

Topic: **Housing**

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Homeowners

- The percentage of homeowners among the Arab population is particularly high: 92.8% compared to 69.7% amongst Jews.² This relatively high percentage of home ownership among Arabs is explained by the fact that construction occurs almost entirely on private land.³
- Housing density among Arabs is higher than among Jews (an average of 1.41 people per room compared to 0.85). Regardless of the size of the residence, the average number of people per room is 30 percent higher among Arabs than among Jews.⁴

Spending on Housing

- As calculated by the Central Bureau of Statistics, expenditures on housing are an indicator of the quality of housing and the level of its maintenance.
- In 2009, the average monthly expenditure on housing among Arabs was a relatively low NIS 1,669, compared to NIS 2,679 among Jews.⁵

Land Used for Public Buildings

- The average area of land used for public buildings (i.e. schools, hospitals, religious services, recreation, libraries etc), in Jewish communities in 2002 was twice as large as in Arab communities (11.2 and 5.7 dunams per 1,000 people, respectively).

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² Ali Haider (editor), *The Equality Index of Jewish and Arab Citizens in Israel: The Sikkuy Report 2009* (Sikkuy – The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality, December 2010), p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Haider, *The Sikkuy Report 2009*, p. 41.

⁵ Haider, *The Sikkuy Report 2009*, p. 45.

Housing Shortage and Government Plans

- The housing shortage remains one of the most difficult problems faced by the Arab population in Israel. Little land is available for private construction (see fact sheet on Land and Planning).⁶
- The housing shortage among Arab citizens is illustrated in several spheres: less development in Arab residential areas compared to Jewish areas; Arab illegal construction resulting in a higher instance of demolition orders; heavy fines and criminal charges against Arabs; racially-charged expressions by Jewish citizens toward Arabs who try to purchase residences in Jewish or mixed Jewish-Arab neighborhoods; and the government's refusal to authorize expansion of the limited jurisdiction area of Arab local councils.⁷
- In 2007, the Israel Land Administration (ILA) allotted approximately 117 million NIS for urban planning and development in Arab localities, but by 2010 only 60 million were put in use and the execution level stood at about only 50%.⁸
- According to a report published by the ILA in June 2009, Arab-populated zones suffer from significant housing shortages. The ILA gave an example of three Arab towns: Shfar'am lacks 7,000 residential units, Sakhnin lacks 1,500 and Umm al-Fahm lacks 4,500.⁹ According to Sikkuy, this shortage exists because the Construction and Housing Ministry initiates 13 times more new building projects for Jews than it does for Arabs.¹⁰
- In March 2008, the Ministry of Interior announced plans to sell land designated for the construction of some 22,000 housing units as well as for industrial zones in the Galilee and Triangle (Central Israel) areas. In January 2009, the Ministry's Regional Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of 4,000 housing units in the city of Umm al-Fahm in the Triangle region. Another 1,500 housing units were designated for construction in some major Arab localities in the Galilee, such as Nazareth, Kafr Manda, Arraba and Daburiyya.¹¹
- In May 2008, the Interior Ministry's Regional Planning and Building Committee approved construction of a 30-floor high-rise building in the Arab village of Kafr Qasim, near Petach Tikva.¹²
- In June 2008, the government pledged NIS 44 million to build low-cost housing facilities for ex-soldiers from the Bedouin, Druze, and Circassian communities. The plan calls for the construction in the first stage of 600 apartment units at a cost of NIS 100,000 per unit.¹³
- The 2009 budget for the Ministry of Housing and Construction reduced the amount allotted to Arab localities from 116 million NIS to 85 million NIS. In 2008, the Ministry used only 12 million NIS of the original 21 million NIS committed to spend on new construction in Arab

⁶ Mossawa Center, "The Human Rights Status of the Palestinian Arab Minority Citizens of Israel", Haifa, October 2008, pp. 19-21.

⁷ Haider, *Sikkuy Report 2008*, pp. 29-30.

⁸ Mossawa Center, 2010 One Year to Netanyahu's Government and the Arab Citizens Report, April 2010

⁹ cited in: Haider, *Sikkuy Report 2008*, p. 28.

¹⁰ *Jerusalem Post*, November 19, 2009.

¹¹ *Kalkalist*, June 11, 2008, January 22, 2009 (Hebrew).

¹² *Ma Bepetach*, May 11, 2008 (Hebrew).

¹³ *Jerusalem Post*, July 1, 2008.

localities, an implementation rate of only 57%.¹⁴

- For 2012 budget allocations by the Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab, Druze and Circassian Sectors earmarked for housing projects in Arab and Druze localities, see Fact Sheet on The Authority for the Economic Development.
- In June 2013, the Knesset's Internal Affairs Committee debated a plan to address the housing crisis in the Arab town of Jisr al-Zarqa, near Haifa. The plan was a transfer of land from the nearby Jewish town of Moshav Beit Hanania.
- After additional debate, which included accusations of racism, MK David Azoulay called on the Haifa regional planning committee to hear the case.¹⁵

New Arab Towns

- In February 2008, the Ministry of Interior announced a plan to establish a new Arab town near Acre, the first since the establishment of the State, which included provisions for 7,000 housing units.¹⁶ Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit declared: "The plan is to build a modern city, in which young couples could buy an apartment and live."¹⁷
- The plan elicited mixed reactions. Arab officials welcomed the idea but doubted whether it would be implemented. Some argued that the establishment of "community settlements" (Yishuv Kehilati) was preferable.¹⁸
- Arab Knesset members endorsed the move. The then Arab Minister Ghaleb Majadele said the decision would increase the Arab public's sense of belonging to the state.¹⁹
- Some Jewish Knesset members, however, derided the plan, saying that "It was outrageous that while the government freezes construction in Judea and Samaria [...], it approves the establishment of an Arab city in the North."²⁰ Criticism was also voiced from some activists. MK Dov Khenin, representing HADASH (DFPE, Democratic Front for Peace and Equality), said in 2008 that it was more important to resolve the current problems plaguing Arab local councils, rather than to establish a new Arab city.²¹

¹⁴ Mossawa Center: The Economic Status of Arab Citizens of Israel: An Overview", 2009.

¹⁵ www.IsraelNationalNews.com, June 25, 2013.

¹⁶ *Yediot Carmiel*, February 22, 2008. (Hebrew).

¹⁷ *Ha'aretz*, February 12, 2008.

¹⁸ *Ha'aretz*, February 19, 2008.

¹⁹ *Ma'ariv*, July 20, 2008.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Panorama*, February 22, 2008.