



תערוכה לציון 25
מعرض بمناسبة مرور
عائنا على تأسيس جمعية بمكوم
شנים לעמותת במקום

Home.Place

Exhibition Marking 25 Years to Bimkom

main text

al-Ghaba / Alonim Hills

Ramat Eliyahu

al-Walaja

al-Isawiyya

al-Zarnuk

Dekeika



Bimkom – Planning and Human Rights was established in 1999 by a group of architects and planners who witnessed daily institutionalized discrimination and rights violations within the planning systems in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Henceforth, the organization has worked to promote equitable spatial planning, based on principles of social and distributive justice, viewing planning as a key component in realizing human rights.

Since its establishment, Bimkom has worked with some 200 marginalized communities. Our goals are to ensure these communities enjoy full and equitable rights; to promote justice and transparency in planning and building processes; and to ensure public resources are fairly distributed through spatial planning and development. We integrate our professional planning knowledge with local knowledge of residents and communities, demanding the state meet its obligation to ensure all citizens and residents have an equal chance to thrive and prosper. Bimkom's in-depth work with communities aims to identify their needs, wishes, assets, and capabilities, working with and for the communities to define their own planning vision. Alongside community representatives, we present this vision to the planning establishment, drawing on a diverse toolbox of planning, legal, and bureaucratic means. We also work to secure human-rights based planning policies.

Current times present us with serious challenges. Hamas's appalling attack on the Western Negev's communities, and the subsequent war on Gaza, have cost numerous lives and left entire communities devastated. Under the fog of war, the Israeli government is deepening the regime of Jewish supremacy throughout Israel/Palestine. We are witnessing not only the total destruction of Gaza's urban and rural fabric, but also growing attempts to displace and expel Palestinian communities in the West Bank and the Negev, to limit their freedoms, to violate their rights, and to corral them into ever-shrinking territories. Among the Jewish-Israeli public, too, growing tendency to silence any criticism while labeling individuals and groups as traitors. Human rights organizations are among the targets of this policy, Bimkom included.

Israel is currently descending into a moral and political abyss at a horrifying pace. Despite this (or maybe because of it), we have chosen in this exhibition to showcase stories that also include moments of optimism and small achievements. Drawing on Bimkom's diverse experience, the exhibition offers a glimpse into the lives of communities that lack official recognition or face ongoing planning discrimination and harmful planning. The exhibits present unique stories of each locality and its residents' lives, alongside their ongoing struggle for recognition, formalization, and planning. Each story highlights a moment of success resulting from years of planning initiatives pursued in the face of harmful bureaucracy and frequent setbacks.

Several artists have offered fresh perspectives on the homes, places, lives, and power relations shaping the communities. Alon Cohen-Lifshitz builds a demolished home, disrupting the entrance to the gallery. Adi Segal documents life on a Bedouin farm in northern Israel. Gidon Levin's photographs explore the lives of residents in the Ramat Eliyahu neighborhood of Rishon LeZion, which is slated for raze-and-rebuild schemes. Miki Kretzman reveals spotless order in the Negev village of al-Zarnuk, challenging common perceptions of "unrecognized village." Nava Sheer and Oren Yiftachel take us on a journey through time and space, presenting historical aerial photographs of the Negev. Talia Hoffman uses a stereoscope to retrace her visit to Dekeika, the hidden village on the margins of the South Hebron Hills. Galya Lulko's photos capture childhood moments in the same village.

Tamar Paikes's raw material is the mountain of planning papers concerning Jerusalem's al-Isawiyyah neighborhood. From the unending heap of bureaucracy, she fashions miniature human figures. Majd Abed's drawings portray the suffocation and chaos created by Israel's control in al-Isawiyyah. Saher Miari, Gaston Zvi-Ickowicz, and Alon Cohen-Lifshitz offer a glimpse into the human and historical layers of the al-Walaje village, viewed through a cistern. Annie Kantar's poem describes the demolition of a home, with all its ramifications, while Yahel Gazit documents what remains after the demolition. Lastly, Raida Adon embarks on a journey through Jerusalem's Old City market, carrying her house on her head. She reminds us of the human longing for a stable home, one we can return to whenever we wish, without ever fearing that it may have vanished.

Amidst endless plans for expulsion and dispossession, Bimkom continues to struggle to protect every human's right to place, to home.

home



עאנא על תאסויס ימעה ימקום
שנים לעמותת במקום

25

תערוכה לציון
מערש במאסיה מרור

al-Ghaba - Alonim Hills

area

West Lower Galilee

Relationship with the community

Since 2016

Staff

Cesar Yeudkin, Sharon Karni.

Partners

Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel;
active residents.

Tawfiq Zbeidat was born and has lived his entire life on a family farm in the heart of the Lower Galilee's open landscape. For generations, the extended Zbeidat family has resided in the area known as Al-Ghaba ("the forest") - the sprawling oak forest hills situated between the Kishon River / Wadi Muqata' and the Zippori River / Wadi al-Malik. Like many Bedouin families, the Zbeidat ancestors came to the area in search of grazing lands, purchased land, settled on it, and began farming.

The Zbeidat family has preserved a traditional rural-agricultural lifestyle, which includes herding sheep and cattle and growing crops and fruit orchards. In the surrounding landscape, one can find cisterns for collecting rainwater, troughs for livestock, and remnants of outlying farms. A few hundred meters to the north lies the traditional Sheikh Mohammad Cemetery, which serves the community to this very day.

Despite state efforts to transition the area's Bedouin citizens to permanent settlements, the Bedouin community continues to view the al-Ghaba area as an integral part of its local identity. The residents' continuous engagement in agriculture and herding has significantly contributed to conservation of the natural environment, prevention of fires, and protection of the area's biodiversity. In recent years, social, cultural, and educational activities have been organized here to foster the traditional Bedouin lifestyle and cultural heritage.

The al-Ghaba area was designated as nature reserve in 1981. The detailed plan for the Alonim Hills reserve was eventually submitted by the Nature and Parks Authority in 2019, ignoring its Bedouin heritage and proposing restrictions on grazing and agricultural practices in the area.

The area's residents submitted objections to this plan, with the assistance of Bimkom and Adalah, demanding that authorities recognize the contribution of Bedouin heritage to the area's nature conservation, and remove clauses that could harm agricultural and herding activities. Tawfik Zbeidat and his family sought to formalize their farm by integrating it into the nature reserve plan, both to protect their home and to enhance Bedouin cultural heritage of the area.

An appeal to the National Planning and Building Council was submitted following rejection of these objections. In 2023, the Appeals Committee accepted several of the residents' demands. It agreed that the nature reserve would be renamed Alonim Hills – al-Ghaba and that the reserve's educational material would officially recognize Bedouin heritage and its contribution to conserving the area. The committee also determined that agricultural and herding could continue within the reserve. Although the Zbeidat family's request to regularize their farm was denied, they continue to live there.

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Al-Ghaba / Alonim Hills

First half of the **19th century**

Bedouin families from tribes originating in the Syrian desert arrive to the oak forests between the Kishon River (Wadi Muqta') and the Zippori River (Wadi al-Malik) in search of grazing lands. After establishing sheep herding, they purchased land and began growing crops and fruit orchards.

Beginning of the **20th century**

Beginning of permanent settlement in "Hakura" - family-based farms. Good neighborly relations and cooperation developed between the Bedouin population and the area's Jewish residents.

Since the **1970's**

Efforts made by Israel to concentrate the area's Bedouin citizens in a limited number of towns and villages such as Basmat Tabu'n, Ibtin, Khawaled and others. However, the transition was never fully completed, as some families continued living on farms in the heart of the open landscape. Many of the area's residents also persist in agriculture practices and sheep and cattle herding.

1981

The Al-Ghaba area was designated as a nature reserve in the national plan for national parks and nature reserves (TAMA 8).

2006

Applying the area's designation as a nature reserve and national park in the National Master Plan TAMA/35, which also determined that the area as an "integrated protected fabric".

2012

Haifa Regional Master Plan (Tamam 6) ratifies the designation of the area as a national park.

2019

The Nature and Parks Authority submits a detailed plan for the “Alonim Hills” reserve, ignoring its Bedouin heritage and proposing restrictions on grazing and agricultural practices in the area.

2020

The area’s residents submitted objections to this plan, with the assistance of Bimkom and Adalah. They demand that authorities recognize the contribution of Bedouin heritage to the area’s nature conservation, remove clauses that could harm agricultural and herding activities, private landownership, and refrain from confining the development of the adjacent town of Ibtin.

2021

The Haifa District Committee rejects the objections. The residents appeal to the National Planning and Building Council.

At the same time, a direct dialogue began between the residents’ representatives and the Nature Authority’s professional staff, assisted by Bimkom. However, no agreement was reached before the appeal hearing.

2023

The Appeals Committee accepted several of the residents' demands: it agreed that the nature reserve would be renamed Alonim Hills – al-Ghaba and that the reserve’s educational material would officially recognize the Bedouin heritage and its contribution to conserving the area. The committee also determined that agricultural and herding could continue within the reserve without restriction.

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عمرها على تأسيس جمعية بمكان
شנים לעמותת במקום
חברכה לציון
معرض بمناسبة مرور

Ramat Eliyahu

area

Rishon LeZion

Relationship with the community

Since 2017

Staff

Maya Atadia, Efrat Cohen Bar, Yael Padan

Partners

Association of Ethiopian Jews, the Israel Affordable Housing Center (Hagar) of Tel Aviv University, and the Tarbut Movement

Following the 2011 “Tent City” social justice protest against the high cost of living in Israel, particularly the soaring housing prices—the planning system began a race aimed at planning thousands of housing units. The working assumption was, and remains, that flooding the market with residential plans, regardless of their quality or social impact, is the sole solution that would lead to price reductions.

Alongside extensive development on state-owned lands adjacent to existing cities, institutional attention was directed toward creating new tools for densification and urban renewal in existing urban fabrics. These two channels were promoted in the Knesset through a series of legislative measures intended primarily to enable fast, efficient planning while removing barriers for planning authorities and real estate developers. These measures included the Planning Committee for Prioritized Housing Complexes (VATMAL), the Governmental Authority for Urban Renewal, updates to TAMA 38 (the National Outline Plan for strengthening buildings against earthquakes), and the "Reluctant Tenant" law.

In practice, this race did not result in lower housing prices, which have since doubled or even tripled—but instead led to the creation of an aggressive planning system. This system evaluates planning committees based on the number of housing units they approve, rather than the quality of planning, while silencing voices of the most vulnerable residents.

In 2011, Bimkom took to the field to meet with protesters in protest tent encampments across the country. We listened and spoke about the right to shelter, affordable housing, public housing, urban renewal that is not merely physical, and the social risks of raze-and-rebuild projects driven solely by economic profit. We helped the protesters develop a social justice perspective on housing and began formulating policy proposals to integrate this perspective into government work, particularly in urban renewal policy.

In 2014, these efforts culminated in a set of recommendations addressing the social aspects of urban renewal, which we promoted in the Knesset and with government ministries. Additionally, we wrote a "Rights Guide" for residents to help them understand their rights when dealing with private and institutional developers. We spent hours and days in Knesset committees, making repeated efforts to incorporate social considerations into urban renewal legislation.

We sought to mandate the preparation of social impact reports for raze-and-rebuild projects, to recognize legitimate reasons for apartment owners to refuse such projects (without the sanctions imposed on those labelled a "reluctant tenant"), to protect residents from unscrupulous middlemen, and more.

In 2017, we arrived in the Ramat Eliyahu neighborhood in Rishon LeZion. A few years earlier, this centrally located neighborhood had been "discovered" as a treasure trove for real estate developers hoping for quick, high profits. The municipality established an Urban Renewal Administrative Authority and began promoting an urban renewal plan that designated the neighborhood's many housing blocks for a massive raze-and-rebuild project.

The residents of Ramat Eliyahu—one-quarter of whom are Israeli Jews of Ethiopian descent—faced racist remarks from the mayor and aggressive pressure from developers. The neighborhood renewal plan was not designed to serve them; instead, they were being pushed to leave the neighborhood and relocate to high-rise buildings in a different area, far from the essential urban fabric.

Together with the Association of Ethiopian Jews, the Israel Affordable Housing Center (Hagar) of Tel Aviv University, and the Tarbut Movement—whose members live and work in the neighborhood—we established the Coalition for Social Justice in Urban Renewal. The coalition worked alongside residents to strengthen their ability to stand up for their rights, understand what the authorities were planning for them, and to influence those plans.

At the same time, we engaged with the municipal Urban Renewal Administrative Authority and the National Urban Renewal Authority as they formulated their strategies, working to ensure a deeper focus on social aspects. We also pushed for fairer working methods with residents and the recognition of their rights.

The significance of our work in Ramat Eliyahu extended far beyond the neighborhood itself. This project—one of the first raze-and-rebuild plans made for an entire neighborhood—revealed many of the limitations of existing planning and regulatory tools. In response, and following our efforts, numerous legislative and policy proposals were advanced by the Coalition for Social Justice in Urban Renewal and adopted at the national level. These aimed to adequately address the social aspects of such projects and ensure that the weakened populations typically residing in these neighborhoods could actively participate in shaping the planned changes to their living environments.

In the years since, we have written research papers, policy briefs, objections, rights guides, and social impact assessments, some of which are displayed here on the wall. Some of our recommendations were integrated into the work of the various authorities and in legislation, while others have yet to receive appropriate attention.

Our position remains unchanged: housing is a fundamental right, not just for the wealthy, and the state bears responsibility for ensuring that all its citizens have access to basic, affordable housing - a principle that has yet to take root.

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חברכה לציון
מعرض بمناسبة مرور
عائنا على تأسيس جمعية بمكان
سنנים לעמותת במקום

Walaja

area	Relationship with the community
South of Jerusalem	Since 2008

Staff

Sari Kronish, Alon Cohen-Lipshitz, Diana Mardi.

Partners

Village Residents' Committee, Village Council, local women's organization, Ir Amim, Friends of Walaja, Friends of Walaja - USA, planning team led by Ayala Ronel, outline plan steering committee.

In memory of Claude Rosenkowitz

Al-Walaja is a small agricultural village located in the seam zone south of Jerusalem. al-Walaja's Palestinian residents have lived continuously in the area for many generations, maintaining their agricultural lifestyle and the surrounding terraced landscapes. Walaja functions as a single unit despite the fragmentation and borders imposed on it over the years— by the Green Line, post-1967 Jerusalem municipal boundary, Oslo Accords, and the separation barrier. Before 1948, al-Walaja lands spanned approximately 17,000 dunams, with the village center located north of the Refaim Valley. After the 1948 war, the moshav of Aminadav was established on al-Walaja lands. Al-Walaja residents dispersed into nearby and distant refugee camps, with some succeeding in re-establishing the village on their lands south of the Refa'im Valley, where they still reside today without recognition or regulation.

Today, al-Walaja is administratively split between East Jerusalem and Areas C (and some B) of the West Bank. The village is home to some 3,000 residents, just over a third of whom live in the part annexed to Jerusalem. The municipality has never approved an outline plan for this area, making it impossible to issue building permits.

In the early 2000s, Walaja residents organized to plan their village themselves. The planning team, led by the late architect Claude Rosenkowitz, initially prepared a comprehensive plan for the entire village, after which separate plans were promoted with each of the relevant administrative authorities.

This is the story of a proposed plan for the part of al-Walaja that lies within the Jerusalem municipal boundaries. It is a story of trial and tribulation, of trust and mistrust, and of a community that, with the assistance of local and international organizations, private individuals, and activists, managed to rise repeatedly from the ruins and insist on the importance of planning its living environment. The aim of the plan is to preserve the cultural landscapes, recognize the community in situ, prevent house demolitions, and allow for a future of dignified life in this special location.

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al-Walaja

Pre- **1948**

The village of al-Walaja spans approximately 17,000 dunams on both sides of Nahal Refaim (Wadi Isma'il). The center of the village was located on the northern bank around the Ein al-Balad spring.

1948-1967

Al-Walaja residents become refugees, some on their own land and others in different locations. The village is reconstructed on village lands south of Nahal Refaim, in the West Bank.

1967

About half of the village in its new location is annexed by Israel, included within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries.

1970's

Extensive al-Walaja lands are expropriated for establishment of the settlements of Har Gilo (West Bank) and Gilo (East Jerusalem).

2004

In response to demolition orders, al-Walaja residents organize to prepare an outline plan for the village. Claude Rosenkowitz is chosen as the planner.

2009

The District Planning Committee rejects the residents' plan, claiming it does not align with planning policy.

2010

Construction of the separation barrier around al-Walaja begins after several petitions on the matter are dismissed.

2013

The National Council for Planning and Building approves the Jerusalem District Master Plan (TMM 1/30), with specific reference to open space planning in al-Walaja and its surroundings.

The Jerusalem District Committee approves the Nahal Refaim National Park on al-Walaja lands that remain on the Israeli side of the barrier.

2014

Al-Walaja residents appeal to the district committee to reconsider their outline plan, but do not receive any response.

2016

Following the increased enforcement against building violations, the National Enforcement Unit begins issuing demolition orders in al-Walaja. Five homes are demolished this year.

2017

Construction of the separation barrier around Walaja is completed. Residents file an administrative court petition against 38 demolition orders. The Court rules that a plan for the village may be prepared, but does not freeze demolitions. Four more homes are demolished this year.

2018

Residents appeal against the ruling, supported by the expert opinion of Bimkom. The Supreme Court freezes demolition orders against 38 houses, allowing their regularization through planning. This freeze has subsequently been renewed every six months. Four more homes are demolished this year.

2019-2020

The state insists that preservation of Walaja's agricultural-historical landscape requires home demolitions. However, the order freezing demolitions remains in effect. Eight more homes are demolished.

2020

Residents, together with Bimkom and Ir Amim, file an objection to a new settlement on al-Walaja lands in Area C (west of Har Gilo).

2021

The Nature and Parks Authority begins charging an entrance fee to the Ein Haniya Spring, located on Walaja lands, as part of the national park. Al-Walaja residents stop visiting the spring.

2021

The court orders the district committee to consider the residents' plan. The committee rejects the plan and sets conditions for preparing a new one. Residents renew their planning efforts, supported by Bimkom, Ir Amim and Friends of al-Walaja. They prepare an environmental survey, demonstrating the possibility of planning the village while preserving the landscape. Five homes are demolished this year.

2022

The state changes its position, allowing for submission of a new plan for the village. Residents hire a planning team led by Ayala Ronel. Friends of Walaja launch a fundraising campaign to fund the planning. Two homes are demolished this year.

2023

The plan is submitted to the district committee, which adds new requirements, including stringent landownership proofs. This requirement undermines the collective right of the residents to plan their village. The plan is resubmitted in October. Three homes are demolished this year.

2024

The district committee discusses the plan twice and considers playing a more active role in its promotion.

Record year of demolition: 20 more homes are demolished, as well as 4 homes and two shops in Area C of the village.

2025

Residents and the planning team, with the help of organizations and supporters, continue to push for the plan's swift approval.

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Isawiyyah

area	Relationship with the community
Jerusalem	Since 2004

Staff

Efrat Cohen Bar, Sari Kronish, Diana Mardi, Rawan Shalalkeh

Partners

Planning team led by architect Eran Mebel, Sara Kaminker, Fox family, Isawiyyah Association for Development and Progress, Isawiyyah residents, activists and volunteers, architect Ari Cohen.

Isawiyyah has many borders, some of which are physical, tangible, clearly visible on the ground; others are hidden from sight, requiring interpretation. Both types, however, weigh heavily on the neighborhood's spaces and residents. A border is first and foremost a separation between what and who may be included and what is doomed to remain outside. Establishing a plan's boundary by drawing the "blue line" is a crucial first step in any planning activity, yet it has far-reaching implications. Often, it determines who will live comfortably and who will be condemned to struggle for their very right to exist in a certain place. In Jerusalem, which has been repeatedly divided and connected, the numerous boundary and planning lines fragment and disconnect Palestinian space while connecting and strengthening that of Israelis.


The struggle of Isawiyyah's residents for an appropriate neighborhood plan is also a fight against all the borders that limit their living space, development, and well-being. Bimkom has accompanied the residents in their struggle since 2004. Together with the residents, we initiated a new outline plan for Isawiyyah that would meet their needs, enable essential development, and put an end to the fear of home demolitions. It was an ambitious project, aimed at designing a neighborhood in collaboration with the residents and in coordination with the Jerusalem Municipality, which initially endorsed the initiative. Together we learned about the assets and qualities of the neighborhood and community, as well as the needs of its residents. We debated planning directions and possible solutions, compromised on ideas, and stood proud and dignified before the municipality and the District Planning Committee. Working on a plan requires a certain degree of optimism, and indeed we were optimistic. Optimism, however, is not enough when Palestinians are working vis-à-vis the State of Israel.

In 2011, after realizing the authorities had no intention of approving a plan desired by the residents, we decided to stop promoting it. Continuing would have been a waste of time and energy. We continued working with the residents, but this time our efforts focused on supporting their struggles against harmful plans that threatened to stifle Isawiyyah's development from the outside. We fought against the planning of a national park on the neighborhood's southern land reserves, submitted objections and appeals, and even went to court when landscaping orders were issued for the area. We further opposed the plan to establish a massive landfill to the north of Isawiyyah, which proposed turning the Mukalik Valley into a hill. In both cases, we successfully halted the plans for extended periods.

The Jerusalem Municipality eventually promoted a new outline plan for the neighborhood. Fortunately, the plan's architect acknowledged the extensive work we had done, expressed interest in the ideas and lessons learned with the residents through this process, and even integrated and developed them in the new plan. The plan, approved in 2023, does not include all the desired and necessary land for Isawiyyah, but does provide various paths for implementation and allows residents to regularize informal construction.

However, excitement over Isawiyyah's new and special plan was short-lived, due to promulgation of new procedures that expose residents to the Absentee Property Law and threaten their landownership. These new procedures have turned planning into a trap for East Jerusalem's residents, including Isawiyyah's, causing the vast majority to refrain from approaching planning and building authorities. Bimkom is once again standing with the residents to overturn these new procedures and enable them to maintain their homes, build, develop, and live dignified lives in their city.

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al-Isawiyyah

Until **1948**

The village of Isawiyyah slowly develops on the eastern slopes of the Mount Scopus –Mount of Olives ridge, located in Jerusalem’s agricultural outskirts. The village's land encompasses 10,000 dunams, stretching from the ridge line to Khan al-Ahmar.

1948-1967

At the end of the 1948 war, when the ceasefire line (the Green Line) was drawn in Jerusalem, al-Isawiyyah was partially under control of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and partially within the Israeli enclave on Mount Scopus. The land was under Israeli control, while al-Isawiyyah residents were under the aegis of the United Nations.

1967

With occupation of the West Bank and establishment of the new Jerusalem municipal boundary, the entire village of al-Isawiyyah was included within the new borders of the "unified" city. Most of its land, however, remained outside the municipal area.

1968

Lands from al-Isawiyyah are expropriated to expand the Hebrew University campus, the Hadassah Hospital complex on Mount Scopus, and build the neighborhoods of French Hill and Tzameret HaBira.

1991

The District Planning Bureau approves an outline plan for the neighborhood on only a quarter of the lands included within the new Jerusalem borders, allowing very few options for construction and development.

2003

Sarah Kaminker, one of Bimkom's seven founders, passes away, and her son David wishes to donate money for a project in her memory.

2004

The "Kaminker Project for Planning al-Isawiyyah," begins. It aims to prepare a new outline plan for the neighborhood, in full cooperation with al-Isawiyyah's residents and in coordination with planning authorities.

2004-2005

In-depth planning workshops with al-Isawiyyah residents are conducted, during which local representatives learned about planning issues and the planning team was exposed to the assets and values of the neighborhood and its residents

2005

The Nature and Parks Authority introduces a plan for a national park on the slopes of Mount Scopus, partially situated on the lands of the al-Isawiyyah and A-Tur neighborhoods.

2005-2007

The planning team develops an outline plan for the neighborhood (No. 11550) in collaboration with the residents, which addresses their needs and includes consensual mechanisms for public land allocations. Meanwhile, the planning team negotiates with the Nature and Parks Authority over the boundary between the neighborhood and the planned national park.

2007

The residents' plan receives conditional approval from the Jerusalem local committee, requiring that its boundaries be narrowed down.

2012

The Mount Scopus National Park plan, partially on Isawiyyah lands to the south is deposited. The residents, with Bimkom, submit objections followed by an appeal to the National Council for Planning and Building. The council accepts the request to examine the neighborhood's development needs before advancing the national park plan.

2012

A landfill plan in the Mukalik Valley on Isawiyyah lands to the north is deposited. Isawiyyah residents, along with residents of French Hill and assisted by Bimkom, submit an objection. They then appeal to the national council, which requires examining the landfill's health impacts.

2018

A Jerusalem master plan for urban nature designates a particularly large nature area, encroaching on the development areas of al-Isawiyyah and a-Tur. Bimkom and residents of both neighborhoods submit objections.

2023

A new outline plan for al-Isawiyyah, initiated by the Jerusalem municipality, is approved. The plan expands development areas, adopts some of the planning principles proposed by Bimkom, and allows for regularization of most homes. Some homes, however, remain outside the plan's boundaries and are slated for demolition.

2023

A new procedure for determining landownership rights for planning and building purposes is introduced. This procedure undermines al-Isawiyyah's planning efforts, all but eliminating the possibility for private landowners to apply for building permits or initiate plans.

2024

A substantially reduced plan is approved for a construction debris landfill in the Mukalik Valley to the north of al-Isawiyyah.

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Al Zarnuk

area

Eastern Negev

Relationship with the community

Since 2009

Staff

Dafna Saporta, Fares Abu Obeid, Cesar Yeudkin, Nili Baruch,
Shuli Hartman

Partners

Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages (RCUV), Adalah –
The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Al Zarnuk
Local Committee, Negev Co-Existence Forum for Civil Equality

As one drives on the Be'er Sheva-Dimona Road, the expansive Be'er Sheva Valley stretches to the north. Across the hills are makeshift shanties, permanent and temporary structures, reflecting unmistakable poverty and want. Some 85,000 Bedouin citizens reside in the area's towns and the recognized and unrecognized villages. The lack of recognition and investment in Bedouin towns and villages leads to daily hardships for the residents, who live in informal structures and face incessant threats of demolitions. They lack the most fundamental infrastructures, including roads, water, sewage, and electricity, and have particularly inadequate educational and health services.

One of these villages is Al Zarnuk, home to some 5,500 Bedouin residents, primarily from the Abu Queder family, who inhabit the area since the 1930s. Additional families live alongside them, engaged in agriculture and livestock farming. Al Zarnuk has almost no unemployment; residents are business owners, teachers, lawyers, and doctors, among others. Furthermore, most women in the community pursue education and work.



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Al Zarnuk

area

Eastern Negev

Relationship with the community

Since 2009

Staff

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One of these villages is Al Zarnuk, home to some 5,500 Bedouin residents, primarily from the Abu Queder family, who inhabit the area since the 1930s. Additional families live alongside them, engaged in agriculture and livestock farming. Al Zarnuk has almost no unemployment; residents are business owners, teachers, lawyers, and doctors, among others. Furthermore, most women in the community pursue education and work.

Over the years, social and familial ties developed among families living in Al Zarnuk. They share public services including a community center, kindergartens, daycare facilities, three mosques, grocery stores, and a health clinic. With the help of Bimkom, Al Zarnuk residents agreed on a framework for regularization of the village based on their current spatial layout, and on preservation of various aspects of their unique lifestyle, including integration into the economy and labor market. Together with Bimkom, the residents are actively working to promote recognition of the village by state authorities.

There are no physical barriers or planning restrictions preventing in situ regularization of Al Zarnuk, and the village meets all institutional criteria developed over the years for regularization. The state, however, is promoting establishment of a new town adjacent to Al Zarnuk, Omrit, intended for a Jewish population, as part of a series of new towns planned along the Be'er Sheva-Dimona Road. Instead of facilitating regularization for the Bedouin residents already living there, the state seeks to forcibly displace and replace them with Jewish residents from outside the area.

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Al Zarnuk

1930's

The Abu Queder family migrates from the Khan Younis area to the Be'er Sheva region and settles in the southern part of the Be'er Sheva Valley.

Post- **1948**

Residents lease the land on which they live from the State of Israel.

1998

The National Council for Planning and Building adopts the principles of the Be'er Sheva metropolitan area master plan. The al-Zarnuk region is designated as an area where various types of Bedouin settlements will be established.

1998

Several families sign an agreement with the state to relocate to Rahat. The agreement, however, is not implemented.

2000

The Neve Midbar school is established in al-Zarnuk. Some 1,000 students currently attend the school, which offers a variety of educational projects.

2006

The Bedouin Authority informs the Supreme Court that the agreement signed with the Abu Queder family to relocate them to Rahat cannot be implemented.

The Goldberg Committee Report outlines criteria for in situ regularization of villages, all of which apply in al-Zarnuk.

Bimkom begins working with al-Zarnuk residents to plan their village, initially mapping the village and analyzing it functionally.

2012

The National Council for Planning and Construction approves the regional master plan for the Be'er Sheva metropolitan area (TMM 4/14/23). The plan designates the area as an integrated agricultural rural landscape, thereby allowing for regularization of Bedouin villages.

2014

Renewed efforts commence to promote the establishment of Omrit as part of a series of new Jewish towns along Highway 25.

2015

The district committee approves a plan for Neighborhood 11 in Rahat, to which the Abu Queder family is supposed to relocate. Both the Rahat municipality and the residents oppose the relocation.

In response to the residents' objections and with the aid of Bimkom, the name of the Abu Queder family is removed from the plan as a target population for the new neighborhood.

2016

Despite the Southern District Committee's recommendation to not approve a new town near Al Zarnuk, the "Moshav" real-estate company launches a campaign to market land in Omrit. The Ministry of Construction and Housing denies advancing the establishment of Omrit.

2020

Head of the Bedouin Authority, Yair Ma'ayan, declares a willingness to recognize al-Zarnuk in situ.

2022

The Israeli government decides to establish 5-7 new towns along Highway 25, including Omrit. It also determines that families from Al Zarnuk are to be relocated to Rahat. Despite this decision, the families continue to live in the village and are actively working to gain recognition for it, and plan for the betterment of their lives.



25
עגאנא עלی תأسیس جمعیة بمکوم
שנים לעמותת במקום
תערוכה לציון
מעرض بمناسبة مرور

Dekeika

area

South Hebron Hills

Relationship with the community

Since 2006

Staff

Alon Cohen-Lifshitz, Diana Mardi, Amal Zoabi, Assaf Peleg,
Shuli Hartman

Partners

Adv. Netta Amar-Shiff, Adv. Quamar Mishriqi-Asad, Rabbis for
Human Rights, Prof. Rassem Khamaisi, active residents.

On the way south from Jerusalem to the South Hebron Hills, wooded mountains give way to barren desert hills. A narrow road winds past Bedouin villages scattered across the desert land. Children walk to and from school along the bumpy, narrow road, where cars traveling in opposite directions are forced to pull over to the side.

The road descends and then rises again before becoming a seemingly endless white dirt path. Here, in the heart of the vast desert, there is not a living soul in sight. Only then, as one continues further down the rugged path, does the Palestinian village of Dekeika slowly reveal itself. It does not appear all at once, but gracefully; first, the tip of the new minaret peeks out from between the bare hills, then homes gradually come into view, along with a herd of goats and a few camels, all obscured among the valleys and riverbeds.

Thus, at the very edge of the West Bank lies the village of Dekeika, home to members of the Ka'abneh-Furijat tribe, who have lived in this very spot for decades. Just past the last house in Dekeika lies an invisible line, the Green Line, cutting through the tribe's historic territory. For a long time, the Green Line did not disturb the daily life of the Ka'abneh-Furijat shepherds, who unwittingly crossed back and forth while following their grazing goats. The movement of the shepherds is dictated by the water, the winds, and the seasons. Dekeika is situated in a low and sheltered area, which traditionally served as the winter habitation zone. In the summer, the community moves to a higher and breezier location on one of the nearby hills.

For decades, tranquillity reigned in the area. The signing of the Oslo Accords in the mid 90's, however, accelerated establishment of settlements in the South Hebron Hills and intensified Israel's efforts to expel the Palestinian communities living in Area C through measures such as home demolitions. Israeli authorities attempted to forcibly relocate Dekeika residents several kilometers north into Khmeida-Najadaeh, an area that while legally recognized by the authorities, lacks a master plan.

Dekeika residents, backed by Bimkom and other human rights organizations, made numerous legal and planning efforts to prevent home demolitions and forcible displacement. However, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) contended that the village did not historically exist in this location and should therefore not be recognized. To prove this, the ICA relied on an aerial photograph taken in June 1967, when the community was situated in its summer location in the higher areas.

A turning point in Dekeika's story came when an aerial photograph from February 1945 was discovered, which clearly showed over twenty tents in the exact location where the village stands today. This definitive proof that Dekeika existed in its location as early as 1945 allowed for the recognition and planning of the village. An outline plan was conditionally approved in 2021.

The hidden village of Dekeika, tucked away in the desert, absent from summer aerial photographs due to traditional practices, was intentionally overlooked by Israeli authorities, who refused to acknowledge its existence and sought to demolish and forcibly expel its residents.

Currently, the court order freezing home demolitions provides the community some protection. Dekeika's residents continue living and developing their village.

home



Dekeika

End of the **19th century**

Ottoman government marks boundaries of the Ka'abneh-Furijjat tribe's land in the South Hebron Hills area.

1942

British mandate authorities approve the RJ/5 regional master plan, which designates the area as a desert region.

1949

The ceasefire line (Green Line) cuts through the territorial living space of the Ka'abneh-Furijjat tribe. Shortly after the Rhodes Agreement, most of the community was expelled to the northern side of the Green Line into the West Bank. Some remained in this area while others dispersed throughout the West and East Banks.

1971

Israel provides water and other essential infrastructure to the Khmeida-Najadaeh area, one of the summer living areas of the Ka'abneh-Furijjat tribe, in an attempt to permanently settle them there.

1981

The Israeli military commander establishes a "demarcation line" for Khmeida-Najadaeh, setting its development boundaries but without preparing a master plan. Permanent homes and tents already existed on the site at this time.

1990's

The Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) threatens to demolish homes located outside the demarcation line and even demolishes several structures. The combination of demarcation and demolitions restricts the movement of Dekeika residents and grounds the community in place.

2005

The ICA issues numerous demolition orders against homes in Dekeika. Residents petition against these orders with the assistance of Bimkom.

2010

The High Court rejects this petition yet leaves an opening for submission of a plan to regularize the village. Residents submit a request to the ICA for planning regulation of Dekeika.

2011

Residents file an additional petition requesting to freeze demolition orders and allow them to prepare a plan to regularize Dekeika. Bimkom assists the residents to prepare this principled plan.

2013

ICA's Central Planning Bureau rejects the regularization plan submitted on behalf of Dekeika residents, claiming there is no planning justification for establishing a new village.

2014

Residents petition the High Court against the Central Planning Bureau's rejection of the plan for in situ regularization of Dekeika.

2016

Bimkom uncovered a 1945 aerial photo, proving that Dekeika has existed in its current location for many years. Following this revelation, the court instructed both parties to begin negotiations on village regularization. The ICA committed to freezing demolitions, while residents agreed to refrain from additional construction pending submission of a plan.

2017

Bimkom submits a planning and anthropologic expert opinion to the court, detailing Dekeika residents' lifestyle and spatial conduct. At the residents' request, the court issues an order to freeze demolitions and requires authorities to provide justification for why the village cannot be regularized in situ.

2018

The ICA reaches an agreement with the residents to proceed with a regularization plan and freeze demolitions, while residents will refrain from new construction.

2021

ICA's Central Planning Bureau conditionally approves the regularization plan for Dekeika. A period of three years is given to finish the regularization process. The ICA is not implementing demolition orders but fails to deposit the village's plan.

2024

The court grants an additional extension of the order freezing demolitions, which provides some protection for the community. In the meantime, Dekeika residents continue to live in and develop their village.

[home](#)