

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues is a coalition of 100 North American Jewish organizations. It was formed in 2006 by key Jewish American leaders from federations, foundations, religious movements, service, and advocacy organizations to promote greater awareness and involvement by the American Jewish community on issues related to Israel's Arab citizens and Jewish-Arab relations in Israel.

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Website www.iataskforce.org

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General Demographics

- Arab citizens comprise nearly 21%¹ of the Israeli population, approximately 1,786,000 citizens².
- Of that population, 83% are Muslim (including the Bedouins), 9% are Christian, and 8% are Druze.
- The growth rate of the Arab population in Israel in 2014 was 2.2% annually, as compared with a 1.7% growth rate for the Jewish population. The Israeli Bureau of Statistics estimates that in 2035 Arab citizens will constitute 25% of Israeli society. In 2016, Arab and Jewish women's fertility rates were equal with an average of 3.1 children each.
- In 2016, 42% of Arabs are below the age of 19 (compared with 24.5% of Jews)

Economy

- While Arab citizens of Israel make up 21% of the total population, the government estimates that they contribute only 8% of national GDP.
- The Israeli government estimates that the Israeli economy loses 31 billion NIS every year as a result of not realizing the full workforce potential of Arab women and men.
- The vast majority (96%) of Arab localities fall into the Ministry of Economy's 4 lowest socio-economic rankings (on a scale of 1-10) of Israeli municipalities.
- In 2007 the Israeli government established a special Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab, Druze and Circassian Sectors in the Prime Minister's Office. The Authority, headed by a senior Arab economist, aims to realize the full potential of these sectors and integrate them into the broader Israeli economy. Following the 2015 general elections, the Authority was moved to the Ministry of Social Equality.

Poverty³

- In 2015, 53.3% of Arab families lived below the poverty line (up from 52.6% in 2014), compared to 13.8% of Jewish Israeli families. Arab families constitute 37.4% of all poor families.
- 65.6% of Arab children in Israel are considered poor, compared to 19.8% of Jewish children

Education

- In 2016, 78% of Arab youngsters reached the 12th grade (up from 76% in 2012), compared with 94% of their Jewish (non-Haredi) peers.

¹ All figures relate to Arab citizens of Israel and are based on the most recent Government of Israel statistics.

² These numbers include around 300,000 Arab residents of East Jerusalem and 24,000 Druze residents of the Golan Heights.

³ According to the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, poverty data does not include the Bedouin community due to access difficulties.

- In 2016, the percentage of Arab youngsters who achieved a complete matriculation certificate⁴ was 46% (up from 27% in 2012), compared with 71% of their Jewish peers.
- Of all students pursuing their undergraduate degree in Israel today, only 15.2% are Arabs (up from 12% in 2012.)
- In graduate programs, Arab students comprise 11.3% and 5.7% in the MA and PhD studies respectively, (up from 9% and 4% in 2012) and continue to comprise only to 2% of all academic staff.

Employment

- The work participation rate (those currently employed and those actively seeking employment) for Arab citizens is 73.8% for men and 34.7% for women (up from 69% and 27% in 2012), compared to 81% and 79.1% work participation rates for Jewish men and women, respectively.
- While Arab and Jewish men are employed at relatively similar rates, Arab men are overrepresented in fields such as unskilled labor, and in the construction and service industries, and are underrepresented in fields such as high tech, finance and the public sector. "Blue collar" employment of Arab men leads to a steep drop in employment participation after 40 - 44 years of age.
- Work participation rates rise to 90% for Arab men with one higher education degree and 97% for men with a PhD, and to 72% and 82% for Arab women, respectively.
- Arab citizens comprise 10% of government employees. 10% was a goal set for 2012 that was finally achieved in 2016.
- As of 2015, Arab citizens make up 5.7% of the high tech workforce (16,200 people), and 2% of those in R&D. This is up from 2008 when Arab citizens constituted only 0.5% of R&D employees in hi tech (350 people).

Geography

- The vast majority of Arab citizens live in Israel's periphery regions. Geographic distribution is as follows:
 - Haifa, Galilee and the northern region - 57%
 - Jerusalem - 19%
 - The Negev – 13.3%
 - Tel-Aviv and the center of the country – 10.7%
- On the whole, Jews and Arabs live in separate localities, with 70% of the Arab population living in Arab cities, towns and villages and only 1% living in Jewish localities.
- Israel has five cities traditionally referred to as "mixed cities"⁵ where the remaining Arab population live alongside the Jewish majority. The following are Arab population percentages for each of Israel's "mixed cities":
 - Acre - 31%
 - Lod - 29%
 - Ramle – 22.7%
 - Jaffa - 31%
 - Haifa - 11%
- New mixed cities are forming, with the following percentage of Arab citizens:
 - Upper Nazareth - 21.6%
 - Ma'alot-Tarshiha – 20%

⁴ Matriculation exams are a series of final exams taken by Israeli high school students towards their graduation (usually in 11th and 12th grades) covering major subjects studied during these years. A complete matriculation certificate is received by achieving passing exam grades in seven core subjects defined as mandatory by the Israeli Ministry of Education.

⁵ According to the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, a "Mixed city" is defined where more than 10% of registered inhabitants are Arabs.

- Karmiel and Beer Sheva -10-15% (estimated).

The Bedouin Community

- Negev Bedouins, approximately 220,000 people, are the poorest population in Israeli and rank significantly lower on each and every measurement, including education, employment and socio-economic levels.
- Rahat, the only Bedouin city of around 59,000 people, is the poorest city in Israel with one of the youngest populations – around 60% of its residents are below the age of 19.