

2018 Personal Security Index:

Violence, Crime and Policing in Arab Towns

The Abraham Initiatives launched the Personal and Community Security Index due to the bloody reality in Arab society, which has seen a sharp rise in crime and violence over recent years.

The aim of the Personal Security Index, published for the second year, is to provide an accurate picture of issues relating to policing and violence in Arab society, with an emphasis on attitudes among Arab citizens. The Index is published in cooperation with the Samuel Neaman Institute at the Technion and includes an attitudes survey and a review of the situation on the ground, based on the Abraham Initiatives' monitoring program. The survey team was headed by Dr. Nuhad Ali, the academic advisor to the Abraham Initiatives' Safe Communities project and chairperson of the Jews-Arabs-State sphere at the Neaman Institute.

Violence and Crime in Arab Communities: Scope, Feelings, and Attitudes

- **In 2018, 71 Arab citizens were killed: 56 men and 15 women.**
- **61% of all murder and manslaughter victims in Israel in 2018 were Arab citizens – three times the weight of Arab society in the population as a whole.**
- **How many Arabs were affected by violence over the past year? 26.6% of Arab citizens report that they or a member of their family were affected by violent offenses over the past year (including beatings, stabbings, and shootings).**
- **Over one-third of Arab citizens (35.8%) have a sense of personal insecurity in the community where they live due to violence.** This compares to just 12.8% among Jewish citizens.
- **Fear of being affected by various forms of violence and crime is greater in Arab society than among Jewish citizens: 59.3% of Arab citizens are afraid of being the victims of violent offenses, compared to 19.6% of Jewish citizens.**
- **When asked where they feel threatened by violence, 32.1% of Arab citizens mentioned places of entertainment and 31.8% mentioned their home community.** Conversely, the home is perceived as the safest place (only 6% of Arab respondents feel a threat to their personal security in the home). This finding shows that for Arab citizens, their home is their castle, and is regarded as the only place that can protect them against violence and crime.

- The proportion of Arabs who report that they, their relatives or their friends were harmed by various manifestations of violence is higher than among Jews. **For example, 11% of Arab respondents reported that they or their acquaintances were harmed by the use of cold weapons or firearms, compared to just 1.2% among Jews.**
- **Access to firearms: 90.8% of Arabs agree or tend to agree with the claim that it is easy to obtain firearms in Israel, compared to 33.8% of Jews.** Similarly, 93.1% of Arab respondents feel that the use of firearms in their locale has increased in recent years (compared to 22.2% of Jews). These figures highlight the central role of firearms in Arab society, a factor that makes their daily routine something like a state of emergency.

Relations between Arab Society and the Police: Attitudes and Feelings among Arab Citizens

- **The level of trust in the Israel Police among Arab citizens is low – 26.1%** (compared to 42.2% in Jewish society).
- **Mistrust and non-reporting of crime** – 61.7% of Arab citizens who were the victims of violence stated that they did not submit a complaint to the police about the incident. This finding underscores the strong mistrust of the police, which leads many citizens to seek alternative solutions to the problem without referral to the law enforcement agencies.

Trends in the Relations between the Police and Arab Society in 2018 and Monitoring of the Implementation of Decision 1402

- **New police stations in Arab communities:** In 2018, new police stations were opened in Majd al-Krum, Arara in the Negev, Kafr Qassem, Baqa al-Gharbiya, and Kafr Yassif. In Tamra, a police station was established outside the town, and accordingly is not included here in the list of police stations established in Arab communities.
- **Indictments:** The Israel Police reports that as of May 2019, indictments have been filed in 50% of the murder cases in Arab society in 2017.
- **Our monitoring of the implementation of Government Decision 1402** shows that from 2016 through the end of 2018, 550 Arab police officers were recruited (225 joined in 2018). During the same period, 79 Arab women joined the police force, mainly in 2018.
- The cut of NIS 400 million in the budget for the construction of police stations (mainly in Arab society and peripheral areas) has seriously reduced the number of police stations that were due to open in 2018 and in 2019-2020. The decision to make this

cut was sharply criticized by the State Comptroller, who found that the Ministry for Personal Security did not consult with the police and failed to understand the operational and financial damage the decision will cause to the police and to its suppliers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Violence in Arab communities is acquiring the dimensions of a social disaster, as clearly indicated by the survey findings. Despite the depressing reality, the survey also shows that Arab society is interested in combating violence, and is even willing to overcome its mistrust of the police and the state institutions in order to ensure that this struggle is successful.

In order to improve the **personal security of citizens in Arab communities**, the police should maintain a permanent and positive presence in these communities; enhance formal dialogue between the police and the community; and tackle the problem of illegal firearms. In particular, the cut of NIS 400 million introduced in 2018 in the budget for police stations in these communities must be abolished. It is also vital to address the root causes of violence, and particularly the policy of discrimination and chronic neglect of Arab society. The police alone cannot respond to these aspects. Accordingly, the Abraham Initiatives urges the government to establish an interministerial team to eradicate violence and crime in Arab society.