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Combating Crime or Expanding Israeli State Control?**

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Abstract

In order to combat rising crime rates among '48 Palestinians in Israel, successive Israeli governments since 2000 have pursued a policy of establishing new police stations in their towns and villages. This paper examines the effectiveness of this policy and the underlying rationale. It provides analytical tools for evaluating the outcomes of this policy, whether for purposes of challenging its shortcomings or advocating for more effective alternatives.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, crime rates among the Palestinian Arab population in Israel (also referred to as '48 Palestinians or Palestinian citizens of Israel) have risen steadily, with more than 220 people killed annually in criminal incidents since 2023. One of the Israeli government's main responses has been to establish new police stations in Palestinian towns and villages. After years of implementation, this paper examines whether this policy has been a success or failure.

As of December 1, 2025, a total of 243 Palestinians had been killed during 2025 as a result of internal criminal violence¹ a new record since record-keeping began, with crime running rampant within Palestinian society in Israel. To better capture the scope of this phenomenon, it is instructive to compare the murder rate among '48 Palestinians with that of the Jewish Israeli population. In 2024, the murder rate among '48 Palestinians stood at 13.03 per 100,000 people, ranking 13th highest globally.² By contrast, the rate among non-Arabs in Israel in 2024 was 0.74 per 100,000 people,³ around 17 times lower than that of '48 Palestinians, placing Jewish Israeli society as the 11th safest in the world.⁴

In the past two decades, the Israeli government's response to this phenomenon has been to establish new police stations in Palestinian towns.⁵ This policy has not been systematically addressed in the academic literature, and its effectiveness remains unproven. Why, then, has the same policy been pursued year after year? This paper assesses whether this policy is effective in addressing violence and crime, or whether it has been a failure.

1. Data collected by the author.

Among them, 12 were killed by Israeli police, 6 were killed in East Jerusalem, and 4 are originally from the West Bank.

2. Baladna. 2025. Statistical report regarding murder crime in the 1948 Palestinian territories 2024. Baladna. [In Arabic]

3. Figures calculated for purposes of this study.

4. World Population Review. (2026). Murder rate by country 2024. [World Population Review](#).

5. Government Secretariat. (2021, October 24). National plan to deal with crime and violence in the Arab community 2022- 2026. [The Office of the Prime Minister](#). [In Hebrew]

This paper makes four main contributions. First, it upgrades a contemporary framework for evaluating public policy. Drawing on securitization theory, this framework functions as a useful analytical tool for assessing public policy, both in colonial and non-colonial contexts. The paper also draws on deterrence theory from the field of criminology in evaluating the effectiveness of the policy from multiple perspectives and in assessing whether it has been a success or a failure.⁶ Second, the paper provides a sharper picture of the scale and gravity of the situation by conducting empirical data analysis of murder rates within the '48 Palestinian community. Third, it contributes to research on the policing of national minorities by analyzing the effectiveness of the policy of establishing new police stations as a method of combating crime. Finally, and most crucially, the paper targets leaders within the '48 Palestinian community, providing them with academic analysis of the policy and its implications, consolidating relevant data and outlining potential strategies for addressing crime, and offering analytical tools to assist in policy development.

The paper starts with a review of the existing literature in the fields of criminology and public policy. It then sketches the timeline from 2000 onwards, before focusing on major governmental decisions pertaining to policing in Palestinian towns and villages in Israel and their evolution over time. The paper then presents the findings of the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for this study, followed by a discussion of the results, and a conclusion.

Theoretical background

Deterrence theory and rational choice theory⁷ are core frameworks in classical criminology.⁸ According to deterrence theory, a rational individual will weigh up costs and benefits before committing an illegal act. When the perceived benefits outweigh the anticipated costs, a rational individual is more likely to commit such an act; conversely, when the expected costs exceed the benefits that an individual stands to gain, they will be deterred from breaking the law.⁹ Deterrence theory focuses on three elements of punishment: severity, certainty, and celerity.

Severity refers to the harshness of the punishment, which is assumed to discourage criminal acts. Certainty relates to the likelihood of being apprehended and punished, and

6. McConnell, Allan. (2010). Policy Success, Policy Failure and Grey Areas In-Between. [Journal of Public Policy](#), 30 (3). Pp. 345- 362.

7. Among the wide range of theories in criminology, this paper focuses on deterrence theory as the main framework for assessing the effectiveness of the policy of establishing new police stations. Despite its limitations, as identified in the literature, deterrence theory remains the dominant approach for explaining how police presence may influence crime. Other theories from the field of criminology were not explored in this paper due to spatial constraints.

8. Beaudry-Cyr, Maude. (2015, December). **Rational Choice Theory**. Florida: [University of South Florida](#).

9. Abramovaite, Juste; et. al. (2022). Classical deterrence theory revisited: An empirical analysis of Police Force Areas in England and Wales. [European Journal of Criminology](#). Pp. 1- 18.

works on the assumption that severity alone is insufficient for deterrence if the perceived chance of apprehension is low. Celerity denotes the swiftness of any punishment imposed, with delayed sanctions assumed to weaken deterrence.¹⁰

Securitization: A targeted minority

The Israeli citizenship granted to '48 Palestinians has been described in various terms, including settler-colonial citizenship¹¹ and citizenship within an ethnic democracy,¹² among others. In all of these conceptions, '48 Palestinians are not conceptualized as equal citizens or part of the state's ethnic core, but as a minority population that is managed and controlled by the settler-colonial regime. This constitutes important context for analyzing Israeli policy towards '48 Palestinians.

As Ben-Porat and Ghanem argue, "Citizenship is the most important foundation upon which the modern state guarantees the egalitarian status and rights of individuals within its territory".¹³ In the context of majority–minority relations, they add that citizenship "ensures equality and balance between individuals and collectives, and serves as the main component for engendering common bonds to the state". Ben-Porat and Ghanem further observe, however, that citizenship is not a fixed concept but is "often a contested ground for individual and group rights, inclusion and exclusion, and the very definition of the political community".¹⁴

In an article from 2021, Ben-Porat explored a paradox: while Palestinian citizens of Israel increasingly request more policing in their towns and villages, these requests come against a historical background of discrimination as a national minority, including recurrent clashes with the Israeli police.¹⁵ He contends that interactions with public officials, especially police officers, indicate to citizens where the government's priorities lie and offer a comparative lens that reveals how different groups of citizens are treated by the state.

Ben-Porat further observes that in many societies there is a clear division in perceptions of the police, with some groups viewing them as protective, while others regard them

10. Ibid.

11. Rouhana, Nadim; & Sabbagh-Khoury, Areej. (2015). Settler-colonial citizenship: conceptualizing the relationship between Israel and its Palestinian citizens. [Settler Colonial Studies](#), 5 (3). Pp. 205– 225.

12. Smootha, Sammy. (2001). THE MODEL OF ETHNIC DEMOCRACY. [ECMI](#), 13.

13. Ben Porat, Guy; & Ghanem, As'ad. (2017, September 24). Introduction: securitization and shrinking of Citizenship. [Citizenship Studies](#), 21 (8). Pp. 861– 871.

14. Ben Porat, Guy; & Yuval, Fany. (2011, November 28). Minorities in democracy and policing policy: from alienation to cooperation. [Policing and Society](#), 22 (2). Pp. 235- 252.

15. Ben Porat, Guy. (2021). To Be Served and Protected: Israeli Arab Citizens and the Police. [Brown Journal of World Affairs](#), xxvii (ii).

as oppressive.¹⁶ Practices entailing political repression, police violence, and institutional neglect, serve as proof of differentiation between citizenship and equality. In such an environment, police are tasked with "patrolling the boundaries of citizenship",¹⁷ separating "law-abiding" citizens from those regarded as dangerous. Hence, through interactions with the police, minorities may come to view themselves as second-class citizens.¹⁸

This process occurs through the securitization of citizenship, whereby minorities are framed as a threat to "national identity, state sovereignty and social stability".¹⁹ Such concerns are used to justify surveillance and police brutality targeting national minorities within the state. It is therefore unsurprising that minority populations report lower levels of trust in the police than majority populations.²⁰ This dynamic is particularly pronounced among '48 Palestinians, who constitute a national, ethnic, and religious minority, which deepens their sense of alienation from the state even relative to other minority groups. As a result, they experience the effects of state securitization more intensively and report more negative perceptions of the police.²¹ Furthermore, survey data show that '48 Palestinians' trust in the police is not only low but also declining, standing at just 7.4% in 2019.²² Trust is even lower in relation to police dealings with violence and other crime, with the highest evaluation given to dealings with traffic police.²³

The securitization process is manifested in two distinct phenomena: over- and under-policing.²⁴ "Over-policing" refers to "the targeting of particular individuals for stops, searches, arrests and the use of violence against them", while "under-policing" occurs when "the neglect of minority neighborhoods by law enforcement renders them vulnerable to crime and disorder".²⁵ Significantly, "over and under policing are not mutually exclusive: minorities often suffer from both",²⁶ and the Palestinian Arab community in Israel suffers from both forms of policing.²⁷ An example of over-policing appears in a report published

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Mentovich, Avital; et al. (2020). Policing alienated minorities in divided cities. [Regulation & Governance](#), 14. Pp. 531- 550.

22. Ali Nuhad; et al. (2020, June). Violence, crime and policing in the Arab community– communal and personal safety metric 2019. [Samuel Neaman Institute](#). [In Hebrew]

23. Ibid.

24. Ben Porat, Guy. Reference No. 15.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. For more, see: Zoubi, Himmat. (2020). Palestinians in Israel: Between a fragile citizenship and the threat of organized crime. [Madar](#). [In Arabic]

by the Mossawa Center, which states that the Israeli police killed 55 Palestinian Arab citizens in the two decades between the October 2000 protests and October 2020.²⁸

While other minorities in Israel also experience disproportionate police violence, the overwhelming majority of victims are Palestinian Arabs. Between 2014 and 2019, for instance, the police killed 14 individuals: nine Arabs, four Mizrahi Jews, and one Ethiopian Jew.²⁹ In none of these cases were charges filed against police officers. In two cases no investigation was initiated, in ten cases investigations were closed, and only two remain ongoing.³⁰ Notably, none of the killings by police in 2000 resulted in a conviction.

The main focus of this paper is under-policing. It is important to note that the Israeli police operate under a single central command, unlike policing systems in many other countries, where local or regional authorities exert more control.³¹ Multiple indicators reveal the neglect of the '48 Palestinian community and its abandonment in its struggle against rising crime and violence. The phenomenon of under-policing and neglect is closely linked to geographic segregation, as reflected in the fact that "95 percent of Jews and Arabs in Israel live in segregated towns and villages and rarely come into contact on a daily basis".³² This physical separation facilitates police neglect of Palestinian towns and villages.

Direct comparisons between the Jewish majority and Palestinian minority in Israel indicate the scope of police neglect more clearly. In 2022, for example, the murder rate among the Palestinian minority was 6.61 per 100,000 people, compared to 0.46 per 100,000 among the Jewish Israeli majority, i.e., over 14 times higher. Between January 1 and December 1, 2025, 243 Palestinians were killed. These figures support accusations of under-policing among citizens who are supposed to be equal and subject to the same system of law enforcement.

Policy failure

The field of policy failure has analyzed many factors as causes of failure, from the degree of bureaucratic capacity and political incentives in the policy problem,³³ to the

28. Mossawa Center. (2020, September 27). The uprising of Al Quds and the Al Aqsa– Suppressing protests of the 2000 October Uprising. [Mossawa Center](#). [In Arabic]

29. Zev, Oren. (2019, January 23). In five years: 14 citizens were killed by police fire, zero indictments. [Seha Mekomit](#). [In Hebrew]

30. Ibid.

31. Mentovich, Avital; et al. Reference No. 21.

32. Ibid.

33. Park, Sanghee. (2021). Politics or Bureaucratic Failures? Understanding the Dynamics of Policy Failures in Democratic Governance. [Korean Journal of Policy Studies](#), 36 (3). Pp. 25- 36.

complexity of public policy, which is hard to control and predict.³⁴ Allan McConnell cites different attempts to understand failure. Among these are structural frameworks (e.g., bottom-up or top-down models), gaps in implementation, and flawed policy proposals.³⁵ He defines policy failure as follows: a policy fails, even if it is successful in some minimal respects, if it does not fundamentally achieve the goals that its proponents set out to achieve, and if opposition is strong and/ or support is virtually non-existent.³⁶

Many policy failure frameworks include a political element in the analysis, whether in the form of political incentives (as mentioned above) or political evaluations of policy, which may be based on lived experiences, narratives, and framings.³⁷ McConnell emphasizes this element in his framework, which is also incorporated into this paper.³⁸ In his expanded model, he builds on Walsh's inclusion of politics in studies of policy failure.³⁹ However, the existing literature discusses policy failure primarily from the viewpoint of democratic governments. Political explanations for a stated policy are often reduced to questions of electoral gains and losses.⁴⁰ Even when the suggestion is made that policies are designed to limit the rights of particular groups, they are still often dealt with as merely bureaucratic matters, with little attention paid to the institutional ideology that may underlie them.⁴¹ This represents a shortcoming in much of this literature, which focuses largely on Western policy making and is not sufficiently adapted to cases in which standard models of democratic governance fall short.

Trevor Bell discussed this issue when describing his attempts to advocate policy change in apartheid South Africa. He sought to demonstrate, in objective terms, that racial separation harmed the South African government's own stated goals.⁴² Bell later stated that this approach was naive, admitting that he had "underestimated how irrational such policies are". His account highlights how tools of Western governance and policy analysis are of limited use when applied to systems that operate within a settler-colonial project, or apartheid, for example. This paper therefore incorporates elements of McConnell's policy framework, highlighting the 'political' dimension to make settler colonialism, securitization, state control, and institutional goals part of policy evaluation.

34. Mueller, Bernardo. (2020). Why public policies fail: Policymaking under complexity. [EconomiA](#), 21. Pp. 311- 323.

35. McConnell, Allan. (2015). What is policy failure? A primer to help navigate the maze. [Public Policy and Administration](#), 30 (3- 4). Pp. 221- 242.

36. Ibid.

37. Bovens, Mark; & 't Hart, Paul. (2016). Revisiting the study of policy failures. [Journal of European Public Policy](#), 23 (5). Pp. 653– 666.

38. McConnell, Allan. Reference No. 6.

39. Smooha, Sammy. Reference No. 12.

40. Ben Porat, Guy. Reference No. 15.

41. McConnell, Allan. Reference No. 35.

42. Bell, Trevor. (2005). Academics and the Policy-making Process under Apartheid and in Contemporary South Africa. [African Sociological Review](#), 9 (1). Pp. 83- 88.

McConnell's framework: Evaluating policy failure and success

This study adopts the framework proposed by McConnell in 2010, which provides an innovative, multi-dimensional approach to evaluating public policy. Instead of judging policy as either a success or a failure, it is assessed more holistically.⁴³ While policy advocates typically describe a policy as successful, and opponents present it as a failure, McConnell claims that the reality is more often somewhere in between. His framework therefore uses a spectrum ranging from resilient success to failure in place of the simple binary of success or failure, while specifying three main realms within any policy — namely, process, program, and politics— in which a policy may be deemed to succeed or fail. Within each realm, success/ failure can further be assigned along a spectrum of "success, resilient success, conflicted success, precarious success and failure".⁴⁴

This is precisely why this paper employs this framework to evaluate the policy. It recognizes that a policy may fail in one aspect but succeed in another, and offers the researcher flexibility through a spectrum of success and failure. By placing each aspect of a policy along this spectrum, the assessment of the whole provides a more complete picture for understanding and evaluating the policy.

The paper follows the approach laid out by McConnell by applying a spectrum to each policy aspect— process, program, and politics.⁴⁵ Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methods, as detailed below, it evaluates the success and failure of the Israeli government's policy to tackle crime and violence within Palestinian Arab society in Israel by establishing police stations in Arab towns and villages and increasing police presence.

The analysis begins with the aspect of process. McConnell defines process as entailing "deliberative engagement, policy design, resolving controversies, solving problems, and the policy cycle".⁴⁶ For governments, this entails identifying problems, considering policy alternatives, conducting consultations (or not doing so), and making decisions.⁴⁷ Process additionally involves the government selecting whom to consult, and assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the various available policy choices prior to finalizing its decision. Since these actions are performed by governments, the aspect of process itself can be evaluated along the spectrum of success or failure.⁴⁸

43. McConnell, Allan. Reference No. 6.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

Second is the aspect of program, defined as "what governments do".⁴⁹ This refers to the actual implementation and manifestation of the intentions and declarations made for a policy. It encompasses the sum of "resources and tools of governments", including "laws, public personnel, public expenditure, tax incentives and exhortations".⁵⁰

As the third and final aspect, politics is essential to a holistic understanding of policy, as a key element in the multidimensional policy assessment of the framework.⁵¹

"We need to recognise that programs have political repercussions".⁵² McConnell lists several dimensions that must be explored to assess political success or failure. These include governmental choices, the timing of decisions, and, importantly, the role of symbolism, whether it appears through action or inaction. All these factors affect politicians' electoral prospects and their ability to define the political agenda. McConnell also highlights the significance of policies that are tailored toward winning votes.⁵³

It is important to note, however, that the political actions of states and politicians are motivated by more than purely electoral considerations. For example, ideology and institutional biases may also contribute to policy decisions. For the analytical framework to be more comprehensive, this paper will therefore trace the political impact of the policy at the national level. This is another advantage of the framework— its flexibility in allowing for the inclusion of unique factors pertaining to a specific policy, while maintaining McConnell's overall structure.

The relationship between '48 Palestinians and Israel's state security apparatus

The relationship between the '48 Palestinian community and the state's various security apparatus has shifted over the years, at times escalating into conflict, including during the establishment of the state in 1948 and the Nakba, the period of military rule from 1948 to 1966,⁵⁴ the massacre at Kufr Qassim in 1956,⁵⁵ Land Day in 1976, the First Intifada in 1987– 1993,⁵⁶ and the Second Intifada in 2000– 2005.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Bomel, Yaaer. (2015). "The military rule". In: Rohana, Nadim; & Khoury-Sabbagh, Areej (Eds.). **Palestinians in Israel**. Haifa: [Mada Al-Carmel](#). Pp. 59- 70. [in Arabic]

55. Manaa, Adel. (2015). "The Kufar Qasim Massacre". In: Rohana, Nadim; & Khoury-Sabbagh, Areej (Eds.). **Palestinians in Israel**. Haifa: [Mada Al-Carmel](#). Pp. 87- 94. [in Arabic]

56. Bsheer, Nabeeh. (2016). **Land Day**. Haifa: Mada Al Carmel. Pp. 66- 86 [In Arabic]; Nakhleh, Khalil. (2015). "Land day". In: Rohana, Nadim; & Khoury-Sabbagh, Areej (Eds.). **Palestinians in Israel**. Haifa: [Mada Al-Carmel](#). Pp. 95-102. [In Arabic]; Mohammed, Gibreel; & Nazzal, Wassef. (1990). **Palestinians of 48, continuous struggle (1948- 1988)**. Jerusalem: Al-Zahraa Center. Pp. 177- 188 [In Arabic]

Here, the focus falls on the period from 2000 until December 2025, beginning with the outbreak of the Second Intifada and the killing of 13 Palestinian citizens of Israel by the Israeli police in October 2000.⁵⁷ After the Second Intifada, the Or Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate the events, and in its report of 2003 it made a number of damning findings, including that the Israeli security apparatus treated Palestinian citizens of Israel as enemies of the state, and recommended that their actions be subject to investigation.⁵⁸ In 2005, the Department of Internal Police Investigations (Mahash) submitted its own report in which it recommended that no charges be brought against officers in relation to the 13 deaths. In spite of mounting criticism of this decision, the Attorney General decided in 2008 to close all investigations into the killings.⁵⁹

In May 2021, clashes once again broke out between the police and '48 Palestinians, this time sparked by the state's eviction of Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. In response to the ensuing protests in Palestinian towns inside Israel, the police's heavy-handed response included the use of rubber bullets, the imposition of curfews, the closure of many Palestinian towns with barricades, the deployment of Border Police patrols, and a massive arrest campaign involving over 1,500 individuals.⁶⁰

The hostile treatment of Palestinian citizens as enemies, identified years earlier by the Or Commission, has therefore not ended. As Mentovich et al. argue, "Arab citizens are seen not only as a non-Jewish minority but also as 'the enemy within'".⁶¹ In recent years, a growing body of reports has been published describing Israel as an apartheid state.⁶² Their findings point to a system widely identified by observers as institutionally structured to discriminate against the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The securitization of the Arab minority is therefore happening within the context of apartheid.

57. In September 2000, Ariel Sharon, then Leader of Opposition in the Knesset, visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound accompanied by Israeli security forces. The visit triggered protests in the West Bank, Gaza, and inside Israel by '48 Palestinians, marking the start of the Second Intifada. In October 2000, 13 Palestinian citizens of Israel were killed by Israeli police during protests. After enormous public pressure, the Or Commission was established in late 2000 to investigate the events of October 2000. Adalah. (September 30, 2020). *The October 2000 Killings (October Uprising)*. [Adalah](#). For more, see: Abu-Ras, Thabet. (2015). "The October Uprising". In: Rohana, Nadim; & Khoury-Sabbagh, Areej (Eds.). *Palestinians in Israel*. Haifa: [Mada Al-Carmel](#). Pp. 167- 180. [in Arabic]

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Shalhat, Anton. (2021). The Uprising of 48 Palestinians: Dual Goal. [Journal of Palestinian Studies](#), 127. Pp. 89- 96.

61. Mentovich, Avital; et al. Reference No. 21.

62. OHCHR. (2022, March 25). Israel's 55-year occupation of Palestinian Territory is apartheid– UN human rights expert. [OHCHR](#); Amnesty International. (2022, February 1). ISRAEL'S APARTHEID AGAINST PALESTINIANS. [Amnesty](#); HRW. (2021, April 27). A Threshold Crossed- Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution. [HRW](#).

Israeli governmental decisions to establish new police stations in Palestinian towns and villages

Having outlined some of the historical relationship between '48 Palestinians and the state, this paper now turns to the state's response to soaring crime rates within the Palestinian community in Israel. This response includes a multitude of governmental decisions, among them decisions establishing new police stations in Palestinian towns and villages, the main focus of this study; it does not focus on other decisions aimed at narrowing economic gaps, for example.

Immediately after the events of October 2000 —on 22 October, to be exact— the government led by the Labor Party's Ehud Barak approved Government Decision No. 2467, a multi-year plan to address inequalities between the Jewish and the Palestinian Arab communities in the country. The plan included the allocation of state funding to increase police presence in Arab towns and the building of new police stations.⁶³

The trend continued under the Likud government of Ariel Sharon, which approved Government Decision No. 2026 in 2004. Through this decision, the government ratified the police's response to the recommendations made by the Or Commission of Inquiry, first by completing the construction of a new police station in Umm al-Fahm, a Palestinian Arab city in the Triangle area of Israel, and second by hiring additional police officers and increasing the number of police volunteers.⁶⁴

It was not until 2015 that a further governmental decision again placed emphasis on increasing police presence. Government Decision No. 922, adopted by the Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu, provided for the development of a plan to expand police presence and strengthen law enforcement in "minority towns". This included establishing additional police stations, increasing the number of police officers, and rolling out the crime prevention program run by the Ministry of Public Security to more towns.⁶⁵ It is important to note that Decision No. 922, unlike earlier decisions, was a five-year plan aimed primarily at the economic development of "minority populations", and included a section on policing.

Decision No. 922 (2015) was followed in 2016 by Government Decision No. 1402. Titled "Increasing Personal Security in the Arab Population and Security in Jerusalem", this decision allocated funds for "constructing new police stations, reinforcing existing police stations, strengthening operational capabilities, and expanding police support

63. Prime Minister's Office. (2000, October 22). Multi-year plan to develop the towns of the Arab sector. [Prime minister's office](#). [In Hebrew]

64. Government Secretariat. (2004, June 13). The dispersing of Israel's police in the Arab sector and providing services to this sector following the "Or commission" report. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

65. Government Secretariat. (2015, December 30). The government's activities towards the economic development of minority populations in the years 2016- 2020. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

capabilities by recruiting 2,600 new police officers".⁶⁶ It also required the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense, and the Treasury to develop a three-year plan for the years 2017–2020.

In 2021, following a steady increase in crime in the Palestinian community, the Netanyahu government adopted Government Decision No. 852. This decision contained numerous components, some of which were based on recommendations made in the special report of the directors-general of the ministries issued in July 2020.⁶⁷ It built on earlier decisions, including the aforementioned Decision No. 1402, and maintained the same focus on crime within Palestinian society in Israel. A section in this decision allocated additional funding to complete the construction of several police and fire stations in Arab towns, as well as to support the expansion of existing stations.⁶⁸

New elections were held in March 2021, and the new Bennett-Lapid government came to power in June. This came immediately after the events of May 2021 and, for the first time in Israeli history, an Arab party was included in a governing coalition.⁶⁹ The new government adopted several decisions concerning '48 Palestinians, including Government Decision No. 292, a five-year economic plan,⁷⁰ and Decision No. 550, a plan to reduce economic gaps between the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority in Israel.⁷¹ The main decision dealing with crime in the Palestinian community, however, was Government Decision No. 549.

The stated goals of Government Decision No. 549 are: dismantling criminal organizations operating in Arab society by targeting their economic resources; increasing the sense of safety among Arab citizens; significantly reducing the number of illegal weapons within the Arab community; increasing the Arab community's trust in law enforcement; improving cooperation with heads of Arab local authorities; and, finally, empowering the Arab community to combat crime locally.⁷² The decision also authorizes the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Public Security (now the Ministry of National Security) to

66. Government Secretariat. (2016, April 10). Increasing Personal Security in the Arab Population and Security in Jerusalem. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

67. Government Secretariat. (2021, March 1). Governmental policy to deal with widespread crime and violence in the Arab community and the strengthening of the Arab community in Israel and modifying government's decisions. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

68. Ibid.

69. Smooha, Sammy. (2021, August 9). The causes and ramifications of involving an Arab party in a coalition: Is it a revolutionary and sustainable change?. [INSS](#). [In Hebrew]

70. Government Secretariat. (2021, August 1). Five-year plan for the Arab sector. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew].

71. Government Secretariat. (2021, October 24). Economic plan to reduce gaps in the Arab community until the year 2026. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

72. Government Secretariat. (2021, October 24). Program to deal with the phenomena of crime and violence in the Arab community 2022- 2026. [Prime Minister's Office](#). [In Hebrew]

launch a six-month emergency operation to tackle crime within the Arab community.⁷³

In the subsections of the plan, there is again an emphasis on reinforcing existing police stations in Arab towns, as well as provisions for the construction of a new station in the southern Naqab (Negev) region, and measures aimed at combating crime in Bedouin communities. The plan also introduces a "secure city" model in mixed cities, which integrates technological capabilities and enables municipalities to conduct their own law enforcement, and provides for the installation of CCTV cameras in designated localities.⁷⁴

Embedded in the decision is a section titled "reducing the main phenomena of crime and lawlessness", which states that police forces will be reinforced by Border Police units to "combat serious crime and public disturbances". In the following section, it additionally states that two extra reservist Border Police platoons will be allocated for use in cases of severe escalation and in preparation for public disturbances.⁷⁵ A final notable section addresses at-risk youth, identifying policing as a recommended source of employment.⁷⁶

Methodology

This research combines quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the various elements presented in McConnell's framework. Quantitatively, since it is not a straightforward task to measure the impact of a police station, the study narrows its focus to murders. As noted earlier, not all acts of violence and crime are reported to the police, whereas murder is the most extreme form of violence and therefore more likely to be recorded in police statistics. In addition, according to a report published by the Baladna youth organization, data on murders is relatively complete, stable, and accurate.⁷⁷ To minimize reporting bias, the analysis is therefore limited to murder rates. The data are taken from two main sources: public institutions and non-governmental organizations. The paper uses information published in Knesset and governmental reports, as well as data obtained through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the police. It also relies on datasets from Aman Center– The Arab Center for Safe Society and the Abraham Initiatives, as well as reports from Baladna.⁷⁸

73. Ibid, known as the "Segalovitz campaign" and discussed in subsequent parts of this paper.

74. Government Secretariat. Reference No. 72

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Baldana. (2020, June 1). Nine years of blood– Statistical report on murders at 48 Palestinians. [Baladna](#). [In Arabic]

78. Some organizations include Arab residents of East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan Heights in their counts, while others do not. Both territories were captured and annexed following the Six-Day War in 1967 and are considered occupied territories by the international community (UNSC. (2016). Resolution 2334 (2016). [UNSC](#); IMEU. (2005, December 21). What Are the Occupied Territories?. [IMEU](#).). In addition, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem and the Syrian residents of the Golan Heights do not hold Israeli citizenship for different legal and political reasons. For these reasons, this paper does not include victims from these two territories, even though they are under Israeli police jurisdiction. This exclusion does not appear to have a significant effect on the overall results.

Qualitatively, the author for purposes of the study conducted 17 semi-structured interviews with relevant actors and stakeholders, including Palestinian Members of the Knesset (MKs), mayors, civil society experts, and academics. Most interview participants were '48 Palestinians, alongside a smaller number of Jewish Israelis.⁷⁹ Interviews were conducted in person where possible, or remotely via Zoom. The purpose of the interviews was to draw on stakeholders' knowledge of the subject, and to survey their views on the specific policy.

Results

The following section includes graphs that aim to achieve three main objectives. Firstly, it presents a comprehensive view of the scale of the crime crisis affecting '48 Palestinians. Secondly, it enables comparisons with both Jewish Israeli society and other countries in order to quantify and contextualize the issue. Thirdly, the graphs present data on Palestinian towns in which police stations have been newly opened in recent years, in order to analyze the impact on local murder rates.

Here lies the challenge of measuring the effect of these police stations. A recent study found that the closure of local police stations, while maintaining the same number of officers and patrol routes, contributes to a rise in incidents of burglary and car theft in residential areas.⁸⁰ However, the study focuses on a specific category of theft and does not deal with deterrence as it relates to violent crime. Another recent study found that crime increases with distance from a police station, peaking at around 500–600 meters.⁸¹ This study was conducted in a large city with multiple police stations, where crime reaches its maximum level in a zone between two police stations. In addition, the paper relies on the premise that police stations "increase the probability of apprehension",⁸² following Nagin's argument that this is the "most effective deterrent".⁸³

This study measures murder rates per 100,000 people in towns with newly established police stations. It then compares these figures to the community-wide shifts in order to determine whether these police stations have had any local effects. While police stations are also expected to have an effect on neighboring towns, the study focuses exclusively on their effect on the towns in which they are located. Subsequent graphs examine changes in crime rates in relation to the total number of police stations. Finally, the study investigates clearance rates relative to the number of newly established police stations, as a crucial element of deterrence.

79. These include Professor Ben-Porat, an expert on minority policing quoted in this paper, and Rooi, responsible for tracking murders in the Palestinian community for NGO the Abraham Initiatives.

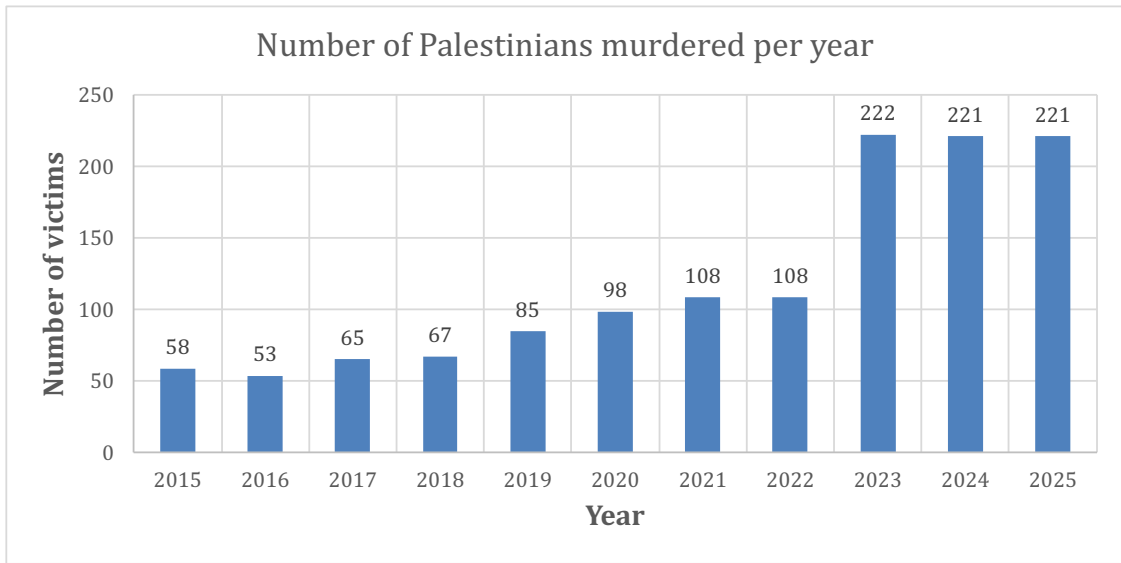
80. Blesse, Sebastian; & Diegmann, André. (2022, February 8). The place-based effects of police stations on crime: Evidence from station closures. [Journal of Public Economics](#), 207.

81. Fondevila, Gustavo; et al. (2021). Crime deterrent effect of police stations. [Applied Geography](#), 134.

82. Ibid.

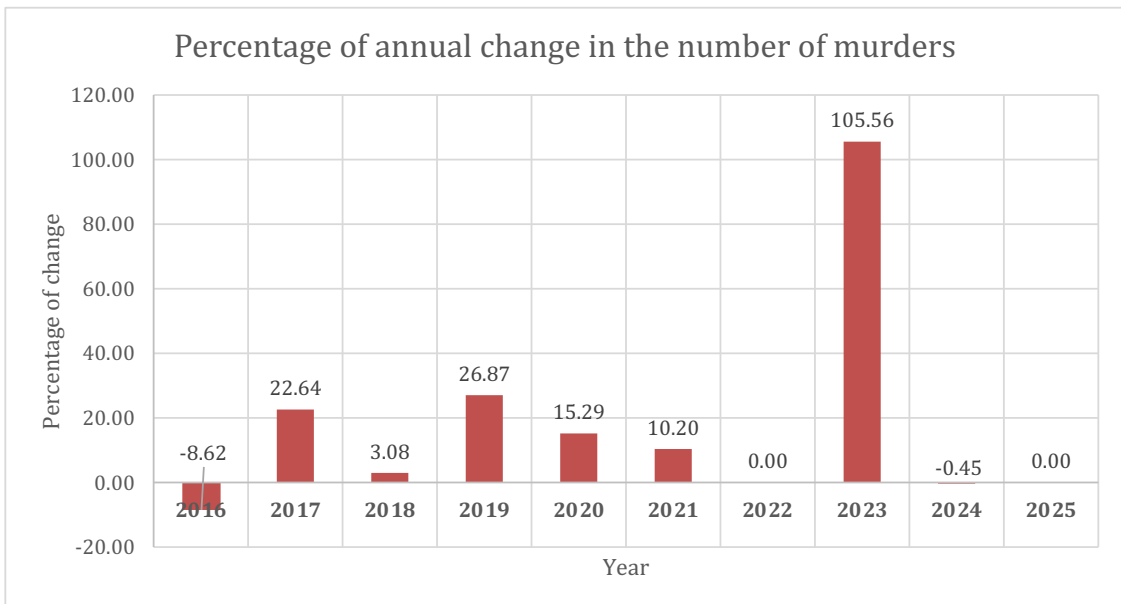
83. Nagin, Daniel S.. (2013). Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century. [Crime and Justice](#), 42. Pp.199–263.

Graph 1: Number of victims murdered in the Palestinian Arab community in Israel over the past decade⁸⁴



Since 2023, it has become the norm for the number of murder victims among Palestinians in Israel to exceed 220 people per year.⁸⁵ A new record was reached in 2023, with over 220 deaths recorded for the first time, more than doubling the figure for the previous year.

Graph 2: Annual change in the number of murder victims⁸⁶

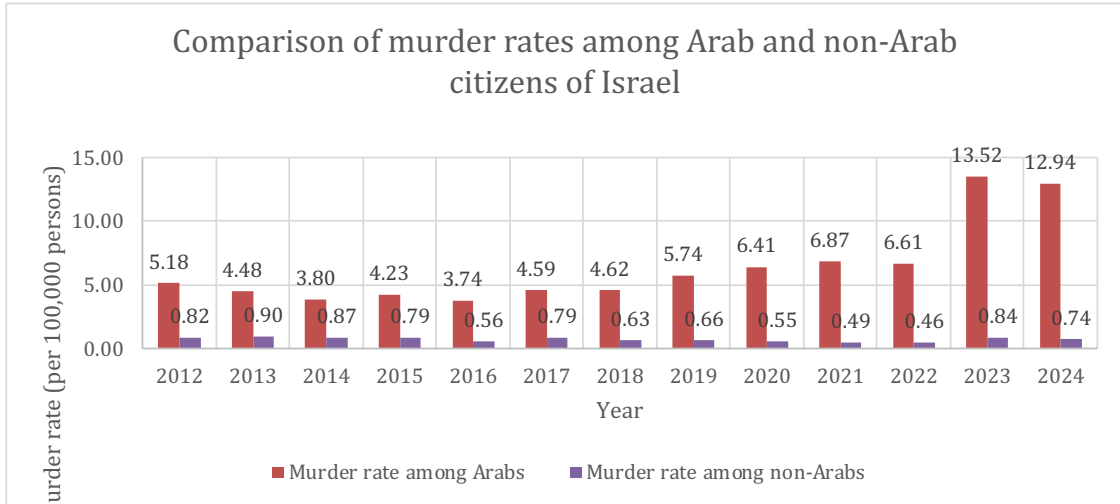


84. Baladna. Reference No. 2, and the author's own data collection. The figure for the year 2025 is accurate as of December 1.

85. It is important to clarify again that these figures exclude Palestinians in East Jerusalem, Syrians living in the Golan Heights, and Palestinians killed directly by Israeli police. In 2025, 12 Palestinian citizens of Israel were killed by Israeli police.

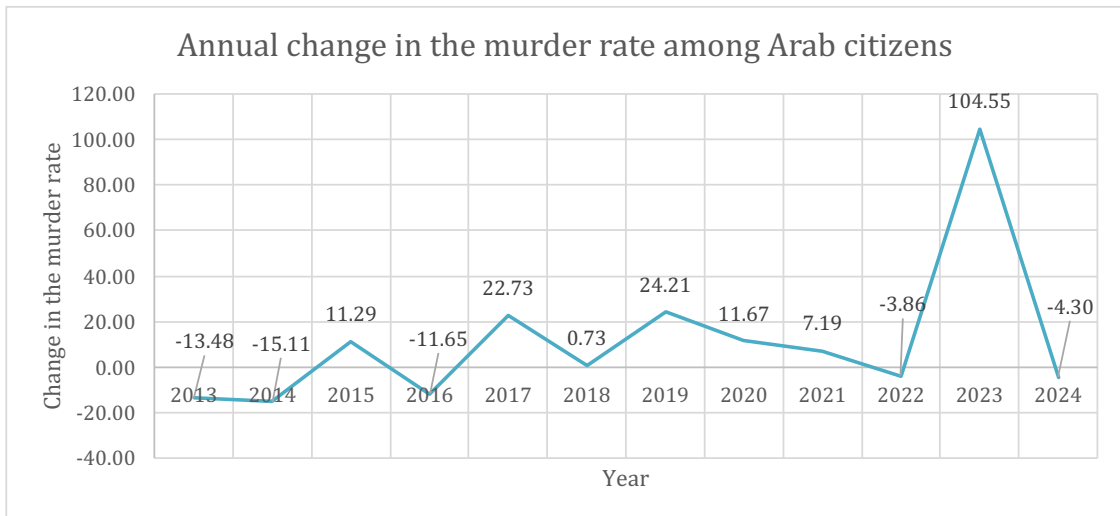
86. Calculated by subtracting the number of people killed in the previous year from the number of people killed in the subsequent year, dividing the result by the number of people killed in the earlier year, and then multiplying by 100.

Graph 3: Murder rate (per 100,000 persons) among Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel over the past decade compared to the murder rate among non-Arab citizens⁸⁷



The gap between murder rates is large, but widens markedly after 2023, when the murder rate for Arab citizens of Israel rises to **over 17 times** that of non-Arabs citizens of Israel.

Graph 4: Changes in the annual murder rate among Arab citizens



87. The population data were taken from the official website of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). As noted above, this excludes East Jerusalem and the occupied Golan Heights. Their population numbers were therefore subtracted before calculating the rate, obtained by dividing the number of those killed by the total Palestinian Arab population. The results are presented per 100,000 people, as this is the standard rate used by international organizations for comparative purposes. Sources: The Israeli Institute for Democracy. [n. d]. The yearly census of the Arab society in Israel. [IDI](#). [In Hebrew]; Central Bureau of Statistics. (2024, December 31). Population of Israel on the Eve of 2025. [CBS](#). [In Hebrew]; The Center for Research and Information. (2024, December 26). Data on the Arab population in East Jerusalem. [Knesset](#). [In Hebrew]

Here, again, the peak of 2023 is clear, as is the continuous and almost uninterrupted upward trend in the murder rate since 2017, which underlines the gravity of the situation.

Table 1: A comparison of murder rates before and after the opening of new police stations in towns with newly constructed police stations, compared with the national average⁸⁸

Town	Year of construction of police station	Average murder rate before opening of the police station (per 100,000 (persons	Average murder rate after opening of the police station (per 100,000 (persons	Average murder rate among '48 Palestinians before (per 100,000 (persons	Average murder rate among '48 Palestinians after (per 100,000 (persons	Change in murder rate change (town/ '48 Palestinian community as a (whole	
Majd al-Krum	2017	4.59	4.14	4.34	8.10	-9.8%	86.83%
Baqa al-Gharbiyye	2017	0.62	8.47	4.34	8.10	1266%	86.83%
Tamra	2017	2.56	4.14	4.34	8.10	67.71%	86.83%
Kufr Kanna	2017	1.60	7.70	4.34	8.10	381.2%	86.83%
Kufr Qassim	2018	9.73	14.31	4.25	8.68	47.04%	104.2%
Al-Tira	2020	11.63	20.57	4.76	9.99	76.87%	109.9%
Kufr Yassif	2020	1.72	13.02	4.76	9.99	657%	109.9%
Jisr az-Zarqa	2021	11.73	31.9	4.74	10.81	172%	128.1%
Shaqib al-Salam	2022	8.5	13.766	5.00	11.79	61.88%	135.8%

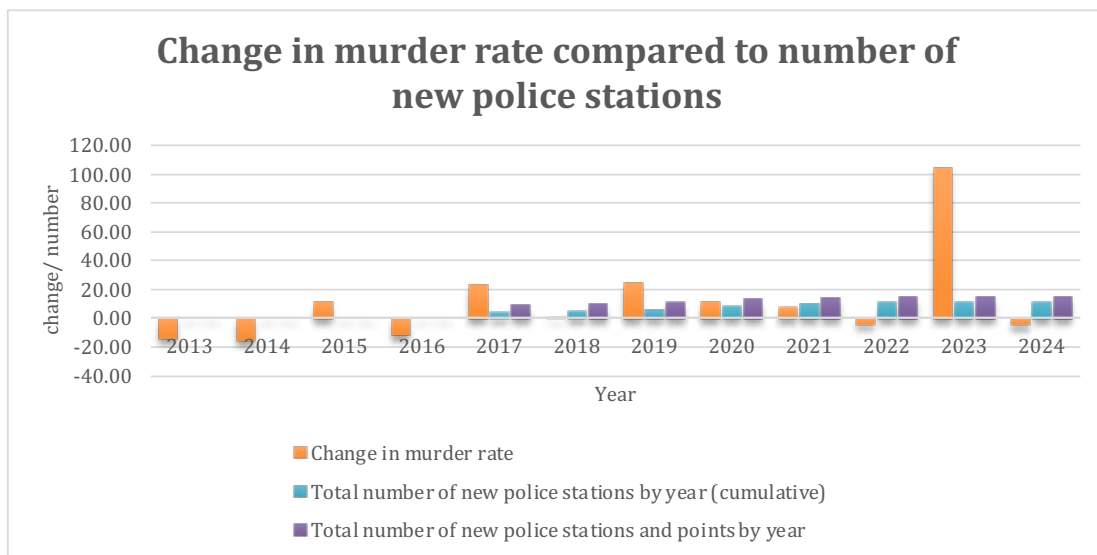
According to police data acquired by the author through a FOIA request, 11 new police

88. Now we turn to an analysis of several towns in which new police stations were established. Specific towns in which new stations were established were selected, while acknowledging from the outset that multiple factors affect crime rates. Almost all Arab localities are ranked among the lowest socio-economic strata (levels 1- 4 of 10), allowing for the assumption that similar socio-economic conditions pertain in these towns. In addition, crime rates within towns were examined over time with the figures adjusted to population size. Finally, the changing rates were compared to those in the wider '48 Palestinian community. This approach follows Soha Arraf's argument from 2020 that police stations do not reduce crime, and in some cases may be associated with reported increases in crime (Arraf, Suha. (2020, January 21). Investigation: police stations in Arab towns do not reduce murder cases. [Siha Mekomit](#). [In Hebrew]). The paper seeks to corroborate and extend these findings, where possible. Researchers at Baladna and the Aman Center kindly provided data for the murders in these villages; the author carried out data analysis. Data for populations were collected from governmental sources, primarily: The National Insurance Institute. (2026). Statistic by town. [NI](#). [In Hebrew]; The Central Bureau of Statistics. (2026). Geographic division generator. [CBS](#). [In Hebrew]

stations have been constructed in Arab localities in Israel since 2017, including those mentioned in this table.

Notably, only one town (Majd al-Krum) recorded a reduction in the murder rate, while all the others recorded increases. The towns marked in red indicate that the increase in the murder rate at the level of the town was higher than the average for the whole Arab community in Israel; the towns marked in green indicate that it was lower. The table shows above average increases in four towns and below average increases in five. The average increase in the towns above is 302.2%, 2.9 times higher than the average increase for the entire Arab community in Israel, at 103.9%.

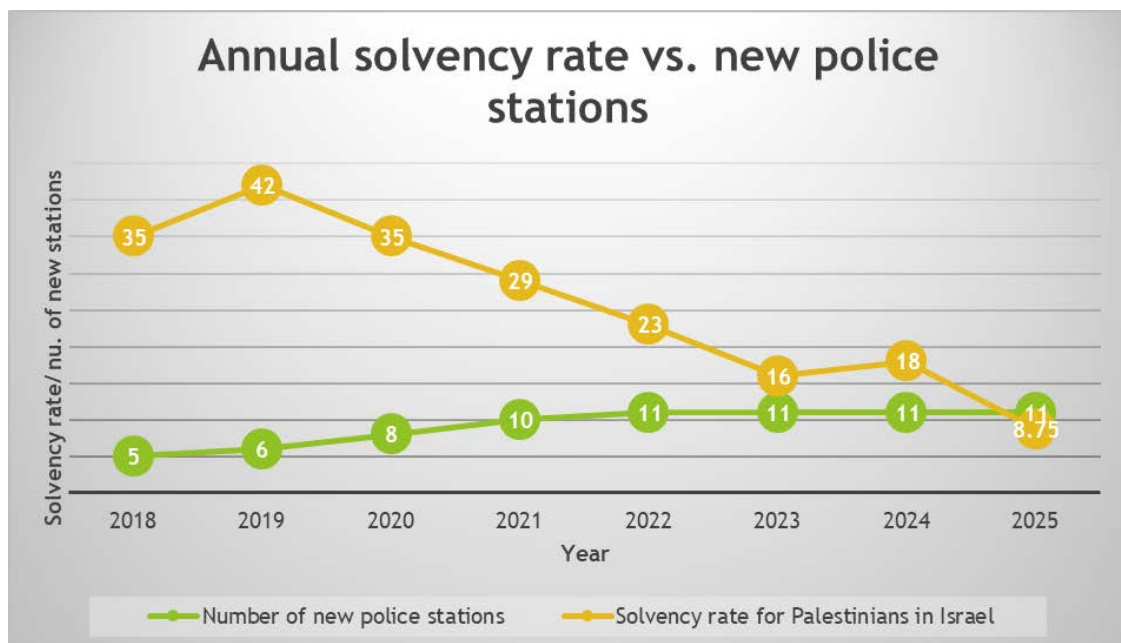
Graph 5: Change in murder rate among Arab citizens compared to the number of new police stations and police points⁸⁹ constructed, by year



This graph illustrates changes in the murder rate alongside the number of new police stations (including smaller police points) constructed. It shows no clear correlation between the establishment of new police stations and changes in the murder rate. In 2023, the year that saw the highest number of police stations established in the past decade, there was a sharp increase in the murder rate.

89. Police points are rooms dedicated to police officers for use when working in the specific town. It is important to note that they are not manned at all times, but they do provide some level of police presence, even if only for short periods of time.

Graph 6: Annual clearance rate of murders by year,⁹⁰ alongside the number of new police stations established⁹¹



This graph makes clear that the establishment of new police stations has not improved the murder clearance rate in the '48 Palestinian community; indeed, the trend is in the opposite direction.

Qualitative results

This summary presents the range of positions and viewpoints on the main focus of this paper: the policy of opening police stations as a means of reducing crime in Arab towns and villages in Israel. Stakeholders' opinions on the political purpose of this policy and the official recommendations are discussed separately in the analysis section.

All participants interviewed during the course of the study agreed that the state bears responsibility for tackling the problem of crime within '48 Palestinian society, though they differed over what share of that responsibility falls on the state, including the police, and what share falls on society itself. The head of one Arab municipality argued that the police bear the main responsibility: "The role of the police is far greater, including in collecting unlicensed guns in the Arab community. That is not the job of the municipality or ... peace committees [community-based mediation groups that resolve local disputes]

90. Knesset Center for Research and Information. (2023, February 6). A collection of data on crime in Israel. [Knesset](#). [In Hebrew]

91. Knesset Center for Research and Information. (2025, May 11). Data analysis on murder cases in Israel from 2021 to March 10 2025. [Knesset](#). [In Hebrew]. Journalists' reports offer sources for 2025 and reveal even lower numbers for previous years than those reported by the Knesset: Shaalan, Hasan. (2025, September 6). The mother did not recognize her son who's engaged and shot from zero distance: "They abused him." [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

... There is a failure in the collection of weapons... everything related to combatting crime and criminality is primarily the responsibility of the police".⁹²

With regard to the issue of opening new police stations, four main positions were voiced. The first camp is in favor of opening police stations as a means of reducing crime. A second camp opposes the policy entirely. A third camp is personally opposed but cooperates with and accepts the establishment of new stations for strategic reasons. A fourth camp is ambivalent toward the policy.

In the first camp are several NGOs that consider establishing new police stations as an important step in increasing police presence and combating crime. The camp also includes the head of an Arab political party, who shares this view. In the second camp are numerous NGOs, experts, and some mayors. As one interviewee stated, "police and prison are not the answer in many of the cases... I don't think it's about the number of police officers or the appearance of police station buildings".⁹³ Members of this camp warn that new police stations may not contribute to safety but instead pose risks to individual rights. Such risks, they argue, include the ill-treatment of detainees held for political reasons: "Even inside this police station, as we know from testimonies, people were beaten and effectively tortured during and after interrogations".⁹⁴ They also point to budget cuts made to supportive social programs in order to fund new stations, which they claim are not serving their function in reducing crime. They therefore see them as physical reminders of state oppression that do not serve a useful purpose and could justifiably be closed.

In the third camp are some MKs, other national leaders, and mayors. While they recognize the complexity of the issue, they view the establishment of new police stations as a trap: if they oppose a new station, they invite blame for not being serious about combating crime, but if they approve, this enables the greater securitization of their community. Members of this camp argue that once new stations are established, the state can no longer shift blame onto the community and must take responsibility for its failure to protect its citizens. As one municipal head put it: "It was not our position to open police stations— it was the state's ... We, as Arab society, as an Arab community, followed a policy of 'removing any excuses'".⁹⁵

In the last camp are mayors who claim that they will do whatever is needed to combat crime, and that what matters to them is not the presence of a police station but reducing crime. As one mayor stated, "If the police perform their duties, I am the happiest of people... To me it doesn't matter where the police are... With all due respect, what is the added value of having police here if they don't tackle crime?".⁹⁶

92. Interview conducted with the head of the municipality of Kufr Qassim.

93. Interview conducted with a representative of Adalah (a Palestinian legal center in Israel).

94. Ibid.

95. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Kufr Yassif.

96. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Umm-Al Fahm.

When discussing the causes of crime, a range of possible factors were raised, beyond policing, including the role played by the Israeli intelligence services (the Shin Bet),⁹⁷ socio-economic factors, at-risk youth,⁹⁸ the loss of traditional familial and tribal social structures,⁹⁹ and the resulting vacuum that modern civic institutions have not filled, as well as the erosion of older value systems.

When asked about the causes of crime, the "Segalovitz campaign"¹⁰⁰ was widely discussed. Many claimed that this initiative was responsible for the halt in the rising crime rate in 2022. An Abraham Initiatives representative mentioned that there was a decline in criminal cases in the first half of 2022 before the new government came to power. After the government decided to discontinue the campaign, the number of criminal cases began rising again in the second half of 2022 and has continued to do so since then.

Multiple videos were shared discussing the Shin Bet and its involvement.¹⁰¹ In a documentary film released in 2019,¹⁰² featured an interview with Professor Menachem Hofnung from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In it, he claims that tens of thousands of Shin Bet collaborators have been brought into Israel and have mostly settled in Arab or mixed towns. Most, he argues, had prior involvement in criminal activity and that, lacking adequate economic and legal means, both they and their children are more likely to engage in criminal conduct. He further notes that criminal cases brought against them are frequently dropped or they receive a plea bargain.¹⁰³ As a result, many experts, NGOs, and political leaders are opposed to this approach and call on the Shin Bet to stop providing protection for criminal behavior rather than increasing its involvement, as advocated by Netanyahu and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.¹⁰⁴ Some critics see this proposal as a cheap political tactic to avoid finding and funding genuine solutions, particularly given its lack of advancement.

97. A news clip was shared in an interview conducted with the head of the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens: Makkan [مكان - هيئة البث العامة]. (2022, October 1). Life in the shadow of death | A Makkan documentary. Youtube. [Makkan](#). [in Arabic]

98. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Umm-Al Fahm. Reference No. 96.

99. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Majd al-Krum.

100. A six-month campaign led by then-Deputy Minister of Interior Security, Yoav Segalovitz. The campaign was implemented by a task force from different agencies that targeted organized crime in the '48 Palestinian community. The campaign is part of Masloul Batuach "Safe Route", part of Government Decision No. 549. (Ministry of Interior Security. (2022). Operation "Safe Route" and the reduction of crime in the Arab community, led by Deputy Minister Yoav Segalovitz. [Ministry of interior Security](#). [In Hebrew])

101. Makkan. Reference No. 97.

102. An interview conducted with an expert who previously worked in governmental ministries on the issue of crime.

103. Makkan. Reference No. 97; Hofnung, M. (2014). The price of information: Integration and rehabilitation of collaborators with the security apparatus in Israeli cities. [Hebrew University](#).

104. Haakhmon, Alon. (2023, June 8). An unprecedented killing spree in Yaffa: 5 killed in a shooting incident. [Maariv](#). [In Hebrew]

Another issue raised is that of targets. In the "Safe Route" plan, the target murder clearance rate was set at 36%.¹⁰⁵ As one critical interviewee stated, "There is no police in the world that sets a target of solving just 35% of murders",¹⁰⁶ pointing to the unusually low level of ambition and stating that the target should be set at 100%. Even against this low bar, the results were lower in 2022 and fell further in 2023. One mayor claimed that the clearance rate for crimes involving shooting in his town is just 3%.¹⁰⁷

One expert added that many of the targets tied to funding are not related to reducing crime, but rather to the recruitment of Arabs into the police or civil service. One unit described as a "crime fighting unit" was tasked primarily with recruiting Arabs into the police force: "The unit was called 'crime fighting,' but the name was inaccurate. It had no authority to make arrests or investigate... the most it worked on was encouraging Arabs to join the police force..."¹⁰⁸ While targets generally aim to help public institutions achieve their goals,¹⁰⁹ critics identify a large gap between stated objectives and the actual performance targets. Therefore, they argue, the stations function more for purposes of public relations and recruitment, and less as a means of combating crime.

According to an interviewed expert, CCTV cameras installed to help fight crime have rarely helped to solve cases, except in limited circumstances such as the May 2021 Dignity Uprising protests and in prisoner escapes: "But were these cameras able to decipher the puzzles of a murder case? It's the opposite—we have not seen crimes involving shootings or arson solved using these cameras... They were used twice in 2021, once in the May protests and once when prisoners escaped from Gilboa prison..."¹¹⁰

However, as experts and leaders noted, the police were able to use the tools at their disposal to successfully target several criminal organizations within the Jewish community in the early 2000s. In the words of one interviewee: "From experience we know that when it was decided that crime had become too prevalent in the Jewish community, the state destroyed it".¹¹¹ Another comparison discussed concerns mixed towns in which Arabs are a minority of the population but the majority of crime is committed in their neighborhoods. A case involving a Jewish victim to which there was a rapid police response was raised to illustrate differential police treatment: "A Jewish person was killed by mistake... they captured the murderer in Gaza!".¹¹² Finally, criticisms were raised over the quality of police officers: "The

105. Knesset Center for Research and Information. Reference No. 90.

106. Makkan. Reference No. 97.

107. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Kufr Yassif. Reference No. 95.

108. An interview conducted with an expert who previously worked in governmental ministries on the issue of crime. Reference No. 102.

109. Davis, Nick; Atkins, Graham; & Sodhi, Sukh. (2021). Using targets to improve public services. [Institute for Government](#).

110. Ibid.

111. Interview conducted with the head of Balad political party.

112. Ibid.

problem is severe... the police force is nationalistic, and its members who are in daily contact with the Arab community are not adequately qualified culturally, administratively, humanly, ethically, or professionally.¹¹³ This concern was reiterated in the media.¹¹⁴

As for solutions, a wide variety of solutions and recommendations were proposed at a multitude of levels, which are summarized in the appendix. One major theme is the role of the state. While almost all the actors interviewed consider the state and the police to be the primary responsible entities, there is disagreement over the extent of desired cooperation with the government, particularly given wider tensions between the community and the state. For some, the focus falls solely on the government and entry into the ruling coalition as the only solution, while others prioritize local initiatives and international avenues, with one interviewee arguing that "the State of Israel should be prosecuted in the Hague".¹¹⁵

Analysis

The paper now evaluates the Israeli government's policy of combating crime in the Palestinian Arab community in Israel by establishing new police stations to increase police presence, using McConnell's framework. It assesses each aspect of the policy —process, program, and politics— separately. Each aspect consists of multiple components, each assigned a position along a spectrum ranging from full success to complete failure.¹¹⁶

We begin with the aspect of **process**. The first element of process concerns the **preservation of policy goals and instruments**, where the policy can be assessed as a resilient success. Although the initial goals stipulated in Government Decisions No. 2467 and No. 2026 were not specifically related to combating crime but came primarily as a response to the events of October 2000, they nevertheless included the same main instrument: increasing police presence and establishing new police stations in Arab communities. Over time, the stated goals shifted to combating rising crime and improving personal security in Arab localities. Consequently, in this respect the policy constitutes a **resilient success**.

In regards to the element of **legitimacy**, the policy was a more **precarious success**, with significant damage to legitimacy from the community's perspective. McConnell specifies stakeholder consultation and support for the policy as a major component of legitimacy. In many government decisions, however, there is little mention of stakeholder

113. Interview conducted with the director of Aman Center— The Arab Center for Safe Society.

114. Zimoky, Tova; & Azolai, Moran. (2023, June 8). Netanyahu after the massacre near Nazareth: "I am adamant for the Shaback to enter the Fray", Judicial sources: "First the law needs to be amended". [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

115. Interview conducted with the director of Aman Center— The Arab Center for Safe Society. Reference No. 113.

116. McConnell, Allan. Reference No. 6.

consultation, with the exception of consulting the Arab Mayors' Committee on certain funding provisions.¹¹⁷ One expert emphasized this point in discussions with officials: "In one meeting I told them, before you open a police station, go to the community, sit down with them, what are the topics bothering the people? ... that those who open a police station will commit... to deal with your top 4- 5 priorities in an X success percentage".¹¹⁸

The only reason the policy was evaluated as a precarious success in relation to legitimacy and not a failure was because Government Decision No. 549 passed in 2021 following consultation with some stakeholders, including political party Ra'am, a member of the governing coalition at the time. Findings from the interviews also indicate a greater emphasis on discussions with Arab municipal leaders during that period. As one municipal head shared: "Why did I say that we made good progress? Because when they came to sit with us, we told them that we had already implemented some of the issues they wanted to discuss ...",¹¹⁹ Therefore, the policy is deemed a precarious success in relation to legitimacy.

As for **coalition** building, the policy can be regarded as a clear **success**. There is little indication of difficulty in forming coalitions around this policy; on the contrary, the coalition agreement signed with Ra'am in 2021 included references to a plan to combat crime in the Arab community.¹²⁰ The plan is therefore a complete success, having contributed to an unlikely coalition.

The next element is **innovation**, and here the policy can be evaluated as a **complete failure**, as the same approach has been proposed repeatedly, with no significant change or development over time.

Finally, concerning **opposition to the process**, there was significant opposition from residents, as well as from local and national officials. The press reported on clear cases of stakeholders' opposition at both the local and national levels.¹²¹ Residents, municipal council members and mayors alike opposed the policy and were not consulted when it was developed. This finding is supported by the interviews conducted as part of this study. As one interviewee stated: "This was not our position, to open police units, this was the position of the state... as if it was a part of the effort to annihilate crime".¹²² As opposition mounted, including through refusing to allocate land for the construction of police stations, lawmakers proposed new legislation that would allow such construction

117. Government Secretariat. Reference No. 65.

118. Interview conducted with the former director of Aman Center– The Arab Center for Safe Society.

119. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Umm-Al Fahm. Reference No. 96.

120. Bahazit. (2021, June 2). Abbas and Lapid sign a coalition agreement. [Bahazit](#). [In Hebrew]

121. Nardi, Guy. (2017, September 5). In the Arab sector they want security– but do not want police stations. [Globes](#). [In Hebrew]; Rozner, Shmoael. (2021, September 24). These are the reasons why the police will have difficulty reducing crime in the Arab community. [Maariv](#). [In Hebrew]

122. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Kufr Yassif. Reference No. 95.

without municipal approval. Arab lawmakers fiercely opposed the law.¹²³ This element can therefore be classified as a **precarious success**: while some actors supported the policy, there was substantial opposition to it that delayed its implementation.

Moving on to the aspect of **program**, the first element is **implementation in line with objectives**.¹²⁴ Here, quantification is more difficult. Regarding the construction of police stations and police points, most were completed, despite minor delays.¹²⁵ Police data obtained by the researcher confirms this finding.

The question of whether the policy increased police presence, however, is debatable. Quantitatively, the reported crime rate is the main measure for assessing the effectiveness of police presence.¹²⁶ However, in the Israeli case, there is almost no data available on police presence in Arab towns. Since there were no police stations in many of these towns beforehand, the assumption in this section is that opening new stations and deploying officers resulted in some increase in police presence, even though there is no information on how officers' time was utilized.

In an article from 2021, Dau et al. reviewed the effectiveness of police presence.¹²⁷ They note that the term "police presence" itself has not been clearly defined and they therefore attempt to provide a more precise definition. According to Dau et al., police presence is "focused on the structural characteristics of it (i.e., where and when they police, how many officers are present, how long they are present). It describes social, spatial, and temporal aspects of police work, which can be measured as definite quantities".¹²⁸ Relevant studies, then, measured police presence using quantifiable indicators like "time of police presence, number of visits, hours of officers per police beat or length of patrol shifts".¹²⁹

In addition, research on deterrence theory maintains that police presence may reduce crime by increasing the chances of being caught (certainty), even if the severity of the punishment is reduced.¹³⁰ Incapacitation theory draws a similar conclusion from a different angle: higher rates of crime clearance lead to more arrests of criminals, and

123. Rozner, Shmoael. Reference No. 121.

124. McConnell, Allan. Reference No. 6.

125. Globes. (2022, April 4). Was there only one police station in an Arab city before 2009?. [Globes](#). [In Hebrew]

126. Dau, Philipp M.; et al. (2021). Policing Directions: A Systematic Review on the Effectiveness of Police Presence. [European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research](#), 1- 35.

127. Ibid.

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid.

130. Durlauf, Steven N.; & Nagin, Daniel S. (2011). Imprisonment and crime. [Criminology & Public Policy](#), 10 (1). Pp. 13– 54; Wilson, James Q. (2011). Comment on Durlauf and Nagin. [Criminology & Public Policy](#), 10. P. 165.

therefore to reduced capacity among offenders to commit additional crimes.¹³¹

If police presence is conceived simply as the presence of police officers in a police station within an Arab town, then it unquestionably increased with the construction of new stations. However, according to Dau et al., it should be measured through the aforementioned indicators— e.g., duration of police presence, number of visits, hours per police beat, and length of patrol shifts. Since none of this data was available in this case, the present study relies on qualitative data to gain greater insight into the subject. According to many interviewees, officers are typically found inside police stations during daytime hours and are often absent when needed during the evening and nighttime hours. Many interviewees commented on the low quality of policing. As one interviewee stated: "Not even 10% (of police officers) work... I have 80 police officers sitting in their offices during the day; while more than 95% of murders occur at night... 10 patrols in Taybeh at night are better than 200 officers sitting in the station during the day".¹³²

Moreover, as Graph 6 indicates, crime clearance rates fell, which, according to Dau et al., may also indicate lower police presence. One may therefore assume that the perceived police presence is lower than what would be expected based on the construction of new stations. Nonetheless, the policy should be considered a resilient success in terms of the construction of new police stations and police points. The issue of police presence in Palestinian towns warrants further research, particularly into how police officers are deployed and the extent to which they patrol.

Regarding **desired outcomes**, the policy is a **complete program failure**. Since 2015, the stated aims of each government plan have been to combat crime in the Arab community and to "increase the individual sense of security".¹³³ As Graphs 1– 4 (above) demonstrate, however, both murder rates and the number of victims continued to increase. As of December 1, the number of murder victims in 2025 had surpassed 221, breaking the previous record. The sense of security among Arab citizens has also decreased markedly, according to polling conducted by the Abraham Initiatives, which showed a sharp rise in the proportion of Arab citizens who feel unsafe,¹³⁴ directly contrary to the policy's stated aims.

In addition, as Table 1 shows, there is no clear correlation at the level of individual towns between the existence of a new police station and a reduction in murder rates. As Arraf noted in her article, in 2024, seven of the ten towns with the highest number of murder

131. Dau, Philipp M.; et al. Reference No. 126.

132. Interview conducted with the director of Aman Center– The Arab Center for Safe Society. Reference No. 113.

133. Government Secretariat. Reference No. 66.

134. Abraham Initiatives. Reference No. 22

victims had police stations.¹³⁵ Ramleh, the city with the highest recorded murder rate and ranked 11th in a global comparison, houses a police station that is responsible for the entire district.¹³⁶ In 2025, Lydd topped the list with 20 murders, despite housing two police stations or police points, as well as the headquarters of Lahav 433, the National Unit to Combat Organized Crime.¹³⁷

This policy is also a **program failure**, as it has brought no perceived benefits to the target group—Palestinian Arab citizens. It has instead created potential harms, either by diverting funding away from solutions that work—as noted by an interviewed expert in the field: "The outlook was more from a security point of view... not on a civilian level... in exchange for opening police stations they closed social programs combatting crime, for example the closure of the Israel Anti-Drug Authority".¹³⁸— or through creating spaces in which citizens may be tortured, an issue raised by a representative from Adalah, cited above.¹³⁹

Thus, the findings indicate significant negative consequences but no real improvement in terms of police presence (as stated by interviewees) and no real effect on deterrence, as supported by the quantitative data and the ongoing escalation of crime in practice.

Lastly, regarding "**opposition to aims, values and means**",¹⁴⁰ the policy is more of a **conflicted success**. There was overall agreement among stakeholders over the stated aim of combating crime in the Arab community. However, significant division arose concerning the values underlying this goal and the means used to achieve it. Many of the interviewees, as well as many other residents and local leaders discussed earlier,¹⁴¹ were opposed to the focus on increasing police presence in Arab towns. They also rejected the means used to achieve it, claiming that the same results could be achieved using officers stationed outside Arab towns. As one interviewed mayor stated: "I am certain it is not a matter of police stations... you could have had a police station in Carmiel, Nahef... if there is a serious decision by the police or the state to combat crime... I have a feeling that there hasn't been one".¹⁴² Opposition has also been manifested in public protests, with many reports of citizens demanding the closure of new police stations, particularly following murders.¹⁴³ Therefore, for all these reasons, we classify this dimension as a **conflicted success**.

135. Baladna. Reference No. 2.

136. Israel Police. (2026). Addresses and phone numbers. [Israel Police](#). [In Hebrew]

137. Israel Police. (2026). Lahav433. [Israel Police](#). [In Hebrew]

138. An interview conducted with an expert who previously worked in governmental ministries on the issue of crime. Reference No. 102.

139. Interview conducted with a representative of Adalah (a Palestinian legal center in Israel). Reference No. 93

140. McConnell, Allan. Reference No. 6.

141. Nardi, Guy; & Rozner, Shmoael. Reference No. 121.

142. Interview conducted with the head of the Municipality of Majd al-Krum. Reference No. 99.

143. Shaalan, Hasan; et al. (2023, August 22). Shabak involved in the murder investigation of Tira's municipality's CEO, his brother: The police know who shot him. [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

Last but not least is the aspect of **politics**, beginning with **electability and reputation**. For Jewish political parties and leaders, the study does not perceive any direct electoral benefits from this policy. According to the Israeli Democracy Institute (IDI), the percentage of Arab voters who vote for Jewish parties remained largely unchanged.¹⁴⁴ As for indirect benefits, an example comes from Netanyahu's campaign for the 2021 election, when he visited Umm al-Fahm and promised a plan to combat crime, referencing the plan he passed in 2015 as evidence of his action on behalf of the Arab community in Israel.¹⁴⁵ This move does not seem to have boosted support for the Likud, with votes for the party from Umm al-Fahm voters barely rising from a mere 21 votes in 2015 to just 39 votes in 2019.¹⁴⁶ Instead, some viewed these steps as attempts to gain support from the Ra'am party,¹⁴⁷ with multiple rounds of negotiation reported with its leader.¹⁴⁸

Up until the 2021 elections, no significant increase was observed in the number of Palestinians voting for Jewish Israeli parties, including the Likud.¹⁴⁹ As for Arab parties, Ra'am, the party in favor of these plans, held onto seats in the Knesset, despite widespread predictions it would not, with some referring to the situation as a "drama".¹⁵⁰ In fact, both its share of the vote and total number of votes increased in the 2022 election.¹⁵¹ In an interview, the party's leader stated that his policy on crime has increased his party's electability: "There is no doubt that Ra'am... we now became the number one political actor among Arabs... we have credibility with the people... what we promised happened...".¹⁵² In summary, we would classify the policy as a **political success** in terms of **electability**. The policy has contributed, directly or indirectly, to parties that endorse it, or at least has had no negative consequences for them in elections.

In terms of **controlling the policy agenda**, the policy constitutes a **complete political success**. Here the assessment also draws on information provided in the interviews. The policy agenda is framed in such a manner that opposition to it is interpreted as support

144. Rodnetsky, Eric. (2021, April 4). Arab citizen's vote for the 24th Knesset, March 2021. [IDI](#). [In Hebrew]

145. Shaalan, Hasan. (2021, January 2). The Arab vote for Netanyahu? "We won't buy his deceptions". [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

146. Medaa' Laa'm. (2015). Document of results for the 20th Knesset by town & ballot box. [Odata](#). [In Hebrew]; Central Elections Committee for the 21th Knesset. (2019). Results by town. [Central Elections Committee](#). [In Hebrew]

147. Salameh, Daniella; et al. (2021, January 13). Netanyahu going after the Arab vote: "Opportunity for a new age". [Ynet](#). [In Hebrew]

148. Majadleh, Mohammed. (2021, June 11). Behind the scenes of the negotiations between Abbas and Netanyahu: Head of Ra'am visited the official residence multiple times. [Channel 12](#). [In Hebrew]

149. Sawaed, Khader. (2021, March 8). Arab politics after the split of Ra'am from the Joint List: Towards a bi-polar system?. [INSS](#). [In Hebrew]

150. Srugim. (2021, March 24). Drama: Ra'am crosses the voting threshold; the right-wing block is sinking. [Srugim](#). [In Hebrew]

151. Central Elections Committee for the 24th Knesset. (2021). National results. [Central Elections Committee](#). [In Hebrew]; Central Elections Committee for the 25th Knesset. (2022). National results. [Central Elections Committee](#). [In Hebrew]

152. Interview conducted with the head of Ra'am political party.

for crime.¹⁵³ In practice, this means that even in the absence of supporting evidence, politicians and the media assume that it is the only viable policy solution and it continues to be promoted.¹⁵⁴ This puts any politician who opposes the policy in a difficult position. The dilemma described by Ben-Porat thus extends to political leaders: should they oppose what they know to be a faulty policy and risk being accused of standing against efforts to combat crime? Or do they back it nevertheless, despite their misgivings, and then shoulder the responsibility if the police harm members of the community they represent?

It appears that many Arab leaders, locally and nationally, have made a strategic decision not to directly oppose the opening of new police stations, while at the same time making the argument that their establishment has failed to produce results. This reflects **complete control over the policy agenda**, as alternative proposals are drowned out or co-opted, even when opposition is based on strategic considerations, and the policy continues to be portrayed as the only solution, despite the lack of supporting evidence. In addition, polling on the issue indicates that public opinion is largely on board with this framing.¹⁵⁵

Moving to the aspect of **government direction and values**, the issue of securitization again becomes relevant. As a "securitized" minority, the state has historically viewed its Palestinian Arab citizens as a national security threat. As the Or Commission of Inquiry concluded following the events of October 2000, the police must stop treating Arab citizens as enemies of the state. However, this recommendation has not been adopted and the same approach has continued and even intensified. If the government's underlying values and approach are to continue to treat the Palestinian Arab minority as a threat that needs to be controlled, then this policy can be viewed as a **complete political success** in those terms. Returning to 2000, as mentioned earlier, the first major increase in police presence was implemented not in response to crime rates, but as part of the government's response to the Second Intifada. The government's plan in this regard was introduced just two weeks after police killed 13 Arab citizens during the October 2000 protests, killings for which no police were ultimately charged. The government's subsequent plan introduced in 2004 continued the same security-based approach.

What can be inferred is that in all these governmental plans, expanding police presence is mentioned exclusively as a mechanism of control and preventing disorder, with no reference to combating crime. This interpretation was echoed by many local leaders in the interviews.

After the events of October 2000, the securitization of the Arab minority appears to have further intensified, and the establishment of additional police stations in Arab towns can be understood as a way of asserting control over the Arab minority. It is only in 2015 that

153. Nardi, Guy. Reference No. 121.

154. Shaalan, Hasan. Reference No. 145.

155. Abraham Initiatives. (2017). New poll by 'Abraham Initiatives' shows: A large majority in favor of constructing police stations in Arab towns. [Abraham Initiatives](#). [In Hebrew]

there is a shift in framing and explicit mentions of crime begin to appear. Thus, for most of the period in which this policy has existed, it has been oriented more towards security and control than fighting crime. This approach did not change even with the inclusion of an Arab party in the governing coalition. Government Decision No. 549, for instance, increased police presence and included the deployment of two border police platoons to deal with public disturbances, indicating the continuing entrenchment of securitization.

The approach includes increased reliance on CCTV cameras, the reported use of torture in police stations, and the growing involvement of the Shin Bet intelligence agency and the national guard,¹⁵⁶ and most recently the declaration of crime syndicates as terror organizations.¹⁵⁷ Even the leader of Ra'am has proposed the further expansion of policing powers.¹⁵⁸ This approach has therefore survived five different prime ministers and even more governing coalitions, in another clear indication that the underlying policy direction has been maintained over time.

Lastly, the policy can be characterized as a **conflicted success** in terms of the **political opposition** it has encountered. While many oppose the attempt to exert greater control and the framing of citizens as enemies, including stakeholders who support the policy, political benefits such as joining coalitions and electoral prospects face far less opposition from local stakeholders, making the policy a conflicted success in this dimension.

Conclusion

To conclude, after applying an expanded McConnell framework to the Israeli government's policy of opening new police stations and increasing police presence in Arab towns and villages, the policy can be deemed a resilient success in terms of process, a program failure, and a political success.

In terms of process, the policy was maintained over the course of years with no significant contribution to coalition building and no substantive innovation. It was a conflicted success with regard to legitimacy and opposition, having produced acceptance and resistance among stakeholders. Concerning the program aspect, the policy has been a complete failure. Although certain objectives were achieved, these have not been translated into positive outcomes or meaningful benefits for the targeted group, and some argue it caused harm. It has also encountered opposition for its underlying values and means of implementation. At the political level, however, it has been a complete success. It has aided its political proponents, dominated the policy agenda, with limited and divided opposition to its wider political gains. Most importantly, it has consistently

156. Elan, Shahr. (2024, October 14). We pushed the Arabs to the sidelines, that is why the wild west developed there. [Calcalist](#). [In Hebrew]

157. Haakhmon, Alon. Reference No. 104.

158. Interview conducted with the head of Ra'am political party. Reference No. 152.

advanced the logic of securitization of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel and the need to control it for over two decades.

As demonstrated above, this paper argues that the policy of establishing new police stations in Arab towns and villages has failed to achieve its stated objectives. Local stakeholders should therefore be encouraged to oppose any additional police stations, given the potential harm at multiple levels and the lack of proven benefits. Instead, the literature and this study suggest that stakeholders should demand the increased deployment of detectives and technical staff, higher crime clearance rates, and the channeling of resources to crime prevention programs. It is hoped that this study will contribute to advancing such an approach. In addition, local leaders should explore a broad range of alternative solutions with the aim of reducing high crime levels in their communities. Finally, further research is warranted, with a particular focus on accurately quantifying actual Israeli police presence—something that was not possible to achieve in full in this study—and on crime within the '48 Palestinian community, as one of the world's most securitized minorities.



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