



Response To Common Inaccuracy: Arabs are Second Class Citizens

Inaccuracy: Israel treats Arabs as second-class citizens.

Response

Israeli law makes no distinction between its Arab and Jewish citizens. Israeli Arab citizens enjoy the same rights as their Jewish neighbors. They are free to practice their religion without discrimination, in accordance with Israel's commitment to democracy and freedom. Israeli Arabs are well represented in the Israeli Knesset (parliament), and Arab members of Knesset are extremely vocal in promoting their issues and opinions. Israeli Arabs serve in Israel's foreign service, as government ministers and as justices on the Supreme Court.

As in every country, more needs to be done to promote greater educational and employment opportunities for minorities, particularly for Israeli Arabs. The Israeli government has committed to investing in the necessary infrastructure and assistance for these communities. As in the United States, non-governmental organizations publicly advocate for increased investment in Israeli Arab communities.

Palestinian Arabs living in the [West Bank and Gaza Strip](#) are not citizens of Israel. After gaining territory in the 1967 War, Israel was faced with a million Palestinian Arabs under its administration. Israel hoped its authority over the Palestinians in these areas would be short-lived and that it would be able to exchange the land for

peace with its Arab neighbors. As a result, Israel did not annex or incorporate the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Israel proper, and thus does not apply to Palestinians the same laws that govern Israeli civilian life.