



Yatir Stream in the Negev Under Threat

Regavim warns government ministers of illegal dumping and unauthorized waste sites in the Negev, and demands criminal proceedings against those responsible for severe environmental damage.

August 23, 2026 — The Regavim Movement has sent an urgent warning to government ministers and enforcement authorities, demanding immediate action to address severe pollution and environmental damage in Yatir Stream, one of the Negev's central streambeds.

According to Regavim, extensive criminal activity in the area includes large-scale illegal dumping, the establishment of unauthorized waste sites and dump-and-burn incineration of garbage. Illegal grazing has also resulted in the accumulation of animal carcasses, creating an additional serious sanitation hazard.

"We have seen with our own eyes that offenders are dumping and burning waste at unauthorized sites without any permit whatsoever, creating extremely serious environmental and health hazards while taking advantage of the failure of enforcement authorities to act in the area," Regavim wrote in its letter.

Regavim is demanding that the relevant authorities urgently launch inspection and enforcement operations, impose fines on offenders and operators of illegal waste sites, and initiate criminal proceedings against those responsible, alongside measures to rehabilitate the area.

Regavim's correspondence with the relevant authorities stresses that much of the illegal activity takes place on weekends, when enforcement presence is limited. "The majority of the criminal activity takes place on weekends, and enforcement presence in the area must therefore be significantly increased during these periods, with organized enforcement plans adapted accordingly," the letter stated.

Yehuda Kapach, Regavim's Southern District Director, said: "The stream is suffering from severe neglect and serious pollution that threatens its future. The tsunami of commercial, electronic and residential waste, decomposing animal carcasses and other garbage, combined with criminal activity that exploits the lack of oversight, is causing severe damage to local flora and fauna and leading to damage that may soon become irreversible. With winter approaching, there is serious concern that rainwater will carry the waste downstream, block the streambed and cause flooding. State authorities must formulate an appropriate enforcement plan, impose fines on offenders that will deter future abusers, and act urgently to rehabilitate the area."

Barak Werker of “Green Now,” an environmental watchdog that has done extensive research on cross-border pollution in Israel: “Where there is no governance, the environment is the first victim. The Negev’s open spaces and environment have no voice and no representation, but the consequences of their pollution are extremely serious: air pollution that kills and wastewater that contaminates the groundwater that all of us drink.”

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