



BADIL
Resource Center

for Palestinian Residency
and Refugee Rights

Oral statement- ENGLISH ONLY
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Israeli State policy and collaboration with para-statal agencies continue to severely impact indigenous Palestinian Communities

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members

My name is Rania Madi, a Palestinian lawyer representing Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. Badil is a Palestinian human right organization advocating Palestinian Refugees and IDPs rights. I would like to thank you for providing us with an opportunity to address you in this hearing.

Mr. Chairman,

On 11 September 2011, the Israeli Government approved the Praver Plan, which recommends the destruction of fourteen (14) villages in the Beer Sheba district located in the Negev, effectively displacing 40,000 Palestinians from their homes. The forced population transfer of indigenous Bedouin Palestinians from their homes would amount to ethnic cleansing. We urge you to call upon Israel to comply with its international human rights obligations with regard to its indigenous population.

The Praver Plan, referred to as the "final solution" for Israel's Bedouin population is a continuation of Israel's ethnic cleansing policies pursued since its establishment. The Plan reduces the amount of Bedouin land to be recognized to 100,000 dunams, a sixth of the indigenous population's outstanding claims. The rest of the land is to be confiscated. Netanyahu has appointed Moshe Yaalon, an accused war criminal for the bombing of the UNIFIL compound in Southern Lebanon in 1996, to enforce the Praver Plan indicating the militarized approach to be pursued by the Israeli government. Thabet Abu Ras, a professor of geography at Ben Gurion University in the Negev, described the plan as a "declaration of war" on the Bedouin way of life.

Broadly, the State seeks to forcibly remove the population of 75-90,000 Bedouins living in 45 unrecognized villages from their ancestral homes and their agricultural livelihoods and into overcrowded townships characterized by urbanization. Its tactics have included denial of basic services to the Bedouins and in many cases it has involved the violent and repeated destruction of their homes, villages, and agricultural lands.

Israeli authorities have destroyed the village of Al-Araqib destroyed 29 times between July 25th 2010 and September 2011. In July 2011, the Israeli Land Authority sued the residents of Al-Araqib sued for demolition and eviction costs in the amount of \$500,000.

This conduct constitutes a breach of Israel's obligations under the Covenant affecting most of the substantive rights guaranteed by the treaty such as the right to an adequate standard of living , including the right to food, water and housing (article 11) the right to work (article 6) the right to health (article 129 the right to education (article 13) .

Also , the aforementioned conduct represents a violation of Israel's obligation to respect

economic, social and economic , social and cultural rights as stated by principle 13 of the very recently adopted (*Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*)

Mr. Chairman,

This could not be done without the assistance and leadership of the Jewish National Fund. The JNF's flagship program, 'Blueprint Negev' is according to them, 'a major initiative to revitalize Israel's southern region' by means of planting trees and displacing half a million people. Consider that during the seventh demolition of Al-Araqib in December 2010, the Jewish National Fund erected signs displaying the name of the forest to be planted in place of the Bedouin village. The JNF's forestation project, funded by private donors, atop Palestinian lands has a long legacy. According to Ben Gurion Professor, Neve Gordon:

The practice of planting forests in an attempt to Judaize more territory is by no means new. Right after Israel's establishment in 1948, the JNF planted millions of trees to cover up the remains of Palestinian villages that had been destroyed during or after the war. The objective was to help ensure that the 750,000 Palestinian residents who either fled or were expelled during the war would never return to their villages and to suppress the fact that they had been the rightful owners of the land before the State of Israel was created. Scores of Palestinian villages disappeared from the landscape in this way, and the grounds were converted into picnic parks, thus helping engender a national amnesia regarding the Palestinian Nakba.

BADIL urges the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights to

1. Impress upon Israel the rights of the indigenous Bedouin population in the Negev;
2. Disavow the Praver Plan and revert to the recommendations made by the Goldberg Report in 2008;
3. Recognize the 45 unrecognized Bedouin villages in the Negev and afford them basic rights; and
4. Recognize and respect the legitimacy of the land deeds of the indigenous Bedouin population.

Thank You