

Adalah's Newsletter, April 2014
SAVE ATIR-UMM EL-HIERAN



On 30 April 2014, the Be'er Sheva District Court will hold a hearing on two appeals filed by Adalah on behalf of the twin Arab Bedouin villages of Atir-Umm el-Hieran in the Naqab (Negev) in Israel. The court will decide whether to uphold 19 eviction orders confirmed by the Be'er Sheva Magistrates' Court against the Arab Bedouin citizens living in the village, or to accept Adalah's appeals and cancel the orders. If upheld, the lawsuits, which were initiated by the State of Israel, will lead to the forced displacement of the villages' 1,000 Arab Bedouin inhabitants and citizens of the State and the dispossession of their land and property.

The [twin villages of Atir and Umm el-Hieran](#) are slated to be demolished and the lands used to build a new Jewish town called "Hiran", and to expand a Jewish National Fund (JNF)-sponsored forest called "Yatir". The approval of the state's plans for Atir-Umm el-Hieran will mark the second mass displacement and dispossession of the Arab Bedouin villagers since the establishment of Israel.

Adalah has been representing the residents of Atir-Umm el-Hieran for over 10 years before [all levels of Israeli Courts](#) and in [Land and Planning Committees](#) against these demolition orders and eviction lawsuits. Adalah is currently defending the villagers against a total of 25 eviction lawsuits, 33 demolition orders, and 3 master plans.

A history of displacement and discrimination

In 1956, the Israeli military governor [moved the Al-Qian tribe to the lands of Atir-Umm el-Hieran](#) after the state confiscated their land and expelled them from their ancestral village of Khirbet Zubaleh. Although the state relocated the residents to those lands, it refused to legally recognize their village. As a result, the state did not issue the villagers permits to build new

homes and infrastructure, and the village was denied basic services including water, electricity, schools and sewage systems.

In 2002, the Israeli government announced plans to establish the Jewish town “Hiran” over Umm el-Hieran and to expand the “Yatir” forest over Atir. In November 2013, the government [approved the acceleration of the construction of four new Jewish towns](#) in the Naqab including Hiran, despite the fact that several cases remain pending in the courts against the demolition of the village and the evacuation of its people.



Meanwhile, a group of Israeli Jewish citizens have [built a gated community inside the Yatir Forest](#) neighboring Umm el-Hieran, waiting for the evacuation of the Bedouins in order to move into Hiran. This unauthorized illegal community has been connected to the electricity and water networks, while the 1,000 residents of Atir-Umm el-Hieran have never received these most basic services for the past 58 years.

The case of Atir-Umm el-Hieran poses [a very important question](#): can Israel demolish an Arab village and forcefully evict its residents, in order to establish a town for Jewish citizens and a man-made forest over its ruins?

For more information:

- Read Adalah’s report, [“Nomads Against Their Will: The example of Atir-Umm el-Hieran”](#)
- Watch the video, [“Umm el-Hieran Unrecognized Village v. Hiran Settlement”](#)
- See Adalah’s [special newsletter on the Supreme Court hearing on the case](#)
- Read more about the [Israeli government’s plan](#) to forcibly displace thousands of Arab Bedouin citizens in the Naqab

Share their story and join their struggle to remain