

Announcement*

Opinion: Stop the “Praver Law” to Regulate Bedouin Settlement

We, the undersigned, academics and professors in academic institutions and civil organizations, wish to voice our opposition to the “Law for the Regulation of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev”. The bill seeks to implement the “Praver-Begin Plan”, which recommends the forcible evacuation of the Bedouin population, including tens of thousands of civilians, from villages in which they have lived for generations, mostly on their ancestral lands. We believe that the law will deepen the conflict between Bedouin citizens and the state, rather than move towards a solution. In our opinion the bill is flawed, for several main reasons:

- The law and its land arrangements are based on discrimination between citizens of the state;
- The law invalidates the ownership claims of the majority of the Bedouin and legalizes their dispossession;
- The law conditions the provision of basic services to the Bedouin citizens, services that every citizen is entitled to receive, on the Bedouin’s consent to an unjust land settlement agreement;
- Despite its name, the law does not offer a solution for Bedouin settlement and raises serious concerns that many existing villages will be evacuated and destroyed;
- The law and the “Praver-Begin Plan”, as approved by the government, adopt a position that disrupts Bedouin tradition and culture, because they do not ensure the continuity of the Bedouin way of life, and fail to reveal the names of the villages that will be recognized;
- Contrary to basic civil rights, the law limits Bedouin citizens to a single area, in which they can register land in their names or establish villages;
- The law establishes an inflexible and centralized mechanism of implementation, without Bedouin representation and in violation of the democratic norms;
- The consultation that accompanied the drafting of the law was inadequate - it took place only after the government approved the Praver Plan and failed to internalize the views of the community.

Because of these problems the law is invalid and will waste vast resources

The Bedouin population completely opposes the proposed law. We urge the government to cancel the bill and open a genuine dialogue with the Bedouin population. It should give serious consideration to the Alternative Plan proposed by the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages. This plan demonstrates that it is possible to recognize all villages based on professional criteria and apply equal standards to them, similar to those applied in the rural sector in Israel. Opening a genuine dialogue would allow the state to fulfill its duty to uphold human rights and not harm the rights of the minority, and significantly improve the conditions of all residents of the Negev, Jews and Arabs alike.

* Translated to English by Adalah

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