

# Israel's Begin-Prawer Plan: Global Protests Against Bedouin Ethnic Cleansing

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Around 40,000 Bedouins are targeted. They're Israeli citizens. They're considered nonpersons. They're treated that way. They're denied all rights.

The so-called Begin-Prawer Plan (Law for Arranging Bedouin Settlement in the Negev) is ruthlessly racist. It legitimizes ethnic cleansing. It wants Bedouin land for exclusive Jewish development.

It authorizes destroying Bedouin homes. It calls for dozens of villages to be leveled. It sanctions mass ethnic cleansing on a scale not seen since 1948. Israeli authorities are trampling on the rights of their own citizens.

According to Association for Civil Rights in Israel attorney Rawia Aburabia:

Israel's plan "will cause the displacement and forced eviction of dozens of villages and tens of thousands of Bedouin residents, dispossessing them of their property and historical rights to their lands, destroying the social fabric of their communities, and sealing the fate of thousands of families into poverty and unemployment."

"All of this while the government simultaneously promotes the establishment of new Jewish communities, some of which are even slated to be built on the fresh ruins of Bedouin villages."

"Rather than displacing these communities, the government should seek a true and just solution that facilitates the inclusion of Bedouin citizens into the civil and social fabric of the Negev by recognizing the unrecognized villages and acknowledging their legal ownership rights to their lands."

"For years, the Bedouin citizens have lived in (unrecognized) villages without basic conditions while around them more and more Jewish communities are built."

"The government must decide whether to seek a true and just solution that facilitates the inclusion of Bedouin in the Negev as equal citizens or a belligerent plan, that only increases the alienation, hostility and poverty in these communities."

Bimkom is an Israeli human right group. Nili Baruch is one of its urban planners. "The key to a solution to the issue of the unrecognized villages in the Negev is planning," she said.

"A plan to formally recognize the unrecognized villages (such as the one initiated by the

village residents themselves) will afford them their rights to education, health, adequate infrastructure, and sources of employment.”

“Such a process would not only be the most likely to succeed, but also the most just, coming after years of neglect of the unrecognized villages, most of which have been in existence since before the state of Israel was established.”

In September 2011, Netanyahu’s cabinet approved Begin-Prawer. It’s part of a longterm ethnic cleansing agenda. It aims to Judaize areas for exclusive Jewish development.

In June 2013, it passed its first Knesset reading. Two more are required. Final passage could come any time.

Yaron Ben Ezra heads the World Zionist Organization’s settlement division. He represents its racist policy.

He calls building new Negev Jewish communities important “to prevent the continued invasion of state lands by the Bedouin and to prevent the creation of Bedouin or Arab (territorial) contiguity.”

Israel considers Bedouins foreign invaders, squatters. They lived on their land for centuries before Jews arrived. It doesn’t matter.

Israeli revisionists rewrite history their way. They violate international laws, standards, and fundamental democratic principles doing so.

Bedouins are considered nonpersons. They live in so-called “unrecognized villages.” The term is Orwellian in its worst sense. How can real people in real communities not exist?

They’re considered internal refugees. They’re victims of Israel’s “War of Independence.” It was premeditated aggression.

Nuremberg Tribunal Chief Justice Robert Jackson called these type wars the supreme international crime against peace. Israel is flagrantly guilty multiple times. So is America.

Israel’s 1965 Planning and Construction Law delegitimized Bedouin villages. It established a regulatory framework and national plan for future development.

It zoned land for residential, agricultural and industrial use. It prohibited unlicensed construction. It banned it on agricultural land.

It stipulated where Arabs and Jews could live. South African apartheid worked the same way. Israel’s version is much worse. It reflects slow-motion genocide.

Palestinian communities got no room to expand. Residential land was rezoned for agricultural use.

Entire communities became unrecognized. Homes and other structures were declared illegal. At least 95% of them existed before the 1965 law passed. It didn’t matter. It doesn’t now.

Residential and other property on these lands are subject to demolition. Their inhabitants

face displacement.

New communities are prohibited. Unrecognized ones are denied essential services.

They include clean drinking water, electricity, roads, transport, sanitation, education, healthcare, postal and telephone service, refuse removal, and more.

Under Israel's Planning and Construction Law, they're illegal. Denying fundamental rights spurns international laws and standards.

Israel's Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom is violated. It authorizes overturning laws contrary to dignity, life, freedom, privacy, property, and right to leave and enter Israel. It states:

"There shall be no violation of the life, body or dignity of any person. All persons are entitled to protection" to preserve them.

"There shall be no deprivation or restriction of the liberty of a person by imprisonment, arrest, extradition or otherwise."

Israeli Basic Law ignores equality. Rights apply solely to Jews. Bedouins targeted for displacement face imprisonment and fines for failing to leave.

Israel considers itself a Jewish state. Arabs are unwelcome, unwanted, unprotected, and unequal under state law.

Bedouins are nonpersons on their own land. They're considered intruders. They're denied all rights. They face constant harassment.

They face imminent loss of their homes, land, communities and freedom. Their lives are at risk when Israel targets them violently.

Negev Bedouins number up to around 100,000. They're all targeted for displacement. About 40,000 face an imminent risk.

International human rights groups condemned Begin-Prawer as blatantly racist. Philip Luther heads Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Program. Last August he said:

"The Prawer-Begin plan is a blatant example of Israel's discriminatory policies towards its Palestinian minority. It must be dropped immediately."

World leaders able to act responsibly do nothing. Israel's Bedouin displacement policy is longstanding. It followed its War of Independence.

During the early 1950s, most Negev Bedouins were relocated. A "permitted" "Siyagh" region was set aside for them. It was in Jordanian-controlled West Bank territory.

Bedouins incrementally returned to their ancestral lands. They struggled to remain there. They continue doing so.

In the late 1990s, Israel escalated efforts to remove them. Increasing numbers of demolition orders were issued.

In 2002, herbicide spraying contaminated their land. Crops were spoiled. Livestock died. Health problems surfaced.

Massive ethnic cleansing plans were drafted. They culminated in Begin-Prawer. It's a landmark racist law.

Palestinians, human rights groups, and supportive activists struggle to prevent its enactment. Tens of thousands of Bedouin futures are at stake.

On November 29, the [Palestinian Solidarity Campaign](#) urged human rights supporters to sign it anti-Begin/Prawer letter. It said in part:

"If implemented, this plan will result in the destruction of more than 35 Palestinian towns and villages in Al-Naqab (Negev) in the south of Israel and the expulsion and confinement of up to 70,000 Palestinian Bedouins."

"It means forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes and land, and systematic discrimination and separation."

"The Israeli government is pushing ahead with this plan despite the Palestinian Bedouin community's complete rejection of the plan, and condemnation from human rights groups."

Activists declared November 30 an international "day of rage." Protests were held in Israel, the West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza, Cairo, other regional cities, Berlin, London, Rome, Paris, the Hague, other European cities, Montreal, Toronto, Washington and elsewhere.

A Bedouin statement said:

"We are human beings and citizens, but the Prawer Plan treats us like animals who can be moved around from place to place with no consultation or regard for our wishes."

"This Saturday, we will stand with our supporters from near and afar, and call for the recognition of the villages denied recognition and for a halt to this cruel plan."

International law prohibits forced displacements. Fourth Geneva's Article 49 states:

"Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive."

Begin-Prawer is a crime against humanity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) says so.

Article 7 prohibits "deportation or forcible transfer of (a) population." It forbids "the crime of apartheid."

It bans "other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health."

It calls these practices "crimes against humanity." Israel turns truth on its head. It claims it wants to "modernize" and "alleviate" Bedouin conditions.

Police states operate this way. They try justifying the unjustifiable. They ignore international laws and norms.

They do it unaccountably. They enforce policy through the barrel of a gun. They do it ruthlessly.

Several Palestinian youth groups issued a statement saying:

“No one will live quietly and comfortably as long as a single family in Negev faces the threat of displacement.”

“No one in this country will enjoy freedom and dignity if we Palestinians, especially in Negev, do not live in dignity on our land.”

Israel prohibits the right to demonstrate. Military Order No 101 bans gatherings of more than 10 Palestinians without IDF permission.

Violators face stiff fines and imprisonment up to 10 years. It applies to Jews supporting Arabs.

On Saturday, Israeli security forces attacked peaceful protesters. They did so violently. They fired rubber bullets and stun grenades. They used batons, tear gas and skunk water. Dozens were arrested.

Arab Knesset members Ahmed al-Tibi and Jamal Zahalka joined demonstrators. Al-Tibi said:

“The protest was meant to emphasize that Praver will not pass on the ground, even if it does in the Knesset, because it’s essential goal is to displace the indigenous Arabs from their towns.”

“This resolution will not be respected because it is racist.”

According to Zahalka:

“The plan will lead to a confrontation between Israeli and indigenous people in the Negev, and Israel will have to deal with the repercussions.”

Palestinians endured Israeli repression since 1948. State-sponsored terror is official policy. Israel’s democracy is fake.

Peace is a non-starter. Brutal occupation is a daily reality. World leaders able to help turn a blind eye. Palestinian suffering persists.

Tens of thousands of bedouins struggle for their futures. Land they’ve lived on for centuries is up for grabs. Israel wants it exclusively for Jews.

Palestinian rights don’t matter. Israeli Arab citizens have few. Bedouins have none. It bears repeating. Police states operate this way. Israel is ruthlessly racist.

*Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net).*

*His new book is titled “Banker Occupation: Waging Financial War on Humanity.”*

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Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

#### About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net). His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com). Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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