

Racism and Apartheid: Better to Be a Dog Than Bedouin in Israel

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I have [written recently](#) about Israel's efforts to wipe off the map the 1,000-strong Bedouin community of Umm al-Hiran in the Negev (Naqab) so that Jews can live in their place. Dozens of other Bedouin communities in Israel – known as “unrecognised villages” and representing tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens – are facing similar fates.

The short animated film below adds another absurdist angle to the Umm al-Hiran story.

Appealing to racist assumptions about the Bedouin, Israel has claimed that it cannot provide services such as electricity and water to what it calls “scattered” communities like Umm al-Hiran, even though the Bedouin have been settled in Umm al-Hiran in large numbers and in permanent homes for decades after their forced removal from their own ancestral lands at Israel's creation.

Right next to Umm al-Hiran is one of what Israel terms Negev “ranches” – usually run by a single (Jewish) family and styled on the huge ranches familiar from Texas. Ariel Sharon owned a famous one in the Negev. Despite the tiny number of (Jewish) people living on these ranches, and their scattered nature, they are instantly connected to water and electricity by the state.

The family running the one next to Umm al-Hiran has made it a dog hotel (and a pet cemetery), where the dogs have more rights than the inhabitants of Umm al-Hiran. You can visit the dog hotel's website [here](#).

As the film concludes, there's a word for this: it's called apartheid.

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