

# Israeli government is planning the largest single attempt at the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians since the 1948 Nakba

By [PAJU](#)

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The Israeli government is planning the largest single attempt at the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians since the 1948 Nakba.

The Begin-Prawer Plan, which is the name of the law calling for the mass relocation of the Bedouin, passed its first reading in the Israeli Knesset on Wednesday, June 23. If the law is fully passed and implemented, it will mean the destruction of up to 40 Bedouin villages. Over the ruins of these villages, the Jewish National Fund—an Israeli para-statal organization with a charitable branch in Canada—will plant forests and help to establish Jewish-only settlements as part of its four billion dollar campaign: Blueprint Negev

The Prawer Plan aims to:

- \* confiscate around 210,000 acres of land in the Naqab (Negev) desert
- \* expel over 30,000 Palestinian Bedouins
- \* demolish about 40 unrecognized villages
- \* confine the Arab Palestinian Bedouins who are 30% of the Naqab in to 1% of the land

Repeatedly, the Israeli government has refused to listen to the strongest possible opposition from the Bedouin community and their attempt to propose alternative plans. Instead, the government has chosen forced transfer.

These Bedouin Israelis are already the poorest sector of the population, many of whom live in villages “unrecognised” by the Israeli government and who are denied basic services such as electricity, schools and healthcare.

At the same time, Israel is planning to evict about 1,000 Palestinians from their homes and villages in the South Hebron Hills in the West Bank to make way for a military shooting range — yet another gross violation of international law. Palestinians have lived in these villages for centuries.

Scott Weinstein of Independent Jewish Voices-Canada denounced the Prawer Plan in the strongest terms: ‘This proposed forced transfer of thousands of Palestinian Bedouin from their ancestral homes constitutes ethnic cleansing on a massive scale. It is a grievous crime enacted against an indigenous population for the purpose of judaizing the Negev. IJV-Canada calls on the government of Canada to denounce this criminal act in the strongest possible terms. To pressure Israel to obey international law, we urge people throughout the world to intensify the boycott of Israel, both economic and cultural. ’

Bruce Katz of Palestinian and Jewish Unity commented:

‘ To transfer the Bedouin by force off their ancestral lands for the purpose announced by Netanyahu more than a year ago of creating a Jewish majority in the Negev reeks of the kind of vicious racism to which Jews themselves were subjected in Europe not so long ago. It is ‘Lebensraum’ Israeli-Style. Will the Harper government which crows about supporting democracy in the world, denounce it?’

It is to be noted that ninety-one Canadian authors, including Margaret Atwood, John Ralston-Saul and Michael Ondaatje, sent a letter to Canadian and Israeli governments calling on them “to halt immediately and permanently the eviction of about 1000 Palestinians from their homes ... in order to clear land for an Israeli army firing zone.... Evicting them would violate international law and cause extreme hardship.”

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