

Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
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Oral statement submitted by Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status.

Indigenous Palestinian Bedouins and Israel's policy of Ongoing Forcible Displacement

1. BADIL welcomes the annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the "rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities". The report explicitly states that the indigenous Palestinian "Bedouins community has been gradually and systematically dispossessed of its land and faces constant attempts to displace it from their homes" (par. 28).

2. Furthermore, BADIL welcomes the High Commissioner's emphasis on the importance of indigenous issues and rights as stated in paragraph 39-42 of her annual report.

3. The state of Israel has not recognized thirty-five villages, located in the Negev Desert, home to over sixty-thousand indigenous Palestinian Bedouins, who are citizens of the state of Israel. The inhabitants of those villages are deemed by the state of Israel to be invaders, illegal trespassers and squatters, and as such are being targeted for forcible displacement - despite having lived on the land in some cases before the creation of the state of Israel,.

4. Thirty thousand of those inhabitants from fourteen different communities, placed around the city of Beer Sheba in the Negev Desert, are at present directly threatened to be forcibly evicted from that area in the near future.

5. This forcible eviction is based on the *Prawer Plan* which the Israeli government approved in September 2011. Under this plan the Israeli government has decided to forcibly remove thirty-thousand indigenous Palestinian citizens of Israel from their homes and transfer them to concentrated settlements which were created by the Israeli government for such purpose, without taking into account the community's traditional culture or livelihood and without the consultation with the community.

6. We urge the Human Rights Council to:

- Find that Israel's policies in the Negev Desert towards the indigenous Palestinian Bedouins constitute a policy of population transfer;
- Call upon Israel to refrain from its human rights violations, discrimination and plans to transfer the Palestinian Bedouin population of the Negev;
- Call on Israel to immediately recognize those affected villages and incorporate them into municipal and town planning plans, so that those communities can have access to state services such as water, electricity, sewage systems, schools and health facilities.