

ENGLISH ONLY  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
Sixteenth Session, Item no. 3  
ID with IE on Minority Issues  
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Oral statement submitted by **Badil** Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status.

## **Palestinian indigenous Minority in Israel endure multifaceted state oppression**

Badil wishes to focus on inequalities between Jewish citizens of Israel—the majority—and Indigenous Palestinian citizens of Israel, a national minority, comprising 20% of the total population. Their status under international human rights instruments to which Israel is a State party is that of a national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minority. Despite this status, the Palestinian minority has been systematically denied of minority protection rights in Israel.

Palestinians in Israel suffer from established state political persecution which is illustrated also by criminalization of Palestinian human rights and civil society actors; Mr Ameer Makhoul a leading Palestinian human rights defender and formerly General Director of Ittijah; the network of Arabic nongovernmental organizations in Israel represents a classic example of this policy. He was sentenced in Jan 2011 by an Israeli court in Haifa to nine years imprisonment for spying, while his sentence was denounced by both Amnesty international and The Human Rights Defenders Coalition<sup>1</sup>.

As for land exploitations Badil has already urged the HRC during this session to take urgent steps for halting the repeated forced eviction of Palestinians Bedouins in the Negev desert<sup>2</sup>.

Badil wishes to stand on the cultural oppression Palestinians in Israel endure; Israel defines itself as a Jewish state which makes inequality a practical, political and ideological reality for the Palestinian minority.

The Jewish character of the state of Israel is evident in numerous Israeli laws and discriminates the Palestinian minority on ethnic and religious basis; Many laws<sup>3</sup> give recognition to Jewish educational, religious, and cultural practices and institutions, and define their aims and objectives strictly in Jewish terms, while no similar laws providing similar legal recognition to the religious and cultural rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel have been legislated.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/news/3373-eu-must-protest-conviction-of-palestinian-human-rights-defender> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/palestinian-human-rights-activist-jailed-israel-2011-01-30>

<sup>2</sup> See Badil's oral statement of 8 March under SR on adequate housing at: <http://portal.ohchr.org/portal/page/portal/HRCExtranet/16thSession/OralStatements/080311/Tab1/Item3-ID-NGO-BADIL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> SUCH AS THE CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL LAW – 1980, THE FLAG AND EMBLEM LAW – 1949, AND THE STATE EDUCATION LAW – 1953

This discriminative state of affairs is far plainer in school education system; *The State Education Law – 1953* sets educational objectives for state schools that emphasize Jewish history and culture. Article 2 of the law specifies that the primary objective of education is to preserve the Jewish nature of the state by teaching its history, culture, language, etc. Students in Arab state-run schools receive very little instruction in Palestinian or Arab history and culture, and spend more time learning the Torah than the Qur'an or the New Testament.

On the same token, the ministry of education issued in 2009 a report<sup>4</sup> which instructs that references to the word “Nakba” be removed from new Arabic textbooks. The term Nakba (“catastrophe” in Arabic) is used to refer to the mass destruction of the Palestinians homeland upon the establishment of the State of Israel 1948. Moreover, a new bill commonly referred to as the “Nakba Law”<sup>5</sup>, proposes to ban all bodies that receive state funding from spending money on any activity that, inter alia, “commemorates Independence Day or the day of the establishment of the state as a day of mourning”.

Finally Badil wishes to draw the HRC attention to the fact that whereas the Palestinians' demands initially were of inclusiveness, Israel's persistent violation and suppression of their inherent rights as an indigenous minority might turn these demands into seperative nature. Furthermore, continuation of Israel's policy towards its Palestinians' citizens will proliferate the already vulnerable situation in the region and alarms a slippery slope to yet a more violent conflict.

We urge the Human rights council:

- To urge the state of Israel to halt all forms of intolerance and discrimination against the Palestinian minority based on ethnic, linguistic and religious grounds.
- Furthermore to call upon Israel to annul immediately all discriminatory laws that stand at odds with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
- Investigate all forms of Palestinian minority discrimination in view of providing remedies to all victims

**Thank you for your attention**

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<sup>4</sup> Titled the Gov of Israel believes in Education ; available at:

[http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/owl/hebrew/alsederhayom/education\\_presentation\\_final\\_opt.pdf](http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/owl/hebrew/alsederhayom/education_presentation_final_opt.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> An amendment to the State Budget Law-1985