



Right Hon William Hague MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Also by email: private.office@fco.gov.uk

For the attention of: Right Hon William Hague MMP

30 May 2013

Dear Mr. Hague,

Re: The Praver-Begin Bill and proposed mass forced displacement of Palestinian Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel

We write to express our concern at the Praver-Begin Bill that was proposed and adopted by the Israeli government on 6 May 2013. The Praver-Begin Bill, if enacted into law and implemented, would lead to the eviction and destruction of most of the unrecognised Arab Bedouin villages in the Naqab (Negev) desert in the south of Israel. In the process, it would dispossess and forcibly displace tens of thousands of Palestinian Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel from their ancestral land, villages and homes.

On 6 May 2013, the Ministerial Committee on Legislation approved the proposed “Law for the Regulation of Bedouin Settlement in the Negev – 2013” (Praver-Begin Bill). The Israeli human rights NGOs, Adalah and the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, have prepared a joint briefing paper which outlines how the proposed law violates both Israeli constitutional law, including the right to dignity, as well as international human rights principles such as equality, non-discrimination, the right to property, and meaningful participation in planning and decision-making.

The proposed legislation will serve as the implementing arm of the Praver-Begin Plan, the government’s overarching policy framework for the Arab Bedouin. Even though the Praver-Begin Bill remains pending before the Knesset, according to a press release issued on 27 May 2013 by Adalah and the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality the Israeli government has already begun to implement the planned displacement and dispossession throughout the Naqab.

In light of these serious developments, which attempt to provide legal underpinning for the proposed mass forcible displacement of Palestinian Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel from their land and homes in violation of fundamental international human rights principles and Israeli constitutional law, we urge that the British government lead the international community in making the following rule of law and human rights compatible recommendations to the Israeli government:

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- Cancel the Praver-Begin Plan and the legislative process for bill, as recommended in 2012 by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the European Parliament;
- Recognize the historical land rights of the Arab Bedouin in the Naqab and their traditional way of life; and respect their right to choose their own place of residence, without discriminatory restrictions;
- Establish a committee, with adequate Arab Bedouin representation, to implement the Alternative Master Plan for the unrecognized villages, which provides a professional framework for recognition of the unrecognized villages as a critical step towards addressing historic injustice;
- Cease the policy of home demolitions, evictions, and indirect methods of forced displacement, including the denial of access to basic services and water.

Yours sincerely,

Tareq Shrourou
Director, Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights