

### **Opening Remarks**

On 30 March, we shall commemorate the 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Land Day. Land Day began as a general strike in 1976 to protest against Israeli governmental policies of massive land confiscation of Arab-owned land. The day ended with the killing of six Arab citizens of Israel from Sakhnin and Arrabeh in the Galilee by Israeli security forces. Each year, Arabs in Israel hold memorials and demonstrations to remember this day.

This year, 2012, one of the greatest threats to the land rights of Arab citizens is the Praver Plan. If this plan is enacted into law, it would lead to the forced displacement of up to 70,000 Arab Bedouin from their homes in the unrecognized villages in the Naqab (Negev) to government-planned townships unsuited to their way of life, and the final dispossession of their ancestral lands. Adalah and its NGO partners are campaigning locally and internationally against this proposed law.

This month, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) raised concerns about the situation of the Arab Bedouin particularly regarding the policy of home demolitions and the loss of their land and access to new land. Notably, it recommended that Israel, "withdraw the 2012 discriminatory proposed Law for the Regulation of the Bedouin Settlement in the Negev [the Praver Plan Law], which would legalize the ongoing policy of home demolitions and forced displacement of the indigenous Bedouin communities."

Heeding the UN's call, on this 36<sup>th</sup> Land Day, Adalah urges the Israeli government to: cancel the Praver Plan Law; recognize the unrecognized villages and Arab Bedouin claims to their ancestral land; halt home demolitions and forced evictions from Arab Bedouin villages; and engage in meaningful dialogue with the Arab Bedouin community and the Arab political leadership to resolve the land claims in the Naqab.