



Discriminatory bill to evict tens of thousands of Bedouin communities in Israel from their ancestral lands – time for EU action

Brussels, 2 July 2013 - The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) condemns the approval of the discriminatory Praver-Begin Bill, which passed its first reading by a vote of 43 to 40 in the Israeli parliament (Knesset) on Monday 24 June 2013. This bill constitutes the implementing legislative arm of a government-approved plan, parts of which have already been put in practice, to displace tens of thousands of Bedouin citizens, who are part of the Palestinian Arab minority of Israel, from their homes and ancestral lands in the Naqab (Negev) desert in southern Israel. EMHRN urges the EU leaders to immediately, strongly and publicly take a tough stance against this plan.

The Praver-Begin Bill is widely opposed by the Bedouin community, the Palestinian Arab political leadership in Israel, local civil society engaged in this question, and the international community. According to a new poll conducted by Rabbis for Human Rights, a majority of Jewish Israelis, when properly informed about what the plan entails, also oppose it and believe that the Bedouin's land claims are fair.

In 2012, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing have called to cancel this discriminatory displacement plan. The UN Human Rights Committee requested information from Israel of any steps taken to withdraw the plan. The European Union (EU) has expressed its concerns about it a number of times, including in the 2013 ENP progress report and in a [resolution](#) of the European Parliament (EP) of 5 July 2012.

Considering the urgency of the case, on Thursday 20 June 2013, the European Parliament (EP) subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) hosted a parliamentary hearing on the human rights situation of the Bedouin and other minorities in Israel, where this plan dominated the discussions.

Despite intense local and international criticism, the Israeli coalition government has listed the passage of the Praver-Begin Bill as one of its top priorities, and following the first reading, the bill will now be sent to the Committee for Interior Affairs and Environment to be prepared for the second and third readings. This bill may become law before the closing of the Knesset session at the end of July 2013.

EMHRN asks High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton to issue a public statement condemning the Praver-Begin bill as discriminatory and contrary to the human rights provision of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. The EU should thus publicly denounce and urge the Israeli government to protect the rights of all citizens to full equality, in particular to protect the rights of the Arab Bedouin as well as the Arab minority as a whole.

EMHRN also requests that the European Parliament's president, Martin Schulz, express his concern to the Chairman of the Israeli parliament and the Israeli Ambassador to the EU about the Praver Plan and the denial of equal treatment that results from it. The European Parliament itself should address this issue.

The 'Alternative Plan', an initiative of the Bedouin community created by professional planners that, on the basis of equality, proposes the recognition of the unrecognized villages, is a just framework for future development that must be considered.

For more information, see:

* Adalah: [Update: Praver-Begin Bill and the Forced Displacement of the Bedouin](#)

* EMHRN, Adalah, Arab Association for Human Rights: [EU and the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel](#)

* HRA: [Israeli government continues to legitimize forced eviction of the Arab Bedouins of the Naqab](#)

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