

**Adalah** The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel

عدالة المركز القانوني لحقوق الأقليّة العربيّة في إسرائيل  
עזאלה המרכז המשפטי לזכויות המיעוט הערבי בישראל



### Forbidden Land

'Forbidden Land' is a short documentary produced by Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel that highlights the confiscation of Palestinian Arab-owned land by Israel. Thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel lost their land in the 1950s and 1960s after the government seized it, claiming that the land was needed for "essential" public purposes. Attorney Suhad Bishara, head of the Land and Planning Unit in Adalah, explains that "these cases are classic ones of expropriation for the sake of expropriation, nothing more."



"They took our land to build, to settle. But since then they haven't built a single house... We want to build here. Why won't they let us return?" Mohammed Abd El Hassan Jabareen, former resident of Lajoun

'Forbidden Land' examines the issue of land confiscation through two specific cases on which Adalah is working. The first case focuses on the appropriation of a 200-dunam plot of land in the village of Lajoun, located near to the Arab town of Umm al-Fahem in the center of Israel. The land was expropriated in 1953 at the order of then-Minister of Finance Levi Ashkol, in

accordance with his powers under the Land Acquisition Law (1953). Approximately 34,600 dunams of land in Umm al-Fahem, including in the area of Lajoun, were appropriated for “essential settlement and development needs”. However, over the next 55 years, the land was not put to use by Israel, and where the village used to stand, there is now just a forest and the crumbling remains of a water-well. In March 2007, the Nazareth District Court rejected a lawsuit filed by Adalah on behalf of 300 Palestinian Arab families who are seeking the return of their land in Lajoun. An appeal to the Supreme Court of Israel is pending.

The second case centers on a ten-dunam plot of land in Nazareth owned by the Hamdan family that was confiscated by the state in 1958 under the Land Ordinance (1943) for alleged “public use”. However, the land was never used for such purposes and was offered for sale and sold by Mivtahim Ltd., a private company in 2008. In 1958, the Finance Minister transferred the land to Mivtahim, which then built a small hotel for its workers on a part of the land that operated until 2000. Adalah submitted a petition to the Israeli Supreme Court in July 2008 on behalf of three members of the family demanding the return of the plot of land. However, the court rejected the request for a temporary injunction to prevent Mivtahim Ltd. from selling the land. The petition also remains pending.

Testimonies from the families who lost their land are presented alongside an interview with Adalah Attorney Bishara who has been working on their cases. The film casts new light on a harsh system of state land confiscation that continues to dispossess Palestinian citizens of Israel of their land.

"Let me have the land that belonged to my father, to my grandfather. We are attached to this land. Why won't you give it back?" - Sa'ed Hamdan

Adalah is releasing this video in commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 17 of the UDHR states that: (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others; and (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Language	Arabic
Subtitled in	English and Hebrew
Country of Filming	Israel
Country of Production	Israel
Original format	16:9 DVCAM-PAL (color)
Running time	7 minutes, 55 seconds
Sound	Stereo
Distribution formats	DVD-PAL (all regions) DVD-NTSC (all regions) Quicktime Movie (H.264 encoding) Quicktime Movie (MPEG)

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(The contents of the film are the sole responsibility of Adalah, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU)