



Date : 14/01/2022

Israel's 'green' expulsions of Bedouins from the Negev must cease immediately

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](#)) condemns in the strongest possible terms the [Jewish National Fund's](#) (JNF) recently launched a campaign of afforestation in the Negev, which has been described as a strategy of “soft expulsion” of the Arab Bedouin people of the region.

International civil society must put pressure on the [JNF](#) to cease this inhumane program of expropriation and expulsion, whilst Israel must be forced to recognise the historic lands claims of the Bedouin people, many of whom continue to see their homes routinely [destroyed](#) by Israeli occupation forces.

The [Jewish National Fund](#) (JNF) is a quasi-governmental body that controls 13 percent of land in Israel. Last Sunday, in the Negev, the JNF began a [tree-planting campaign](#) on lands belonging to al-Atrash Family, local Bedouins. Al-Atrash's claim to the plot, filed in 1973, has still not been validated.

The tree-planting campaign immediately sparked protests by the nearby population. By Tuesday 11 January, 18 Bedouins had been arrested, amongst them seven minors.

Founded in 1901, the JNF has historically played [a major role](#) in the [expelling Palestinians](#) from historic Palestine, a role which continues today. Activities such as were seen Sunday threaten not only to rob Bedouin farmers of their livelihoods – more ominously, Bedouin leaders describe the tree-planting campaign as the first step in their expulsion from the lands.



And indeed, Sunday's tree-planting was just one part of a \$48 million plan by the Israel Land Authority (ILA) to create new forests across huge swathes of so-called public lands, including over six Bedouin villages that [remain](#) "unrecognised", that is, by the state itself.

Whilst talks between various political parties appear to have brought an end to the immediate crisis, AOHR UK joins local Bedouin leaders in decrying the imminent threat of expulsions via tree-planting and other such practices. AOHR UK demands that the JNF's campaign cease, and that the Bedouin people's [landownership](#) be recognised.

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