

**The 99th session of the Human Rights Committee
Geneva, 12 to 14 July 2010**

Presented by Mr Khalil Alamour,

**Member of Alsira Village Committee and board member of Negev Coexistence Forum
for Civil Equality**

I would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to speak.

My name is Khalil Alamour and I am a Bedouin man from the southern desert region of Israel. It is an honour to speak on behalf of my village and the Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality and to present our shadow report on Israel's Third Periodic Report pursuant to the ICCPR.

One of the most critical issues that we believe needs to be addressed by the State of Israel in order to comply with the ICCPR is its treatment of Bedouins in 'unrecognized villages'. About 190,000 Bedouin live in the Naqab and almost half of this population lives in villages that are not recognized by the government. The State thus refers to them as 'illegal villages'. They do not appear on any official maps and we cannot register these villages on our identity cards as our residential address. I come from one of these villages, Alsira. All construction in the village is 'illegal' and can be demolished by the government. My own home is subject to a demolition order as I speak along with all the other homes in my village.

Nor can we participate in or be represented in local council and municipal planning bodies as we are prevented from exercising the basic political right to vote and run for office in local government. This means effectively that we are also denied the right to shape the policy that affects the quality of our lives. Moreover, we are denied all public services including water and electricity. This is how the Government pressures us to leave our land—land that has been in our families for generations and generations.

This is a gross violation of our rights as indigenous people and we urgently ask the Committee to encourage the government of Israel to respect its obligations under the ICCPR by recognizing these villages and ensuring that their residents are treated as equal citizens.

Thank you.