



Urgent Appeal to Halt Imminent Demolitions and Displacement of Bedouin Communities in the Negev-Naqab

To: Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Gunnar Theissen and Mariya Stoyanova, UN housing / Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons / Andrea Pontiroli, Deputy Head of Mission - Head of Political, Press and Information Section, Delegation of the European Union to Israel / Prof. Fernand De Varennes, Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues / Francisco Calí Tzay, Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

International Human Rights Organizations; and Members of the Media (Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch; Reporters Without Borders)

From: The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality

Date: September 16, 2024

We urgently appeal for your intervention to stop the escalating home demolitions and forced displacements of Bedouin communities in Israel's Negev-Naqab region. These actions, driven by discriminatory policies that prioritize Jewish settlement expansion, constitute a grave violation of international law and demand immediate international action.

On September 12, 2024, Israeli police raided the village of Umm al-Hiran, delivering eviction notices and announcing its imminent demolition within two months. This action, tragically reminiscent of the 2017 killing of resident Yaqub Abu al-Qi'an during a previous demolition attempt, reopens deep wounds and instills profound fear within the community.

The demolition of Umm al-Hiran is not an isolated incident but part of a systematic policy of displacement targeting Bedouin communities across the Negev-Naqab. During the first half of this year alone, over 2,000 structures have been demolished, leaving countless families homeless and dispossessed. These actions directly contravene international law, including Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right to adequate housing and Article 31 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which guarantee the right to adequate housing and protection from forced displacement.

The Israeli government attempts to justify these demolitions by framing Bedouin villages as "squatters" and their presence on their ancestral lands as "illegal." This rhetoric masks the discriminatory nature of these policies, which aim to displace indigenous Bedouin communities.



The impact of these demolitions is devastating. Families are forcibly removed from their homes, often with little to no notice, and left with nowhere to go. Children are traumatized, and their education is disrupted. The elderly and people with disabilities face immense challenges in accessing essential services and rebuilding their lives.

We kindly appeal to you, Mr. and Ms., in your critical roles within the UN, to:

- **Publicly condemn** the ongoing demolitions and forced displacements in the Negev-Naqab.
- **Demand an immediate moratorium** on all planned demolitions and evictions.
- **Conduct an independent investigation** into Israel's discriminatory land and housing policies.
- **Call on the Israeli government to uphold its obligations** under international law, including the right to adequate housing and the prohibition of racial discrimination.

We further call on international human rights organizations to provide legal and humanitarian assistance to affected communities and advocate for measures to hold Israel accountable. We urge journalists to report on the human impact of these demolitions, challenge the Israeli government's narrative, and demand justice for the victims.

Destroying villages is not governance as Minister Ben-Gvir, the Minister of National Security claims; ensuring full and equal citizenship is the only path forward. We implore the international community to act now to prevent further human rights violations and support a just and equitable solution for all residents of the Negev-Naqab.

The international community cannot stand idly by while homes are demolished and families are torn apart. We urge you to take immediate action to halt these demolitions and ensure a just and sustainable future for the Bedouin people of the Negev-Naqab.

The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality