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By Palestine and the Middle East
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The Jewish National Fund is ethnically cleansing the Naqab



Sources: Palestinian People's Campaign Against the Apartheid Wall

Today at dawn, January 12, 2022, Israeli bulldozers and soldiers prepared to fight **invaded** the Palestinian village of Al-Atrash in the Naqab desert in southern Palestine in 1948 [today Israel]. For the third day in a row, Israeli bulldozers have been razing large swaths of land belonging to Palestinians in the village.

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The escalation of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Al-Atrash is part of a scheme that is being jointly implemented by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Israeli Land Authority.

In response to this, Palestinians in Al-Atrash and the surrounding areas have been demonstrating for three days in an attempt to stop the seizure of their land.

It is hardly surprising that Israeli colonial forces brutally suppressed the protests. As we write this article, Israeli forces **arrested** nine protesters after violently attacking them.



Yesterday, Tuesday, January 11, Palestinian residents of Al-Atrash set up a sit-in with a tent at the site Israel is seeking to demolish and seize. In addition to this, Palestinians carried out a strike in different areas of Naqab, including the villages of Al-Atrash, Sa'wah, BeirHadaj, Al-Zarnouq, Al-Rwayyis and Khirbet Al-Watan.

To stop Palestinians trying to thwart this ethnic cleansing scheme, Israeli soldiers stormed the store, vandalized it and attacked the protesters. Eighteen people were arrested yesterday. Others were injured and soldiers threw tear gas canisters and stun grenades at protesters.

Still, intensified Israeli brutality only encourages Palestinians to demonstrate further. Community leaders and organizers in the Naqab are calling for a mass protest and strike to take place tomorrow.

The unrecognized Palestinian existence in the Naqab

The village of Al-Atrash is one of 35 villages not recognized in the Naqab by the Israeli colonial authorities. Approximately 100,000 Palestinians with third-party Israeli citizenship live in these villages.

By failing to recognize them, Israel denies Palestinians living there basic services, such as health centers, schools, water, electricity and sewage infrastructure. Israel also denies village residents building permits, in places where their homes are constantly demolished or are under threat of demolition at all times.

In addition to Al-Atrash, the village of Al-Araqueeb is another perfect example of Israel's malevolent practices and policies against so-called unrecognized villages. So far, the Israeli authorities have demolished Al-Araqueeb more than 190 times.

This coercive environment in which Palestinians are forced to live serves Israeli plans to expand Jewish settlements in the Naqab.

On the ruins of these villages the Israeli authorities, through the JNJ (JNF), seek to plant trees of injustice, apartheid and colonization. 45,000 *dunams of ethnically cleansed* land will be reforested by the JNF.

The JNF calls this campaign of ethnic cleansing the *Design of the Negev*. Through the Negev Design Campaign, the JNF falsely promotes an image of the Naqab as an empty and barren land that needs revitalization to be inhabited by people, mainly Jews.

The intention of this project is to replace the Palestinian owners of the Naqab land with 500.000 new Jewish settlers and JNF trees.

Palestinians, regardless of the legal framework that subjugates them, are currently facing the same forced displacements practiced by the Israeli occupation authorities in different parts of Historic Palestine. In addition to the Naqab, the existence of Palestinians is criminalized and threatened in the South Hebron Hills (SHH) and the Jordan Valley.

Today Israeli bulldozers invaded Al-Fakheet in the SHH and demolished five residential shops, a water well and two animal shelters.



Demolition attack in Al-Fakheet, SHH

In the Bedouin community of **lbziq** in the Jordan Valley, more than 40 people have now been left homeless after the Israeli occupying forces demolished their homes on 28 December.

Source: <https://www.stophewall.org/2022/01/18/el-fondo-nacional-judio-esta-limpiando-etnicamente-el-naqab/?lang=es>

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