TEN

Postmilitary Rule, the Oslo Era, and the Contemporary Prawer Debate

DESPITE THE FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT of the end of military rule, on November 6, 1966, its dynamics and characteristics continued for a number of years. Other state agencies filled the roles previously occupied by the military government. At this time, new structures and governance bodies started to appear in Bedouin villages. These new state agencies took charge of law enforcement among Bedouin and encouraged plans for urbanization.

In their attempts to control the Bedouin, the Israelis used legislation to establish special government agencies to deal with them. These new state agencies filled the same role as the military government. They followed a similar plan for controlling the Bedouin. If one examines the Naqab after the formal abolition of the military government, it is easy to identify many state agencies that played a role in imposing state laws on the Bedouin. For example, the Bedouin Development Authority (BDA), the Bedouin Education Authority (BEA), and the Israel Land Administration (ILA) all performed functions previously taken on by the military government (Abu Saad and Creamer 2012). Other state agencies such as the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) also played a role in governing the Bedouin (cf. Amara and Miller 2012).

Government bodies such as the Unit for Housing Inspection in the Ministry of the Interior and the Land Settlement Registrar at the Ministry of Justice also participated in imposing state policies on the Bedouin.

These agencies were responsible for acting against illegal Bedouin housing and for land-claim registration (Greenspan 2005). There was also an Implementation Authority. The Rotem was a special police unit for law enforcement among the Bedouin (Yiftachel 2003, 36). From time to time, the ILA disrupted Bedouin who were continuing to live on their land. The ILA would raid the Bedouin in order to try to impose land utilization on them. The ILA excuse was that the Bedouin had built illegally on state land without permission (Jakubowska 1992, 90).

In 1976, Ariel Sharon established a key government unit that contained and amplified these post-military developments intended to enforce restrictions on Bedouin life. Part of the Agriculture Ministry, this special unit was called the Green Patrol. It was set up to guard and protect state land from the Bedouin (Swirski and Hasson 2006). Bedouin women called it the "Black Patrol" (interview with Amneh, July 2013). Members of the unit usually arrived with the intention of fighting so-called Bedouin infiltration and reducing the number of Bedouin flocks to stop overgrazing (Falah 1985; Horowitz and Abu Saad 2007). The Green Patrol confiscated Bedouin flocks and demolished Bedouin tents. It justified its actions against the Bedouin by arguing that they damaged the desert environment with their black goats (Jakubowska 1992, 90–91). It also claimed the Bedouin had been grazing their livestock in a closed military area. Shepherds had to pay high fines to retrieve their herds and sometimes recovered considerably fewer animals than had been taken.

The Green Patrol became the main tool used by the Likud party and the Agriculture Ministry to gather the Bedouin and settle them into specific places. It employed a policy of pulling down and demolishing Bedouin tents and houses. It expropriated, killed, or sold thousands of animals and sometimes required their owners to pay high fines. The Bedouin assumed that these policies intended to terrorize them in order to make them leave their land (*Sawt al-bilad*, July 1, 1984). They therefore resisted such actions. They continued to graze their flocks wherever possible and even took to concealing the tracks of their animals. Sometimes the women spoke to the Green Patrol as a tactic to marginalize the patrol. Testimonies of Bedouin women show that the Green Patrol would raid their encampments and pull down their tents. The patrol would cut the main ropes and then drag the tents behind their jeeps in order to force the Bedouin to leave (interview with Hajja Sarah, May 2014).

Government agencies started to find new tactics to force Bedouin to submit and to follow government policies. Greenspan (2005) describes the

authorities' enforcement policies toward the Bedouin. Some of these worked against those who used state land or against those who built illegally. The government used the Green Patrol to enforce these acts. In an interview conducted in al-ʿAraqib (north Rahat) before its demolition in 2010, the shaikhs of the village confirmed that the authorities used tough tactics to force the Bedouin to leave their land. These tactics included assessing and imposing fines, sending shaikhs to court, prosecuting tribal members, issuing demolition orders, bulldozing cultivated fields, and spraying toxic chemicals on crops. Some family members became ill and had to have hospital treatment because they had been poisoned (interview with Haj Ismael al-Tori, August 2010).

The policy of demolishing Bedouin homes begun in the 1960s has continued until the present (well-known cases are al-ʿAraqib and ʿAtir Um al-Hiran). In the wake of the abolition of the military government, agencies such as the ILA and the JNF continued to demolish the lives of the Naqab Bedouin. However, the Bedouin did not submit.[1]

Memory and the Bedouin Right of Return

Bedouin started to submit more demands for the right to live on their native land after the abolition of the military government and the start of urbanization. Reclaiming the land had not been possible during the military government. In some cases, the Bedouin began to cultivate their land. This linked them to the past and was important in helping them remember their history. This indicates that Bedouin awareness of their native land became stronger after the termination of the military government.

Bedouin adopted the return to their land (*al-ʿawda ila al-diyar*) as a historical reimagining of their past. The act of remembering the past, especially historical lands and names of places, played a crucial role in Bedouin survival tactics. They strengthened their land claims by using memory to tell the authorities that they would never forget their land. Stories of the past narrated by Bedouin emphasized the role of memory as a survival strategy. According to Aburabia (2014), telling stories about the past and visiting their former lands became an integral part of Bedouin rituals. If asked, almost any family in Rahat today has a story to tell of land claims and their willingness to return.

The Bedouin right of return to their ancestral land manifested itself in various ways. Through cultivating their land, bringing their extended families, and telling their children about their past, the Bedouin conveyed a sense of consciousness of their former lives (interview with Hajja Fatmeh, March 2014). They started to return on weekends and holidays to visit their indigenous and historical land. These everyday acts turned into acts of survival and of bringing the past to life. For example, the two religious feasts of ʿEid al-Adha and ʿEid al-Fitr became crucial holidays for returning to the land, remembering the past, and exchanging stories. In this way, Bedouin visits to demolished villages and expropriated land turned into emotional events that recalled happy childhoods and strengthened old memories. Parents were proud to tell their children, "This land was our land, *ardna,* and we shall return to it one day" (interview with Abu Ahmad al-Nasasrah, March 2014). Taking photographs of the land that included their children was an obvious way of laying claim. In some cases, when access to a particular site was barred, the photos were taken from behind a fence. Today, in many Bedouin houses, one sees framed pictures hanging in the sitting room that include scenes of the family on their historical land. In many cases, women's embroidery includes the Palestinian flag, often seen hanging in Bedouin living rooms. Every visitor is told the history behind each picture.

When I conducted interviews in Rahat, I heard stories of how the Bedouin perceived their new life in the towns. Some of these attitudes were shocking. Some interviewees referred to the day they moved to Rahat as a "black day" (*yawm aswad*) in their life. Others said that they were living in a "diaspora" (*al-mahjar*) and never felt loyal to Rahat as a town. For example, a Bedouin who was forced to leave his land east of Beersheba and to live in Rahat said:

> I wish I could go to my tribe's land and to live on it, from where we were evicted and to which we were not allowed to return. Here in Rahat we feel like strangers, we feel that we do not belong to this town at all. I do not see my future in this town, I want to go back to my ancestral land; even living in a tent is much better than this nightmare called Rahat. I am "strange" in Rahat, I have no land, and I live on other Bedouin land, even though we bought it from the government. There is no value in living in this town, as we do not have land of our own here.
>
> (INTERVIEW WITH AHMAD, MARCH 2014)

Other Bedouin reclaim their identity by taking their children to see their ancestral land: "The children must know where we lived before the Nakba, they must memorize the names of the valleys and names of different routes." As one interviewee explained:

> I live in Rahat today, but my land in Tal al-Malah is still empty and we are not allowed to enter it except once or twice a year only, on holidays, such as al-Adha. Every ʿEid I take my children to our land east of Beersheba, we take pictures and I remind my sons that here was my house, here are our dams, wells, olive trees and grape vines. All that remains to us is 'memory,' we will not forget the piece of land. I was born on it, I will say until my last breath that it is my land and I wish to be buried there.
> (INTERVIEW WITH MUHAMAD ABU NASSAR, JUNE 2013)

During the last two decades, visits to Bedouin native lands have taken different shapes and have even turned into permanent living arrangements. Many Bedouin families, disillusioned by the empty promises of Israeli authorities, began to employ much more effective forms of resistance by building their tents and wooden shacks on their ancestral land. Sayah al-Tori recounted the story of how his tribe had gone back to their land at al-ʿAraqib after it had become tired of government pledges. This Bedouin shaikh was evicted from his land in the 1950s but had been promised that he could return in a few months. However, the struggle to return continued until the tribe understood that the Israeli authorities would not allow it. When I interviewed the shaikh in 2009, he said that they were fed up with Israeli promises:

> I have been waiting for more than forty years to be allowed to return to my land, but this dream has never come true. The Israeli authorities promised us a couple of times we could return to our land, but it was only on paper. As a consequence, we decided to return into our native land and to build our houses without having the authorities permit. This is our land, and I will live here forever, and I will not wait for the Israeli authorities to defraud us any longer. Now we are cultivating our land and remembering our past, whether the authorities want it or not.
> (INTERVIEW WITH SAYAH AL-TORI, JULY 2009)

Al-ʿAraqib village was neither the first nor the last case in which the Bedouin finally started to return to their land.[2] Enforcement tactics did not stop the Bedouin from continuing their lives.

Another village that faced destruction was Twayel Abu Jarwal, near the village of Laqiya. The al-Talalqa tribe lived in the village for generations before the establishment of the state of Israel. They have resisted attempts to make them leave their land and have confronted the destruction of their village more than thirty times. They continue to resist, putting their shacks and tents back together again. Each time they rebuild, the government returns, harassing them, uprooting fences, and demolishing the village yet again. From time to time, government agents come to make sure the work is complete and that there are no Bedouin still living there. This tribe has also been subject to arrest for rebuilding their houses and working on their land. Recently, the police arrested fifteen members of the tribe, claiming they had attacked JNF workers over a land dispute. The police maintained that "the sabotage and violence were perpetrated by an organized, hierarchic group which operated secretly."[3]

In both of these cases, Bedouin rejected state policies by going back to their historical land.[4] They marginalized the state's policies and adopted silent resistance. They claimed their land and visited it with their children. Land claims represented one form of resistance adopted by the Bedouin after the abolition of the military government, and beginning in the 1970s, numerous Bedouin land claims appeared in Israeli courts.[5] But these were not sufficient. The Bedouin had to physically to return to their ancestral land and cultivate it again, arguing that it was their land:

> Everywhere I go with my family and we cultivate our land; this is what remains from our past. In order not to marginalize our historical claims for our land, cultivation is the symbol of our land and past. At least we will not give up, this is the piece of land where we grew up and played together, and I remember every metre of it, the valleys, the dams, the wells, and I could even tell you the number of trees we planted there. These olive trees, vines, and fig trees are the symbol and testimony that it is our land; it does not matter what the Israelis think. (INTERVIEW WITH YOUSEF, MAY 2014)

Memory has taken another shape among the 1948 generation, who still use the historical names of their demolished villages and land. It is

immediately recognizable that the past is still alive and remains within their memories. They do not used any of the names Israel has created in order to change the identity of places in the Naqab. Mentioning the original names of valleys, villages, dams, wells, and roads is one form of memory that challenges the Israeli policy of "Hebrew-izing" the historical names of al-Naqab.

The majority of my interviewees negated the "Hebrew-izing" of their villages and land names. When they refer to Beersheba, they always say Biʾr al-Sabaʿ. It is the same for Wadi al-Shalala, Bir al-Mshash, Tal al-Malah, Wadi al-Shariaʾ, Kharbit Zummara, al-Hdeiba, Tal Abu Jaber, and many more.

The Unrecognized Bedouin Villages

After the abolition of military rule, the Israeli authorities planned and recognized a few Bedouin villages. According to Moshe Arens (2013), "Only a process of Westernization, or in this case Israelization, can bring normality to Bedouin society."[6] However, after the Israeli authorities had created the seven permanent Bedouin towns, the phenomenon of unrecognized villages emerged. Despite being full Israeli citizens, all Bedouins who refused to move into the planned towns were categorized by the authorities as illegal and unrecognized. Most of the unrecognized villages were created before the establishment of the state of Israel. Some came about because of special orders issued by the military governors in the 1950s, as in the case of ʿAtir Um al-Hiran (Nasasra 2012). At that time, the military governors pushed the remaining Bedouin to move to the enclosed zone, and this led to the development of new unrecognized villages.

Today, the thirty-six unrecognized villages accommodate half of the Arab Bedouin citizens of Israel. They are deprived of basic services such as housing, water, electricity, education, and health care directly because of the conflict over land ownership and indigenous rights. Bedouin residents of unrecognized villages resisted moving to the planned towns because doing so meant that they would lose their land rights.

The government took a significant step toward resolution of these challenges in 2000 by beginning the process of recognizing another set of Bedouin villages (Abu Saad and Creamer 2012, 40–41). Recognition (both full and partial) was granted to ten new villages: Elgren, Um Bateen, Um Metnan, Qasser Al Ser, Tlaaʾ Rashid, Abu Tlool, Alforaʾa, ʿAmrah, Beir Haddaj,

and Drijat. While the government now legally recognizes these villages, it has made no investment in them even though they accommodate thousands of Bedouin citizens. Essential medical and welfare services are still lacking today in most of these villages.

According to a Human Rights Watch report (2008), the overall umbrella for the proposed new villages was the Abu Basma Regional Council. This council began to operate early in 2004. A Jewish mayor heads the council, and there is no significant administrative role for the Bedouin residents. Even though the official recognition process has begun, the procedures needed for obtaining full recognition, such as having full representation, remain complicated. In some cases, this is because of disputed land ownership. In others, it is because of slow-moving or blocked procedures. For the regional council, legal recognition of the ten villages does not seem likely to settle the conflict over recognition of historical Bedouin villages.

The Oslo Era and Raising Awareness of the Bedouin Struggle

The rise of indigenous Bedouin politics and efforts to establish a Bedouin political party accelerated following the signing of the Oslo Accords (1993, 1995). Awareness of Bedouin marginalization and the struggle for recognition also increased considerably.

Interviews that I conducted in the Naqab confirmed that the Oslo Accords strongly contributed to the politicization of the Bedouin community. Former MK ʿAbd al-Wahab Darawsha maintained that since the early 1990s, the Naqab has witnessed an Arab political awakening among the youth. According to him, many of these young people were against voting for the Mapai party and the fragmented politics of the shaikhs (interview with ʿAbd al-Wahab Darawsha, October 25, 2014, Iksal). At the same time, the Bedouin organized community conferences in an attempt to establish a unified party that would speak on their behalf (*Kul al-ʿArab*, February 16, 1996). Talab al-Sanne, the local MK from the Bedouin village of Lakiya, believed that political awareness of the Naqab Bedouin had increased since the Oslo Accords. He felt that this new awareness could be attributed to the ongoing marginalization of the Bedouin cause (interview with Talab al-Sanne, *Kul al-ʿArab*, February 16, 1996). According to Darawsha, a number of Palestinian leaders,

such as Jibril al-Rjob and Saeb Erikat, arrived in the Naqab after the Oslo Accords were signed. This contributed to awareness among the Palestinian leadership of the marginalized situation in the Naqab (interview with ʿAbd al-Wahab Darawsha, October 25, 2014, Iksal).

After the Oslo Accords, there were significant efforts to establish a political list for all the Naqab Bedouin in 1996. As Darawsha put it, the Naqab had witnessed not only an Islamic awakening but also an educational, Arab, and national awakening (interview with Darawsha, October 25, 2014, Iksal). Activists and local educated leaders began to establish an independent Bedouin party in the Naqab. This local grassroots initiative led to the establishment of a political party called Nida al-Wifaq on August 5, 1995, in the village of Lakiya. The local activist Saed al-Zabarqa was its head, and its general secretary was Hassan Abu Saad. Its main agenda was to improve the situation in the Naqab and represent the Bedouin community (Nida al-Wifaq, 1995).[7] *Davar* reported that 200 people from the Naqab had attended the launch of the party. In an impressive initial move, Nida al-Wifaq declared that one of the party's aims was to put the Bedouin on the political map of the Arabs in Israel (*Davar*, August 27, 1995).

Nida al-Wifaq represented a new form of indigenous politics that struggled against the traditional politics of the shaikhs. According to Mohamad al-Sayed, a local journalist writing in 1995, the Naqab saw growing nationalism following the Oslo Accords. This was directly linked to the prevailing political situation. Clashes occurred between police and the local youth in Rahat, where Mohammad Abu Jammaʾ had been killed after the Haram al-Ibrahimi massacre (*Panorama*, August 18, 1995). Hassan Abu Saad observed that the several days of *intifada* in the Naqab following the al-Ibrahimi massacre contributed to increasing nationalism among the Bedouin during the mid-1990s (interview with Hassan Abu Saad, Lakiya, April 20, 2014).

Meetings took place between PLO representatives and local leaders in Nazareth and in the Naqab. In the villages of Lakiya, PLO representatives were hosted by MK Talab al-Sanne to celebrate the peace process (interview with Abu Ahmad, Lakiya, April 2014). Former MK ʿAbd al-Wahab Darawsha discussed in an interview how a number of Palestinian leaders, including Jibril al-Rjob and Saeb Erikat, visited the Naqab to find out more about the situation there. He noted that such visits to the minority were an active part of the peace process. He regarded the visits as the Naqab's backing the Oslo Accords. It also signaled a strengthening of the relationship among the

Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza (interview with ᶜAbd al-Wahab Darawsha, October 25 2014, Iksal).

Talal al-Kirnawi, the mayor of Rahat in 1995, described in another interview how Yitzhak Rabin was welcomed to Rahat. Rabin was praised as a hero of the peace process by thousands thronging the streets of the town. This was one of the most memorable moments of the peace celebrations in Rahat (interview with Talal al-Kirnawi, March 2015). Rabin sold the peace process to the Palestinians in Israel, but not to the Israeli Jewish population.

Bedouin delegations, including leading Bedouin shaikhs, visited Yasser Arafat and congratulated him on signing the peace accords. Shaikh Sulaiman Mustafa al-Nasasrah delivered a speech in 1994 in front of the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah about the situation of the Bedouin and their struggle for recognition (Shaikh Sulaiman Mustafa al-Nasasrah, private collection, Rahat). The Arab Democratic Party sent their greetings to Arafat during their third general party conference in Nazareth. The party stressed the importance of continuing the peace process and establishing a Palestinian state (The Arab Democratic Party Conference, Nazareth, December 1994).[8]

Arab leaders and politicians in Israel criticized the exclusion of the Arab minority from the peace process because they feared their continued marginalization. At a public event organized in Nazareth in 1994, Ramez Jaraysi, the former mayor, stated, "I fear that as a minority we will be the first to pay the price of the peace process with the Palestinians through further discriminatory policies and continued land discrimination" (*al-Ittihad*, September 11, 1994).

The Oslo Accords focused attention on the situation in the Naqab. They also encouraged the Palestinian leadership to visit the Naqab and support the Bedouin cause. Those acts of solidarity continue partly because of their shared struggle.

The Goldberg/Prawer Initiative

The government initiated the Goldberg/Prawer plan in 2007. The aim of the plan was to deal with the issue of land claims and unrecognized Bedouin villages. The Goldberg/Prawer committee is one more in the long list of committees that deal with Bedouin land claims. Many mainstream Israeli politicians regard it as the most likely committee so far to force a solution

to the conflict with the Bedouin. Ehud Olmert, a former prime minister, established the Goldberg Commission in December 2007.[9] He tasked the commission with finalizing the status of Bedouin land claims in the Naqab (Nasasra 2012).

The Bedouin sought to confirm that 800,000 *dunams* of land (a small portion of their historical lands) were recognized and recorded in the state registry. A report submitted in 2008 recommended that the government formally recognize some of the Bedouin land. The registry offices would list around 200,000 *dunams* (50,000 acres) as Bedouin territory. This was less than half of Bedouin land claims submitted since the 1970s.

The Goldberg Commission also recommended recognition of a limited number of the unrecognized villages.[10] The government formed a panel in January 2009 headed by Ehud Prawer, chief of the Policy Planning Department within the prime minister's office. The Prawer panel worked to implement the Goldberg recommendations by offering to settle less than 27 percent of the Bedouin claims. The Bedouin, represented by the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages and other local grassroots organizations, refused the offer. The Bedouin community could see that the Goldberg and Prawer recommendations would mean another catastrophe (*nakba*) for them (interview with Huda, March 2013).

Yisrael Beiteinu, the political party led by Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, urged the government to cancel the offer later in 2011 in response to the possible implementation of the Goldberg recommendations. The party recommended reducing the amount of land to be recognized (Nasasra 2012). Right-wing members of the Knesset and local Israeli council leaders in the Naqab also came out against the plan. This pressure from right-wing Israeli politicians paid off. The commission made modifications to the official recommendations of their report that included a reduction of the amount of land available to Bedouin communities. They also made a reduced offer of compensation to the Bedouin in order to persuade them to leave their land.

The Peaceful Movement

In 2010, it became apparent that public action would be vital in preventing this discriminatory bill from passing into law.[11] It was essential to appeal

to the media in order to influence public opinion by dismantling misconceptions about the Bedouin community. Such public actions caught the attention of both national and international media outlets. The rights of the indigenous people of the Naqab became a much discussed and contested issue.

The controversial Prawer plan received extensive national and international media coverage throughout 2013. In an unprecedented show of solidarity, Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and the diaspora rallied alongside those marching in the Naqab. As the Bedouin MK Talab Abu ʿArar explained, it was Bedouin awareness of their rights as a minority that prompted massive demonstrations against the Prawer plan. He argued that the bill had been contested by international as well as local organizations since its aim was to confiscate "what remained of Bedouin land, which [was] done under the cover of Israeli law" (interview with MK Talab Abu ʿArar, Jerusalem, February 2014). Similarly, ʿAbed al-Wahab Darawsha, a former MK from the Arab Democratic Party, pointed out that the Naqab today had undergone an intensive change. He said that the emergence of young leadership contributed immensely to the Naqab cause. The best example was the way in which the Naqab unified against the Prawer plan: "We have seen motivated youth who are seeking recognition and their rights" (interview with MK ʿAbd al-Wahab Darawsha, Iksal, February 2014).

The UN issued several statements that called directly for the withdrawal of the Prawer plan. It demanded immediate steps to connect unrecognized villages to the electricity and water grids while improving their infrastructure. Speaking in Geneva on July 25, 2013, Navi Pillay stated that "if this bill becomes law, it will accelerate the demolition of entire Bedouin communities, forcing them to give up their homes, denying them their rights to land ownership, and decimating their traditional cultural and social life in the name of development."[12] Other local organizations such as ACRI (the Association of Civil Rights in Israel) and Bimkom (planners for planning rights) campaigned for cancellation of the Prawer plan and urged people to boycott the bill.[13]

The bill edged through its first Knesset vote in June 2013, forty-three votes to forty. It was thought that the bill would become law before the end of the year. This emphasized the urgent need for public mobilization. Bedouin initiatives arose that included boycotting the government's plans at different levels and organizing protests in Arab villages across the country.

Protesters held demonstrations outside the Knesset in November 2013 while the bill was debated. There were also protests outside the Supreme Court during the hearings concerning the planned demolition of the unrecognized village of Um al-Hiran.[14]

Yitzhak Aharonovitch, the minister for public security, warned of the deteriorating situation and escalating demonstrations in the Naqab. He warned that "problems, fire in the south and the blocking of roads, [were] in response to efforts to regularize the Bedouin communities." He stressed the need for another 400 police officers in the southern region based on worst-case scenarios and increasing protests (*Haaretz*, July 18, 2013).

Public action against the Prawer plan gained momentum in the summer of 2013 with the organizing of national Day of Rage protests under the banner of "Prawer Won't Pass." On July 15, 2013, the High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel declared a public strike concurrent with demonstrations held in Biʾr al-Sabaʿ, Gaza City, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Bethlehem, and the Galilee. The largest protest took place in Biʾr al-Sabaʿ. The authorities declared this protest when the protestors staged a peaceful sit-in intended to block the main street by Ben Gurion University.[15] Protestors held further demonstrations on August 1 in Biʾr al-Sabaʿ, Wadi ʿArra, the Triangle area of central Israel, the West Bank, and in many cities around the world. Ten demonstrators were arrested in the northern Arab village of ʿAraʾra. The Haifa District Court released them under house arrest the following day. On August 31, around 1,000 demonstrators took to the streets in the center of Tel Aviv. Bedouin from al-ʿAraqib and other unrecognized villages led the protests.[16]

The Day of Rage protests reached a high point on November 30, 2013, the eve of the Knesset's second vote on the Prawer plan. Protesters organized in Israel, in the Occupied Territories, and in two dozen other locations worldwide. According to *Haaretz*, thousands protested the plan in the Naqab (in Hura), Jerusalem, and Haifa. At least twenty-eight people were arrested, and police officers were wounded. Avigdor Lieberman responded to the Day of Rage by claiming, "The fight is over Jewish land."[17]

The police continued to arrest activists in the Naqab and the north after the Day of Rage. The astonishing brutality displayed by the riot police was highly controversial for the Israeli public. Some right-wing groups criticized this violence, stating that the response of the riot police had been entirely disproportionate to the peaceful nature of the demonstrations. The image that most encapsulated the arbitrary nature of the arrests was the troubling

footage of a young teenager violently arrested in Hura.[18] Other international actions to denounce and oppose Israel's Prawer plan occurred alongside these protests. One was a letter signed by fifty high-profile British actors, writers, and musicians urging Israel to cancel the plan. This helped to raise awareness of the issue in Britain and beyond.[19]

The Israeli General Security Service threatened political activists involved in the movement against the Prawer plan, particularly those organizing the demonstrations. It sent letters informing the activists that it had identified them and that they would be arrested if they attended the protests. The police even called in activists for interrogation. Such open intimidation intended to deter activists from political activity conflicts with the basic duty of the police to protect freedom of expression in the public sphere. The police threatened bus companies hired to take protestors from various towns and villages around Israel to Day of Rage demonstrations. They claimed that they would treat the transport companies as accomplices in "an illegal activity."[20]

The Joint List led the most recent organized struggle against the Prawer plan after its election to the Knesset in March 2015.[21] The Joint List is active in pursuing the preservation of Bedouin culture. It opposes the Prawer plan's forced relocation of up to 30,000 Naqab Bedouin. On March 26, 2015, the Joint List led the four-day March for Recognition protest for Palestinian Bedouin rights. According to the organizers, the aim of the protest was to raise awareness of the terrible living conditions in unrecognized Bedouin villages and to present a plan to President Reuven Rivlin for formal recognition of the villages.[22] Ayman Odeh, an adamant opponent of the Prawer plan, seeks the termination of all ongoing demolition and relocation projects in the Naqab. On the first day of the march, Odeh stated, "We are indulging in a popular democratic civilian movement to recognize these villages. I am confident at the end of the journey, the villages will be recognized, and everyone will benefit from this achievement" (Deger 2015).[23]

The main goal of this protest was for the Israeli government to give formal recognition to the unrecognized Bedouin villages. This would allow building permits that would enable the Bedouin people to preserve their way of life. After the election of the Joint List, a number of MKs visited the Naqab and prioritized their struggle according to the agenda of the Joint List's campaign for the Naqab cause. As MK Yousef Jabareen stated, "the Naqab context and the struggle against Prawer helps to unify us as a joint list. The urgent need to deal with the situation in the Naqab is more

important than our internal disagreement on various issues" (MK Yousef Jabareen, interview in Hura, June 25, 2015).

Organized Community and the Emergence of Youth Leadership

The Bedouin formed the Bedouin High Committee (*lajnat al-tawjeh al-ʾulya la ʿarab al-naqab*) to stop the Prawer plan from going any further. The committee included representatives from the community, political parties, NGOs, local institutions such as Shatil, women's organizations, activists, the Islamic movement, Bedouin lawyers, and members of the Knesset. Other Arab political and legal bodies, such Balad, Adalah, and the Islamic Movement, were accused of radicalizing the struggle and pushing the Bedouin to protest.[24]

The northern and southern branches of the Islamic movement both took part in recruiting people for demonstrations. The Islamic movement played a crucial role in encouraging people to demonstrate by using its media sources and its mosques as bases for activities (interview with Yousef Abu Jammaʾ, Rahat, April 2014). The Islamic movement was the most organized group in the campaign against the Prawer plan. It is hard to imagine that any vital decisions could have been made in the Naqab without its views being taken into account. Using mosques as recruiting points for demonstrations is still the movement's strongest form of organization.

The young leaders, *al-hirak al shababi*, directed the other powerful form of organization against the Prawer plan. This motivated leadership emerged because of internal struggles among the old guard and as more young people became involved in protest marches. Though not formally declaring themselves as new leaders, they used their own initiative and led the struggle against the Prawer plan and were arrested by the police at the protests. Their activity not only signaled the loss of control over the youth but also challenged the old leadership. Huda Abu Obeid, a leading organizer of the *hirak*, remarked, "The state treats us like an object that can be moved from place to place . . . they are denying us the basic right to decide our own fate, to decide where we will live, what we will do with our property and our basic right to a home."[25] Suddenly, key Israeli and international newspapers were interviewing young Bedouin leaders about their rejection of the Prawer plan. They stated clearly that they would continue to protest peacefully to stop it.

Although political organization emerged among the Bedouin during the Prawer contestation, there was evidence of leadership fragmentation at the institutional level. Two heads were elected to the Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages (RCUV) in the crisis period—ʿAtiya al-ʿAssam and Ibrahim al-Wagili. The community perceived al-Wagili, RCUV's former leader, as linked to the Arab Democratic Party. Thus, the level of trust in his ability to lead the villages in their struggle against the Prawer plan was minimal. Al-Wagili was also accused of promoting the Prawer plan during some of his visits to the villages. He was seen as leading the pragmatic line for resolving Prawer issues and making further concessions. Because of these factors, ʿAtiya al-ʿAssam—regarded as affiliated with the Islamic Movement—was elected as the new head of the RCUV. This led to an ongoing leadership crisis and a representational conflict because al-Wagili refused to recognize his leadership (interview with Sami, Beersheba, March 2014). The fragmentation of traditional leadership resulted in the emergence of the young organizers who directed the demonstrations on the ground.

Arab and Jewish political parties began to pay more attention to the Bedouin situation. They tried to talk about the struggle of the Arabs and the Jews in the Naqab as a unified front. This timing enabled the Arab parties and the Joint List to speak out about the marginalization of the Naqab alongside the Bedouin who were trying to promote the Naqab cause.

One of the positive effects of the Prawer plan was that the Israeli Jewish community began to hear about the Naqab and the Bedouin communities. Suddenly, senior Israeli politicians were talking about how the government had marginalized the Bedouin for years. Meanwhile, the Israeli public was also learning more about the Bedouin and the need for recognition of their rights, even though decades of profound neglect were evident in the Israeli media reports. Following the demonstrations in Hura, the Israeli government suddenly recognized the presence and the reality of Bedouin communities and Israeli citizens that did not exist on the maps.

The Bedouin High Committee continues to organize community meetings to raise awareness of the need for recognition of Bedouin villages and to continue the struggle against Prawer. Bedouin mayors often host the committee meetings. The committee held two of its meetings in 2016 in Hura, where the mayor, Dr. Mohammad al-Nabari, played an important role. The support of Bedouin mayors strengthens and encourages the community to continue the struggle against the Prawer plan.