

Bedouin Communities in Greater Jerusalem: Planning or Forced Displacement?

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In 2014, the Israeli Civil Administration announced a plan to relocate about 12,500 Bedouins residing in different communities in the governorates of Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Jericho to the lands of al-Nu‘ayma village, near the city of Jericho.¹ This study will attempt to explore and analyze the social, cultural, and economic impact this plan will have on the lives of the targeted Bedouin communities. In this regard, the study will consist of three main sections. The first section tackles the cultural, social, and economic situation of Bedouin communities in their current locations of residence, including the mechanisms employed by the communities in confronting Israeli policies and their resilience in preserving their indigenous culture and way of life. The second section addresses Israel’s discriminatory planning, including the conditions set by the Israeli Civil Administration for licensing buildings, as well as the introduction of relocation plans and methods of land distribution and land use put forward in these plans. The last section of the study sheds light on the social, cultural, and economic impact of forced displacement on Bedouin communities in the event of the realization of the al-Nu‘ayma plan.

The communities encompassed by the study are dispersed in the eastern areas of Ramallah and the western foothills of the Jordan Valley, near the city of Jericho, and scattered in the area east of Jerusalem (excluding communities in al-Jabal area, east of the town of al-‘Ayzariyya). All of these communities are situated in areas classified by the Oslo accords as Area C. The relocation plan will forcefully displace the communities to the area of Tal al-Nu‘ayma, north of the city of Jericho.

This study was conducted between late September and late December of 2014. Its methodology involved interviews with six

representatives from among the Bedouin communities targeted for displacement, as well as seven individuals living in the communities. An interview was also conducted with a member of the projects committee in al-Jabal camp, where Bedouin communities have been residing since their forceful displacement in the late 1990s. Other interviews were conducted with two experts, one from the Palestinian ministry of agriculture specializing in livestock (and mandated with Bedouin affairs) and another expert working in agricultural relief. The study also entailed attending four meetings with experts regarding the proposed plan. On 16 December 2014, a focus group brought together representatives from Bedouin communities, representatives from organizations targeting Bedouins, and the head of Bedouin Affairs at the Palestinian ministry of agriculture, who read and responded to the study with feedback.

Bedouins after the Nakba

Bedouins scattered in the West Bank are originally from the Negev desert from which they were displaced in 1948. Others were displaced following the cease-fire in 1951. Reports indicate that 70 percent of Bedouins are Palestine refugees.² Community leader Abu Khamis shared his account: “we were displaced following the cease-fire in 1951 for refusing to cooperate with the Israelis.” Following their displacement from the Negev desert, specifically the northeast Negev, Tal Arad and south of Hebron, part of these tribes immigrated to Jordan while others opted to stay in the West Bank. Bedouins living in the central area of the West Bank belong to three main tribes – al-Ka’abina, al-Rashayida, and al-Jahalin – each of which is made up of smaller families. Those who came to the West Bank came to be scattered in all areas of the region, in varying densities. For instance, Bedouins in the north and west of the West Bank comprise small individual families, whereas those in the southern and central regions as well as the Jordan Valley are comprised of highly populated communities.

Following their forced displacement from the Negev to the West Bank, Bedouins continued to live a similar life of seasonal movement. Abundance of land and freedom of movement are critical for the maintenance of living conditions and patterns of life. The region has large expanses of sparsely populated communal grazing lands with an abundance of springs. Jamil speaks about Bedouins’ use of the lands that they currently inhabit:

The majority of the households displaced from the Negev desert or Tal Arad area relocated to the area east of Hebron, as they had been utilizing these lands prior to 1948 for the quality of their grazing lands when southern areas witness droughts. Our family stayed in Wadi al-Qatif, and where they lived in tents. They would stay for two months then move to another mountainside. They did not have a stable location for each season of year. In summer, they resided in the mountains then headed back to the warm areas in the Jordan Valley in the winter.

Displaced Bedouins refused to live in camps, scattering instead in locations compatible with their nomadic lifestyle, such as the semi-arid lands in the Hebron area. According to community leader Abu Suleiman:

Of course Bedouins are scattered in the West Bank. They refused to live in camps like the rest of the Palestine refugees because they were hoping to return quickly to their homeland. Furthermore, Bedouins, in nature, reside in deserts and their economy is highly dependent on the desert along with their livestock, particularly, camels. In order to preserve their traditional way of life, they chose to avoid residence in cities, villages, and camps as to avoid being confined and losing their culture and traditions.

Bedouins were dispersed in the West Bank areas, mainly in pastoral, semi-arid, and sparsely populated areas in the middle of the West Bank. Lands on which Bedouins reside in the central area of the West Bank are classified into four types of ownership: private ownership, where the lands are owned by families in nearby villages and cities; *waqf* land (charitable trust); communal village ownership; and government or state property. For instance, the lands over which al-Mulayhat group (part of al-Ka'abina tribe) reside are owned by families from the village of Dayr Dibwan;³ the Khan al-Ahmar lands are private property; Bedouin lands in the town of 'Anata are communally owned; al-Mu'arajat lands are classified as state property; and the Bedouin community Sath al-Bahar are situated on Islamic *waqf* land.

Sedentarization

Following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, mainly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Bedouin families began to settle gradually in these areas. Ghazi Falah highlights several elements leading Bedouins to settle down and forgo a nomadic lifestyle, which he classifies into two types: general and specific.⁴ Both are interrelated and cannot be easily separated or distinguished. The general elements include the improvement of security and law conditions, the demographic density within the Bedouin community, urbanization, and mingling with sedentary populations. Specific components encompass environmental, economic, and political factors, as well as social and cultural factors.

Falah suggests that the imbalance between the growing number of Bedouins and livestock and the capacity of the available area of land to accommodate this growth has contributed to the sedentary shift of Bedouins' lifestyle.⁵ The limited capacity of pastoral resources could not absorb the growing number in livestock, resulting in competition with and, eventually, resistance from villagers to Bedouins living and grazing animals near their lands. For instance, residents' large reserves of livestock in south Hebron have resulted in a crisis with neighboring Bedouins over pastures and water sources.⁶

Such instability in Bedouin economic structures also entails a change in the social and cultural structure as a consequence, eventually leading to the fragmentation of

the tribal system and driving individuals to move to urban areas to seek job opportunities. Thus, Bedouins gradually abandon their nomadic lifestyle. As Falah notes:

A consequential detachment from the social unity occurs in a tribe or clan in the event of scarcity in grazing land. As a result, some families may leave their locations to seek alternative pastures. Failure in finding such alternative pastures for developmental reasons or other reasons related to changes in land uses or for political or administrative reasons by which Bedouins' access to existing pastures is denied, would leave Bedouins with the option of selling their cattle and abandoning their pastoral lifestyle and replace it with a new stable living patterns, such as the reliance on agriculture and paid labor for income.⁷

A second factor prompting Bedouins to abandon a nomadic lifestyle is related to the adoption of alternate sources of income. In Falah's words, "the adoption of supplemental living sources, along with an increased demographic reproduction, would create, in the long run, a gradual increase in the reliance on such sources. Bedouins, hence, would come to adopt a new pattern of a sedentary lifestyle linked to their place of work."⁸

Additional factors prompting Bedouins to seek a sedentary life include the proximity of Bedouin communities to cities and villages and the availability of opportunities for interactions with such communities, though such contact does not necessarily result in cultural harmony or eliminate cultural discrimination. Moreover, given Bedouins' marginalization from surrounding communities, they encounter difficulties in meeting increasing service needs associated with an urban life, including in key areas such as infrastructure, public education, health, and so on.

Certain practices of the Israeli authorities, including the denial of access to springs and grazing lands for livestock, have also contributed to the forced settlement of Bedouins. Jamil described how this process worked to confine these Bedouin communities to their current locations:

When you erect your tent in this area then return in winter, the Israelis would not allow that, under the pretext that no residents were left in the area. Therefore, we had to remember our locations in order to be able to return to them. Moreover, being linked to a certain location due to engagement in schools and similar activities makes it impossible to keep moving children between schools from one area to another."

More recently, in the 1990s, Bedouin communities near the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim were forcefully relocated to the al-Jabal area, adjacent to the town of al-'Ayzariyya. Further disrupting the ability of Bedouins to graze livestock, Israel has zoned large areas of the West Bank (accounting for more than 18 percent of its total lands, slightly more than the percentage categorized as Area A, which falls under full control of

the Palestinian Authority) as “closed military zones” for the purposes of military training or as “firing zones.”⁹

Despite the discriminatory Israeli policies imposed against Bedouins, and in light of the growing Bedouin population and livestock, Bedouins were able to preserve their culture and way of life through income acquired from their livestock. They were also able to find many means of preserving their nomadic lifestyle. Sedentarization did not prevent them from practicing many aspects of Bedouin life. This was achieved mainly through reliance on livestock as a primary source of income. More than 90 percent of Bedouins in communities targeted for displacement rely on herding as their primary source of income,¹⁰ while the remaining 10 percent rely on other sources of income, especially labor in Israeli settlements. Though this 10 percent is in some ways a reflection of Israeli success in disrupting Bedouins’ way of life, it largely constitutes supplementary sources of income besides livestock.

According to a study conducted by the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee in Jericho in the localities Jiftlik, Zubaydat, Duyuk, and al-Nu‘ayma, herders in these areas have approximately 28,473 livestock (sheep and goats). These livestock produce 2,272 tons of milk per annum, about two-thirds of which is used to manufacture 379.3 tons of feta cheese and the remainder of which is made into 275.5 tons of yogurt (most of which is manufactured into *labna* (strained yogurt), and 59.6 tons of *jamid* (dried yogurt). The products are marketed and consumed locally.¹¹ According to veterinary statistics certified by the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture in 2013, in the Jerusalem governorate, 41,125 animals produced 3,207.8 tons of milk per annum; in Jericho, 65,301 animals produced 5,093.5 tons of milk per annum; and in Ramallah, 35,724 animals produce 2,786.5 tons of milk per annum. Therefore, the three governorates in which the Bedouin communities targeted for displacement by the al-Nu‘ayma plan reside herd 142,150 animals and produce 11,097.7 tons of milk per annum.¹²

Another means by which Bedouins preserved their lifestyle is through the adoption of seasonal movement of livestock, accompanied by some family members, as the majority of family members remain in their location of settlement in order to avoid displacement by Israeli forces. This relocation generally lasts between three and five months. For example, members of al-Hamadin family, settled in the Bedouin community in the area of Sath al-Bahar, move to the area west of Ramallah in the mountains situated between Baytuniya and ‘Ayn Qinya village. This migration with livestock (and some men, women, and children of the family) lasts from the beginning of May until the beginning of October (the summer period). In another example, the family of Abu Husayn al-Rashayida, settled in the Bedouin community of al-Nu‘ayma al-Fawqa, move with their livestock to the lands of the village of al-Zawiya west of Salfit. Meanwhile, some family members remain in al-Nu‘ayma al-Fawqa Bedouin community in order to avoid its confiscation by the Israeli Civil Administration.

Bedouin communities were also able to preserve much of their nomadic cultural characteristics, including adherence to traditions and family honor and the fundamental element of family cohesion on the basis of kinship, as each grouping consists of two or three generations at most. Arturo Avendaño writes:

Bedouin families are usually large with an average of six to ten children. Some men have two or three wives with a number of children amounting up to 25. Marriage is usually an event that involves a network of families which forms the clan. According to their traditions, it is preferred for Bedouin men to marry wives from the same family, clan or tribe. Marriages are arranged through consultations and agreements between parents, uncles and cousins. Although marriages with non-Bedouins occur in some cases, the majority of Bedouins, however, strictly adhere to their traditions.¹³

The scattered tents or corrugated metal houses of Bedouin families reflect one of the main features of spatial architecture in these communities, in which distance between families is no less than fifty meters. Proximity is maintained between houses of the same family, such as a father and his married children. Bedouin culture does not allow married sons to live with their wives in the family house of their parents, as is common in Palestinian villages.

Bedouins have also adapted by scattering in small and relatively dispersed communities, with each Bedouin community consisting of two to three generations of the same family. For example, the Bedouin community in the area of Sath al-Bahar (“Sea Level”) is comprised of three brothers, their children and grandchildren, i.e., 12 families and about 70 individuals who all descend from the same ancestors. Similarly, the Bedouin community in ‘Utl al-Duyuk are comprised of approximately 300 persons dispersed on 32 families descend from the same ancestors. Such family fragmentation emerged in an attempt to adapt to the Israeli policies directed against Bedouins. The establishment of multiple families in the same community with large numbers of livestock resulted in overcrowded grazing areas, due to access restrictions and high rates of population growth among Bedouins. Collectively these factors prompted some families to move to more opportune locations for practicing their traditional way of life. Though such fragmentation occurred prior to the 1990s, today Bedouins are prohibited from moving to other locations in Area C.

Precarious Life in Area C

The majority of Bedouin communities are located in Area C, which is fully controlled by the Israeli Civil Administration in terms of security, planning, and land parceling. Therefore, the development of the infrastructure in these communities has been very limited and almost impossible due to Israeli policies that require the approval and authorization of the Israeli Civil Administration. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in August 2011 that Israelis has established restrictions in land usage and construction in much of Area C.

Palestinian construction is effectively prohibited in some 70 percent of Area C, in areas that have been allocated for the use of Israeli

settlements or the Israeli military (including areas closed by the Israeli military for training). In the remaining 30 percent, there are a range of other restrictions that greatly reduce the possibility of obtaining a building permit. In practice, Palestinian construction is normally permitted only within the boundaries of a plan approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA), which covers less than one percent of Area C, much of which is already built-up. As a result, Palestinians needing to build in Area C are left with no other choice than to build without a permit and risk demolition of their structures.¹⁴

Some Bedouins managed to replace their tents with houses of tin. However, the Israeli Civil Administration and the settlement protection services organized patrols to monitor these communities on an almost daily basis in an effort to restrict the construction of houses and limit the development of infrastructure in these communities. Reports on such monitoring with recommendations to demolish houses and updated infrastructure in Bedouin communities are submitted to the Israeli Civil Administration on a periodic basis. Furthermore, the absence of an appropriate planning and zoning system in Area C means that the majority of Palestinians lack access to building permits for the construction or rehabilitation of houses, barns, or basic infrastructure. This has resulted in the large-scale demolition of buildings and infrastructural projects in Area C.¹⁵ These demolitions include buildings and infrastructure supervised and supported by international donors: in 2014, 122 such structures were demolished in Area C, compared to 79 in 2012.¹⁶

Access roads to Bedouin communities and roads within these communities are jagged and dangerous, making access to these communities or movement within the community by ordinary vehicles very difficult and making them particularly inaccessible in winter. Bedouin communities lack access to utility services leading some to be dependent on solar energy or special generators for electricity supply. The majority of these communities are not connected to water networks, resulting in greater reliance on private water tanks for water supply, increasing costs significantly. The daily water consumption per capita in some Bedouin communities is 20 liters which is 20 percent of the rate recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).¹⁷ Official domestic water consumption needs vary according family size, cost per square unit of water, and size of livestock herds. The average water consumption rate for livestock (specifically goats and sheep) is 6–8 liters per animal on daily basis in the winter and 8–12 liters per animal daily in summer.¹⁸ In addition, Bedouin communities lack health centers and mobile clinics, and can only receive medical services in nearby villages and cities, which are in some instances difficult to access, increasing their vulnerability.

The majority of Bedouin communities are also marginalized in regards to the availability of nearby schools. Schools are only available in two out of 41 Bedouin communities in the central West Bank. Further, these schools are constantly threatened by the risk of demolition by Israeli forces. In fact, all of these communities have received demolition notices issued by the Israeli Civil Administration. However, the Israeli Supreme Court froze the demolition orders for some schools until alternative venues can be found. Although the Palestinian

ministry of education provided some of these communities with buses to transport pupils to schools in nearby villages and cities, the majority of students need to walk long distances to reach their schools, a problem which becomes more dangerous in winter due to floods in valleys that separate Bedouin communities from schools.

The deteriorating economic conditions facing Bedouins, coupled with the remoteness of schools, has contributed to rising dropout rates among students, with only a few members of Bedouin communities having completed their undergraduate studies. Bedouin females in particular are deprived of education, since the distance between their residences and schools is perceived by parents as a decisive reason to halt their enrollment in school, as the personal security of females (associated with family honor) is considered more important than education.

Bedouins consider the humanitarian aid offered to them by the PA and other entities insufficient to meet their minimum basic needs to remain steadfast against settlement expansion and associated threats such as land confiscation. For instance, a governmental committee estimated the amount of incurred losses in the demolition of a home by Israeli forces (under the guise of building without a permit) in the Bedouin community of al-Nu‘ayma al-Fawqa at 25,000 U.S. dollars. The PA offered the said homeowners compensation in the amount of 1,000 U.S. dollars, which was rejected by the victim. Lately, the Palestinian ministry of agriculture specified 4 million NIS in financial support to Bedouin communities and herders. This amount is considered paltry given that each herder’s share would amount to merely five days’ worth of animal feed. Observers see the Palestinian government as following no long-term strategy to support Bedouin communities and its intervention is dependent on annual donations without clear and transparent mechanisms of support.

Israeli Planning and Bedouin Urbanization

Planning is intimately linked to processes of urbanization and modernization. As Oren Yiftachel notes:

Conventional wisdom portrays urban and regional planning as a progressive, reformist and modernist societal project. Consequently, planning has been conceived, by planners and public alike, as a rational professional activity, aimed at producing a “public good” of one kind or another. Planning’s theoretical and professional discourse has therefore tended to concentrate on its capacity to contribute to the attainment of well-established societal goals, such as residential amenity, economic efficiency, social equity, or environmental sustainability.¹⁹

Researchers and policymakers use several terms to describe the plans targeting Bedouins, such as: Bedouin settlement, Bedouin resettlement, Bedouin stabilization, and Bedouin grouping. Falah writes that the term Bedouin settlement, for example:

indicates that official efforts are being made to change the Bedouins' existing nomadic nature of migration and movement between locations – and that such a nature is, of course, incompatible with the regional and development plans of a “civilized” state like Israel! That being said, government policies, therefore, seek the settlement of Bedouins in fixed locations, both for the public good and the good of Bedouins as well.²⁰

An associated goal of settling Bedouins into bounded gatherings²¹ is the “development” of these communities. Bearing in mind that the development process and its mechanisms, on one hand, and the life of periodic movement undertaken by Bedouins, on the other, are incompatible, their relocation or settlement in certain planned areas for development purposes emerges as an appropriate option. It is within this context that the concepts of relocation or settlement emerged to reflect a transformation in Bedouin life. ‘Abdallah Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman defines resettlement as:

a set of processes enabling the stabilization and resettlement of Bedouin gatherings within a certain spatial location, be it their current locations or new appropriate areas, and in line with their conditions, values, systems, basic needs, desires, and behavioral patterns within a defined period of time, for the purpose of causing an intentional change in the prevailing social and economic lifestyle, traditions, and behavioral patterns, and in light of thoughtful local and national plans.²²

Further, resettlement also reflects “the process by which the elements of organized and structured economic stability and independence are provided for Bedouins in their current locations or, at least, in the nearest locations.”²³ Such planning may be considered positive planning in that it is aimed at the improvement and development of people’s lives and the advancement of their social and economic conditions. One such case was the Egyptian government’s plan in north Sinai, which reclaimed more than one million acres upon which Bedouins were resettled.²⁴

However, planning may be negative in cases where it aims to control people and strip them of their cultural, social, and economic resources and livelihoods. Such a negative planning policy is practiced by Israel in various locations and under different circumstances. Many studies concluded that the Israeli planning policies are meant to serve Jewish ethnic groups at the expense of Arab ethnic groups. Falah writes that the Negev regional plan evidently aims at “exploiting the natural resources in that area while ignoring the existence of Bedouins there, especially in terms of: the current pattern of land use by Bedouins, the extensive grazing activity, the spread of Bedouin houses in a low density area, and the demands of Bedouin to own large tracts of land.”²⁵ The content of either plan, or the so-called “area development,” “was for the benefit of residents of the existing Jewish cities and the prospective agricultural settlements. As for Bedouin inhabitants, the plan pointed out that they will benefit after the establishment of the industrial zone.”²⁶ Falah concludes that the primary goal of implementing relocation

projects for Bedouins is “to seize Bedouin land after being evacuated, whether through land confiscation, closure, or by making deals of exchange by which the Bedouin get a larger share in the programmed relocation projects in return of selling or abandoning their land in the Negev.”²⁷ Yiftachel agrees with Falah that the objective of plans prepared by the Israeli Civil Administration for Bedouins is consistent with long standing Israeli policies of land seizure and forced relocation of Palestinians.²⁸

To take one example in the Jerusalem area, a study conducted by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights in al-Jabal area near the West Bank town of Abu Dis noted that 150 families from al-Salamat Jahalin Bedouin residing in areas targeted for the expansion of the settlement of Ma’ale Adumim had been displaced in three phases since 1997.²⁹ The same study further noted:

Houses in al Jabal today are all legally connected to water and electricity supplies but are at varying stages of construction: some families, for example, were officially incorporated into al Jabal as recently as 2007 in the third wave so are still building their homes. Streets in the village are half paved and half dirt track. Empty spaces in the village are often used as burning sites for household waste; electricity connections – while legal – are often ad hoc and seemingly precarious, with cable in many cases looping down to ground level over the streets. A walk through the village of al Jabal gives the stranger a mixed impression of a somewhat ragged semi-urban environment where the large size of individual houses, a committee building and a sizeable mosque indicate the comparative wealth of residents, but where the visible lack of care for the communal spaces in between these planned elements suggests an underlying dysfunctional state of affairs. At the top of the village, a new secondary school stands in stark contrast to the battered primary school which is housed in sub-standard structures—including metal containers—without glass in the windows, without an effective toilet system, and without basic equipment.³⁰

The study noted that the Israeli practices, including the establishment of settlements, are illegal and incompatible with international law according to the United Nations. Paradoxically, some 39,000 inhabitants reside in the settlement of Ma’ale Adumim, an illegitimate and unlawful entity according to international law. The settlement includes 79 kindergartens, 20 schools, and 7 swimming pools. The mayor of the settlement refers to it as “a shining pearl in the State of Israel; a city with a high quality of life, educational achievements, developing commerce and many residents who are involved in contributing to constantly-improving community life.”³¹

Israel has placed tremendous pressure on Bedouins residing in Area C in order to displace them and confiscate their lands. Muhyi al-Din Sabir calls this process “moral eviction,” which is aimed at eradicating Bedouins’ livelihood and dismantling their society, “based on secluded local economies characterized by personal relationships, and replacing

it with economies characterized by impersonal relations and the expansion of specialized division of labor.”³² It is within this context that the intentions of the Israeli occupation forces can be assessed. In spite of these policies that violate their dignity and right – manifested in reducing grazing areas, demolishing newly constructed houses and barns, and preventing the Bedouin from developing infrastructure – Bedouins have managed to maintain their steadfastness in their gatherings. However, after previous attempts to displace Bedouins failed, the Israeli Civil Administration issued demolition and eviction orders for many Bedouin gatherings, including those in the areas of Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Jericho. As a result of legal challenges filed by Bedouins against these orders and notices before Israeli courts, the Israeli Supreme Court decided to freeze the eviction orders (and consequent displacement) until alternative locations, appropriate for their lifestyle and meeting their needs, are found. The Israeli Civil Administration accepted the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court and thus designed three plans to be implemented in the central area of the West Bank for the relocation of the targeted Bedouin communities.³³ According to Amira Hass, writing in *Ha’Aretz*, an explanatory note claimed that the plans were in accordance with “dynamic changes” that have taken place in Bedouin society, namely the shift from an agricultural base to “a modern society that earns its living by commerce, services, technical trades and more.”³⁴ The following section will discuss al-Nu‘ayma plan (or, as Bedouins call it, al-Nu‘ayma camp), the largest of Israel’s proposed plans, which aims to establish a Bedouin town in the Jordan Valley.

Al-Nu‘ayma Plan

The master plan for al-Nu‘ayma is composed of six interrelated sub-schemes for the establishment of a large camp, with a total area of 1,460 dunams allocated for the accommodation of some 12,500 Bedouins. These lands are adjacent to Area A and are classified as state land. Two of the six schemes, namely 1/1418 and 3/1417, suggest the establishment of main roads, byroads, and regional roads as well as the allocation of spaces for green areas. The remaining schemes suggest the allocation of lands to be utilized as residential areas, industrial zones, engineering facilities, cemeteries, and open or archaeological areas in addition to roads and public transportation stations.

The total number of housing blocks in the latter four schemes is about 1,120 with an approximate average area of 500 square meters each. However, a single housing block may include two housing units of two stories each, with an area of about 170 square meters for each story, with the possibility of adding a basement and a storeroom with a maximum area of 25 square meters. However, approval for the building permit requires that the front of the building be built of stone and that a blueprint of the neighborhood indicating the location of the housing unit relative to other units be submitted. As for livestock and agricultural areas, the plan does not envision any agricultural activity: there is no space allocated for barns, livestock, grazing, or planting. According to an agricultural engineer at the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association, livestock cultivation requires wide expansions of land, as each animal requires a minimum of two meters of space.³⁵

The plan did not officially identify the Bedouin communities to be transferred. However, surveys conducted by international institutions operating in Bedouin clusters and verbal statements made by the Israeli Civil Administration and directed to certain Bedouin communities reveal that the Bedouin communities that have been proposed for transfer to al-Nu‘ayma include more than twenty clusters belonging to different tribes and clans, such as al-Jahalin, al-Rashayida, and al-Ka‘abina. The following table, though not exhaustive, lists the clusters most likely to be targeted for transfer.

Cluster	Governorate	Family
al-Mashru‘	Jericho	
al-Hathrura	Jericho	al-Jahalin
al-Nabi Musa	Jericho	al-Jahalin
al-Nu‘ayma al-Fawqa	Jericho	al-Rashayida
Dayr al-Qilt	Jericho	al-Ka‘abina
‘Ayn al-Qilt	Jericho	al-Ka‘abina
‘Ayn al-‘Awja al-Fawqa	Jericho	al-Ka‘abina
Jabal al-Baba	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
Sateh al-Bahr	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
Ma‘azi Jaba‘	Ramallah	
Jaba‘ Bedouin gathering	Ramallah	
al-Kassarar	Jerusalem	al-Ka‘abina
al-Khan al-Ahmar: Makab al-Samin	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
al-Khan al-Ahmar: Wadi al-Sidr	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
al-Khan al-Ahmar: al-Mahtush	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
al-Khan al-Ahmar: Abu al-Hilu	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
al-Khan al-Ahmar: Abu Falah	Jerusalem	al-Jahalin
Mikhmas Bedouin	Ramallah	
Maghayir al-Dayr	Ramallah	al-Ka‘abina – al-Mulayhat
East Tayba	Ramallah	al-Ka‘abina
‘Ayn Samia	Ramallah	al-Ka‘abina
Ras al-Tin	Ramallah	al-Ka‘abina
Wadi al-Siq	Ramallah	al-Ka‘abina
‘Ayn al-Rashrash	Ramallah	al-Ka‘abina

In order to clarify the nature of the schemes, we will address one of the six sub-schemes in detail. These schemes vary in terms of size of the planned area and the number of housing and commercial units, but it should be noted that all four housing schemes are similar in their details, in terms of the size and nature of buildings as well as land use, licensing, and approval conditions. The scheme described here is scheme 1/1417, also known as al-Rashayida Western village, and is designed for the accommodation of al-Rashayida.

The total area of land included in the plan is 85.5 dunams. The table below illustrates land use as specified in the plan:

Distribution of Land Uses as per Plan 1/1417

Land Use	Current		Proposed	
	Area (dunams)	Percent	Area (dunams)	Percent
Housing area (agricultural village, housing area)			27.9	32.6
Commercial area			1.1	1.3
Public buildings area			2.4	2.4
Open spaces			29.8	34.9
Roads (existing or approved)	3.6	4.2	24.1	28.2
Agricultural area	81.9	95.8		
Agricultural road			0.2	0.2

As indicated in the table above, the current area is classified entirely as agricultural land. According to the plan, the agricultural area will be changed to housing and commercial areas in addition to public buildings and roads. Therefore, this plan would eventually deprive the Bedouins targeted of their current economic and agricultural resources. Further, as illustrated in the plan, the Israeli Civil Administration denies the existence of the Bedouin clusters currently living on the land, as it makes no mention of any residential area when noting the current situation. Thus it ignores the existence of 32 Bedouin families, comprising about 300 individuals, belonging to ‘Arab al-Rashayida, that are currently inhabiting this land. Furthermore, the plan specifies the uses of land plots in detail, prohibiting uses other than those specified. It provides great detail on the conditions for obtaining a permit for land use; however, the plan leaves many issues ambiguous, to be determined later by various Israeli authorities (specifically the staff officer on environmental affairs and relevant planning committees).

The area allocated for housing purposes, amounting to a total area between 460 and 672 square meters, is divided into 52 land plots as well as another single land plot with a total area of 1,101 square meters. However, the maximum area of each building is 175 square meters. The plan allows the construction of two housing units on a single land plot of half a dunam. Each housing unit may consist of two floors in addition to a basement, with the possibility of adding an annex building with an area not exceeding 15 square meters to be used for non-commercial purposes. The front side of the building must be built of stone. Moreover, building permits may be granted either in a single phase or in several phases dependent on the current conditions. For example, construction may need to proceed in several stages, such as: obtaining approval for the demolition of an existing building, leveling and cementing the land, meeting the eligibility criteria to conduct the construction of internal roads, obtaining approval for construction maps, and the final development of the area. The detailed plan also includes specifications on the nature of the building, its shape, and construction materials to be

used, as well as defining ways to establish its infrastructure and connect it to utility services and road networks.

The Impact of al-Nu‘ayma Plan on Bedouin Lives

The displacement of Bedouins to al-Nu‘ayma camp will affect all aspects of Bedouin life, resulting in negative consequences on the lives of Bedouins, both current and prospective. Its impact can be divided into two categories: cultural/social and economic. Though this plan presents itself as harmonious with modern life and civilization and well suited for individuals and young families seeking an urban lifestyle, this description does not benefit the Bedouin communities targeted.

As mentioned above, after 1948 Bedouins had spread out in low-populated areas in the West Bank and avoided living in camps, which did not suit their lifestyle, customs, and traditions. They dispersed into clusters comprised of extended families, as is still the case. In these gatherings, they faced repeated aggravation by Israeli authorities – including prohibitions on erecting housing structures and the development of basic infrastructure, demolition of structures, and economic pressure aimed at collective impoverishment and forceful displacement – making their lives unbearable. Still, maintaining a nomadic culture under such harsh conditions is considered more dignified than losing this lifestyle. The Bedouin lifestyle is one of the core values that Bedouins had been nurtured to preserve since their early childhood. According to Barakat: “Bedouins adhere to a set of values that are directly linked to their daily pattern of life. Such values include simplicity, common sense, endurance of hardships, patience, purity of the soul and candor.”³⁶ Abu Suleiman adds: “Our norms, traditions, and Bedouin lifestyle prevent us from living in al-Nu‘ayma camp.” However, Israeli practices compel Bedouins to choose between a nomadic life of poverty or stable economic conditions through the abandonment of traditional ways of life.

Bedouin life has many components, often linked to livestock and the availability of large areas of land over which Bedouins erect their tents or dwellings. Spacious areas enable family members, elders and children, males and females alike, to move around and practice their life in a natural and comfortable manner. No strangers from other families are allowed to trespass the private area of the family unless by prior approval from that family. *Duruk al-bayt* (the sanctity of the house) is one of the traditions of Bedouin culture that is strictly maintained to this day. The area of sanctity varies, but it is no less than 50 meters. This area involves all the living components of a Bedouin family: family houses and facilities, stockyards as well as spaces allocated for women’s chores. Further, Bedouin families are spatially distributed in the Bedouin community by degree of kinship, and thus, they maintain a distance between different families. Each Bedouin gathering is comprised of one *hamula* (extended family) related by kinship and composed of two or three generations at most.

Land use specified in al-Nu‘ayma plan, including the area of each land plot, the allocation for each family, and the conditions for obtaining a building permit, are all incompatible with the Bedouin lifestyle. The allocation of a half-dunam or even a two-

dunam area is not commensurate with a Bedouin lifestyle, which Bedouins have been keen to maintain in spite of the pressures exerted against them by the Israeli occupation. The displacement of Bedouins by al-Nu‘ayma plan would result in restricting women’s freedom and disabling their engagement in the public sphere. Bedouin communities are highly conservative compared to other sectors of Palestinian society. However, the prevailing Bedouin lifestyle is consistent with their conservative culture without putting pressure on women or constraining their freedom, as the space for sanctity is maintained and allows women sufficient space to move and conduct economic activities and chores, without being under any family pressure. The relocation plan threatens women’s freedom and may expose them to family repression and pressures, depriving them of their economic and domestic activities, and potentially raising family honor–related issues.

Bedouin communities also face the challenge of longstanding conflicts among Bedouin tribes and clans, some of which still dictate the behavior and attitudes of Bedouins toward each other. Should such communities be grouped in close proximity to one another, such issues could evolve into violence. In interviews, Bedouins unanimously brought up this issue at length, as it also served as a source of concern regarding the diminishment of their Bedouin lifestyle and culture. Jamil described the situation, saying:

Firstly, that area is tribal anyway.... We cannot inhabit that area or even go there for good pastures in spring, since it is not the area of the clans which we belong to. Secondly, if we live there, there would still be the issue of sensitivity among families, possibly due to old disputes, which are still present. Therefore, the idea of going to Jericho is totally rejected by us.

Abu Mohammed Zheiman adds:

For me, al-Nu‘ayma plan is a massacre, an execution for me and my kin alike. People do have disputes and disagreements with their siblings or even sons; so how am I going to get along with people who are total strangers to me coming from al-Khan al-Ahmar and becoming my neighbors. Also, some people have vengeance with others. Do you want to see people killing each other? Tell them Abu Jamil al-Hamadin said before you make us go there you need to provide each of us with a Kalashnikov rifle [indicating the magnitude of crimes that may occur].

Other Bedouins also describe this plan in terms that reveal their fear of the violence and disruption of its implementation. They envisioned the camp using phrases such as: “a cemetery”; “a definite camp”; “a massacre”; “like placing one’s self in a grave”; “impossible”; “definitely killing me”; “exterminating us”; “ruining our lives”; and “rather die.” One interviewee said, “it will turn into a spot for ISIS” (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), indicating the level of hopelessness and potential violence associated with the plan.

Forced displacement often results in extremely severe humanitarian conditions, as people are deprived of their economic resources and become more dependent on

humanitarian aid. The Israeli occupation stated that it does not want to transfer Bedouin communities forcibly, but it will demolish their houses and confiscate their livestock to pressure them to relocate. Roughly 90 percent of Bedouins are either entirely or partially dependent on livestock for income. Therefore, being transferred to the “urban village” in al-Nu‘ayma would deprive them from their source of income, leading them to seek alternative economic resources. In light of the poor economic conditions in the West Bank, seeking livelihoods would be extremely difficult, especially as many Bedouins have no alternative profession. Consequently, unemployment would likely be widespread, accompanied by poor quality of life and social ills, thus contradicting the notion of sustainable development. Jamil described this situation, saying: “young men will be jobless. They will neither work in Israeli settlements nor in security services. Thus, they will eventually end up as drug addicts or thieves. This means that each option will be worse than the other.”

Agricultural work, including animal husbandry, is the most convenient economic option for Bedouins. Yet, such an option is lacking in the planned Bedouin “urban village” of al-Nu‘ayma. In a similar case, the forced displacement of 150 families belonging to al-Salamat cluster of al-Jahalin family to al-Jabal camp in the late 1990s deprived residents of their economic resources and led to their employment as cheap labor in Israeli settlements. Their limited employment opportunities eventually resulted in a humanitarian crisis in the camp. A joint study conducted by UNRWA and Bimkom indicated that “the centralization of rural communities against their will has resulted in a situation which (1) is socially non-viable and (2) is economically non-viable. . . . financial compensation secured through litigation has not social, economic or cultural security for the Bedouin Palestine refugees in the ‘Arab al-Jahalin village.’”³⁷

Households mainly dependent on agriculture suffer the highest poverty rates, while rural communities are the poorest Palestinian communities. In villages, individuals can work in agriculture in addition to engaging in other economic businesses in sectors such as services, industry, or construction, and this diversity of income sources helps to address poverty. This is not the case in Bedouin communities where the issue of high poverty rates is a challenge. Such high rates are attributed to the constriction of grazing areas, high feed prices, growing household size, and reductions in livestock, all stemming from Israeli practices targeting these communities. As prohibitions on access to grazing land increase, so does dependency on animal feed in feeding livestock. Each animal requires approximately 1 kilogram of feed at a cost of 1.7 NIS, in addition to other resources and medication.

The solutions proposed for Bedouins by the Israeli Civil Administration entail their resettlement in locations that are similar to refugee camps, an option Bedouins have opposed since their displacement from the Negev following the 1948 Nakba. As Jamil says: “After being displaced in 1948, Bedouins refused to be placed in camp as their lifestyle contradicted with that of the camps. So, why is it thought that Bedouin would accept living in a camp in 2014?”

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Endnotes

- 1 See: B'Tselem, "Civil Administration Plans to Expel Thousands of Bedouins from Homes, Concentrate Them in Inadequate Settlement," 17 September 2014, online at www.btselem.org/area_c/20140917_plans_to_transfer_bedouins_to_ramat_nueimeh, accessed 14 March 2016; Amira Hass, "Israeli Government Plans to Forcibly Relocate 12,500 Bedouin," *Ha'Aretz*, 16 September 2014, online at www.haaretz.com/Israel-news/.premium-1.615986, accessed 14 March 2016.
- 2 This figure is supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). See, for example, "UN Officials: Israel Must Halt Plans to Transfer Palestinian Bedouins," 20 May 2015, online at www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/un-officials-israel-must-halt-plans-transfer-palestinian-bedouins, accessed 14 March 2016.
- 3 An agreement between the Bedouins and the land owners, recorded in a notarized letter addressed "to whom it may concern" and signed by the mayor of Dayr Dibwan, states: "This is to certify that the Dayr Dibwan municipality, under special understandings with land owners and the municipality, has no objection for the Mulayhat Shayman Bedouin clan to reside in the area of Maghayir al-Dayr, on the lands of Dayr Dibwan at the current time. With the full knowledge of the people of Dayr Dibwan, the clan has been given this certificate duly upon their request."
- 4 Ghazi Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun: 'Arab al-Naqab, 1906–1986* [The Forgotten Palestinians: Arabs of the Negev, 1906–1986] (al-Tayba: Markaz ihya' al-turath al-'Arabi, 1989).
- 5 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 28.
- 6 Hadeel Hunaiti, "al-Taghayyurat al-lati tara'at 'ala al-bana al-ijtima'iyya wa-l-iqtisadiyya li-qabilat al-Jahalin jira' al-ihtilal wa mumarisatihi" [Changes in the Social and Economic Structures of al-Jahalin Tribe by the Occupation and Its Policies], in *al-'A'ila al-Filastiniyya, dawruha wa mustaqbiluha: buhuth al-mu'tamar al-sanawi al-rabi' al-ladhi 'uqiduhu markaz dirasat al-turath wa-l-mujtama' al-Filastini fi jam'iyyat in'ash al-usra 20–22/3/2009* [The Palestinian Family, Its Role, and Its Future: Studies of the Fourth Annual Conference Convened by the Center for the Study of Palestinian Heritage and Society at the Society for Family Restoration, 20–22/3/2009], ed. Sharif Kana'ana (al-Bira: Jam'iyyat in'ash al-usra, 2009), 174.
- 7 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 28–29.
- 8 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 28–29.
- 9 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory (OCHA), *Area C Vulnerability Profile* (Jerusalem: OCHA, 2014), 3, online at www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_fact_sheet_5_3_2014_en.pdf, accessed 12 March 2016.
- 10 OCHA, *Bedouin Communities At Risk of Forcible Transfer* (Jerusalem: OCHA, September 2014), online at www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_communities_jerusalem_factsheet_september_2014_english.pdf, accessed 14 March 2016.
- 11 Agricultural Development Association (PARC) and Rawasi, "Value Chain Mapping, Analysis, and Optimization for Dairy Products in Selected Locations in Area 'C' in the Middle and North of the West Bank: Strengthening Livestock Holders' Livelihood in Area C" (Unpublished, October 2014).
- 12 Though Bedouin communities are not the only communities in these regions engaged in rearing and herding animals, they are the majority of them; available statistics do not disaggregate Bedouin herders from others.
- 13 Arturo Avendaño, "The Palestinian Bedouins," *This Week in Palestine* 112 (Aug. 2007): 22–25, quote at 22.
- 14 OCHA, *Displacement and Insecurity in Area C of the West Bank* (Jerusalem: OCHA, August 2011), 10, online at www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_area_c_report_august_2011_english.pdf, accessed 12 March 2016.
- 15 For example, in 2012, according to OCHA: "540 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished in Area C, comprising 165 residential structures and 375 livelihood and animal structures, infrastructure and other structures. This resulted in the displacement of 815 people, including 474 children. In addition, 3,691 others were affected by demolitions, including 1,149 children. Approximately, 89 per cent of demolitions occurred in vulnerable farming and herding communities in Area C who live in very basic

- structures (tents, tin shelters), and have little or no service infrastructure. These numbers were almost as high as 2011, the highest since OCHA started systematically collating statistics in 2008; in 2011 571 structures were demolished in Area C, 1,006 people were displaced (including 565 children), and an additional 3,940 people were affected.” See: OCHA, *Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2012* (Jerusalem: OCHA, May 2013), 27, online at www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_fragmented_lives_annual_report_2013_english_web.pdf, accessed 12 March 2016.
- 16 OCHA, *Fragmented Lives*, 7.
 - 17 OCHA, *Area C of the West Bank: Key Humanitarian Concerns* (Jerusalem: OCHA, January 2013), online at www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_area_c_factsheet_january_2013_english.pdf, accessed 12 March 2016.
 - 18 See: United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), *Assessment of Water Availability and Access in the Areas Vulnerable to Drought in the Jordan Valley* (Jerusalem: UNICEF, 2010), 11; “At-Tuwani: Drought in South Hebron Hills Worsened by Israeli Occupation,” *CPTnet*, 1 August 2008, online at www.copt.org/cptnet/2008/08/01/tuwani-drought-south-hebron-hills-worsened-israeli-occupation, accessed 24 March 2016.
 - 19 Oren Yiftachel, “Planning and Social Control: Exploring the ‘Dark Side,’” *Journal of Planning Literature* 12, no. 4 (May 1998): 395–406, quote at 395.
 - 20 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 168.
 - 21 The locations of Bedouin residence are referred to as *tajammu’* in Arabic, translated as “gathering” or “encampment” in English, and distinct from a village or town in that, in keeping with Bedouin social and economic norms, these sites are not considered permanent.
 - 22 ‘Abdallah Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman, *al-Tawtin wa al-tanmiya fi al-mujtami‘at al-sahrawiyya: dirasat fi ‘ilm al-ijtima‘ al-badawi* [Resettlement and Development in the Desert Communities: Studies in Bedouin Society] (Alexandria: Dar al-Ma‘rifa al-Jami‘iyya, 1991), 67.
 - 23 ‘Abd al-Rahman, *al-Tawtin*, 68.
 - 24 See ‘Abd al-Rahman, *al-Tawtin*.
 - 25 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 175.
 - 26 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 175.
 - 27 Falah, *al-Filastiniyyun al-mansiyyun*, 175.
 - 28 See Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 188–210.
 - 29 UNRWA and Bimkom, *al-Jabal: A Study on the Transfer of Bedouin Palestine Refugees* (Jerusalem: UNRWA and Bimkom, 2013), 14, online at www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2013052290269.pdf, accessed 12 March 2016.
 - 30 UNRWA and Bimkom, *al-Jabal*, 21.
 - 31 UNRWA and Bimkom, *al-Jabal*, 16.
 - 32 Muhyi al-Din Sabir and Louis Kamil Malika, *al-Badu wa-l-badawa: mafahim wa manahij* [Bedouins and Nomadism: Concepts and Approaches] (Sirs al-Layyan, Egypt: Markaz tanmiyat al-mujatma‘ fi al-‘alam al-‘Arabi, 1966), 47.
 - 33 Human Rights Watch, “Israel: Reverse Illegal Plans for West Bank: Land Seizure, Settlement Construction, Forcible Displacement of Palestinians,” 3 September 2014, online at www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/03/Israel-reverse-illegal-plans-west-bank, accessed 12 March 2016.
 - 34 Hass, “Israeli Government.”
 - 35 A more detailed assessment would take into consideration different animal classifications, such as milking animals, gestating animals, stud animals, and so on, all of which have different feed requirements and other specific needs.
 - 36 Halim Barakat, *al-Mujtama‘ al-‘Arabi al-mu‘asir: bahth istitla‘i ijtima‘i* [Contemporary Arab Society: Exploratory Social Research] (Beirut: Markaz dirasat al-wahda al-‘Arabiya, 1984), 76.
 - 37 UNRWA and Bimkom, *al-Jabal*, 11.