

Say no to the racism of the Jewish National Fund

Stop the JNF-land grab and ethnic cleansing in the shade of German trees

Open Letter to supporters of the Forest of German States in the Negev

Addressed to:

SPD Secretary-General Nahles
SPD parliamentary leader, Dr Steinmeier
Ms Rettig

Lord Mayor of Esslingen, Dr. Zieger
Members of Jugendhilfe aktiv (Active Youth Welfare organisation)

We were dismayed to learn that you have lent your support to the Forest of German States project of the Jewish National Fund (JNF). It has been well known for several years that the JNF is closely involved with the expulsion, exclusion and dispossession of Palestinians. Human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch together with Palestinian-Israeli civil society groups – Zochrot, Tarabut, Negev Coexistence Forum, the lawyers' organisation Adalah etc.) call on you not to support this action and to protest against the activities of the JNF (see list of web addresses overleaf).



In the photo: residents of a house that was demolished 24th Dec. 2012 at Segev Shalom (a Bedouin township established by the state), between the ruins of their house. The house was demolished despite an arrangement between the owner and the Authority of Regulation of Bedouin Settlement, which determined that it is a temporary house, that will not be demolished until the completion of the construction of his new house. Source: dukium.org

A main focus of the JNF is the so-called development of the Negev in a \$US 600 million project. The JNF is creating parks and woods in areas where Palestinian villages are being systematically eradicated and their inhabitants expelled. At the same time, settlements are being built exclusively for Jewish-Israeli citizens. Up to 70,000 Palestinians are to be forcibly resettled. The Israeli state has decided that the new home for the original inhabitants of this area will be miserable planned towns with very poor infrastructure and few job-opportunities. Small wonder that the so-called Praver Plan has been condemned by the European Commission: (ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2012_enp_pack/progress_report_israel_en.pdf)

The Forest of German States in the Lahav area near Beer Sheva is part of this plan. Here, where the JNF is planting its trees, live extended families of the Tiyaha who were driven from their land as Israel was founded. A family member, Dr. Awad Abu Freih, describes in this video how the JNF is covering up the ruins of his home village beneath the Forest of German States. (youtube.com/watch?v=qIq_XIHZpoE)

The best-known example of the JNF's expulsion policy in the Negev is the village of Al-Arakib that lies just a few kilometers from the Forest of German States. Shortly after Israel came into being, the Israeli authorities designated the village as the seat of a court authority. In the early 1950s, the inhabitants were forcibly relocated. But they have returned and protest continually against the robbery of their land.

The Givot Bar settlement is being built on a part of their land. It is designated exclusively for Jewish citizens. To date, the Palestinian village of Al-Arakib has been destroyed over 40 times. It is to be covered by a JNF-forest.

What's happening in the Negev is happening throughout the land. Ironically, the JNF-forest in Galilee named after the well-known SPD-politician, Willy Brandt is a further example of the expulsion of Palestinians. The wood conceals the ruins of the village of Shajara. The inhabitants of this village were driven out in 1947 and 1948 and are unable to care for the graves of their forbears. (uridavis-official-website.info) (Jewish National Fund section)

The Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East reports how the JNF (through its subsidiary Himnuta) is decisively involved in the development of illegal settlements in East Jerusalem. (juedische-stimme.de/?p=1015)

A short check of the facts gives the lie to the JNF claim that northern Palestinian Negev was a wasteland. Before 1948, large quantities of grain were harvested and exported from the ports of Gaza. The historian Salman Abu Sitta describes the area at that time as the breadbasket of Palestine, quoting reports of visitors from the 19th century. (plands.org/articles/013.htm)

Uprooted olive trees, destroyed gardens and fields of Palestinians in the Negev – the work of the JNF – make it clear that this is no environmental organisation.

Dr. Eurig Scandrett of the Scottish Green Party describes JNF-forestry policy thus:

Its favoured tree is the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), renamed 'Jerusalem pine', which never formed more than sparse stands naturally in Palestine, and is ecologically ill suited to the JNF's dense plantations. In the desert the species of choice are the ... water guzzling, Australian Eucalyptus.

(stopthejnf.org/OpenLetterGreenSunday2012.pdf)

(palaestinakomitee-stuttgart.de/pdfs/brief_an_umweltschuetzer.pdf)

Dear members of the SPD leadership: Follow the example of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Scottish Green Party and many others: distance yourselves from the racist Jewish National Fund and its SPD-Forest as part of the Forest of German States.

How many voters will jump ship when the SPD allies itself with Merkel's support for Israeli human rights violations?

Dear Ms Rettig, It is a great pity that your performance will be associated with Dispossession and Apartheid. We appeal to you to withdraw your support for this JNF fund-raiser.

Dear Dr. Zieger, we call on you to cease your promotion of social exclusion and ethnic cleansing by cancelling your patronage of this fund-raiser.

Dear members of Jugendhilfe aktiv, think of the Palestinian children in Negev who are being traumatised by the destruction of their villages. Make no room for this JNF fundraising concert.

Say no to racism. Follow the example of Stop the Wall, the International Jewish Antizionist-Network and The Palestinian Farmers Union. Donate instead for trees that will be planted in Palestinian gardens in the Negev. This is a truly environmentally friendly action to help reduce the damage caused by the JNF. (ijsn.net/731)

Nobody needs to stay uninformed – there is plenty of information in the internet:

zochrot.org/en – hrw.org/reports/2008/iopto308/iopto308webwcover.pdf – tarabut.info/en/topics/topic/arakib

amnesty.org/fr/node/22995 – adalah.org/eng/?mod=articles&ID=1589 – jnf-machenschaften.de – dukium.org/eng

All links are directly available here:

palaestinakomitee-stuttgart.de/jnf-links-en.htm



With best wishes,

Palestine Solidarity Committee Stuttgart,
Germany

palaestinakomitee-stuttgart.de

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