Official Israeli policy does not recognize the rights of the Palestinian Bedouins in the Negev to their ancestral land, and therefore prohibits them from accessing infrastructural services. Israel continually attempts to confiscate the land and destroy the homes and villages of the Bedouins as a means of slow yet systematic ethnic cleansing. The Prawer-Begin draft bill aimed to destroy 35 villages, making up 800 square kilometres of Bedouin land, and ethnically cleanse 70,000 Palestinians in one go. It was claimed that they had received the approval of the Bedouins on the plan.

With a four-vote majority, the bill passed in the Knesset (Israel's national legislature) on its first reading in June 2013. With such a large-scale plan of ethnic cleansing, this was seen as yet another Nakba (the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948). The goal of the Stop Prawer Plan campaign was to stop the Prawer draft from passing in its second and third readings. The bigger objective, of course, was to stop home demolitions and land expropriation of the Palestinians in the Negev, and to see their villages provided with infrastructure and services.

"UNLIKE WHAT HAPPENS IN MANY OTHER CAMPAIGNS, THE CAMPAIGN LEADERS SPENT MOST OF THEIR TIME ORGANIZING RATHER THAN MOBILIZING."
Initially, various actions were taken by local groups and political parties, yet the number of people mobilized was low. Disappointed by the number of participants, a group of young Palestinian Bedouins organized a campaign to ensure that the Prawer plan would not pass.

The campaign collected Bedouin signatures on the petition denouncing the law, organized a general strike on the day the Knesset committee visited the Negev, and, in alliance with other groups, lobbied the Knesset members to vote against the bill. The campaign organized a global Day of Rage (see: TACTIC: Distributed action) with actions in 34 cities around the world and across historic Palestine, including in the Negev, Haifa, Yaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, and Gaza. All these actions were accompanied by strong media outreach and coverage.

In parallel, all these peaceful actions were met by a violent crackdown by the Israeli police and army to repress Palestinians from nonviolently resisting their continued ethnic cleansing and forced expulsion from their ancestral lands. During the campaign, Israeli intelligence investigated dozens of campaigners and arrested many more who participated in peaceful demonstrations.

Despite the challenges, on the eve of the Day of Rage, the head of the Labour Party withdrew his support for the draft law. A week later the government decided to shelve it. The Palestinians won. Prawer did not pass.

**KEY TACTIC**

**DISTRIBUTED ACTION**

In coordination with the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, the organizers of the Stop Prawer Plan campaign were able to send a call to action to groups and organizations all over the world. Accessing this already-existing network of organized groups made action possible in 34 cities worldwide on the Day of Rage. As interest spread, groups they’d never even heard of contacted them and joined the day of action. This access and networking made all the difference.

**KEY PRINCIPLE**

**KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY**

Initially, the collection of signatures on the petition refusing the Prawer Law was slow and tedious, given the distances involved. Municipal council elections were set for October 22, 2013, so the organizers smartly used these high-traffic points to collect signatures outside the polling stations and saw numbers on the petition multiply.
KEY THEORY

ACTION LOGIC

As action on the campaign was building, the Knesset committee tasked with studying the draft law decided to visit the Negev and meet with the heads of the Bedouin tribes to prove that the Bedouins approved the draft bill. The campaign leaders, along with other organizations, called for a general strike and took to the streets as the Knesset committee arrived. This way, even if the committee had found a few tribesmen to say they supported the bill, bigger numbers taking to the streets against the proposed law would speak far louder.

KEY METHODOLOGY

THEORY OF CHANGE

Because of limited time and resources, it was necessary for activists to choose their actions strategically and invest their limited resources smartly. Despite the many creative ideas that came up, the leaders decided to focus on a few assumptions, which became the guiding principles of their action and alliances. Their four theories of change were that the draft would not pass if: (1) Bedouins demonstrated in an organized way that they were against the draft law contrary to what Prawer said, (2) large numbers of people could be convinced to boycott Israel for being a racist and apartheid state, (3) Knesset members were pressured by their own constituencies, and (4) Israel’s ability to secure order in the streets was jeopardized. Organizers recognized that only if one or more of these four conditions were realized would their opposition be taken seriously.