

**TVNL REMINDER: July 2007 - A new bill in the Knesset seeks to perpetuate discrimination against Israel's Arab citizens.**

Last week, the Israeli Knesset passed, on first reading, the Jewish National Fund bill which allows the JNF to refuse to lease land to Arab citizens. The JNF is a quasi-public charity established to raise funds to purchase land for Jewish settlement within Israel. In 1961, the Israeli government transferred 13% of Israeli land to the JNF. Included in this were one million dunams expropriated from Arab residents who fled Israel in 1948.

The government had sold the land to the JNF at bargain-basement prices in order to remain at arm's length from the tainted process. Historically, the JNF has maintained a ban against Arab use of its land. But the Israeli supreme court, in a landmark ruling, said that the JNF can no longer discriminate against the Arab population. The Court maintained that such a ban defies the norms of a democratic state and must be ended.

The Knesset bill, co-sponsored by a ruling party Kadima Knesset member, is an attempt to get around the court ruling.

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