

PUBLIC

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House Demolition/forced eviction

**ISRAEL/
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

More than 100 residents of Hadidiya village

On 10 April, the Israeli army served demolition orders on all the residents of the Palestinian Bedouin village of Hadidiya, in the Jordan Valley in the east of the occupied West Bank, giving them until 21 April to leave their homes. The inhabitants of the village – about 100 men, women and children from several families – expect the tents and shacks where they live to be demolished any time. After previous demolitions they have pitched tents again in the village but now they face being forcibly removed from the land where they have lived for decades. Since receiving the orders, some families have left the village to take refuge in other villages, while other families have decided to remain in their homes until they are forcibly evicted.

The Bedouin as a group mostly live in tents off the produce of their herds of sheep and goats. The Palestinian Bedouin residents of Hadidiya have lived in the area since before the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel occupied the West Bank.

The village of Hadidiya was previously demolished in 1997, after its inhabitants had received orders for the demolition of their tents. The residents pitched tents and rebuilt shacks and appealed against the demolitions to the Civil Administration (the Israeli military administration of the West Bank) but lost their case. Five families living in the village decided to appeal further to the Israeli High Court of Justice. On 10 December 2006 the High Court of Justice finally turned down this appeal. Palestinian appeals to the courts against home demolitions are almost invariably rejected.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For years Israel has pursued a policy of discriminatory house demolition, allowing scores of Israeli settlements, illegal under international law, to be built on occupied Palestinian land, while confiscating Palestinian lands, refusing building permits for Palestinians and destroying their homes. In particular, there has been relentless pressure from the Israeli army in the West Bank on Palestinians from Bedouin groups to leave the areas where they have been accustomed to live and graze their flocks for decades. The reasons given by the Israeli courts – e.g. lack of planning permission, land reserved for agricultural use or land in a military zone – are used against Palestinians, while Israeli settlements continue to expand on Palestinian agricultural land. The land vacated has often been used for illegal settlements, such as the vast settlement of Maale Adumim near Jerusalem, which was built on land which was once used by Palestinian Bedouin.

Palestinians, including Palestinian Bedouin, in the Jordan Valley, much of which is now a military area or taken over by some 36 Israeli settlements, have suffered particular pressure. Since May 2005 Palestinians whose identity documents do not give the northern Jordan Valley as their place of residence are not allowed to live in the Jordan Valley. House demolition has been widely used as a means to force the Palestinian population to leave the Jordan Valley; then, living elsewhere, the army will not allow such Palestinians to return. Families often receive house demolition orders written in Hebrew, a language which most Palestinians do not understand or read; sometimes these orders are not given to the families but simply left on the land. Families often only know of the order when the army arrives to demolish their homes.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Hebrew or your own language:

- expressing concern that the residents of Hadidiya are facing the demolition of their homes and calling for the demolition orders to be rescinded;
- calling on the Israeli authorities to stop immediately the destruction of Palestinian houses and other properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territories without absolute military necessity as prescribed by international humanitarian law.

APPEALS TO:

Tzipi Livni
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
9 Yitzhak Rabin Boulevard
Kiryat Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem 91035
Israel

Fax: +972 2 530 3367

Email: sar@mfa.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Minister

Brigadier General Avihai Mandelblit
Military Judge Advocate General
David Elazar Street
Tel Aviv, Israel

Fax: +972 3 608 0366

Email: arbel@mail.idf.il

Salutation: Dear Judge Advocate General

Commander
District Coordination Office (DCO)
Jericho

Fax: +972 2 9943305

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 June 2007.