

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN FAMILIES FACING FORCED EVICTION

Eighty-three people, including 32 children, are facing imminent forced eviction and destruction of their property in the Jordan Valley area of the occupied West Bank following military orders from the Israeli authorities.

A recent spate of military orders has marked a renewed effort by the Israeli military in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) to evict Palestinians living in the northern Jordan Valley area of the West Bank and to destroy their property. These villages lie within the 60 per cent of the West Bank designated as "Area C", which is completely under Israeli control; Palestinians living there face severe restrictions on building and destruction of their property.

On 24 June, Israeli military officials, accompanied by soldiers, served eviction orders to two families consisting of 15 people, five of them children, living in the village of 'Ein al-Hilwe in the northern Jordan Valley. The families were told they had 24 hours to leave the area. A day earlier, a demolition order was served against a structure for housing livestock, still under construction, in the nearby village of 'Ein al-Beida, as it had not been given an Israeli-issued building permit.

On 27 June, military authorities handed out 11 eviction orders to 15 families, consisting of 68 people, in the al-Farisiya area of the Jordan Valley. Residents were given just 24 hours to permanently leave the area. The families temporarily left the area last month as part of their usual seasonal migration in the summer months and planned to return to their homes in September. In the past the Israeli army has destroyed homes and other property in other Jordan Valley villages while the residents have been absent during the summer. According to the Palestinian Ma'an News Agency, a spokesperson from the Israeli military authority said the evictions in al-Farisiya were ordered because the homes are in a "closed military zone".

There has been no consultation with the affected communities in 'Ein al-Hilwe, 'Ein al-Beida or al-Farisiya and the Israeli authorities have not offered any alternative housing or compensation for losses to the families. They must rely on family and friends to provide shelter for them and their livestock. They risk losing their livelihood if their animal pens are destroyed.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Hebrew, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern that 83 people are in danger of forced eviction or having their homes and properties demolished, and calling on the Israeli authorities to immediately cancel the eviction and demolition orders;
- Calling for the responsibility for planning and building regulations in the Jordan Valley and elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to be removed from the Israeli military authorities and placed solely with the local Palestinian communities;
- Calling on the authorities to place a moratorium on house demolitions and evictions in the West Bank until the law is amended to bring it into line with international standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 AUGUST 2010 TO:

Minister of Defence

Ehud Barak

37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia

Tel Aviv 61909, Israel

Fax: +972 3 691 6940/696 2757

Email: minister@mod.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Minister

Military Judge Advocate General

Brigadier General Avihai Mandelblit

6 David Elazar Street

Hakiryia, Tel Aviv, Israel

Fax: +972 3 569 4526/608 0366

Email: avimn@idf.gov.il

Salutation: Judge Advocate General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL 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. The land vacated has often been used to build illegal Israeli settlements. International law forbids occupying powers from settling their own citizens in the territories they occupy.

House demolitions are generally carried out without warning of the date, giving no opportunity for Palestinians to salvage their possessions or find elsewhere to shelter. The UN has estimated that some 4,800 demolition orders are pending, many of which are in Area C. In Area C in the West Bank, Israel has complete control over planning and construction and the around 150,000 Palestinians living there lack representation at all levels of the Israeli military planning system. Not only are there no Palestinian representatives on the planning institutions, but even the ability of Palestinian residents to submit objections to eviction and demolition are very limited. Palestinians, especially Palestinian villagers in the Jordan Valley, have suffered particular pressure. Most of the Jordan Valley area of the occupied West Bank has been declared a "closed military zone" by the Israeli army or has been taken over by some 36 Israeli settlements. In a "closed military zone" there is effectively no possibility for Palestinian construction and development.

Under Israeli military law, evicted families are not entitled to alternative housing or compensation, meaning many would face homelessness and destitution were it not for relatives, friends and charities. While homes are often targeted, Israeli authorities have also issued demolition orders against Palestinian schools, clinics, roads, water cisterns, electricity pylons, sheds and animal shelters. For more information, see Amnesty International's *As safe as houses? Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes* (Index: MDE 15/006/2010), issued in June 2010 (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/006/2010/en/4c288ea4-d524-45e4-a583-b5d295880dde/mde150062010eng.pdf>).

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