

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN VILLAGERS AND ISRAELI STATE MEDIATE

The mediation period between Palestinian villagers and the Israeli state was extended until 25 April.

On 2 September 2013 the High Court of Justice suggested that the Palestinian villagers who are threatened with forced eviction and the Israeli state go into mediation. The High Court of Justice did not rule against the forced eviction of all the residents of eight villages situated in the hills south-east of Hebron, in the southern West Bank, to make way for a military training zone, Firing Zone 918, and there are no guarantees that the mediation process will lead to a resolution that does not violate the rights of the villagers.

The villagers agreed to the process immediately and the Ministry of Defence agreed on 21 October 2013. Both sides agreed to the appointment of Yitzhak Zamir, retired Supreme Court Judge and former Attorney General, as mediator. The mediation period was initially set for four months but that was extended. Meetings have been held regularly between representatives of the villagers and the State Attorney's Office, who was targeted in the UA Update of 11 September 2013. The State Attorney has mentioned that the letters he received from Amnesty International activists "left an impression".

The villagers' lawyer has said to Amnesty International that the process is "interesting". The lawyer also said that the current situation, which allows the villagers to remain in their homes while the mediation is ongoing, is more positive than the High Court of Justice potentially ruling that the army's plans could go ahead. The lawyer attributes this relatively positive situation to the conjunction of local and international pressure, to which Amnesty International contributed.

No further action is required from the UA network. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the second update of UA 170/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/013/2013/en>

Name: Residents of Safai, Majaz, Tabban, Fakhit, Halaweh, Mirkez, Jinba and Hillet al-Dhaba'a
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA170/13 Index: MDE 15/005/14 Issue Date: 3 March 2014

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