

URGENT ACTION

FAMILY HOMES DESTROYED

The Israeli authorities destroyed 74 structures, of which 26 were family homes, in the al-Farisiya area of the Jordan Valley in the West Bank on 19 July. The structures belonged to 21 Palestinian families and housed 107 people, including 52 children. Agricultural buildings supporting the villagers' livelihood were also demolished.

During the morning of 19 July, Israeli military officials arrived in the villages of Hmayyir and 'Ein Ghazal, in the area of al-Farisiya, to carry out the destruction of the inhabitants' homes and livelihood.

The destruction in Hmayyir follows the issuing by the military authorities of 11 eviction orders in the village on 27 June. By contrast, structures belonging to two households in 'Ein Ghazal, also in the area of al-Farisiya, were demolished although they had not been served with eviction orders prior to the destruction.

Many of the families, who have lived in the area since the 1970s, have also lost many of their personal belongings and agricultural equipment since the majority of the villagers were not present at the time and those who were there were not given time to remove everything before the properties were demolished. Most of the residents of al-Farisiya were temporarily away from the area when the demolitions took place as part of their usual seasonal migration in the summer months but were planning to return to their homes in September.

Among the property destroyed was a store for agricultural equipment for which no eviction order had been served; 26 residential tents; 10 separate washrooms; 22 animal barracks; seven ovens; and eight kitchens including kitchen utensils. In addition at least four water tanks were damaged as were some two tons of fodder and 0.6 tons of wheat (for human consumption). Four trees were also uprooted including a fig tree.

In June, eviction notices were also served on two families consisting of 10 adults and five children in 'Ein al-Hilwe in the northern Jordan Valley and on a structure being constructed to house livestock, in the nearby village of 'Ein al-Beida. Although not yet destroyed, they could be at any time.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in your own language:

- Condemning the demolition of the homes and agricultural buildings in the al-Farisiya area;
- Urging that all pending demolition and eviction orders against Palestinians in the Jordan Valley be immediately rescinded;
- Calling on the authorities to place a moratorium on house demolitions and forced evictions in the West Bank until the law is amended to bring it into line with international standards;
- Calling for responsibility for planning and building regulations in the Jordan Valley to be placed solely with the local Palestinian communities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 SEPTEMBER 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. This is the First update of UA: 148/10 Index: MDE 15/012/2010, 1 July 2010. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/012/2010/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Unlike many other areas of the Jordan Valley, the communities of Hmayyir and Ein Ghazal had not experienced demolitions in the past. A visit to them in April by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) found that there were 16 households consisting of 85 people living there. Since that time five new households have moved into the area. These demolitions intensify concerns that this is part of an Israeli government strategy to remove the Palestinian population from the area of the West Bank known as "Area C", over which Israel has complete control in terms of planning and construction. The estimated 150,000 Palestinians living there lack representation at all levels of the Israeli military planning system. Not only are there no Palestinian representatives in the planning institutions, but even the ability of Palestinian residents to submit objections to eviction and demolition is 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. The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* reported on 19 July that the Israeli military authorities in the West Bank are acting on government orders to intensify its enforcement against what they deem to be "illegal" building in Area C.

Meanwhile, media reports state that on 18 July 10 demolition orders were issued by the Israeli military authorities against Palestinian farmers in the Bardala area also in the Jordan Valley. Bardala lies in a part of the Israeli-occupied West Bank designated as "Area B" in which the Palestinian Authority is meant to have jurisdiction over planning and construction. On 15 July, two buildings near Hebron in the West Bank were destroyed. On July 13, six homes were demolished in East Jerusalem including in Jabal al-Mukabbir, affecting two families consisting of 21 people. According to UN OCHA, at least 198 Palestinian structures have been demolished since the beginning of 2010, resulting in the forced displacement of almost 300 Palestinians, half of them children, while 600 others have been otherwise affected.

Further Information on UA: 148/10 Index: MDE 15/015/2010 Issue Date: 21 July 2010

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