

Further Information on UA 99/07 (MDE 15/029/2007, 27 April 2007 and MDE 15/052/2007, 27 July 2007) House demolition/Forced Eviction/Denial of Access to Water

**ISRAEL/ More than 100 residents of Hadidiya Village
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**

The Israeli army increased their pressure on the Palestinian villagers of Hadidiya and Humsa on 28 July by confiscating a tractor (one of only two in the village) and water tank from a villager living in Humsa, worsening the already dire water shortage in the village.

The Israeli army has told the villagers (and confirmed to Amnesty International) that to get the tractor and water tank back they must pay a fine of 4,500 Shekels (approx US\$1,000), unaffordable for people living below the poverty line (less than US\$2 a day), and must sign a pledge to leave and not return to the area, which the Israeli army considers a "closed military area" for use by Israeli forces as a shooting practice area.

Ahmad Abdallah Bani Odeh had his tractor and water tank confiscated at the Hamra military checkpoint as he was going to 'Ain Shibli, a few km southwest from his home in Humsa, to fill the water tank for his village.

Palestinians living in Hadidiya and Humsa have to travel to other areas to buy water, although there is a well nearby. The Israeli army does not allow them, even if they pay, to use this well, which is for the sole use of the Israeli settlers in the nearby settlements of Ro'I, Beka'ot and Hamdat.

The confiscation of the water tank is part of the Israeli army's increasing efforts to force the Palestinian inhabitants of large areas of the Jordan Valley to leave their villages. The existing wells are being used by Israeli settlers and are barred to the local Palestinian population; Palestinians are not allowed to drill new wells. The increased restrictions on their movements have made it even more difficult for them to bring water from other areas, ultimately threatening their survival in the area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Israeli army is making increasing efforts to force local Palestinian communities out of the area, notably through house demolition, restriction on movement and preventing access to water and other essential services. These communities have been living in the areas since long before the Israeli army occupied the West Bank in 1967.

The Palestinian Bedouin residents of Hadidiya have traditionally been farmers and herders, living off their crops and the dairy products from their sheep and goats. The growing restrictions imposed by the Israeli army in recent years on their movements and access to water have made it increasingly difficult for them to survive in the area. Now the Israeli army is taking steps to force them out of the area altogether.

The villagers have welcomed international pressure, which has brought several high-level delegations to visit the Hadidiya and Humsa area. However, as international attention diminishes the threat to the villagers increases and further action now is crucial.

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.

Palestinians, especially Palestinian Bedouins, who live in the Jordan Valley, have suffered particular pressure. Most of the Jordan Valley area of the occupied West Bank has been declared a military area by the Israeli army or has been taken over by some 36 Israeli settlements.

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

- expressing concern at the confiscation of the tractor and water tank from Ahmad Abdallah Bani Odeh and urging that the tractor and water tank be immediately returned to him without condition – that is without him having to pay the fine or pledging to move away from the Hadidiya/Humsa area;
- expressing concern that the residents of Humsa and Hadidiya are threatened with the demolition of their homes, and calling for the demolition orders to be rescinded;
- calling on the authorities to place a moratorium on house demolitions and forced evictions in the occupied West Bank until the law is amended to bring it into line with international standards;
- calling for the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian villagers in the Jordan Valley to be lifted, in particular for them to have

access to water, electricity and other essential services, and for them to be allowed to move freely within the Jordan Valley, and between there and the rest of the West Bank;

- calling for 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.

APPEALS TO:

Ehud Bark
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel

Fax: +972 3 691 6940
Email: minister@mod.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

Legal Advisor
IDF Civil Administration in the West Bank

Fax: +972 2 9977 326
Salutation: Dear Sir

Commander
IDF District Coordination Office (DCO)
Jericho, West Bank, via Israel

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 14 September 2007.*****