

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN FAMILIES FACE RENEWED DEMOLITIONS

The Israeli army has ordered the demolition of a further 21 homes and other properties in the Bedouin hamlet of Hadidiya in the Jordan Valley. Many of the structures at risk have been rebuilt following demolitions in June. Fifty people, including at least 25 children, are at risk of permanent displacement.

The Civil Administration (Israeli military administration) issued demolition orders on 10 November for 21 structures used as homes and animal pens. Sixteen of the structures threatened with demolition were donated by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and aid organizations following the demolition of 29 structures on 21 June.

The reason given for the demolition orders is a lack of building permits. However, Hadidiya is in Area C of the occupied West Bank, where the Israeli authorities do not allow Palestinian residents to build permanent structures such as brick houses or roads. It is virtually impossible for residents to obtain permits even for makeshift structures like shacks or tents. The demolition orders request that the owners of the structures demolish their property or the army will do it and charge the owners for the costs of doing so.

Abdul Rahim Hussein Bisharat, a resident of Hadidiya whose home is threatened with demolition, told Amnesty International: "They always say we have to have permits, but what do they want me to get permits for? A tent? The tent is open to the wind and could be blown away. Allow me to get a permit for a proper building and I will pay all fees and prove ownership of the land."

On 12 December residents of Hadidiya, represented by their lawyer, petitioned the Israeli High Court to cancel the demolition orders. The court granted a temporary injunction preventing implementation of the demolition orders. This is valid until another ruling is reached, but does not apply to demolitions that are required for "urgent security reasons". The court has given the Israeli army until 9 February 2012 to respond to its decision. The Israeli army may argue that all the demolitions are required for "urgent security reasons".

Please write immediately in English, Hebrew or your own language:

- Urge the Israeli authorities to cancel all demolition orders against Palestinian structures in Hadidiya and elsewhere in the Jordan Valley;
- Call on them to place a moratorium on house demolitions in the West Bank;
- Call for responsibility for planning and building regulations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to be transferred to the local Palestinian communities.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 FEBRUARY 2012 TO:

Head of Civil Administration

Brig. Gen. Motti Elmoz
Address: Office of the Head of Civil
Administration
Yamal 1029
Military Post Number 01482
Beit El, Israel
Fax: +972 2 9977341

Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

Military Commander West Bank

Brigadier General Hagai Mordechai
Address: Judea and Samaria Division 877
Military Post Number 00149, Israel
Fax: +972 2 9970436

Salutation: Dear Brigadier General

Minister of Defence

Ehud Barak
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakiryia
Tel Aviv 61909, Israel
Fax: +972 3 696 2757

Email: minister@mod.gov.il

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 194/11. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/028/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 10 June 2011, the Israeli army destroyed a tent and three animal shelters in Hadidiya, displacing a family of 10. On 21 June, the Israeli army destroyed 29 homes and other livelihood structures in Hadidiya, displacing six families on the grounds that their structures were built without permits. Homes in Hadidiya were destroyed previously in February 2008, when 34 people including 26 children were displaced. Hadidiya residents have pursued a legal case since the 1980s against previous demolition orders. A petition by five families to the Israeli High Court was rejected in 2006.

The Civil Administration, a branch of the Israeli military, controls planning and construction in Area C of the occupied West Bank. Approximately 150,000 Palestinians living in Area C have no representation at any level of the Israeli military planning system, leaving them constantly vulnerable to forced eviction and house demolition. The Israeli army has forced the Hadidiya residents to live in extremely difficult conditions. Forbidden from building permanent structures, they are forced to live in tents and shacks which provide little protection from the harsh weather of the desert. Even these structures are considered “illegal” by the Israeli army and have been demolished on numerous occasions. The children travel several kilometres on a dirt road to go to school in the village of Tammoun. The residents are not allowed to connect to electricity or water grids or to drill new wells, nor are they permitted to use the wells or roads in the immediate area as these are exclusively for the Israeli settlers living in nearby settlements, such as Ro'i, Beqa'ot and Hemdat, which are unlawful under international law. (See the following link to a film focussing on one of the families whose homes were destroyed on 21 June and are now threatened again: <http://www.slumstories.org/episode/isra%C3%ABlopt-%E2%80%93abd-el-rahim>).

The Palestinian population in the Jordan Valley, who have lived there since long before the Israeli army occupied the West Bank in 1967, has consistently faced discriminatory Israeli policies relating to planning, building, and access to land and water, and has suffered particular pressure as some of the region's most poor and vulnerable people. Much of the Jordan Valley has been declared a “closed military area” by the Israeli army or has been taken over by dozens of Israeli settlements. The inhabitants of Hadidiya, like many Palestinians in the Jordan Valley, live each day under the threat of forcible eviction from their homes and land by the Israeli army. They are also subject to restrictions on their movement as they try to graze their sheep.

Attempts by the Israeli authorities to remove the Palestinian population from Area C appear to be escalating. According to the United Nation Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of 13 December, at least 547 structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had been demolished by the Israeli authorities, displacing 1,051 people. In the equivalent period during 2010, 386 structures were demolished and 516 people were displaced.

Name: Residents of Hadidya village

Gender m/f: Residents – both; Abdul Rahim Hussein Bisharat: male

Further information on UA: 194/11 Index: MDE 15/042/2011 Issue Date: 22 December 2011

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