

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 15/009/2008

07 February 2008

Further Information on UA 99/07 (MDE 15/029/2007, 27 April 2007) and follow-ups MDE 15/052/2007, 27 July 2007; MDE 15/055/2007, 3 August 2007; and MDE 15/057/2007, 14 August 2007) House demolition/Forced Eviction/Denial of Access to Water

**ISRAEL/
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES
New names:**

**More than 100 residents of Hadidiya village
Mohammed Ali Sheikh Bani Odeh (m)
Ali Sheikh Musleh Bani Odeh (m)
Omar 'Arif Mohammad Bisharat (m)
Mohammed Sahad Bani Odeh (m)
And their families**

On the morning of 6 February, the Israeli army demolished the homes of four Palestinian families and their animal pens in the village of Hadidiya, in the Jordan Valley area of the occupied West Bank.

The destroyed properties belonged to Mohammed Ali Sheikh Bani Odeh, Ali Sheikh Musleh Bani Odeh, Omar 'Arif Mohammad Bisharat, and Mohammed Sahad Bani Odeh and their families - more than 30 people, including some 20 children.

These families, like their neighbours in the same area whose homes are also at risk of demolition, have been living in the area for generations but in recent years have been coming under increasing pressure from the Israeli army to abandon the area. Several other families in the area have had their homes and animal pens destroyed in the past year.

The Israeli army has designated the Hadidiya area, as well as most of the Jordan Valley area, as a "closed military area" to be used as a firing range (for shooting practice), and has been exerting increased efforts to force the Palestinian population of these villages out of the area.

In addition to the periodic demolition of the Palestinian villagers' homes and animal pens, the Israeli army also uses other methods to push the villagers out of the area. It has denied them access to water and increasingly restricted their movements, as well as confiscating their animals. The villagers rely on their animals and agriculture for subsistence, and are now finding it increasingly difficult to survive. However, they are determined to remain in the area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

The Palestinian 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 are very isolated and have welcomed international solidarity and pressure on the Israeli authorities to protest the demolitions. However, as international attention diminishes the threat to the villagers increases and renewed 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 villagers 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:

- condemning the demolition of the homes and animal pens in Hadidiya on 6 February 2008;
- urging that any other existing demolition orders against Palestinian homes and properties in the area be immediately 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 Barak
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
37 Kaplan Street, Hakirya
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

Major General Gadi Shamni
Commander, West Bank
Central Commander Office 64
Military Mail 02367 – IDF
Israel

Fax: +972-2 5305741
Salutation: Dear Major General Shamni

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 21 March 2008.