



BEDOUIN RELOCATION: THREAT OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE JERUSALEM PERIPHERY SEPTEMBER 2011

FAST FACTS

- Around 2,300 Bedouin reside in 20 communities in the hills to the east of Jerusalem. More than 80% of them are refugees. Over two-thirds are children.
- The communities have all lost access to land due to settlement expansion, most have demolition orders pending against their homes, none have access to the electricity network and only half are connected to the water network.
- Despite receiving humanitarian assistance, 55% of Bedouin/herding communities in Area C of the West Bank are food insecure.
- Over 200 families were re-located from the area in the 1990s, some by force. Of these, more than 85% report they had to abandon their traditional livelihoods.
- More than 500,000 Israeli civilians live in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, built in contravention of international law.
- As of 1 September 2011, at least 755 Palestinians had been forcibly displaced in 2011 due to demolitions and 127 due to settler violence – some 40% of these were Bedouin.

1. **The Palestinian Bedouin communities living in the hills to the east of Jerusalem are at risk of forced displacement.** The communities have been informed by the Israeli authorities that they have no option but to leave the area, as part of a larger plan to relocate Bedouin communities living in Area C, where Israel retains control over security as well as planning and zoning. Reports indicate that this plan may begin as early as January 2012. At this stage, most of the communities have indicated that they are against the proposed plan.

2. **Concerns have been raised about the proposed relocation site.** The site is located close to Al Ezariya town, near where Bedouin families were relocated in the late 1990s to allow for the expansion of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. The proposed site does not meet minimum standards in terms of distance from the municipal dumping grounds, which is likely to pose a health hazard to the communities, and provides limited access to grazing lands. Previously relocated families report negative consequences, including health concerns, loss of livelihood, deteriorated living conditions, loss of tribal cohesion and erosion of traditional lifestyles.

3. **The Bedouin's current homes are located in an area that holds strategic significance for further expansion of Israeli settlements.** This includes the E1 plan, which foresees the expansion of Ma'ale Adummim and its linkage to Jerusalem. If implemented, these plans, along with Barrier construction in the area, risk preventing Palestinian

growth and development and disrupting the territorial contiguity of the West Bank.

4. **The threatened communities, most of whom are refugees, pursue a traditional life-style of herding and have suffered a serious decline in living conditions in recent years.** There are increasing restrictions on their access to land, resources and markets for their products. They live under the regular threat of demolition of homes, schools and animal shelters due to the inability to obtain Israeli building permits. They experience routine settler violence, alongside settlement expansion. Bedouin and herding communities throughout the West Bank face similar difficulties and are also at risk of forced displacement.

5. **Palestinian communities should be allowed to make a free and informed decision about their place of residence.** International law prohibits the forced transfer of civilians, regardless of the motive or means used, unless temporarily required for their own security or military necessity. The intentional destruction or confiscation of private civilian property, including homes, as well as the transfer of settlers into occupied territory, is similarly prohibited. As an occupying power, Israel has an obligation to protect the Palestinian civilian population and to administer the territory for the benefit of that population. Any voluntary move or transfer of civilians must meet international standards, including relating to a free and informed choice.



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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