

URGENT ACTION

PALESTINIAN SCHOOL AT RISK OF DEMOLITION

A primary school for Palestinian Bedouin children in the Jerusalem area is to be destroyed after Israeli settlers pushed the military to carry out the demolition. It could be destroyed at any time. Seventy pupils from the Arab Jahalin tribe will be left without a school. Demolitions of Bedouin homes in the area are also scheduled to take place soon.

The plan to demolish the Jahalin School is part of a larger campaign to forcibly displace Bedouins who reside in the area east of Jerusalem, near to the Israeli settlements of Maale Adumim and Kfar Adumim. These Israeli settlements, like all Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, are illegal under international law. The school serves several Bedouin communities in the Khan al-Ahmar area, which is located in Area C of the West Bank, where Israel has full civil and military control. These Bedouin communities have faced persistent harassment from the Israeli military authorities and Israeli settlers.

A group of Israelis from Kfar Adumim filed a petition with the Israeli High Court of Justice on 1 August 2011 seeking an explanation from the Israeli military as to why the school has not already been demolished. The petition cites a demolition order against the school issued by the Israeli military authorities in June 2009; it was issued on the grounds that the school was built without an official permit; in practice, it is virtually impossible for Palestinians in Area C to obtain building permits from the Israeli authorities.

Some of the families in Khan al-Ahmar are already facing demolition of their homes and the shelters for their sheep. In July 2011, the Civil Administration upheld final demolition orders for 12 residential structures and four animal shelters in the community. A petition against these demolitions is pending in the Israeli High Court. Khan al-Ahmar is one of 20 communities in the Jerusalem periphery that is targeted for forced displacement by the Israeli military. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed that the Israeli military has recently approved plans to move the 2,300 Bedouins out of the municipal area of Maale Adumim settlement, where they have lived since 1948, without consulting them.

Please write immediately in Hebrew or your own language asking the Israeli authorities to:

- Put an immediate stop to the procedures leading to the demolition of the Jahalin school, as its destruction would be a violation to the right to education;
- Rescind all demolition orders for homes and animal shelters in Khan al-Ahmar;
- Suspend all plans to forcibly displace Bedouins living in Area C in the West Bank;
- Immediately stop the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and related infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a first step towards removing Israeli civilians living in such settlements.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 NOVEMBER 2011 TO:

Minister of Defense

Ehud Barak
Ministry of Defense
37 Kaplan Street, Hakirya
Tel Aviv 61909,
ISRAEL
Fax: 011 972 3 691 6940/ 696 2757
Email: minister@mod.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Minister

Military Judge Advocate General

Major General Avihai Mandelblit
6 David Elazar Street
Hakirya, Tel Aviv,
ISRAEL
Fax: 011 972 3 569 4526
Email: avimn@idf.gov.il
Salutation: Dear Judge Advocate
General

Quartet Representative to the Middle

East
The Office of Tony Blair
P.O. Box 60519
London, W2 7JU
UNITED KINGDOM
Email: info@tonyblairoffice.org
Salutation: Dear Mr Blair

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Michael B. Oren, Embassy of Israel, 3514 International Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008
Tel: 202 364 5500 | Fax: 1 202 364 5607 | Email: info@israelemb.org -OR- info@washington.mfa.gov.il
Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 24 June 2009, the Israeli military authorities ordered construction work to stop on the Bedouin school in Khan al-Ahmar. The school was built anyway as a response to the local needs, and classes began at the primary school in late August 2009.

In February 2010, the Jahalin tribe petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court to grant legal authorization for the school to continue to function. On 3 March, the Supreme Court rejected the petition but ruled that the school could remain open until the end of the school year in June 2010. The school has remained open since then and has not been demolished, at least partly; it seems, due to international advocacy and media interest. Yet, local settlers continue to see the school, and the communities it serves, as obstacles to the expansion of the nearby illegal settlements of Ma'ale Adumim and Kfar Adumim.

The eco-friendly school was built by the Bedouin Arab Jahalin tribe in Khan al-Ahmar area east of Jerusalem with the help of Italian NGO Vento Di Terra and local NGOs. The school serves 70 children (aged 6-10 years) who would otherwise have no access to education. The school is made up of four classrooms, one staffroom and five toilets. There are six teachers working at the school.

Khan al-Ahmar is one of 20 Bedouin communities in the Jerusalem periphery that are being targeted for forced displacement by the Israeli military authorities, in a strategy related to longstanding plans to expand illegal Israeli settlements in the area. The Israeli authorities have informed these Area C communities, home to some 2,300 people, that they will be relocated to an area near al-'Azariyya, in the West Bank's Area B. This is located close to a municipal dumping ground and residents oppose such a move. Implementation of this wider plan is expected to begin in early 2012. Eighty per cent of the people in the communities are refugees and two thirds of them are children. They have been living in the area since 1948. Currently these communities have no access to lands or electricity networks. Only half of the communities are connected to water networks.

Read more on the school in Amnesty International's campaign digest *As Safe as Houses?: Israel's Demolition of Palestinian Homes* Index MDE 15 006 2010: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE15/006/2010>.

Name(s): Palestinian Bedouin children and families (m/f)

Issue(s): Forced displacement, Legal concern

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