



BEDOUIN COMMUNITIES AT RISK OF FORCIBLE TRANSFER

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KEY FACTS

- Around 7,000 Palestinian Bedouins and herders, some 60% of them children, reside in 46 small residential areas, in Area C in the central West Bank.
- Over 70% of the residents are refugees, who were evicted from or fled their places of residence in southern Israel in the early 1950's.
- Approximately 90% of the people depend on herding as their primary source of income.
- Most of the families have pending demolition orders against their homes and over 85% lack connection to the electricity and water networks.
- Two-thirds of the communities reported facing settler violence during the past three years.
- Over 60% of the approximately 6,000 Palestinians forcibly displaced since 2008 due to the demolition of their homes in Area C, on the grounds that they had no building permits, lived in Bedouin/herding communities.
- More than 540,000 Israelis settlers live in West Bank settlements, which were built in contravention of international law; they receive preferential treatment in terms of the allocation of land, planning and provision of services.

1. **Bedouin communities in the hills to the east of Jerusalem and in the central West Bank are at risk of forcible transfer due to a "relocation" plan advanced by the Israeli authorities.** The authorities have justified the plan claiming that the residents lack title over the land and that the relocation will improve their living conditions. The residents, however, have not been genuinely consulted about the plan; they firmly oppose this plan and insist on their right to return to their original homes and lands in southern Israel. In the meantime, they have requested protection and assistance in their current location, including adequate planning and permits for their homes and livelihoods.
2. **Various Israeli practices have created a coercive environment, which functions as a "push factor".** These practices include the restriction of access to grazing land and markets; the denial of access to basic infrastructure; the rejection of applications for building permits; and the demolition and threat of demolition of homes, schools and animal shelters. The authorities have also largely failed to protect the communities from intimidation and attacks by Israeli settlers.
3. **The designated "relocation" sites are inadequate and raise serious humanitarian concerns.** They include three new "townships" to be developed on public ("state") land that the Israeli authorities allocated for this purpose in Area C. Some of the planning schemes for the new "townships" have been recently deposited for public review, towards their final approval. Due to a number of reasons,

including the limited availability of grazing land at the designated sites, the relocation is expected to undermine the traditional livelihoods and culture of the communities, as was the case for 150 Bedouin families who were relocated from this area in the late 1990s. One of the sites is also located next to a refuse dump site, raising serious health concerns.

4. **Some of the communities are currently located in an area that has been allocated for the expansion of Israeli settlements.** This includes the E1 plan, which entails the construction of thousands of new settlement housing and commercial units, creating a continuous built-up area between the Ma'ale Adummim settlement and Jerusalem. The affected area is also planned to be surrounded by the Barrier. If implemented, these plans will undermine Palestinian presence in the area, further disconnect East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, and disrupt the territorial contiguity of the occupied territory.
5. **The UN Secretary-General has stated that the implementation of the proposed "relocation" would amount to individual and mass forcible transfers and forced evictions,** prohibited under international humanitarian law and human rights law.¹ As an occupying power, Israel has an obligation to protect the civilian population in the occupied territory and administer it for the benefit of that population. The destruction or confiscation of private property, including homes, as well as the transfer of settlers into occupied territory, is also prohibited.

1. Report by the UN Secretary General to the UN General Assembly, A/67/372, 14 September 2012, para. 37.



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