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World leaders must stop Israeli forced transfer of Palestinian Bedouins

44 Palestinian, Israeli, and international organizations are urgently calling on world leaders to stop Israeli plans to forcibly transfer thousands of Palestinian Bedouins out of their communities in the central part of the occupied West Bank and into a designated township.

The organizations stressed that the international community must take all possible measures to ensure that individual and mass forcible transfer, which is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, does not take place. The organizations said world leaders should immediately press Israel to cancel all transfer plans and allow Palestinians to remain in and develop their communities, warning that the transfer of Palestinian Bedouins from their current locations would free up land for Israeli settlement expansion in a way that could render the two-state solution unachievable.

The call comes as the Israeli government publicized this week six plans to move Palestinian Bedouins out of their communities around Jericho, Ramallah, and Jerusalem. The plans include moving Bedouins out of the politically sensitive area referred to as the Jerusalem Periphery or “E1,” where Israel has long-intended to demolish 23 Bedouin villages in order to expand and link settlements, established in violation of international law. Settlement expansion in this area would cut the West Bank in two, further disrupting movement and social and economic ties between major Palestinian cities and limiting the little access Palestinians in the West Bank have to Jerusalem.

All of the Palestinian Bedouin communities slated for transfer are located in Area C, the 60 percent of the West Bank where Israel maintains full civil and military control. There are already around 341,000 Israeli settlers living in more than 100 settlements throughout Area C. Although Area C is within the internationally recognized 1967 borders of the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel only allows Palestinians to build on 1 percent of it. The lack of authority to build makes Palestinians vulnerable to home demolition, displacement, and forcible transfer and limits their ability to realize their rights to water, to adequate shelter, to education, health, and to livelihood.

In recent months, the government of Israel has used coercive tactics to heighten the pressure on Palestinian Bedouin communities, issuing eviction orders and demolishing homes and livelihood structures. Israel has also obstructed aid agencies from delivering assistance to these communities, including by seizing and destroying emergency shelters that international donors provided for families whose homes were demolished and confiscating a swing-set and a slide for a Bedouin school. Israel has already demolished more than 350 Palestinian homes or livelihood structures in Area C in 2014, while demolitions in the Jerusalem periphery and E1 area have hit a five-year high, displacing 170 Bedouins, 91 of whom are children.

“Being in constant danger of forcible transfer is not a healthy way of living. We are scared, we can’t build, we lack basic rights, but we don’t want to move to a township. If you ask me to move I would say no. I was born as a Bedouin, and we want to preserve our traditions. Israel is claiming they will create a better solution for us, I will tell you that’s not true, that transferring us will destroy our lifestyle and traditions. If they really want to create a better solution they can let us to go back to the Negev or stay where we are and receive services,” said Jameel Hamadeen, a 32-year-old resident of Sateh al Bahr, one of the Bedouin communities slated for demolition and transfer.

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| 1. ActionAid | 22. Jerusalem Legal Aid & Human Rights Center (JLAC) |
| 2. Action Against Hunger (ACF) | 23. Ma’an Development Center |
| 3. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) | 24. Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP – UK) |
| 4. Alianza por la Solidaridad (APS) | 25. medico international |
| 5. Al Haq | 26. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) |
| 6. Assamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz (ACPP) | 27. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) |
| 7. Badil | 28. Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) |
| 8. CARE International | 29. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) |
| 9. Christian Aid | 30. Oxfam |
| 10. Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP) | 31. PAX |
| 11. DanChurchAid (DCA) | 32. PNGO |
| 12. Diakonia | 33. Quakers in Britain |
| 13. EAPPI UK and Ireland | 34. Rabbis for Human Rights |
| 14. EducAid | 35. Rebuilding Alliance |
| 15. Grassroots Jerusalem | 36. Save the Children |
| 16. Handicap International (HI) | 37. The Civic Coalition for Palestinians Rights in Jerusalem |
| 17. Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, Palestine & Jordan | 38. The Jahalin Association – Nabi Samwel |
| 18. HEKS | 39. The Kvinna til Kvinna Foundation |
| 19. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) | 40. The Palestine Solidarity Association of Sweden |
| 20. International Learning Centers (ILC) | 41. The YMCA Rehabilitation Program |
| 21. Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) | 42. War Child |
| | 43. WeEffect |
| | 44. World Vision Jerusalem- West Bank- Gaza |