



Housing & Land Rights Network
Habitat International Coalition



Program :: News Archive :: Social Production :: Habitat Library :: Solutions & Tools :: Publications :: About Us :: Members :: Activities :: HLRN

GO

UN Experts Condemn Israel Razing Village

By: OHCHR

19 November 2020

UN experts condemn Israel's demolition of houses in Palestinian Bedouin community

GENEVA—UN human rights experts* condemned the demolition by Israel of the homes and property belonging to a Palestinian Bedouin community in the northern Jordan Valley of the West Bank, amid a significant rise in property demolitions across the occupied territory.

In early November, at least 73 inhabitants of Khirbet Humsa, including 41 children, were displaced, and more than 75 structures – including tent homes, animal sheds and solar panels – were destroyed.

The Israeli Civil Administration – the arm of the Israeli Defense Forces which administers the occupation of the West Bank – has said that the living structures of the Bedouin community were destroyed because they were built illegally in a military firing zone.



The experts note that Israel, the occupying power, routinely demolishes Palestinian homes and structures in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that were built without a permit. They say the Israeli military has confiscated significant portions of the West Bank as military firing zones, upending the lands and lives of many pastoral and permanent Bedouin communities.

"The Israeli planning regime in the occupied territory is discriminatory and restrictive, and rarely grants Palestinian applications for building permits," said the experts. "This results in a coercive atmosphere, where property demolitions, or the threat of demolitions, drives Palestinians away from their homes, lands and livelihoods."

According to the United Nations Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, 869 Palestinians have been rendered homeless this year through property destruction by Israel, the largest numbers since 2016. In terms of the number of people left homeless, the destruction of Khirbet Humsa is the largest single demolition operation conducted by the Israeli Civil Administration since 2010.

"Home and property demolitions belonging to a protected population under occupation by an occupying power are a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention," the experts said. "According to Article 53, the occupying power is prohibited from destroying real and personal property unless rendered 'absolutely necessary by military operations'."

The human rights experts expressed particular concern that the pattern of rising home and property demolitions by Israel has been occurring during the coronavirus pandemic. "Secure housing is one of the ultimate protections that individuals possess to protect themselves against COVID-19," they said. "Deliberately creating a homeless population in the midst of an international health catastrophe is a serious human rights blemish on any State authority responsible for such acts."

"We call on Israel to immediately halt its property demolitions in the occupied territory, to ensure that its actions are strictly compliant with its international humanitarian and human rights obligations and to provide protection for, rather than displacement of, the protected population."

ENDS

(* **The experts:** Mr. **Michael Lynk**, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967; and Mr. **Balakrishnan Rajagopal**, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

UN Human Rights, Country Page: [Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel](#)

For more information and **media requests**, please contact Katarina Medlova (+41 22 917 9129 / kmedlova@ohchr.org)

For **media inquiries** related to other UN independent experts please contact Renato de Souza (+41 22 928 9855 / rrrosariadesouza@ohchr.org), Jeremy Laurence (+ 41 22 917 7578 / jlaurance@ohchr.org)

Follow news related to the UN's independent human rights experts on Twitter @UN_SPEExperts.

Concerned about the world we live in?

Then **STAND UP** for someone's rights today.

#Standup4humanrights

and visit the web page at <http://www.standup4humanrights.org>

Original release

Photo on front page: Remains of the Israeli demolition of Khirbet Hamsa al-Fawqa, where Israel overturned a tranquil life in few moments. Source: WAFA.

The Land and Its People

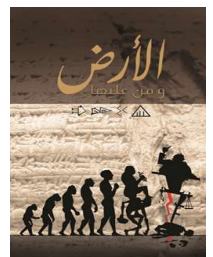


The Land and Its People



HIC Expectations of Habitat III

HLRN Publications



Land Times



All rights reserved to HIC-HLRN -Disclaimer