

Palestinian villagers' homes under threat

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The Israeli army is threatening to destroy their homes of Palestinian villagers in the Jordan Valley region of the West Bank. The villagers are facing increasing pressures as the army restricts their movement and their access to water.

In Humsa and Hadidiya, two hamlets in the north-east of the West Bank, the Israeli army is increasing its efforts to force more than 100 villagers, most of them children, out of the area.

The inhabitants of Hadidiya were forced to move from Hadidiya to Humsa, about one kilometre away, last April, after the Israeli army threatened to destroy their homes and animal pens. They are now, once again, being threatened with the destruction of their homes and further displacement, as on 29 May 2007 the Israeli army issued another order for them to leave the area "with immediate effect".

Since then, they live in fear that the army's bulldozers may come at any time and destroy their tents, shacks and animal pens. In the meantime they continue to be harassed by Israeli forces. They are denied access to water and their movements are increasingly restricted by military checkpoints and blockades that prevent them from using the main roads in the area.

The Israeli army has declared most of the Jordan Valley a "closed military area" from which the local Palestinian population is barred. However, Israeli settlements -- established in violation of international law -- continue to expand and Israeli settlers are allowed to move freely and use vast quantities of water.

While in Humsa and Hadidiya every single home is slated for destruction and the Palestinian villagers have to bring water for their basic needs from 20 kilometres away, Israeli settlements only a few hundreds of meters away, have well-watered gardens and swimming pools.

In a visit to the area in July 2007, an Amnesty International researcher witnessed the extremely difficult conditions in which the Palestinian villagers are forced to live, with no running water or electricity and no longer able to cultivate their land because they have no water to irrigate their crops. By contrast, in the Israeli settlements nearby sprinklers were wastefully watering the fields in the afternoon sun.

Read more:

Israel/OPT: Forty years of occupation -- no security without basic rights (Press Release, 4 June 2007)

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE150382007>

Enduring occupation: Palestinians under siege in the West Bank (Report, 4 June 2007)

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE150332007>

Israel and the Occupied Territories: Road to nowhere (Report, 1 December 2006)

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE150932006>