



הוועד הישראלי נגד הריסת בתים
The Israeli Committee
Against House Demolitions
الحركة الاسرائيلية ضد هدم البيوت



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Submitted by the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

ISRAEL'S POLICY OF DEMOLISHING PALESTINIAN HOMES MUST END

Since 1967 Israel has demolished nearly 29,000 Palestinian homes, businesses, livestock facilities and other structures vital to Palestinian life and livelihood in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In 2013, a total of 663 Palestinian structures were demolished by the Israeli authorities, displacing 1103 Palestinians (545 children). During the first two months of 2014, 132 structures have been demolished with 181 people displaced, 123 of them are children with those in the Jordan Valley, the periphery of Jerusalem and the South Hebron Hills being most vulnerable. Palestinians are forcibly displaced following home demolitions but also because of demolitions of animal shelters, water cisterns and other structures related to their livelihood or because of the destruction of infrastructure, including roads. Several hundred Palestinians have been displaced as a result of evictions, settler violence and military training.

The motivation for demolishing these homes is purely political, and racially informed: to either drive the Palestinians out of the country altogether (the "quiet transfer") or to confine the four million residents of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza to small, crowded, impoverished and disconnected enclaves. By such practices Israel effectively forecloses any viable Palestinian entity or the realization of Palestinian self-determination; it also solidifies permanent Israeli domination and illegal settlement expansion, *de facto* annexing the OPT. Taken against the background of Israel's systematic destruction of more than 530 Palestinian villages, towns and urban neighborhoods in 1948 and after, the legal steps taken to alienate the Palestinian property from its lands, homes and properties subsequent to the 1948 war and its ongoing policy of demolishing the homes of Palestinian citizens of Israel residing in so-called "unrecognized villages and neighborhoods," the picture that emerges is one of institutional racial discrimination and ethnic displacement.

We are witnessing a process of ethnic displacement, what the Israeli government itself



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describes as “Judaization.” These institutionalized policies are intended to alter the ethnic, religious and racial composition of the affected population and stand in direct contradiction to numerous international covenants. In particular, as the Occupying Power, Israel is bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention to safeguard the homes of the protected persons (Palestinians).

Recommendations

- ICAHD calls on the state of Israel to dismantle its system of institutionalized discrimination over the Palestinian people, to repeal all discriminatory laws, and to cease forthwith acts of persecution against Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel;
- ICAHD calls on the Council in its concluding observations to forcefully insist on the application of IHL in the OPT, to act vigorously to protect the Palestinian people and its fundamental human rights and, particularly, to call for an immediate end to that most painful policy of occupation – forced eviction and displacement as the result of the demolition of Palestinian homes, property, schools, businesses and infrastructure, which causes displacement and dispossession.
- ICAHD calls for the transfer of powers and responsibilities related to planning and zoning in the West Bank, including Area C, to Palestinian jurisdiction in accordance with international law and bi-lateral agreements, to allow for a planning system to include community participation in all levels of the planning process.
- ICAHD calls for all refugees and internally displaced persons who have been forcibly displaced to be allowed to repatriate, return to their homes in safety and dignity, and be given compensation for any harm they have suffered, including the destruction of land, homes and property.
- ICAHD calls all states, intergovernmental organizations and civil society to cooperate to bring to an end the illegal situation arising from Israel’s practices of apartheid and persecution, including the imposition of sanctions.
- ICAHD calls for an end to the Occupation of the Palestinian Territory and a prompt realization of Palestinians right to national self-determination.

Israel's ability to ignore and even violate with impunity IHL and fundamental human rights poses a major challenge to the international community. The inability of this body and the entire UN system to stop Israeli violations is more than a technical or political issue; it fundamentally undermines the rule of law and makes it impossible to resolve conflicts in a just way.