

Israel Plans to Expel Bedouin Communities from Area C, West Bank

10 October 2011: Civil Administration plans to expel tens of thousands of Bedouins from Area C in the West Bank

The Civil Administration (CA) is planning to expel the Bedouin communities living in Area C in the West Bank, transferring some 27,000 persons from their homes. In the first phase, planned as early as January 2012, some 20 communities, comprising 2,300 persons, will be forcibly transferred to a site near the Abu Dis refuse dump, east of Jerusalem. These communities currently live in the area of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement and nearby settlements; half of them live in 1E, the area designated by Israel for future expansion of Ma'ale Adummim. In the second phase, the CA plans to expel communities from the Jordan Valley. One option being considered is building a new permanent town for these communities next to a-Nabi Musa, west of Jericho. According to the CA's schedule, the plan will be implemented in three to six years.



A Bedouin community near the Adummim settlement bloc. Photo: activestills.org

The CA announced its plan to "relocate" the Bedouin communities to the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#). The main reason given was the claim that the Bedouins do not have rights to the land on which they currently live and that all their construction has been done without permits. The CA did not consult with representatives of the communities before adopting the plan, and ignored the anticipated harm to these communities' way of life. Most of the communities informed the UN agencies that they would object to the plan.

About 80 percent of the Bedouins living in what Israel terms the "Adummim bloc", who are expected to be expelled in coming months, are refugees from 1948 who once lived in the Negev, in southern Israel. Two-thirds are under age 18. All of them have lived for decades in unrecognized villages. Demolition orders have already been issued against most of the structures in the communities – tin structures and tents and a school in the Khan al-Ahmar community. In two communities – Wadi Abu Hindi (350 residents) and al-Muntar (300 residents) – demolition orders have been issued against all the structures in the community.



Bedouins from the Jahalin tribe near the Abu Dis refuse dump. Photo: [activestills.org](#)

None of the communities are hooked up to the electricity grid and only half are connected to the water system. They do not receive vital services in the areas of health, education and others. They live a traditional life based on sheep and goat farming, but their access to grazing land and to markets is limited. According to OCHA's figures, most of the residents in these communities suffer from food insecurity.

The Civil Administration plans to transfer these communities to a site near the Abu Dis refuse dump, which is Jerusalem's principal dump. In the early 1990s,

members of the Bedouin Jahalin tribe were moved to this site to enable the expansion of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. The refuse dump poses a health hazard to persons living nearby. Israel's Environmental Protection Ministry has warned that the site is a "source of environmental pollution, risk of fire and even explosions" due to the lack of a system for pumping out the gases created from unloading the waste. Burial of waste at the site is planned to end in mid-2012. The Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adummim municipalities and the Civil Administration have not yet agreed on a plan to rehabilitate the site.

The communities currently live in areas that are strategically important to expansion of the settlement enterprise in the area. Half of them live along Route 1, which connects Jerusalem with the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea area, and by the settlement of Qedar. The other half live inside and on the outskirts of E1, which is situated northwest of the built-up area of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. Israel has already drawn up plans for construction in E1 of 3,910 apartments, and a metropolitan employment and business center that will serve both Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adummim. Also, it has already built the SHAI Police District headquarters there and has paved wide roads in the area leading to the isolated police headquarters. The roads are also intended to serve the neighborhoods planned for E1.

The expansion plans have not yet been implemented, due to opposition of the US Administration, among other factors. If implemented, the E1 plan will create urban contiguity between the Ma'ale Adummim settlement and Jerusalem, will exacerbate the isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, and will cut the territorial contiguity between the northern and southern parts of the West Bank, thereby creating two completely separate areas. This undermines the possibility for the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state.

The Civil Administration's plan blatantly contravenes international humanitarian law, which prohibits the forced transfer of protected persons, such as these Bedouin communities, unless the move is temporary or is necessary for their safety or to meet a military need. The Civil Administration's expulsion plan meets none of these conditions. Israel, as the occupying power, is obligated to act for the benefit and welfare of residents of the occupied territory. Expansion of the settlements does not comport with this requirement.

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