



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

World leaders must stop Israeli forced transfer of Palestinian Bedouins

Moncton, New Brunswick – October 1, 2014 - 45 Palestinian, Israeli, and NGOs including the United Network for a Just Peace for Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) 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 45 organizations have 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.

In Canada, UNJPPI has written Prime Minister Stephen Harper urging him to use his relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reconsider this illegal action. Rev. Steve Berube, UNJPPI Co-chair said, *“The Prime Minister has worked hard to have Israel recognize Canada as its best friend. This is a situation where Canada can use our influence to help prevent an injustice against the Bedouin who are the least and last in Israeli society.”*

Berube went on to say that Harper having just returned from his annual Arctic tour must recognize the similarity in the nomadic lifestyles of Canadian Innu and Inuit and the Palestinian Bedouin. “Surely, Mr. Harper can help Netanyahu understand that forcing the Bedouin off of the land they have inhabited for centuries and into a township is a sin and a singularly foolish act.”

All 45 organizations have 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 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 near Jerusalem 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.

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 other structures. Israel has also obstructed aid agencies from delivering assistance to these communities, including 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 this year.

“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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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ActionAid 2. Action Against Hunger (ACF) 3. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) 4. Alianza por la Solidaridad (APS) 5. Al Haq 6. Assamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz (ACPP) 7. Badil 8. CARE International 9. Christian Aid 10. Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP) 11. DanChurchAid (DCA) 12. Diakonia 13. EAPPI UK and Ireland 14. EducAid 15. Grassroots Jerusalem 16. Handicap International (HI) 17. Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, Palestine & Jordan 18. HEKS 19. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) 20. International Learning Centers (ILC) 21. Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) 22. Jerusalem Legal Aid & Human Rights Center (JLAC) 23. Ma’an Development Center | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP – UK) 25. medico international 26. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) 27. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) 28. Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) 29. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) 30. Oxfam 31. PAX 32. PNGO 33. Quakers in Britain 34. Rabbis for Human Rights 35. Rebuilding Alliance 36. Save the Children 37. The Civic Coalition for Palestinians Rights in Jerusalem 38. The Jahalin Association – Nabi Samwel 39. The Kvinna til Kvinna Foundation 40. The Palestine Solidarity Association of Sweden 41. The YMCA Rehabilitation Program 42. War Child 43. WeEffect 44. World Vision Jerusalem- West Bank- Gaza 45. United Network for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) |
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The United Network for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI) is a network of concerned United Church of Canada (UCC) members and friends which has been established to respond to concerns from the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem and Kairos Palestine. It speaks to the United Church of Canada UCC and not for the UCC.

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