



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

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August 13, 2015

THE HOUSE THAT CANADA BUILT

by Jeff Halper, ICAHD Director

In two weeks this summer, between July 19-August 3rd, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) built a beautiful, four-room home for the Fhadat family of the West Bank town of Anata, complete with a stone fence and garden! Much of the funding for the home was raised on my month-long tour of Canada last February, when I traveled to 15 cities between Halifax and Newfoundland in the east to Vancouver and Vancouver Island in the west, sponsored by the United Church of Canada's United Network For A Just Peace In Palestine And Israel (UNJPPI) and Independent Jewish Voices (IJV). CUPE, it should be noted, also donated \$2000 towards the camp.



A key part of ICAHD's resistance to Israeli occupation, and especially to Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes (about 46,000 on the Occupied Territory since 1967), is to rebuild demolished homes as *political* acts of resistance. We have built 189 homes in the past 15 years, significant if seen as 189 joint actions of Israeli, Palestinian and international activists working together.

This year we built a home for the Fhadat family of Anata. The Fhadat family is really two families, that of the husband and wife and the husband's widowed sister-in-law – 11 children altogether. An impoverished Bedouin family, the Fhadats were forced to demolish their own home by the Israeli authorities or face a violent demolition by the IDF and a stiff fine of \$15-20,000.





Twenty international volunteers participated in this year's rebuilding camp. Our base was Beit Arabiya, the home of Salim and Arabiya Shawamreh that has been demolished six times (and rebuilt each time by ICAHD), where we slept, ate and had encounters with Palestinian and Israeli activists and academics in the evenings.

It was amazing to see the house progress over the two week period, It gave us all a sense of accomplishment to actually construct something physical: in the evening when we left the site a wall, or a window, or a bathroom existed that had not been there in the morning. Here are a couple photos of the rebuilding:

1. Laying the Foundations (with the ubiquitous Apartheid Wall in the background)



2. Putting up the columns (with the Israeli settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev in the background, just beyond the Wall)



Mohammad and John



Heidi

3. Pouring the concrete for the roof (a moving moment)



4. The walls start to go up



5. and the internal walls....



6. The house takes shape



7. and shape....



8. And it's done!

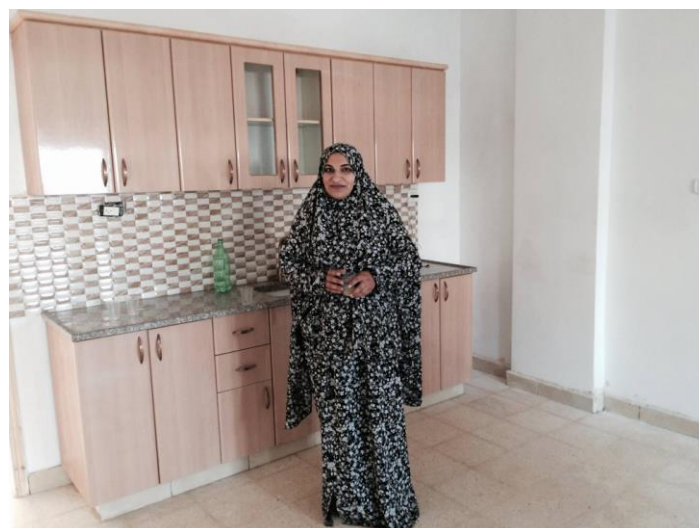
The family in front of their new home



Helping the family move in



Majdida in her new kitchen



9. And we celebrate the house that Canada built!



Hajaj, Salim and Jeff (plus grandchildren)
planting a fruit tree in the garden of the new home





John and Michael



Joined by Go Palestine kids, a summer program for young people of Palestinian origin living abroad



I can't begin to thank all the hundreds of people and dozens of organizations involved in my Canadian tour (though I can begin with the two main organizers, Kathy Bergen of UNJPPI (and her co-chair Marianna Harris) and Tyler Levitan of IJV, with great support from the United Church of Canada, Anglican Church of Canada, MCC Middle East, Canadian Friends of Sabeel, the Park Christian Fellowship-Mennonite and United Jewish People's Order, plus all the universities and organizations that invited me to speak. And, of course, the my wonderful hosts in the 15 cities all across Canada who offered me beds instead of couches and good home cooking instead of junk food (unless I snuck out).

This is the meaning of grassroots resistance to oppression, on the ground, in Canada and throughout the world.

With thanks and in solidarity,

Jeff Halper

