



MAAN Development Center

# Demolitions in the Jordan Valley



- **42:** percentage increase in Israeli demolitions from 2010 to 2011<sup>1</sup>
- **80:** percentage increase in the number of displaced Palestinians due to house demolitions from 2010 to 2011<sup>2</sup>
- **10:** number of active demolition orders for education facilities<sup>3</sup>
- **18:** number of active stop-work orders for educational facilities<sup>4</sup>
- **90:** percentage of total demolitions that occurred in Area C, affecting vulnerable farming and herding communities<sup>5</sup>
- **4,175:** number of Palestinians in Area C who were affected by demolitions<sup>6</sup>

For decades, Israel has used home demolitions as a means to further control and isolate the Palestinian people. After the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, Israel demolished thousands of Palestinian homes, hoping to dissuade refugees from returning to their previous residences. From the 1967 war until the present day, Israel continues this practice. Since 2006, Israel has carried out more demolitions in the Jordan Valley than anywhere else, exploiting the liberties afforded to Palestinians through the Oslo Accords.<sup>7</sup>

Under the Oslo Accords, 95% of the Jordan Valley is designated as Area C, which means it is under full Israeli civil and military control. As a result, Palestinians must apply for permits for any structure they wish to build. According to the United Nations Relief Work Agency (UNWRA), Israel only allows 1% of Area C to be used for construction by Palestinians.<sup>8</sup> This means that Palestinians must either build in Areas A or B of the Jordan Valley (5%), which suffer from overcrowding, or build illegally in Area C (95%), and risk demolition. While it is possible for

Palestinians to apply to the Israeli Civil Administration for building permits, the authorities rarely grant permission; between 2000 and 2007, the Administration granted permits to only 6% of applications.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Repercussions of Demolitions in the Jordan Valley**

The impact of demolitions holds many worrisome implications for Palestinian families in the Jordan Valley. Victims of house demolitions are left homeless, many are forced to relocate to a new area with no familial connections, and families are unable to maintain normal livelihoods. In addition, the extremely stressful effects of constant insecurity and potential demolition create significant psychological distress. Demolitions cause women to feel a loss of control over domestic affairs and heightened insecurity, while men also experience increased stress and anxiety.<sup>10</sup> According to a study conducted by Save the Children, 31% of surveyed households in the Jordan Valley had been either temporarily or permanently displaced at least once since 2000 as a result of Israeli military order and house demolitions.<sup>11</sup> Most families in the Jordan Valley have a high number of children, therefore, a large percentage of those affected by house demolitions are youth. Out of a total of 4,175 Palestinians who were displaced in 2011, 2033 were children.<sup>12</sup>

### **Communities Still Under Threat**

Beyond the issue of individual demolition orders, many communities face the more distressing situation of all-encompassing demolition orders. Villages such as Fasayil al-Wusta, located in the central Jordan Valley, live under the constant threat of pending demolition orders which could affect hundreds of residents.

Most recently, in June 2011, the Israelis demolished ten homes and confiscated rudimentary electric generators used by the inhabitants.<sup>13</sup> Other communities, such as al-Farisiya, Khirbet Tana, and al-Hadidiya, are confronted by a similar risk of destruction, which can be carried out suddenly without warning, or in incremental stages.

#### **Endnotes**

- 1 UNOCHA, *Demolitions and Forced Displacement In The Occupied West Bank*, (January 2012), [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_demolitions\\_fact\\_Sheet\\_january\\_2012\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_demolitions_fact_Sheet_january_2012_english.pdf).
- 2 UNOCHA, *Demolitions and Forced Displacement In The Occupied West Bank*, (January 2012).
- 3 UN Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), *Occupied Palestinian Territory 2012*, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt\\_cap\\_2012\\_full\\_document\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ochaopt_cap_2012_full_document_english.pdf).
- 4 UN Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), *Occupied Palestinian Territory 2012*.
- 5 UNOCHA, *Demolitions and Forced Displacement In The Occupied West Bank*, (January 2012).
- 6 Statistics for 2011, see: UNRWA, "Demolition Watch," Accessed March 1, 2012, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=1001>
- 7 B'Tselem, "Statistics on demolition of houses built without permits in the West Bank," Accessed on March 1, 2012, [http://www.btselem.org/planning\\_and\\_building/statistics](http://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building/statistics).
- 8 UNRWA, "Demolition Watch".
- 9 Americans for Peace Now, "Ha'aretz, AFP, Sydney Herald Articles re: Peace Now Report on Denial of Palestinian Building Permits," Accessed March 1, 2012, <http://peacenow.org/entries/archive4606>.
- 10 UNOCHA, *Demolitions and Forced Displacement In The Occupied West Bank* (January 2012).
- 11 Save the Children, *Jordan Valley Factsheet*, (2009), [http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/English\\_Jordan\\_Valley\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_and\\_Citations.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/English_Jordan_Valley_Fact_Sheet_and_Citations.pdf)
- 12 UNRWA, *Demolition Watch*.
- 13 MA'AN News, "10 Homes Bulldozed in Jericho Valley," Last modified June 16, 2011, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=396569>.