



MA'AN's Jordan Valley Monthly Update

MA'AN's monthly updates are not intended to be a news source, but instead offer information that is relevant or underreported in the region.

December 2013



Jorday Valley : Through My Eyes. Photo of a youth presenting his photography.

Storm Devastates Jordan Valley Communities

Amidst the regions worst snowstorm in decades, the Jordan Valley faced harsh conditions and extensive damage to infrastructure that has impacted upon the day-to-day lives and ongoing livelihoods of local residents. In a space where communities cannot access building permits and are constantly faced with the threat of demolitions and forced displacement, the communities weathered extremely low temperatures with little access to basic provisions, such as adequate shelter and sources of warmth. In addition, the storm left already-fragile homes and other infrastructure devastated. Reports reveal that 20 houses in the Al-Jiftlik area were

damaged. In addition, another 10 homes were reported to have been devastated in the Al-Maleh area. The damages present significant drawbacks for communities living in Area C under full military and settler occupation that already face routine and systematic barriers towards sustainable development.

On-going Demolitions

In addition to the destruction caused by these recent weather conditions, on-going active demolitions took place across the Jordan Valley. Reports suggest a total of 30 structures were destroyed, while an estimated 41 people have been forcefully displaced, including 24 children. For some families, this was the second demolition in less than one month.



On the 10th of December 2013, 5 homes and 3 animal shelters were demolished across Farseya, Ein-el-Helwa, and Yarza. In Jiftlik, 3 homes were demolished for a second time this month. The demolitions pose critical challenges for the ongoing development and stability of local communities in terms of the disruption of livelihoods and routines. In particular, heightened effects are visible amongst women and children who continue to remain the most vulnerable in these contexts.

Proposed Annexation of the Jordan Valley

The Israeli Ministerial Committee for Legislation has approved a Likud party proposal that suggests annexing the Jordan Valley. This comes simultaneous to John Kerry's visit to the region to further bridge gaps between Israeli and Palestinian officials to push peace negotiations. The proposed plan is a serious threat towards the establishing of a viable Palestinian state as it isolates the West Bank from its food basket. Further, it undermines the basic rights of local communities—mostly herders and farmers—in its proposition to forcefully annex land and by virtue devastate livelihoods. It should also be noted that the plan undermines agreed upon boundaries and principles under Oslo, and further poses larger questions of sovereignty and self-determination for Palestinian communities.

Additional Solar Panels in Ras-al-Auja

Through December 2013, MA'AN continued its efforts to work at the grass-roots level in Ras-al-Auja where an additional six solar panels were installed. This investment in solar panels is promising as it gives local communities access to power in an area that is restricted from accessing building permits to improve local electricity supply infrastructure and networks.

MA'AN's commitment to sustainability is exemplified here as the additional solar panels will contribute towards the maintenance of the local dairy industry within the community. This offers local merchants broadened avenues through which to consider long-term income generation models for dairy production.

Jordan Valley: Through My Eyes

On December 29, 2013, through a generous donation from World Vision, MA'AN was able to hold a gallery even in Jericho to showcase the work of youth photographers from across the Jordan Valley who had been involved in the project. The project engaged youth from different villages to bring them into an interactive space to learn from each other, while simultaneously developing skills in media and photography. A total of 12 participants were given digital cameras and were able to showcase their work along with their personal reflections on their current respective contexts. During this time, a passionate discussion occurred amongst participants and the audience, which included officials from the Offices of the Governor of the Jordan Valley, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Labor, and respected community members including Head of Al-Arabi Bank and local business personalities. Overall, the showcase event successfully marked the culmination of this well-received and creative Jordan Valley project.