



## 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.*

July August September 2014



Distribution of school supplies, Fasayil

News during July and August were mostly driven by the war in Gaza, addressing its consequences and therefore focusing much less on the Jordan Valley. It is worth recalling that, in more than seven weeks of violent bombings on the territory, more than 2,133 Palestinians lost their lives, 10,193 were severely injured, 18,000 homes were destroyed and more than 475,000 people were internally displaced.

### *Minister of Agriculture denied entry in the Jordan Valley*

Minister of Agriculture, Shawqi al-Ayasa, was denied entry to the northern Jordan Valley, where he was scheduled to meet with farmers in the village of Furush Beit Dajan on the 3rd of July. After being held for 45 minutes at Hamra checkpoint, Israeli soldiers denied him entry. The access to the Jordan Valley is controlled by four different checkpoints and a military order limits entry only for the residents of

the area. Palestinians who do not have residency in the Jordan Valley are officially required to obtain a permit to enter the region with a private vehicle.

### *European Union ban Israeli products originating from the settlements*

European Union imposed a ban on Israeli products originating from the settlements. Officially, the EU officials impose the ban due to the public health concerns, as the EU doesn't recognize Israeli sovereignty beyond the Green Line, food from this area is considered as unregulated. As the Israeli authorities haven't complied with this new regulation, the EU gave Israel one additional month to prepare, the dead line being extended by the end of September. This regulation could have an impact on the Jordan Valley settlements' production, as the wide majority of them are agriculturally based and

the EU their main export market.

### *Demolitions in Aqaba*

The Israeli occupation forces demolished the homes of two citizens in the village of Aqaba, located in the north of the Jordan Valley. This is yet another demolition within the ongoing policy of demolitions that is occurring in the Jordan Valley. This aggressive Israeli policy aims at removing the Palestinians from their land in an attempt to gain more control within the area.

### *New Israeli plan to expel Bedouin communities*

In September, Israel announced a plan to expel 12,500 Bedouins from lands east of Jerusalem and forcibly relocate them to designated areas in the Jordan Valley, without any prior consultation with the concerned population. In addition to severely harm the traditional Bedouin way of life, this plan would annihilate any possibility of a sovereign Palestinian state on a continuous territory, cutting the West Bank in two, aiming to expand and link settlements and further disrupting movements. This plan will not be the first one to be announced. Bedouin communities have faced many eviction and demolition orders as well as forced displacement to the benefit of Israeli settlers since the occupation in 1967.

## **MA'AN's Work in the Jordan Valley**

### *Jordan Valley Opportunity for Undertaking Development*

MA'AN started a new project entitled Jordan Valley Opportunity for Undertaking Development funded by the Norwegian Representative Office, which objective is to contribute to improving living conditions and resilience of targeted communities. Committees in charge of planning, implementing and monitor the activities were formed in each of the villages, Fasayil, Marj Na'aje, Jiftlik and Furush Beit Dajan during August. One of the activities consists on renovating houses in the targeted villages and during September, the beneficiaries were selected.

### *Supporting Small Farmers in Dates Storing*

The project, funded by the AFPS, consists of building a cold room for farmers for date's storage in the village of Jiftlik. During July and August, the farmers'

cooperative of Jiftlik prepared the land and the ground for construction and installed sunshields. In parallel, a bid process was engaged and a company was contracted for the construction.

### *Project Backpacks 2014*

With the support of the United Palestinian Appeal, students of Ka'abneh and Fasayil al-Foqa schools received backpacks and stationary kits in preparation for the 2014 school year.

### *Jordan Valley Youth for Change*

The objective of this project is to increase the capacities of youth and women from 6 youth CBOs and 2 women centers to ensure they possess the required skills for the labor market and for seeking job opportunities. Visits were organized among women centers in the Jordan Valley in order to increase networking and facilitate the sharing of experience between the volunteers and activities such as initiatives and campaigns were implemented. In September, a session on "work seeking skills" in Al Quds University was organized for youth in the Jordan Valley, as well as a training on research skills that took place in Zbeidat, in the Jordan Valley.

### *Empowering Communities in the Jordan Valley and Hebron to Advocate for Security and Justice*

The youth proposed initiatives for several villages of Jordan Valley, Ein al Beda, Marj Na'aje, Jiftlik, Bardala and Furush Beit Dajan with the aim of improving the access to justice and security. The two selected one were lightening the villages' roads and the construction of shelters for public transportation's stops.

### *Tours in the Jordan Valley*

The 18th of August, twenty young people from Italy and fifteen Palestinian youth joined MA'AN's team for a tour in the Jordan Valley. The tour covered the whole southern part of the Jordan Valley, from the community of Ras al-Auja to the village of Zbeidat and aimed to highlight the severe restrictions and issues this region in particular is facing and violations carried out by the occupation forces against the Palestinians.