

Umm al-Hiran: New tactics, same policy of forcible displacement, Badil Resource Center says

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On 18 January 2017, Israeli forces completely demolished eight homes and seven agricultural buildings in the Palestinian Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in the Naqab, south of Israel.

According to a special legal report released by BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights during the police operation, Palestinian Bedouin resident Abu al-Qi'an was shot dead by Israeli forces while driving his car, subsequently causing him to fatally injure an Israeli police officer by driving over him.

The legal report said that the military orders for the demolitions are the result of an Israeli Supreme Court decision of 2015 that allowed Israel to demolish Umm al-Hiran and forcibly displace its residents in order to establish a new Jewish-Israeli town called 'Hiran' in its place.

The residents of Umm al-Hiran were expelled from their original lands by an Israeli military order in 1956 and were forcibly relocated in their current location.

The Court ruled that since the residents were placed there by Israel, the Israeli authorities could relocate the residents again if they wanted to, Badil report said.

The decision of the Supreme Court regarding Umm al-Hiran in May 2015 was issued the same day as the decision on the West Bank Bedouin village of Susiya.

In this case the Court allowed Israel to demolish the village and forcibly displace all of its 350 Palestinian residents after the rejection of the proposed outline plan for the village.

The plan was rejected on the basis of the village being too small to have one – despite Israel having planned colonies for smaller populations – and that the location made it impossible to connect the village to basic infrastructure, which is inaccurate.

Although no demolitions have taken place since the Court decision, they could happen at any moment.

On 10 January 2017, Israel demolished 11 Palestinian homes in the city of Qalansawe in central Israel, leaving many Palestinian families homeless.

The demolitions took place after Israeli authorities refused to accept the city's master plan. The city has been trying to get a master plan for decades with no success, which has forced many residents to build homes without permits as the authorities are failing to approve enough building permits to match the demand.



In East Jerusalem, the Israeli Minister of Interior has decided to revoke the residencies of 12 members of the al-Qanbar family to date, and delivered demolition notices to 81 houses in the al-Qanabara neighborhood of Jabal al-Mukabir on the pretext that they were built without a permit.

Other punitive collective measures have unlawfully been targeting the entire population of Jabal al-Mukabir, which include the closure of main roads resulting in the disruption of the movement of people and public transport. Both administrative and punitive home demolitions are prevalent in East Jerusalem.

While 2016 witnessed a record number of home demolitions by Israel in the oPt, with 1,089 Palestinian-owned structures being demolished displacing 1,593 Palestinians, this increase has also taken place inside Israel itself.[8] In December 2016 Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu instructed Israeli officials to “work to issue demolition orders for the illegal structures located in Arab towns in northern and southern Israel, as well as in eastern Jerusalem.”[9]

All these oppressive measures by the Israeli authorities on both sides of the Green Line represent different manifestations of the same policy.

In Umm al-Hiran the pretext was its status as an ‘unrecognized’ village; in Qalansawe, Susiya and Jabal al-Mukabir they were administrative home demolitions due to lack of building permits, with Jabal al-Mukabir facing punitive home demolitions as well. Israel is using different tactics that serve the same purpose of realizing the Zionist goal of ‘maximum amount of land with minimum number of Palestinians.’

The last two cases of demolitions of Palestinian homes inside Israel, Umm al-Hiran and Qalansawe, should highlight the need to draw connections between the oppressive Israeli policies against Palestinians living in both the oPt and Israel.

The international community rarely stresses this forced population transfer happening both inside Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory , despite the manifest displacement that is occurring daily.

In the end of his legal report BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights call international community and relevant UN agencies should scrutinize Israel’s policies and practices of forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line, and to take necessary action in order to put an end to these ongoing violations of the basic rights of Palestinians and central tenets of international law.