

## UN experts appalled by Israeli court decision permitting demolition of West Bank Bedouin village

GENEVA (10 September 2018) – An Israeli High Court ruling giving the Government of Israel the green light to demolish the entire Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar Ab al Helu, has been described as “appalling” by two UN human rights experts\*.

“It is gravely disappointing that a High Court can take a decision that is totally against the fundamental principles of international human rights law and international humanitarian law,” said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 and Leilani Farha, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living.

“This appalling decision could trigger the eviction of 180 inhabitants, including more than 90 children, putting them at imminent risk of forcible transfer,” they added.

“Forced eviction constitutes a gross violation of the right to adequate housing under international human rights law. In addition, forcible transfer of people who are protected within an occupied territory is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and amounts to a war crime under the 1998 Rome Statute,” the experts said.

“If the demolition of the village goes ahead and results in the residents having to move out of their current location, all those responsible for this international crime should be held accountable.”

The experts’ comments follow a decision on 5 September to dismiss the latest petitions by residents of Khan al-Ahmar, some 15 km northeast of Jerusalem in the West Bank.

The Special Rapporteurs are also urging Israel, as the occupying power, to stop the eviction.

“It is time to regularize their situation and respect the rights of the Khan al-Ahmar residents to remain on the lands they have inhabited for decades,” the experts added.

The residents of Khan al-Ahmar are descendants of Bedouins expelled from the Negev by Israel in the 1950s. They were relocated in the West Bank, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Their village is situated between two large Israeli settlements, Ma’ale Adumim and Kfar Adumim, and an Israeli industrial zone called Mishor Adumim. The residents have been subjected to constant pressure by the Israeli authorities and neighbouring settlers and have been living in what has been described as an “increasingly coercive environment” that may leave no other choice to the community but to move.

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(\* ) The UN experts: **Mr. Michael Lynk**, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 and **Ms Leilani Farha**, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living.

The Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups are part of what is known as the *Special Procedures* of the Human Rights Council. *Special Procedures*, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. *Special Procedures* experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

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