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Mona and two of her seven children, in a poor household affected by electricity and water shortages. Rafah, Gaza Strip, October 2017

© Photo by OXFAM

HIGHLIGHTS

- The continuation of the electricity crisis and the lack of funding for WASH interventions have rendered 1.45 million people in the Gaza Strip at risk of contracting waterborne, diseases, including as a result of flooding.
- Despite the evacuation of settlers from privately-owned Palestinian land, which was taken over or officially seized for the establishment or expansion of settlements, the Palestinian owners continue to face severe restrictions in accessing their land.
- 171 Palestinians in four herding communities in the northern Jordan Valley are at risk of forcible transfer, following the approval of demolitions by the Israeli High Court of Justice.
- Despite the positive developments regarding the Fatah and Hamas reconciliation agreement, it has not led, so far, to the reversal of the measures that triggered the latest deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

OCTOBER OVERVIEW

On 1 November, the Hamas authorities handed over control of the Erez, Kerem Shalom and Rafah crossings to the Palestinian Government of National Consensus. This is the most significant practical step so far towards the implementation of the reconciliation agreement signed by Fatah and Hamas on 12 October 2017, with Egyptian facilitation. The agreement points the way to a possible end to the decade-long internal Palestinian divide and to an improvement in living conditions in the Gaza Strip, including a potential lifting of the Israeli blockade.

However, as of the time of writing, none of the measures that triggered the latest deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Gaza since April 2017 has been reversed, including the Palestinian Authority’s cuts in the funding of the electricity supply from Israel, and in the allowances paid to public employees. For the sixth consecutive month, the two million residents of Gaza have received electricity for only four to six hours per day, negatively impacting all aspects of their lives. During his August visit to the oPt, the UN Secretary-General characterized the situation of Gaza as “one of the most dramatic humanitarian crises” he had ever seen.

This month’s Humanitarian Bulletin focuses on the situation in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector (WASH), where the provision of emergency fuel by humanitarian agencies to 145 critical facilities resulted in a limited improvement in some of the key indicators in September. However, these indicators remain well below the levels recorded during the first quarter of 2017, prior to the aggravation of the energy crisis. Of additional concern, apart from the provision of emergency fuel, urgently-needed interventions in the WASH sector remain critically underfunded, raising concerns about the potential spread of waterborne diseases as the winter rains approach.

In the West Bank, October witnessed a number of developments regarding the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements, which have been a longstanding driver of humanitarian vulnerability for Palestinians. These included the advancement of plans for the construction of more than 2,000 new housing units, including in two new settlements planned for the relocation of settlers evacuated from two unauthorized settlement outposts (Migron and Amona) following court orders.

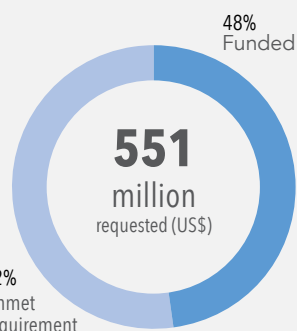
OCTOBER FIGURES

Palestinian killed (direct conflict)	13
Palestinian injured (direct conflict)	120
Israelis killed (direct conflict)	0
Israelis injured (direct conflict)	5
Structures demolished in the West Bank	27
People displaced in the West Bank	60

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN 2017

551 million requested (US\$)

48% funded



This Bulletin also details the impediments that Palestinian farmers face in accessing their private land in areas taken over or officially seized for the establishment or expansion of settlements, and subsequently evacuated following Israeli court decisions. The article profiles the situation of Burqa farmers, in the Nablus governorate, who are prevented from accessing their private land around the settlement of Homesh, which was evacuated in 2005 as part of Israel's 'Disengagement Plan'.

This Humanitarian Bulletin also highlights the situation of four Palestinian communities in the northern Jordan Valley, home to over 170 people, half of them children, who are at imminent risk of forcible transfer. This followed the recent closure of petitions they filed with the Israeli High Court of Justice, which paved the way for the demolition of the majority of the communities' homes and other structures. The affected communities are located in Area C, mostly within an area designated for military training ('firing zones'), where Palestinian access is prohibited.

A number of issues raised by Assistant-Secretary General, Miroslav Jenca, in his October briefing to the Security Council are relevant to this month's Bulletin. Regarding Palestinian reconciliation, the Assistant-Secretary reported that "the Secretary-General has spoken to President Abbas and welcomed the signing of this intra -Palestinian agreement. Its timely implementation and concrete efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis will be critical for effectively empowering the Palestinian Government in Gaza". Regarding the West Bank, Mr Jenca reiterated the UN position "that all settlement activities are illegal under international law and are an impediment to peace", and urged Israel "to cease the practice of demolitions, which has led to the displacement of thousands of people".

The UN Secretary-General welcomed the intra -Palestinian agreement and called for its timely implementation, including concrete efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.



GAZA ENERGY CRISIS: LIMITED IMPROVEMENT IN WATER AND SANITATION INDICATORS; CONCERNS OVER WATERBORNE DISEASES REMAIN

Ongoing electricity outages of 18-20 hours a day across the Gaza Strip throughout September and October continue to undermine the provision of basic services. In the water, sanitation and hygiene sector (WASH), sustained efforts by humanitarian agencies to provide 154 critical facilities with emergency fuel to run backup generators resulted in a limited improvement in some key indicators during September compared with previous months. There was a modest increase in the quantity of piped water supplied to households and in the functioning of desalination plants, plus a slight decline in the contamination levels of sewage discharged to the sea. Nevertheless, September indicators remain well below the already poor standards recorded during the first quarter of 2017.¹

Although funding for emergency fuel has been satisfactory, other urgent interventions in the WASH sector remain underfunded and render the overall situation extremely precarious. The Gaza Urgent Funding Appeal launched in July 2017 requesting \$25 million for interventions in the water and sanitation, health and food security sectors faces a gap of \$10.8, all for the non-fuel related requirements. Agencies operating in the WASH sector estimate that approximately 1.45 million people in the Gaza Strip are at risk of contracting waterborne diseases from the consumption of unsafe water. During the winter months, the risks and consequences of winter flooding could impact an estimated 500,000 people.

Water supply for domestic consumption

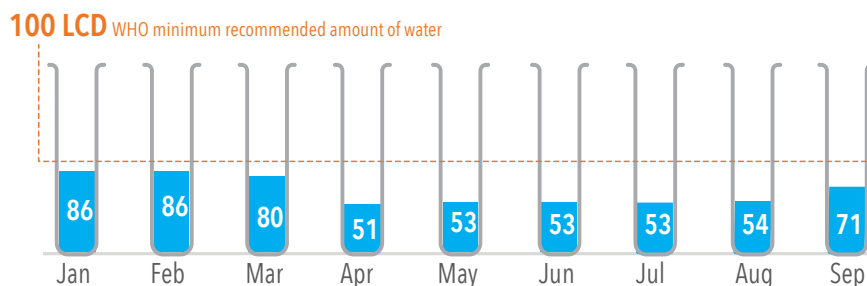
Electricity cuts since April 2017 directly interrupt supplies of piped water through municipal networks as they reduce extraction of underground water from wells, hamper the operation of equipment to pump water through the network, and, due to the low pressure, from the network to water tanks on the rooftops of homes, particularly in multi-story buildings. In recent months, piped water has been supplied for 4-6 hours every three to five days in most areas.



The WASH Sector
contributed to this section

Although funding for emergency fuel has been satisfactory, other urgent interventions in the WASH sector remain underfunded and render the overall situation extremely precarious.

ACCESS TO PIPED WATER LITRES PER CAPITA PER DAY

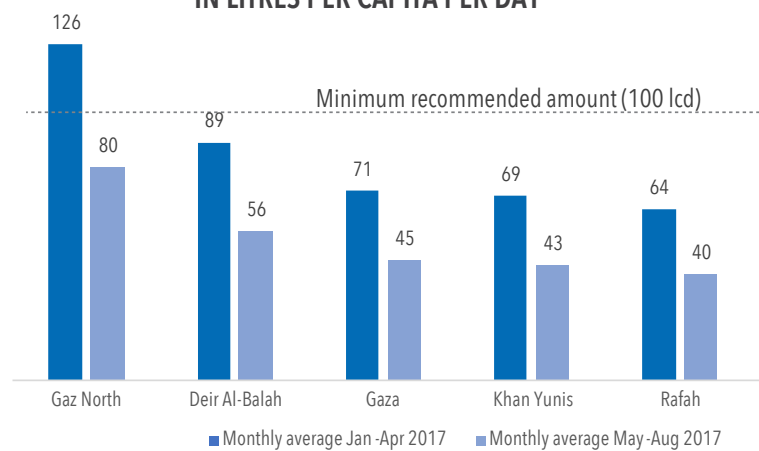


* Due to its poor quality, piped water is used for domestic purposes other than drinking and cooking. For the latter, people rely mostly on buying tankered desalinated water from unregulated water vendors.

Due to an increased supply of emergency fuel, the average quantity of water supplied to households during September was 71 litres per day per capita (l/d/c), an increase of 34 per cent compared with the monthly average during April to August, but still well below the equivalent figure in the first quarter of the year (84 l/d/c), and far below the internationally recommended standard of 100 l/c/d.²

These figures are averages for all of the Gaza Strip but they conceal wide variations by area. For example, supply in Rafah governorate in July 2017 was 40 l/d/c, half of the equivalent figure in the Northern Gaza governorate (80 l/d/c). Since the aquifer extraction plant is located West of the Gaza Strip, creating further distance to Rafah, the low pressure of water requires electrical pumping which has been affected further by the further increase in electricity outages.

AMOUNT OF WATER ACROSS GAZA GOVERNORATES IN LITRES PER CAPITA PER DAY



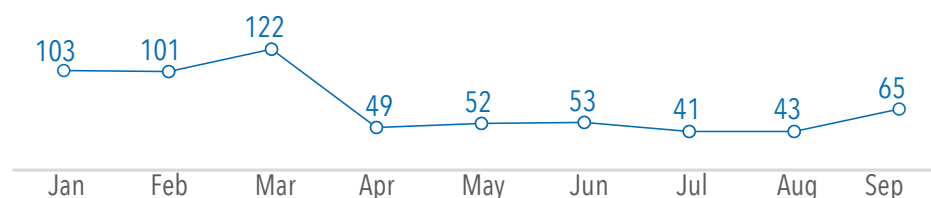
About 90 per cent of people in Gaza have little choice but to purchase desalinated water for drinking and cooking, at 30-50 NIS per cubic meter, compared with 1-1.3 NIS for water supplied through the network.

Access to desalinated water

Water piped through the municipal network is used mostly for domestic purposes other than drinking and cooking as it has high salinity due to over-extraction from the Gaza aquifer, which is the only available source of natural water. Currently, less than 5 per cent of all water extracted from the Gaza aquifer meets internationally recognized drinking standards.

As a result, about 90 per cent of people in Gaza have little choice but to purchase desalinated water for drinking and cooking, primarily from private water providers. Apart from the fact that the quality of this water is questionable, the cost of one cubic metre of purchased water ranges from 30-50 NIS compared with 1-1.3 NIS for water supplied through the network. This increases the financial burdens faced by poor families.

VOLUME OF DESALINATED WATER PRODUCED BY MONTH IN THOUSANDS OF CUBIC METRES



“WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT BUYING EXPENSIVE DESALINATED WATER”

Mona, mother of seven, Rafah

Forty-four-year-old Mona lives with her husband and seven children in the Orabia neighbourhood of Rafah city. Most families in the area rely on agriculture-related work, paid primarily by the hour, including Mona’s husband. Mona is a housewife caring for Sama, four years old, and Sara almost two, plus five additional school-age siblings.

Mona’s husband earns 20 NIS per day, most of which is used for the family’s daily meal, commonly comprising vegetables and grains, with milk for the youngest children. *“Often, my husband and I choose not to eat to save food for our children. Sometimes I substitute milk with tea when I don’t have enough money.”* Buying medicine when the children fall ill is a separate struggle.

Since April, the family has received three hours of electricity per day rather than six hours as supplied previously. Unlike most of the neighbouring homes, Mona’s house is connected to the water network and should be supplied with piped water twice a week for a few hours. *“In practice, we never receive water that often”,* said Mona. *“Due to the low pressure, water does not reach the water tanks on the roof and requires an electrical pump, but the supply of water and electricity rarely coincide.”*

As most other families in the area, Mona purchases water from a nearby private agricultural well. This is five times more expensive than water provided by the municipality and lacks any form of safety or quality control. After the children contracted giardia worm and diarrhea, both waterborne diseases, Mona began to buy desalinated water from a private vendor. To buy 60 litres per day at 3 NIS per litre, this is nearly 50 times more expensive than water from the network and consumes 15 per cent of the family’s income. *“I don’t believe this water is very clean either but it is the only option”,* said Mona.



Mona filling a bottle of non-potable water from a tank in her yard.



OXFAM

This section was contributed by WASH Sector partner, Oxfam.

“Due to the low pressure, water does not reach the water tanks on the roof and requires an electrical pump, but the supply of water and electricity rarely coincide.”

© Photo by OXFAM

The deterioration in energy supplies since April has significantly reduced production in all Gaza desalination plants to only 55 per cent of maximum capacity of 20,000 cubic metres per day. As with piped water supplies, desalinated plants increased production moderately during September, but it remained at nearly half the level recorded in March 2017, prior to the start of the current crisis.

Wastewater treatment

A variety of factors, including the energy deficit and import restrictions imposed by Israel as part of the blockade, had already left wastewater treatment facilities unable to operate at full capacity. The additional power outages since April 2017 and subsequent challenges in synchronizing the operation of different components of the system, have further undermined the capacity of these facilities.

This has led to a decline in the quality of approximately 108 million litres of wastewater discharged every day into the Mediterranean Sea, with an increase in sea pollution and heightened health and environmental risks.

Pollution levels measured in September were 10 per cent lower than the monthly average between April and August, but remain higher than in the first three months of 2017, and over four times higher than the international environmental health standard.

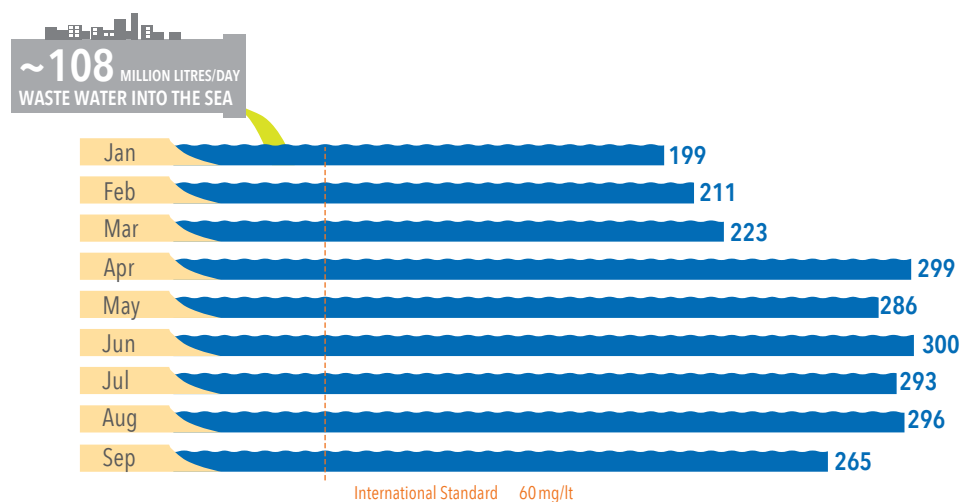
Concern over waterborne diseases

The declining availability of water for drinking and other domestic purposes, both through the network or via desalination plants, has exacerbated health risks, particularly for poorer households. These include the risk of contracting waterborne diseases following consumption of polluted water and/or as a result of a decline in hygiene practices.

Diarrhea among children under three is a common indicator of poor water consumption. The number of documented cases has increased significantly since April 2017 and peaked at over 4,200 cases in July. The number of cases fell to around 4,000 in August and 3,300 in September. The decline can be attributed to the ongoing distribution of emergency fuel, combined with the decline in demand with the end of the summer season.

The number of documented cases of diarrhea among children under three, a common indicator of poor water consumption, has increased significantly between April and July 2017 and began decreasing since August.

POLLUTION LEVELS OF WASTEWATER FLOWS INTO THE SEA (IN MG/LITRE OF BOD*)



* Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) is an indicator of water pollution levels, which are linked to the effectiveness of wastewater treatment.

RESTRICTED ACCESS TO FARMING LAND TAKEN OVER BY SETTLERS DESPITE LEGAL RULINGS IN ISRAELI COURTS

The seizure of privately owned Palestinian land to establish and expand Israeli settlements has been a common phenomenon from the beginning of the Israeli occupation.³ In recent years, these actions have been conducted primarily by Israeli settlers without an official permit or authorization, but often with the acquiescence and active support of the Israeli authorities. The resulting loss of property and sources of livelihood, restricted access to services, and a range of protection threats have triggered demand for assistance and protection measures by the humanitarian community.⁴

In several instances Palestinian landowners affected by settlement expansion, supported by human rights organizations, have won court rulings or administrative decisions that uphold their ownership of specific plots of land and order the removal of the settler trespassers or the revocation of seizure orders. However, these rulings have often remained “on paper”, with landowners unable to access or cultivate their land even after settlers have been evacuated.

Amona settlement outpost was established in an area belonging to Palestinians from Ein Yabroud village (Ramallah). In February 2017, following a protracted legal battle that ended with an Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) ruling in favour of the Palestinian landowners, the settlement was evacuated. Immediately after, the Israeli military issued a “demarcation order” forbidding entry to the area by any person (including both Israelis and Palestinians) for a period of two years.

In response to an appeal by Yesh Din on behalf of the landowners, the military stated: “In light of real concern of friction in the field”, entry to the area requires “prior coordination” and the policy for granting such coordination at this stage would be “very limited”.⁵

In recent years, the Israeli authorities have expanded the requirement of “prior coordination” as a condition for Palestinian farmers to access their land in the vicinity of settlements.⁶ This practice, which allows only limited access (a few days a year in most cases), undermines agricultural activities, endangers livelihoods and penalizes farmers affected by settler violence rather than enforcing the rule of law on violent settlers.



Protection Cluster partner, Yesh Din, contributed to this section.

Court rulings and administrative decisions that uphold the Palestinian ownership of specific plots of land and order the removal of the settler trespassers or the revocation of seizure orders, have remained “on paper”, with landowners unable to access or cultivate their land.



Farmers from Burqa as they remove stones which settler used to block the road to their land, Burqa, October 2017.

In other cases, Palestinian farmers have been discouraged or prevented from accessing their land in evacuated areas due to systematic violence and intimidation by Israeli settlers who are often armed. For example, in the case of private land belonging to Palestinians from Burqa village (Nablus), where the settlement of Homesh was established and then evacuated in 2005 (see case study).

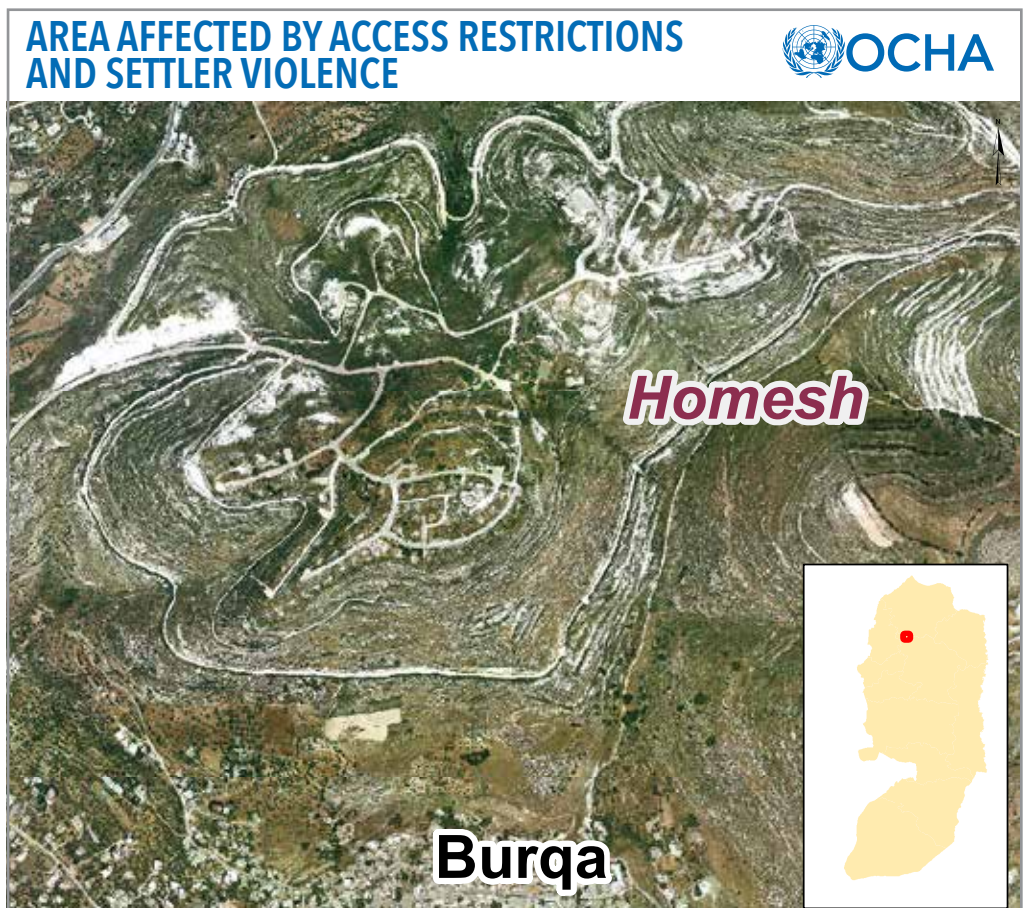
There have been similar cases in which Palestinian landowners face formal or informal restrictions to access their land despite legal rulings reversing a takeover by settlers. These cases include the evacuated settlement outposts of Migron and Ulpana (Beit El), both in Ramallah governorate, and specific plots in or around the settlements of Ofra, Elon More and Shilo in the Ramallah and Nablus governorates.

The appropriation of private land for settlement activities violates a range of provisions under international humanitarian and human rights law. As highlighted above, although some Palestinians succeeded in establishing ownership via legal remedies, the translation of the legal rulings into facts on the ground has proved challenging. In some cases the Israeli government has attempted to retroactively regularize takeovers via new legislation.⁷

Palestinian farmers have been discouraged or prevented from accessing their land in evacuated areas due to systematic violence and intimidation by Israeli settlers who are often armed.

The Case of Burqa

The settlement of Homesh was established in 1978 on private land requisitioned from Palestinians from Burqa village for “military purposes”. As part of a disengagement plan, the settlement was evacuated in 2005 and most of the homes and infrastructure were demolished.⁸



The Israeli authorities did not revoke the military requisition order imposed on the land of the previous settlement but around a year later, the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture initiated a land rehabilitation project to allow landowners to regain access and resume cultivation around the built-up area of the evacuated settlement, but not inside it.

From 2011, groups of Israeli settlers, reportedly from a nearby religious college (Yeshivat Homesh), began to visit the area regularly and attack or harass Palestinian farmers, block access to land and vandalize property. On various occasions, settler representatives claimed that access by farmers to the area was illegal because the land is still requisitioned for military purposes.

According to a landowner, Abu Kuteiba, a group of 8-12 Israeli settlers have moved into a nearby cave and in tents to monitor the area continuously. Whenever farmers try to access their land, settlers approach them, threaten them at gunpoint, hurl stones or physically attack them. On a few occasions when farmers tried to enter in larger numbers for safety, the settlers summoned the army, who sent the Palestinian farmers back on the grounds that the area is a closed military zone.

In May 2013 following a petition filed with the Israeli HCJ by Yesh Din on behalf of Burqa farmers, the Israeli authorities revoked the 1978 requisition order. A few months later, the authorities also revoked an order designating the area as a closed military zone, thereby removing all legal barriers to the access and use of the land by the owners. Despite these legal steps, the reality on the ground remains unchanged and the Israeli settlers have continued their activities unabated.

Since 2011, Israeli settlers, reportedly from a nearby religious college (Yeshivat Homesh), began to visit Burqa regularly and attack or harass Palestinian farmers, block access to land and vandalize property.

"IF I HAD ACCESS TO MY LAND I WOULD BE MAKING 8,000 NIS FROM THE OLIVE HARVEST" Farmer from Burqa

Pointing to his land, Abu Kuteiba, land owner and father of three, explained: *"In 2008, I planted 200 almond trees. In 2011, Israeli settlers uprooted all but 60 of them. Three years later I planted 150 olive trees; when they became three years old, Israeli settlers came and cut them, along with the 60 almond trees"*



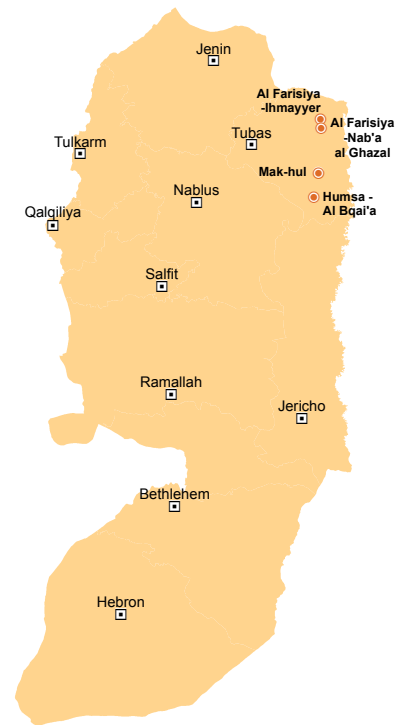
"If I had access to my land, this time of the year, I would be making 8,000 NIS in profit from the olive harvest. We could be able to have a lot of projects in this land, like raising cattle, planting seasonal vegetables, etc. There are a lot of possibilities," says Abu Kuteiba.

When asked about whether he had ever filed a complaint against Israeli settlers at the Israeli police station, following an attack, Abu Kuteiba explained:

"In April 2017, after being physically attacked by an Israeli settler, I filed a complaint at the Israeli police station in Huwwara, with the help of Yesh Din. I was also accompanied by a representative from the Palestinian District Liaison Office. I even had a photo of the Israeli settler who attacked me, which I took with my mobile. During the meeting, the Israeli officer said that the complaint will not bring anything good, on the contrary it will most likely trigger further problems regarding my ability to access my land, insinuating the issuance of orders effectively barring access to his land. I ended up withdrawing my complaint in fear of repercussions. The funny part is, when I applied for a magnetic card^o, I was rejected citing a police objection."

FOUR HERDING COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHERN JORDAN VALLEY AT IMMINENT RISK OF FORCIBLE TRANSFER

In October, legal cases filed with the Israeli HCJ in relation to four Palestinian communities in the northern Jordan Valley ruled in favour of demolitions due to lack of building permits, which are rarely granted by the Israeli authorities for Palestinians. Consequently, more than 200 structures, 26 per cent of which were donor-funded, in the communities of Makhul, Humsa al-Baqai'a, al Farisiya-Ihmayyer and al Farisiya-Nabe al Ghazal are under threat of demolition. An estimated 171 people, over 50 per cent of whom are children, are at imminent risk of displacement. Demolitions or the threat of demolitions, along with discriminatory planning policies that make it near impossible for Palestinian residents of Area C to obtain authorization for construction, are among the Israeli policies identified by the Secretary-General as generating a coercive environment that puts pressure on Palestinians to leave their communities and creates a risk of forcible transfer.



“Forcible transfer does not necessarily require the use of physical force by authorities, but may be triggered by specific circumstances that leave individuals or communities with no choice but to leave; this is known as a coercive environment.”

Secretary General,
March 2017.

All four communities are located in Area C, where less than one per cent of the area is covered by a planning scheme for Palestinian communities.¹⁰ There are currently over 12,500 demolition orders pending against Palestinian structures in Area C. Prior to the recent Israeli HCJ rulings, lawyers for these communities requested that a freeze on outstanding demolition orders be extended to enable detailed outline plans to be submitted to the communities.¹¹ The Court rejected the petitioners' request to extend the demolition freeze. However, in the case of Makhul, on 22 October, the HCJ issued a temporary injunction order preventing demolitions until 24 December 2017.

The northern Jordan Valley has been targeted by multiple demolitions. A wave of incidents in Makhul since 2013 has already resulted in the departure of half of the community: five out of 10 families. The remaining households, comprising 29 people and including 15 children, are now vulnerable: some 47 structures, of which 11 are donor-funded, face potential demolition. These include: seven residential buildings; 16 animal-related structures and five structures for fodder storage for the community's 1,110 sheep; five external kitchens and five *taboun* (traditional) ovens; four latrines; and five solar panel units. (See case study).

Of the households in Humsa al-Baqai'a, three households comprising 26 people and including 18 children are also affected and 21 structures, including two funded by donors, face the threat of imminent demolition. These include: three residential shelters; nine animal shelters and six structures for fodder storage for the families' 750 sheep; three kitchens and three *taboun* ovens; and two solar panel units.

WE LOST OUR CASE IN COURT, AGAIN.

In describing their experience, Mr. Bisharat explained, *"I have lived here in Makhul for the past 12 years, but I grew up in an area called Ar Ruwaq near Humsa al-Baqai'a, several kilometers away. In 1998, when I was 21 years old, I first saw an Israeli army bulldozer razing our home and animal shelters in Ar Ruwaq, where my parents and grand-parents had lived since the 1940s. I remember how they demolished or confiscated our tents and animal shelters, even using the bulldozer to damage our water tanks, and confiscated our water truck.*

"We rebuilt our homes and filed a court case against demolitions. Five years later in July 2003, our lawyer informed us that we had lost our case in court because the area was designated as a closed military area. Between August and September 2003, we were all forced to demolish our homes and moved to nearby communities. I moved to al Hadidiya and two years later to Makhul. In October, I got married. Two months later, the Israeli army literally razed everything that was left standing in Ar Ruwaq, including a few animal pens, water tanks and three trees, and used earth to bury it.

"We never completely abandoned Ar Ruwaq but life has changed. In the old days, you would see more than 35 tractors working during the ploughing season and more than 15 harvesters and 20 tractors during the harvesting season. It was a time of joy with dozens of people. Now it is mostly empty, with only five or six families from Makul and al Hadidiya still planting some 7,000 dunums in the area. The other families, who mainly came from Tammun, stopped planting the area following the erection of trenches and other access restrictions along the western edge of the Jordan Valley in 2000.

"I live in Makhul with my wife and seven children. Like Ar Ruwaq, the land here is privately owned Palestinian land. I have a rental contract with the Palestinian land owner from Tubas and pay 250 Jordanian Dinars in annual rent. In 2013, a few days before the mass demolition of Makhul, we were informed by the lawyer that the case filed in court to have our structures legalized had been rejected.¹² That was the second demolition experience I witnessed in my lifetime. Following a series of demolitions and confiscations, including of humanitarian assistance, we rebuilt our structures and life here. But one family left. In 2015, four of the nine remaining households had their homes demolished: two of these families subsequently left. Two other families also left later. It seems demolitions or fear thereof had a heavy toll on them. Five households now remain in Makhul, including my family.¹³

"At the beginning of October this year, we were informed by our lawyer that we had lost our case in court yet again. He told us to expect a demolition at any time now, despite the appeal he submitted against the ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court. I console myself and say that I will rebuild my home. But if they demolish our home in winter when there is rain and very cold weather, it would be especially devastating for my family.

"Herding is the primary source of income for my family. In 2000, I bought 30 sheep and I now have some 350 sheep. If the Israeli army demolishes our homes and forces us out of Makhul, I may be forced to move to the Atuf area, west of the trenches. Grazing land in that area is limited and I would be forced to sell most of my livestock, which would have a serious impact on my family's income. It is also Area C there but it is not heavily targeted with demolitions as in Makhul.

Mrs. Bisharat added, *"Inshallah we will continue to live here. I cannot imagine being forced out. It would be like taking a fish out of water."*

Interview conducted on 18 October 2017.



Bisharat family, standing in front of their residence which is at imminent threat of demolition, Makhul, 18 October 2017.

"Inshallah we will continue to live here. I cannot imagine being forced out. It would be like taking a fish out of water."

In al Farisiya-Ihmayer, 16 households with an estimated population of 84, including 41 children, are at risk of displacement. There are outstanding demolition orders against the families' 97 structures, of which 27 are donor-funded.

In al Farisiya-Ihmayer, 16 households with an estimated population of 84, including 41 children, are at risk of displacement. There are outstanding demolition orders against the families' 97 structures, of which 27 are donor-funded. Structures at threat include: 25 residential shelters; 17 animal shelters and eight structures for fodder storage for the families' 500 sheep; 12 kitchens and nine *taboun* ovens; 14 latrines; and 12 solar panel units.

In al Farisiya-Nabe al Ghazal, seven of 10 households comprising 32 people, including 16 children, are at threat of displacement and their 30 structures have no protection against demolition. These include: seven residential shelters; six animal structures and three structures for fodder storage for about 750 sheep owned by the families; four kitchens and three *taboun* ovens; and three latrines. Fourteen of the structures at risk are donor-funded.

Humsa al-Baqai'a, al Farisiya-Nabe al Ghazal and al Farisiya-Ihmayer are partially or fully located within areas declared as 'firing zones'. These are just part of approximately 6,200 Palestinians in 38 mostly Bedouin or herding communities in such locations in Area C. These are some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank with limited or difficult access to education and health services, and to water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure. They are also subject to 'temporary relocation' due to military activity: Humsa al-Baqai'a has witnessed more than 38 incidents of evacuations for military training over the past five years.

ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all WASH-related figures are provided by UNICEF on behalf of the WASH cluster.
2. It is estimated that leakages in the network account for the loss of 33% of the water produced at source before it reaches homes.
3. Until 1979, the main method used to establish Israeli settlements was by requisition of private Palestinian land for “military purposes”. However, a landmark ruling by the Israel Supreme Court forced the Israeli authorities to discontinue this practice and rely on so-called “state land”.
4. See OCHA, “The humanitarian impact of de facto settlement expansion”, The Humanitarian Bulletin, February 2017.
5. Letter from legal advisor to the West Bank to Attorney Shlomy Zachary from the legal staff of Yesh Din, 2 July 2017, in response to a request to coordinate a meeting with the petitioners in HCJ 9499/08 Maryam Hassan Abd al-Kareem Hamad v. the Minister of Defense.
6. According to the Israeli authorities, the prior coordination of Palestinian access to certain areas is required to reduce friction and ensure the safety of Palestinian farmers.
7. On 6 February 2017, the Israeli Knesset approved the Regularization Law, which provides for the retroactive legalization of settlements established without authorization on private Palestinian land, provided certain conditions are met. The implementation of the law has been suspended pending a ruling by the Israeli High Court of Justice.
8. The disengagement plan entailed the unilateral evacuation of all Israeli settlements and military bases from the Gaza Strip, as well as four Israeli settlements in the northern West Bank.
9. An Israeli-issued identification card is a prerequisite for a permit to enter occupied Palestinian territories otherwise barred to Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza.
10. The average approval rate for applications for building permits by Palestinians in Area C in 2007-2016 was less than four per cent.
11. To date, 110 local outline plans for communities in Area C have been prepared. If approved, these would significantly enhance the ability of residents to obtain building permits. However, only five of the 101 plans submitted have been approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) and 96 have been pending with the ICA for more than 18 months.
12. See UNOCHA, Protection of Civilians Weekly Report, 10-16 September 2013, URL: https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_protection_of_civilians_weekly_report_2013_09_19_english.pdf.
13. In addition to the five families that moved out of Makhul over the past four years, ten other families relocated out of the community in earlier years due to movement and planning restrictions in a coercive environment that has gravely affected the community’s access to grazing land and water resources. For more information, please UNOCHA, Movement and Access Update, September 2012, pages 25-26, URL: https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_movement_and_access_report_september_2012_english.pdf.