



Israel Announces Illegal Settlement Expansion

Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

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In violation of international law, Israel announced a massive expansion of settlements and expropriation of land around the occupied city of Jerusalem. The Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem calls upon the international community to act decisively to hold Israel accountable to international law.

New Illegal Construction and Expropriation

During the last week, the Local Committee for Zoning and Building at the Jerusalem Municipality announced the drafting of a master plan 1012 for construction of 1,590 new settlement units in Ramot, on the land of the Palestinian communities of Shuafat, Lifta, and Beit Ikse. This plan increases the number of housing units, public buildings, commercial areas, and open areas in the illegal settlement. The Ramot settlement was initially established in 1970 by the confiscation of 4,840 dunams of land from the communities of Beit Ikse, Beit Hanina and Lifta. Ramot currently contains 8,000 housing units inhabited by 40,000 Jewish-Israeli settlers.¹

The Minister of Finance also announced the intention to take control of 4,998 m² of the land of Walaja, for the construction of the separation wall. Israel will use the expropriated land in Walaja, south of Jerusalem, to expand the wall and build a new gate.²

Both of these announcements come as part of the Master Plan for Jerusalem 2020, which states that 58,000 new settlement units will be constructed in East Jerusalem by the end of 2020.

The construction of new settlement units and expropriation of land are all part of Israel's larger campaign to achieve a demographic ratio of 70% Jewish-Israeli and 30% Palestinian in Jerusalem as outlined in the Master Plan for Jerusalem 2000.³ The city's Palestinian population is currently much

¹ "Jerusalem Municipality Drafted a New Master Plan to Expand Ramot Settlement on the Land of Beit Hanina, Beit Ikse and Lifta," AL QUDS NEWSPAPER, 22 February 2016.

² The Palestinian Information Center. "Israeli plans to expand separation wall and Ramot settlement" 22 February 2016, available at <http://english.palinfo.com/site/pages/details.aspx?itemid=76956>.

³ Jerusalem Municipality, "Local Outline Plan: Jerusalem 2000", at Chapter 7.1, para 10, English translation available at http://www.coalitionforjerusalem.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/populationandsociety_7.pdf.

larger than 30% and growing more rapidly than the Jewish-Israeli population, so Israel is using any means at its disposal to forcibly displace Palestinians from Jerusalem.

Violations of International Law

These Israeli actions are in clear violation of international law. The construction of new settlement units and expropriation of Palestinian land are violations of the Geneva Conventions,⁴ and the implantation of settlers also constitutes a war crime.⁵

Moreover, the construction of new settlements in these locations serves to further fragment the Palestinian community in Jerusalem. By expanding settlements, Israel isolates certain Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem from others. In this way, Israel is employing a “divide and conquer” strategy and using indirect force to forcibly displace Palestinians from Jerusalem.

Forcible displacement of civilian population from an occupied territory is both a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions⁶ and a war crime.⁷

Under Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, all state parties, even those not involved in the specific conflict, have the obligation to ensure respect for the convention by other states.⁸ States parties are also required, in the case of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, to “search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, such grave breaches, and shall bring such persons, regardless of their nationality, before its own courts.”⁹

Recommendations

In light of states’ legal obligations, the Civil Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem calls upon all states to:

- 1) Take serious actions, such as economic sanctions, to ensure that Israel abides by international law, and
- 2) Prosecute individuals who have ordered Israeli policies effecting forcible displacement.

⁴ Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, 12 August 1949 [GC IV], Art 49, para 6 & Art 53.

⁵ Rome Statute of the international Criminal Court [Rome Statute], Art 8(2)(b)(xiii).

⁶ GC IV, *supra* note 4, Arts 49 & 147.

⁷ Rome Statute, *supra* note 5, Arts 8(2)(a)(vii), 8(2)(b)(viii) & 8(2)(e)(viii).

⁸ GC IV, *supra* note 4, Art 1. *Advisory Opinion Concerning Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, International Court of Justice (ICJ), 9 July 2004 at para 158.

⁹ GC IV, *supra* note 4, Art 146.