



PRESS RELEASE

Humanitarian Coordinator calls on Israel to halt demolition plans in Susiya

Jerusalem, 23 July 2015

Today, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, Robert Piper, visited Susiya, a Palestinian herding community in Area C in the southern West Bank, where homes and community structures are at imminent threat of demolition. He was accompanied by senior officials from the Governments of Norway, Switzerland and Italy.

"I came here today along with senior diplomats and humanitarian partners to learn about the hardships and anxieties of a community whose homes and livelihoods are under threat," Mr. Piper said.

Some of the families at risk have been subject to three waves of demolitions and displacements since 1986. A settler outpost now stands at the site of their initial displacement, which was classified as an archaeological site by the Israeli authorities at the time, requiring the community to move. At their current site, successive attempts by the community to have a spatial plan and building permits approved have been rejected. A petition against the latest rejection will be heard by the Israeli High Court of Justice on August 3.

"Susiya is emblematic of a pattern of injustice that is repeating itself across many parts of the West Bank. Too many communities are coming under multiple threats and intimidation - by legal process, by bulldozer, by settler violence - to relocate completely or relinquish surrounding agricultural and grazing lands on which their livelihoods depend. The international community cannot stand by and witness these acts in silence," Mr. Piper said.

"The destruction of private property in an occupied territory is prohibited under international humanitarian law. I call on the Israeli authorities to suspend all demolitions of Palestinian structures in Area C and to provide its residents with a planning and permit regime that allows them to meet their needs," he added.

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