

Demolishing lives in the Jordan Valley

21 June, 2011 – Hilary Minch

Over 40 people, (at least 15 children) were made homeless in the latest wave of home demolitions by the Israeli Army today (21 June). The demolitions took place in Al Hadidiya and Khirbet Yarza in the Jordan Valley in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).

In Al Hadidiya, five families had 30 structures demolished, including family homes, animal shelters, kitchens and fencing. One woman, Ralia, who is in her sixties and suffers from diabetes, described what happened: “The big soldier wouldn’t speak to me. He just said ‘This is my job, sit down and shut up’”. She was sitting alone, desolate, crying. Ahmed Abdullah Harfi Yusuf Ben Adi stood with his wife Hitam who is 6 months pregnant, their son Abdullah and mother, viewing the remains of their family home and animal shelters. Their belongings were strewn in the rubble and they had salvaged what they could.

A few hundred metres away in Roi colony settlement, the trees and flowers abundantly surround the modern homes, swimming pools, lush gardens. The colony is built on the land of Al Hadidiya.

In Khirbet Yarza, EAPPI and Jordan Valley Solidarity arrived just as the Israeli army demolished the family homes, a kitchen as well as animal shelters belonging to the Darraghmeh family. 30 people, including 8 children were affected by the demolition. The Darraghmeh family’s son plans to get married in July – all the wedding funds were lost beneath the rubble of their demolished home. One of the sons said “I really don’t care about my suffering, but what about the children?” The family were warned by the army that the soldiers would return if the family remained in the area or received humanitarian assistance. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxCYmOSPJvg>

Under International Law, (Article 53 of the IV Geneva Convention), any destruction by the Occupying Power of personal property of protected people (Palestinian civilians living under Israeli military occupation) is prohibited, except when such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.



Ralia Saleh Yusuf Mahmoud Sharad sits on the rubble of her demolished home. Photo Hilary Minch, EAPPI.



Israeli army demolishing homes in Khirbet Yarza, Jordan Valley, 21 July. Photo: Patricia Mercer, EAPPI.



Ahmed Abdullah Harfi and his family in front of the ruins of their home and animal shelters a few hundred metres from Roi colony settlement. Photo: Hilary Minch, EAPPI.



Roi colony settlement, Jordan Valley, built on land belonging to Al Hadidiya. Photo: Hilary Minch, EAPPI.

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The EAPPI is an advocacy and human rights programme of the World Council of Churches in response to a request by the Jerusalem Heads of Churches and Palestinians in 2001 for an international protective presence in Palestine. The EAPPI supports an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine and a resolution to the Israeli-oPt conflict with a just peace, on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.