
SAMPLE URGENT ACTION

URGENT ACTION: STOP EXPULSION OF PALESTINIANS SOUTH OF HEBRON

On January 16 the Israeli High Court will consider the case of a group of Palestinians living in the West Bank just south of Hebron. The Israeli government has been trying to force this community to leave their land for several years as a step toward taking their land and blurring the border between Israel and the occupied territories. A group of Israeli, Palestinian and international human rights organizations has worked through the courts and through direct action to try to defend this community.

Our Israeli partners tell us that they believe a strong **fax / email campaign** right now could influence how vigorously the Israeli government pursues this case. We are including below the information put together by Gush Shalom. From North Americans, they are asking for faxes, or emails if faxing is not an option. Fax is better (contact info at the end; the cc's are important). Please let us know (by e-mail to richm@cpt.org) if you are able to send a fax.

The CPT team in Hebron reports this week that, although fewer Israeli troops have been assigned to restrict travel between Hebron and Jerusalem, MORE Israeli troops have been placed in the South Hebron Hills, where they are maintaining high visibility through frequent troop movements. This raises concerns for what the Israeli occupation forces are planning there.

Your letter can be very brief, and use large type:

"Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer,

Please stop your harassment of the South Hebron Hills Palestinians.

Use the coming High Court session to announce that the government of Israel will no longer attempt to remove these Palestinian communities from their homes and lands."

Background From Gush Shalom: Stop the Expulsion of the Palestinian Cave Dwellers from the South Hebron Hills

In the first third of the 19th century (1830s), poverty-stricken Palestinian families left their villages in the South Hebron region and went to eke out their livelihoods in the surrounding hills and fields, living in the numerous and spacious caves spread throughout the area (today the south-western West Bank). In the generations that followed these families developed a unique culture and way of life based on their sheep herding, agriculture and cave dwelling. Today this scattered pastoral population numbers a few thousand - but their very existence is now in danger. **THEY ARE FACING IMMINENT EXPULSION BY THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES.**

In November 1999 the decades-long harassment of this population reached a new level when the Israeli army violently expelled some 750 inhabitants (mostly children and women) from their homes and land. Israeli peace and human rights organizations mounted a major public campaign to return the cave-dwellers to their homes, and the High Court of Justice issued an interim decision to this effect in March 2000. As a result of the Court ruling things remained relatively quiet until July 2001 when, without any warning, the Israeli army and Civil Administration tore through a wide area with bulldozers - destroying caves and other dwellings, stopping up water wells with rocks and dirt, mowing down crops and livestock, and expelling hundreds of people. Since then Israeli and Palestinian peace and human rights organizations have mobilized in defense of this vulnerable population - but the army and the settlers reign supreme on the ground.

We need your help! It is clear that the Israeli government aspires to expel the population of cave dwellers, to reinforce its own settlements in the area, and to eventually annex this territory to Israel "cleansed" of its Palestinian inhabitants. This is a war crime and a crime against humanity.

PLEASE WRITE TO ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTER, DEFENSE MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER, TO THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND TO YOUR OWN FOREIGN MINISTRY - DEMANDING A STOP TO THE HARASSMENT AND EXPULSION OF THE PALESTINIANS FROM THE SOUTH HEBRON HILLS, AND WARNING THAT SUCH CRIMES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

For more information you can visit the following website: www.southebron.com

Israeli organizations active in defense of the South Hebron Hills Palestinians include: Alternative Information Center (AIC), Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), Bat Shalom, B'tselem, Gush Shalom, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN), Peace Now, Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Rabbis for Human Rights, and Ta'ayush - Arab-Jewish Partnership.

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