

Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC) Deplores the Israeli Decision to Hand Al Rajabi Building Over to the Settlers

In the aftermath of the Jerusalem District Court's arbitrary decision on September 13, 2012 (to place Al Rajabi Building in the hands of the settlers and the subsequent condemnation made by HRC of such a biased and unfair ruling that is inconsistent with the basic and fundamental rules of due process), we were shocked with the most recent decision by the minister of the occupation army, Ehud Barak, on October 11, 2012, to allow the settlers to reoccupy the building. This decision implies that there is collaboration between the Israeli judicial system and the occupation government in violating the rights of Palestinian residents in order to facilitate further colonization of Hebron by radical Jewish settlers.

This prejudiced decision is considered an infringement of the legal authority and a stark violation of the legal procedures which prohibit the handing over of disputed property to any party of the conflict until all of the legal measures are exhausted. The Palestinian owners of the Rajabi building (represented by HRC) have the right to appeal the decision of the District Court at the Israeli High Court within 45 days of having been officially informed of the decision. It follows that Barak has no legal authority to allow the settlers to reoccupy the building before such an appeal process takes place and a final decision is issued by the Israeli High Court.

HRC deplores and condemns the decision of Barak and considers it to be a political decision of the first degree as it aims to secure political gains in the early elections that were called for by the Israeli Prime Minister. HRC resents the fact that the rights of the Palestinians (and their property) are becoming mere commodities that have to be scarified by political rivals of the Israeli occupation. This in turn leads to further colonization of the City of Hebron and more violations of the rights of its Palestinian residents. The establishment of a new settlement will create territorial continuity between the settlement of Kiryat Arba and its satellite outposts in Al Shuhada Street increasing restrictions of movement placed upon Palestinians.

HRC is extremely concerned by the immediate consequences of allowing the settlers to reoccupy the Rajabi building. History is a witness to the violations that took place over a period of 19 months when the settlers were occupying the building in 2007 and 2008 during which time settlers used to burn houses, damage property and attack residents. If history is allowed to repeat itself there will be an increase in the number of settler attacks and the occupation forces will use this new settlement as a pretext to increase the number of house searches and detentions in the area. The reoccupation of the building by settlers will disrupt the daily lives of Palestinian residents - women, men, children and the elderly alike.

HRC calls upon you to use all means available to prevent the implementation of this decision, which will put the lives and property of Palestinian citizens in jeopardy, and to continue coordinating with HRC in the different activities that aim to prevent the reoccupation of Al Rajabi building by the settlers.

Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, Hebron, 15 October 2012
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