



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
10 Downing Street
Westminster
London
SW1A 2AA

09/08/2018

Dear Prime Minister,

IMMINENT DEMOLITION OF KHAN AL-AHMAR, WEST BANK BEDOUIN VILLAGE

As you may be aware, the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar, situated east of Jerusalem in the area known as E1 in the West Bank, is scheduled for imminent demolition by the authorities of the State of Israel within the next few days. If this proceeds, it will see the forced displacement and transfer of 32 families, comprising 173 people and including 92 children. It will include the destruction of a school funded by the international community, which serves over 150 children.

This Bedouin community has lived in this area since the 1950's, yet the Government of Israel wishes to demolish the village to allow for the expansion of the nearby Israeli settlement of Kfar Adumim, the existence of which is illegal under international law. The Israeli authorities have relied on arguments about the permissibility of the structures in Khan al-Ahmar, despite the fact that almost 99% of applications from Palestinians to build in Area C are denied. As you will know, the forcible transfer of a population in this situation is contrary to International Humanitarian Law, and is recognised by the International Criminal Court as a crime against humanity.

Aside from the absence of both morality and legal compliance involved in demolishing the homes of innocent people, the sites that the Israeli authorities propose to transfer the community to are in the vicinity of a rubbish dump, and of sewage pipes from Israeli settlements. They are wholly unsuitable, not least for the continuation of the Bedouin way of life, which must be protected. There is good reason to be gravely concerned that if the destruction of Khan al-Ahmar is allowed to proceed, we can expect similar action against other Bedouin and Palestinian villages slated for destruction, including Susiya in the South Hebron Hills.

Furthermore, given the geographic positioning of Khan al-Ahmar we fear that if the State of Israel proceeds with this action, then settlement expansion will result in the severing of the West Bank – dealing a fatal blow to the possibility of a contiguous State of Palestine. This will sound the death knell for any remaining hopes of a two state solution to the protracted and bloody conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.



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It is clear from the actions of the Government of Israel that the time has passed when releasing British Government statements of concern will have any impact on proceedings. We believe that the planned destruction of Khan al-Ahmar represents a test of the international community's willingness to take meaningful action in response. Until there is a significant price to be paid, it seems clear that such abhorrent acts will proceed. To save Khan al-Ahmar and prevent the destruction of many more such communities, a new diplomatic approach is essential, which should include the possibility of targeted action against illegal Israeli settlements. The Government of Israel cannot on the one hand expect to be treated as a liberal democracy whilst simultaneously continue its flagrant disregard for international law and decent behaviour. The proposed destruction of Khan al-Ahmar must represent a line in the sand, and it is time now to make clear the UK's intention to act with European allies unless the village is saved.

We ask you to raise this matter personally and urgently with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and to make it clear that enacting this demolition will necessitate a strong response from the international community.

Yours sincerely,

Wes Streeting MP

The Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP

Jess Phillips MP

Tim Loughton MP