



Monthly Report

March 2012

Israeli Violations in Occupied East Jerusalem

Prepared by

Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

In cooperation with

Land Research Center

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Introduction

During the month of March 2012, the Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Land Research Center (LRC), recorded many violations of Palestinian rights at the hands of Israeli authorities and Israeli settlers. Of particular note during this month were attacks targeting children, including their right to education, and peaceful demonstrators on Land Day.

Violations during March:

- **Residency Rights** (including Demolitions, Threats of Eviction and Confiscation, and Threats of Demolition)
- **Settlers, Settlements, and Land Confiscation**
- **Plowings and Demolitions**
- **Access, Movement, and the Separation Wall**
- **Aggression on Religious Sites**
- **Violations Against Individuals**
- **Violating the Right to Education**

1. RESIDENCY RIGHTS

Home Demolitions

Farrah family in Beit Hanina forced to demolish their own home:

On March 12 the Farrah family was forced to demolish their Beit Hanina residence, under threat of large fines from the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem. The son of the owner, Sana Farrah, destroyed approximately 30 m², including the home's bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. The residence was constructed seven years ago.



Sana Farrah, demolishing his home (left), demolition order (right). (March 2012)

Threats of Eviction and Confiscation

Al Sabbagh family, Sheikh Jarrah residence:

During the month of March, the Israeli Court ruled that the Al Sabbagh family has a right to the original section of their residence, but ordered them to evacuate the newly constructed extension. (The extension includes two tool sheds with a total area of 60 m²) The court did not give reasons for this ruling, nor did they take into consideration all aspects of the construction license or the fact that Al Sabbagh family ownership of the land is not disputed.

Al Natsha family residence:

Al Natsha family is at risk of being evicted from their home. In the event that this did occur, the home would be given to Israeli settlers.

Khaled al Natsha's wife said in a statement: *"We have owned the plot for over 77 years. My father-in-law bought this plot in 1935. For years he used part of it for a block production workshop and the rest was used for cultivation.*

In 1998, a 95 m2 house was raised on the ruins of the workshop, and in 2003 another house was built. Three years later, we added a small house for my son, Suleiman.

We are two families, 14 members including 7 children".



Al Natsha family lands (left), Khaled's home (center), Suleiman's home (right). (March 2012)

Threats of demolition

Al Joulany demolition order:

On March 25 the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem handed Mohammad al Joulany (38) a demolition order for his Beit Hanina residence. The order was issued on the pretext of unlicensed construction.

The two bedroom residence is 70 m2 and shelters the entire family, including 4 children.



Al Joulany family residence in Beit Hanina (March 2010)

2. SETTLERS, SETTLEMENTS, AND LAND CONFISCATION

Call for men to physically and illegally force Palestinians from their homes

Arieh King, one of the leaders in the Israeli settler movement, announced on March 21 that he was seeking Israeli settlers to do what he believes Israeli fails to do: violently and forcefully evict Palestinians from their homes.

The call for force read as follows: "Bullies Needed. Physically strong men, specialists in lock-picking and breaking and entering needed. Also, truck drivers and porters, preferably those who have served in the army, ousting Palestinians."

Israeli settlers abuse Abu Janba family in their Sheikh Jarrah home

On March 10, tens of Israeli settlers broke into the Abu Janba family home in Al Sheikh Jarrah. The settlers sprayed the family with gas and beat them before fleeing.

Al 'Izariyya road

The Israeli Authorities intend to block Al 'Izariyya road (connecting al 'Izariyya to Jerusalem and Beit Hanina to Jericho) in order to facilitate confiscating Palestinian lands on along the road. This will aid in the expansion of Ma'ale Adumim settlement.

The cancerous expansion of the settlement is ongoing in the Ras al Ayazra area (over 4,000 dunums of land) which is owned by the Palestinian families of Al 'Izariyya. Approximately 42,000 currently people benefit from these lands.

3. PLOWINGS AND DEMOLITIONS

Poorly planned maintenance serves as plowing of Palestinian lands

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem blocked the road connecting Bab Hutta and Al Salahiyya in the Old City, turning it upside down, claiming the actions were for the purposes of renovation. However, the fact that these renovations were planned for the worst construction months of the winter has meant increased suffering of the area's Palestinian residents.

4. ACCESS, MOVEMENT, AND THE SEPARATION WALL

Wall around Abu Dis, and further displacement

Israeli Authorities currently plan to confiscate more of lands from Abu Dis. This plan would lead to the eviction and relocation of over 2,300 Bedouins.

Isam Faroun, the Abu Dis Municipal Council Chief, stated: "*Al Shakhaleeb lands, among other target areas, are private properties. They were planted and used annually up until they were left, because of Israeli orders. Today, the Israelis claim that the lands have been abandoned.*"

The plan involves the relocation of approximately 2,000 Bedouins in a 1,000 dunum plot of land, as well as an addition 2,000, who will have been forcefully evicted from lands around Jerusalem.

This means evicting them from the dwellings in which they have lived for over sixty years. It also means complete negligence to UN resolutions regarding Palestinian refugees and the right of return. The majority of these Bedouins are refugees who were forced to leave their dwellings in the Negev in 1950.

The route of the Separation Wall will isolate Abu Dis, further detaching it from Jerusalem. Previous Israeli confiscations of land in Abu Dis have left to town with only 4,800 of their once 28,000 dunums of land.

Iron Gate in Beit Iksa

On March 10 the Israeli Occupation Army installed an iron gate at the entrance to Beit Iksa. The gate separates the town into the eastern and western areas. The gate also renders over 2,000 dunums of land and seven residences accessible only by foot.



New gate in Beit Iksa (March 2012)

5. AGGRESSION ON RELIGIOUS SITES

An Attack on a Muslim Cemetery

On March 25, 2012, 17 Israeli settlers broke into Bab Al Rahma Cemetery. After conducting several Jewish religious rituals, the settlers broke several gravestones. The Israeli Police were present at the time of the incident did not prevent the settlers from acting.

This incident occurred after Israeli Authorities announced a plan to transform the cemetery into a



Biblical Park that would connect Al Aqsa Mosque with the “City of David” in Silwan.

Israeli Soldiers break into courtyard of Al Aqsa Mosque

On March 28, 3 Israeli army units broke into the courtyard of Al Aqsa Mosque. Approximately 100 uniformed soldiers walked around the courtyard before leaving.

Such actions are classified as touristic activity when, in fact, they are clear provocations. The Palestinian Waqf condemned these "tours" and called them provocative and disrespectful. Soldiers are well aware that just in the past month, such actions have sparked clashes between worshippers and the Israeli Police.

Opening in the Old City Wall

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the Israeli Ministry of Antiquities opened a large door in the northern section of the Old City wall. The Old City wall was built by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1543 and UNESCO has classified it as a world heritage site.

Authorities claim that the new opening is necessary in case of emergencies, though they have not made clear in what type of emergencies the opening would of use. The fact that all construction was hidden from view indicates that the opening is not actually for emergency purposes, but rather is part of the Municipality’s plans to modify and change the structure of the Old City.



The new “emergency exit” in the Old City wall. (March 2012)

Fake Jewish graves on Palestinian land

During the month of March, Israeli settlers continued the practice of planting fake Jewish gravestones on Palestinian land, in attempts to claim Jewish ownership and confiscate the lands.

Additionally, settlers ransacked a children’s cemetery in Silwan. Israeli authorities took no action to stop or punish those who committed the crime.



6. VIOLATIONS AGAINST INDIVIDUALS

Fines

Al Bustan checkpoint:

On March 17 Israeli Police erected several checkpoints within Al Bustan neighborhood. They checked IDs and issued multiple fines for random reasons. The checkpoints caused traffic jams, and prevented and delayed movement within the neighborhood.

Silwan shops:

On March 28 Israeli Police and officers from the Tax Authority raided a number of commercial shops in the East Jerusalem area of Silwan. The officials issued multiple fines for a variety of reasons, and many shopkeepers reported receiving fines for no discernible reason. The authorities also shut down one shop selling construction materials.

Attacks on school students

At Tur clashes and arrests:

On March 10 clashes erupted in At Tur when Israeli Police officers harassed Palestinian students as they left school.

The police launched sound grenades, and the "Musta'rebeen" unit was present.

That night, the Police raided the neighborhood and arrested Mohammad abu al Hawa (16), Taysee abu al Hawa (19), and Majdi al Sayyad (17).

All three boys were taken to the Police Station on Saladin Street and were held for several hours.

13 year old boy arrested in Shu'fat:

On March 28 Israeli Police arrested Muaz Ubaidiyya (13) as he left his school in Shu'fat. The Police claimed that the arrest was made after Muaz threw rocks.

However, according to an eyewitness statement, "There were no clashes whatsoever, and no one threw rocks. [The police's] presence there is unnecessary and provocative. It is only intended to start clashes with citizens".

Silwan:

In Silwan, an Israeli Patrol raided a school in search of a child who threw stones at them. They informed the school that they were searching for a child with red shoes.

The actual purpose of such broad raids appears to be to instill fear in the children of the area.

Many children who have been arrested in the area have later reported that during their interrogations, Israeli Authorities attempt to force or recruit them as collaborators.

Israeli Police use Palestinian car to arrest youth

On March 26 Israeli Police entered the area of Al Isawiya from different angles. They threw sound grenades, physically harassed a number of people, and arrested several children.

Several eyewitnesses said that the police officers confiscated a Palestinian car, saying they needed to take the car for “security reasons.” These eyewitnesses later saw the officers use the car to get close to groups of Palestinian youth, then arresting and taking five of them into custody.

Police violently break up non-violent Land Day demonstration

On March 30, Land Day, Israeli Authorities deployed a large number of troops around the Old City to prevent people from entering Al Aqsa Mosque.



Israeli troops barricading entrance to the Old City (March 2012)

At noon, following Friday prayers, Palestinians began peaceful demonstrations, waving Palestinian flags. Israeli troops responded by throwing tear gas and sound grenades, and assaulting demonstrators with pepper spray. Units on horseback charged the crowd, attempting to dismantle the demonstration. They also used sewage water (or skunk gas) on the crowd.

Later on, clashes erupted in nearby areas, where there were a number of injuries due to tear gas and rubber bullets.

Eyewitnesses in Al Isawiya said that Israeli troops attacked Palestinians with bats, beating them on the hands and legs.

A large scale raid and many arrests took place that night.

Such violent reaction to peaceful demonstrations is in flagrant violation of the universal right to assemble.



Attacks on Land Day near Damascus Gate (March 2012)

7. VIOLATING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

A new curriculum based on loyalty and recognition of the “State of Israel”

Education in East Jerusalem has been vulnerable to actions by the Israeli Municipality since 1967. Most recently, Authorities have begun to censor, change, and control the curriculum of Palestinians in the city.

The Israeli Department of Education sent a letter to all schools in Jerusalem, warning them of consequences facing any school using non-Municipality curriculum.

On March 7 Lara Embarki, director of Arab Education, sent a letter to all school principals. The letter demanded that the schools post the Israeli Declaration of Independence and an explanation of the "values" it holds, in visible spaces in the schools.



Additionally, they reminded the principals to provide the Municipality with the number of textbooks they would require for the coming year. This in order to complete the switch to Municipality censored and written textbooks. One of the suggested books is *Being Citizens of Israel*. This textbook explains the Declaration of Independence and the ideas and notions behind the Jewish State.

This new policy further detaches Palestinian Jerusalemites from their history, culture, and heritage. It is particularly dangerous because it targets children, not allowing them to learn about their own nationality, and forcing upon them a biased version of history.

The Israeli Authorities do not have the right to change and control the education of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Such actions are in violation of the Palestinians' right to education.