

Joint Statement on planned demolition of Khan al-Ahmar

August 15, 2018

We, the undersigned international faith-based, human rights and civil society organizations once again draw the attention of our respective governments to the urgent plight of the Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar, and this critical moment in history.

Unless the world takes immediate action to uphold international law and hold the Government of Israel accountable for its actions, the Israeli authorities will carry out a demolition order on the entire village of Khan al-Ahmar, including Palestinian homes and the local school, and will forcibly displace the entire population of the village. The demolition order against Khan al-Ahmar is part of a broader, troubling trend in which the government of Israel is systematically demolishing structures and displacing Palestinians in Area C to allow for the expansion of Israeli settlements and, potentially, the full annexation of Area C.

Khan al-Ahmar is located in [E1](#), a strategic area linking Jerusalem and the illegal settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. [Legal experts explain](#) that demolishing Khan al-Ahmar paves the way for the Israeli government to link Ma'ale Adumim settlement directly to Jerusalem.

On August 1, 2018, the Israeli High Court [granted the community of Khan al-Ahmar a brief 10-day reprieve](#), giving the Israeli Government 5 days to propose an alternative site to which to forcibly transfer the community, and an additional 5 days for the community to respond. Nevertheless, the High Court's decision still allows for what human rights organizations have cautioned [constitutes a war crime](#) if the village is demolished, and its community forcibly transferred. The lawyer for the community of Khan al-Ahmar has argued that the village is located on [privately-owned Palestinian land](#) and, therefore, the state cannot forcibly remove the residents.

The Government of Israel has [twice before transferred the residents of Khan al-Ahmar](#): the first time was in the 1950s, when it transferred them from where they were living in the Negev (within Israel proper). The second time the government transferred them in order to construct the illegal Israeli settlement of Kfar Adumim. Now the Israeli government is poised to expel them from their homes for a third time.

We collectively call on our governments to take action to stop the precedent-setting demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and to denounce this potential war crime. We urge our governments to call on the Israeli government to reverse its decisions to demolish the village of Khan al-Ahmar and forcibly evict its residents before it is too late.

By silence and inaction, governments have become complicit in this violation of international law, and by extension, make all of us who elected them into office complicit. We trust that when members of the G7 claimed to be committed [to holding accountable those who violate international humanitarian law](#), that they meant every state and every non-state actor, *without exception*. This is an opportunity to live up to this commitment, declared less than two months ago.

We refuse to be complicit. We join the community of Khan al-Ahmar, and all Palestinian villages in occupied territory slated for or in danger of demolition in resisting this violation of their human rights and of international law. We stand in solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis working for a just peace based on international law, even in the face of [legislated repression](#) and [discrimination](#).

The world is facing a cross-roads in the search for just peace in Palestine and Israel, and history will judge us not only by our actions but by our *inaction*. The Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar faces a crucial struggle for its very survival. We ask our governments today to take action for a just and lasting peace, and to fulfil their obligations under the IV Geneva Convention Article I to ensure respect by the Government of Israel of its obligations under international law regarding the rights of this vulnerable community.

Signed:

Act for Peace, Australia
Canadian Friends of Sabeel
Catholics for Just Peace in the Holy Land, Canada
Christian World Service Aotearoa New Zealand
Church World Service, USA
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends of Sabeel North America, USA
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ, USA
Just Peace Advocates/Mouvement pour une Paix Juste, Canada
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
People for Peace, Canada
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
The United Church of Canada
United for Palestine-Greater Toronto Area, Canada
United Network for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel, Canada
World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland