

Bedouin Protection Committee
Jerusalem Periphery, West Bank, Palestine
14 May 2012



ACTION

Mr. Pascoe

COPY

UNHCR L.O.
OHCHE

Excellency,

From the Bedouin communities of the West Bank we send you our best wishes for a peaceful year ahead.

We write to thank you for the visit of Baroness Amos in May 2011 and the subsequent visit of Ms. Bragg in May 2012 to the Bedouin Palestine refugee communities in the West Bank. Their visits and words of support have been of great encouragement to our community in a time of growing adversity.

Over the last year there has been a significant increase in pressure against Bedouin communities in Area C (the 62% of the West Bank under full Israeli control) and in particular around the Jerusalem periphery, by both the Israeli Civil Administration and the settler population. Although the rural areas around Jerusalem where we live are highly strategic for Palestinian development, large parts of it have been clearly earmarked by the Israeli authorities for the expansion of illegal settlements, particularly Maale Adummim. Our presence for over 40 years in this area is an obstacle to the Israeli execution of their settlement expansion plan.

Indeed, the rumours we have heard for several years about the Israeli authorities' plans to force us out of our homes in these strategic areas and relocate us into purpose built villages are now becoming a reality. The over twenty Bedouin communities in the Jerusalem periphery, numbering over 2,300 individuals, are now (April and May 2012) the subjects of a census by the Israeli authorities, who have confirmed to the United Nations their intention to relocate us. We, the Arab al Jahalin Bedouin - an over 85% refugee population - were expelled from our tribal territories in the Negev desert after 1948 and are now on high alert once again to the threat of expulsion. The current peak in pressure against many communities is alarming and is rendering our day to day existence unsustainable and our futures unknown.

Our self-representing body, the *Protection Committee for Bedouin communities in the Jerusalem periphery*, has identified the below three points as our priorities when calling for international protection:

1. Our first request is to return to our tribal territories in the Negev.
2. Pending return to our tribal territories, the Bedouin request protection to stay in our current locations in the Jerusalem periphery.
3. Should a forced relocation prove inevitable, we request that the Bedouin are recognised by all duty-bearers as key stakeholders in all aspects of the decision making process, and that any planning includes full consultation with Bedouin on Bedouin social structure and traditional livelihoods.



In line with these identified messages, we write today to draw your attention to the imminent threat of forcible transfer to the Bedouin refugee communities in the West Bank. In the face of settlement expansion, Barrier construction, settler harassment, poverty, food insecurity and lack of access to basic services and natural resources, resisting forced displacement has become a daily challenge.

We ask you to stand with us in reminding the Israeli authorities of their responsibility to protect the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territory, within and from which forcible transfer is illegal; to ask the Israeli authorities to cease immediately administrative demolitions of homes and livelihood structures; to award Bedouin communities in the Jerusalem periphery official village status in their current locations and to ensure Bedouin refugees and local Palestinian herders of Area C access to rangeland and natural water resources.

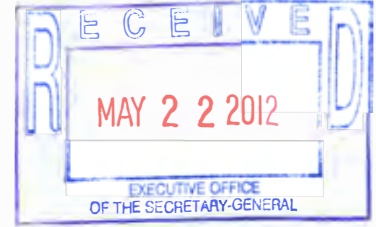
With kind regards and our deepest thanks for your ongoing support in this critical time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, written in Arabic script. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end. It appears to be a personal signature of an individual.

Members of the Protection Committee for Bedouin communities in the Jerusalem periphery.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

التاريخ: ٢٠١٢/٥/١٥



تحية طيبة وبعد :-

حضرة السيد بان كي مون الامين العام للأمم المتحدة المحترم

نتقدم نحن ابناء عرب الجهالين الذين تم ترحيلهم وتهجيرهم على عدة مراحل منذ عام ١٩٥٠- ١٩٩٨ حيث كانت هذه اخر عملية تهجير من مكان مستوطنة معالي ادوميم الى مكب النفايات في بلدة العيزريه حيث ان الوضع هنا مأساوي للغاية وتتخلص مشاكلنا في مايلي :-

- ١- تسرب غازات سامه من داخل التربه الى داخل منازلنا .
- ٢- طمر المخلفات الكيماوية وغيرها في المكب مما ادى الى تفشي امراض السرطان والاعاقات عند الاطفال .
- ٣- الشاحنات تسير بسرعة جنونه حيث فقدنا عدد من الاطفال على ايدي سائقي تلك الشاحنات
- ٤- الكلاب الضالة والحشرات الضارة التي تعم المكان
- ٥- نرفض فكرة التوطين في املاك الاخرين ونطالب بحق العوده الى موطننا الاصلي تل عراد في بئر السبع ولن نتنازل عن اي حفنة تراب
- ٦- ونهيب حضرتكم بان هناك مخطط لتهجير ٢٤٠٠ عائله في المرحله القادمة والمكان المخطط لترحيل تلك العائلات له لا يستوعب هذا العدد ومن نتائجه
أ- فرض سياسة امر واقع على الارض لفصل شمال الضفة الغربيه عن جنوبها
ب- القضاء على الثروة الحيوانيه التي تعتبر مصدر الرزق الوحيد للعائلات
ت- القضاء على طابع الحياة البدويه .

وتفضلو بقبول فائق الاحترام

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Translated from Arabic

15 May 2012

We, Sir, are the inhabitants of Arab al-Jahalin who have been expelled or displaced at various times between 1950 and 1998. In that most recent displacement operation we were removed from the site of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement to a rubbish dump in the town of Eizariya. Our current situation is catastrophic. Our troubles may be summarized as follows:

1. Poisonous gases seep out of the soil and into our homes.
2. Chemical and other waste products are buried in the landfill, and have caused an outbreak of cancer and child deformities.
3. Lorries passing at breakneck speeds have killed several of our children.

Mr. BAN Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

4. The area is overrun by **stray dogs** and infested by harmful insects.
5. We reject the notion of **settling** the lands of others, and we demand the right of return to our land of origin, Tall **Arad** in Bi'r Sab'a. We will not relinquish a single hand of land.
6. We appeal to you regarding the plan to displace 2,400 families in the coming period to a location that will not be able to support so many families or what they produce.
 - (a) A policy of creating facts on the ground is being imposed in order to divide the northern and southern parts of **the** West Bank.
 - (b) The livestock that **constitute** the sole livelihood of these families is being exterminated.
 - (c) The character of Bedouin **life** is being erased.

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Accept, Sir, the assurances of our highest consideration.

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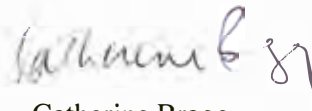
Tel.0598574470

Note to Ms. Malcorra

**TRANSMISSION OF TWO LETTERS FROM THE PALESTINIAN
BEDOUIN COMMUNITY TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

During my recent visit to the oPt, leaders from the Bedouin communities with whom I met, requested that I bring the enclosed two letters to the attention of the Secretary-General. I would appreciate it if you could do so at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Bragg', followed by a stylized flourish or date '87'.

Catherine Bragg
18 May 2012