

Brigadier General Fares Atila

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Dear Brigadier General Fares Atila,

I am concerned about the forced displacement of **Jamila and Muhammad Abu Sabha, their family, and other Palestinian villagers** in the south of the West Bank in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Nine villages in the area, known as Masafer Yatta, are at imminent risk of demolitions and their 1,150 inhabitants face forced displacement.

The Israeli army said that it needed to conduct training in the area, and so declared it a “firing zone”. The villagers appealed against this plan, because they have lived in Masafer Yatta for generations, and they need the space for raising livestock. However, the villagers have now exhausted their legal remedies since the Supreme Court rejected their request for a further hearing on 2 October. The demolition of homes, schools and roads is a violation of Masafer Yatta villagers’ right to an adequate standard of living, including housing, under international human rights law.

In the region of Masafer Yatta, meanwhile, several Israeli settlements and outposts are expanding: Mitzpe Yair to the south, East Susya to the west, Avigayil, Havat Maon and Maon to the north. The settling of an occupying state’s civilians in occupied territory and the forcible transfer of protected persons are serious violations of international humanitarian law and war crimes. These forcible transfers are carried out to maintain Israel’s system of oppression and domination over Palestinians, and therefore also constitute the crime against humanity of apartheid.

I call on you to immediately halt all plans to demolish Palestinian homes and evict residents in Masafer Yatta, end Israeli settlement activity, and to stop forcible transfers of the Palestinian population in the occupied West Bank in general. Israel should also end other violations against Palestinians in the OPT, such as arbitrary restrictions on Palestinians’ freedom of movement and residence in their communities, and on their rights to access livelihoods, healthcare services and education.

Yours sincerely,