

Oral statement submitted by Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status.

Israeli policies in Jerusalem Accelerate Ethnic Cleansing of Palestinians and Undermine Palestinian Self-determination

1. Israel's policies within the OPT and Israel systematically undermine the Palestinian fundamental right to self-determination. Within the OPT, including East Jerusalem, specifically, its policies of population transfer, colonialism, and Apartheid jeopardizes the territorial integrity of the land intended to constitute the state of the Palestinian people. Israel's ethnic cleansing policies in East Jerusalem are particularly insidious. The State employs several legal mechanisms to systematically expropriate Palestinian land and forcibly remove its indigenous Palestinian population.¹

2. Today 35% of East Jerusalem has been expropriated for state land use and there exist 1,500 pending demolition orders.² In 2010, Israeli authorities destroyed 78 structures, including 24 homes, displacing 116 people, and affecting 289. This figure does not include the number of residential buildings seized by settler groups with the sanction of Israeli Authorities. In 2010, settler groups seized 10 buildings and 28 residential structures, effectively displacing 158 residents, including 85 children.³

3. Israeli authorities have embarked on settlement expansion plan targeting the Palestinian residential areas in the "Holy Basin" area of East Jerusalem comprised of Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, At-Tur (Mt. of Olives), Wadi Joz, Ras Al-'Amud, and Jabel Mukaber. Today 2,000 settlers reside in these areas and the Government plans to link these settlements to one another by creating a series of contiguous parks around the "Holy Basin" and eastern slopes of Mount Scopus (the "Open Spaces" plan).⁴

4. The most recent manifestations of this ethnic cleansing policies include destruction of the historic Shepard Hotel, desecration of the Mamilla Cemetery, the eviction of 60 Palestinians from their homes in Karm al-Ja'ouni, as well as plans to evict 200 Palestinians from their homes in Kubaniyat Im Haroun.⁵

5. Most recently, on March 6, 2011, Israeli police and Jerusalem municipality workers issued 15 eviction notices to families in the Ar-Rashid building in Beit Hanina. The orders only given the families ten days to leave their homes, after which time the homes will be demolished. The demolition will affect 150 people. Israeli authorities claim that the residents do not have the proper permits although they insist that the permit process begun well before construction of the homes began.⁶

¹ These legal mechanisms include the Absentee Property Law, discriminatory zoning and planning policies, declaration of State or Public Land Uses, the subordination of Palestinian Jerusalemites as residents only, and the recognition of exclusively Jewish claims predating 1948.

² <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d392b9bc.html>

³ http://home.al-maqdese.org/attachment/000000110.pdf?g_download=1

⁴ http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sheikh_jarrah_factsheet_2010_10_11_english.pdf

⁵ http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_the_monthly_humanitarian_monitor_2011_02_11_english.pdf

⁶ <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=366403>

We urge the Human Rights Council to:

1. Recognize that Israel's policies in Jerusalem constitute ones of population transfer and a regime of apartheid and colonialism;
2. Condemn Israel's policies for abrogating the prohibition of population transfer pursuant to the Fourth Geneva Convention;
3. To call upon Israel to cease its policy of ongoing desecration activities and other actions against holy sites in and around East Jerusalem as well as to cease its policy of revoking the residency rights of those Palestinians inhabitants of East Jerusalem.