



Jude Kirton-Darling MEP
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Vice-President of the Commission
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Federica Mogherini
European Commission
Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Vice-President and High Representative Federica Mogherini,

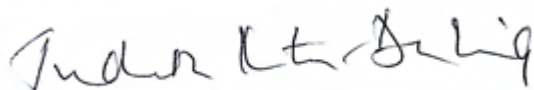
I am writing to express my concerns regarding the prospective illegal demolition of the village of Susya, located in the South Hebron Hills of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The demolition of the village would cause the mass displacement of Susya's several hundred occupants, resulting in the loss of their homes, livestock and agricultural land. On 4th May Israel's High Court of Justice authorised the demolition of the village and the forcible transfer of its residents from Area C of the West Bank. The justification for their demolition is cited as being due to a violation of zoning regulations yet this occurs within a discriminatory legal context in which it is almost impossible for Palestinians to legally obtain building permits and they are habitually denied the right to plan and build their own communities within the West Bank.

This problem is pervasive within the Occupied Palestinian Territories yet the state of affairs in Susya calls for an urgent response. The residents sought an interim order to freeze the implementation of the demolitions until their petition is heard at Israel's highest court on 3rd August, as is standard practice in such cases. Unfortunately, although the High Court of Justice has expressed a willingness to hear the village's petition to legitimise its status, the villagers request for an injunction has been refused. In consequence the court has effectively permitted Susya's demolition before even hearing its residents' case. The impact of the demolition will be far-reaching and cause irreversible damage to the livelihoods and lifestyles of the villagers.

The ruling stands in stark contrast to Israel's obligation to meet the needs of the residents of the occupied territories and constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law prohibiting forced transfer. Demolitions and the evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and are hugely detrimental to the peace process. The threat of demolition and expropriation of the village of Susya is indicative of the broader systemic problem for Palestinian villages located in Area C, within which executive planning decisions are often completed by military planning committees without Palestinian representation.

Within your capacity as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy I request that you take all possible action to raise our concerns over Israel's failure to respect the fundamental rights of Susya's residents. We must be explicitly clear voicing our condemnation of the treatment of the villagers and the refusal to facilitate local Palestinians in Area C in the planning processes that decimate their lifestyles and displace them from their homes. I trust we will have your full support in this matter and look forward to receiving your response. If you require any further information on the situation in Susya or wish to discuss this matter in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jude Kirton-Darling', written in a cursive style.

Jude Kirton-Darling

Member of the European Parliament