PALESTINE HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMATION CENTER

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HWR 190

"FROM THE FIELD"
A Monthly Report on Selected Human Rights Issues

Settlement Freeze - What Does it Really Mean?

This issue of "From The Field" chronicles the continuing growth of illegal settlements, and settler violence. The human rights violations are not exceptions, but predictable results of an Israeli government policy of settlement expansion and land confiscation. Despite well publicized "confidence building measures" announced in the wake of the elections (July 1992), there is a wide gulf between Israeli government statements and Israeli government actions. The announced settlement freeze is so diluted by the exemption of broadly defined "strategic" and "security" settlements, that substantial policy change has not occurred. Statements designed for international consumption have not addressed the rights of the Palestinian people to their land. ❖



Givat Ha'apot settlement, started in 1991 after the Gulf War, lies immediately southeast of the Palestinian city of Hebron; it is still under construction. Land from the Hebron municipality was seized for the settlement.

In what Yitzhak Rabin termed a first step towards reallocating government funds to social and economic projects within the Green Line, the new Labor-led government announced a freeze on construction of new houses and roads in settlements in the Occupied Territories for a period of one year. The "freeze" actually means that the Housing Ministry will not — for a limited period of time — sign further contracts for government subsidized housing (Shahak translation # 107 from July 22 *Yediot Ahronot*).

Rabin stated that settlements along the Jordan Valley and on the Golan Heights were "strategic" and exempt from any restrictions. Settlements near Jerusalem would likewise not be subject to "political or security" categorizations (*Jerusalem Post*, June 30). The building of 10,000 homes in the Gush Etzion bloc in Hebron, around Ma'aleh Adumim city-settlement east of Jerusalem and Ma'aleh Ephraim settlement in Nablus will continue (*Jerusalem Post*, July 24).

Only Jews wanting to live in designated "security" settlements are eligible for a special area grant from the Israeli government. This NIS 50,000 grant ($20,000), formerly given to all settlers as a gift from the state, will be allocated only to settlers in the targeted "security" areas of the Jordan Valley, Greater Jerusalem, and in the Eztion Bloc in Bethlehem. Jews wanting to live in "political" settlements are no longer eligible for this grant but are provided a special area loan from the government.

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The Palestine Human Rights Information Center

The Palestine Human Rights Information Center (PHRIC), established in Jerusalem in 1986 under the auspices of the Arab Studies Society, is an independent, non-governmental Palestinian organization devoted to the monitoring and documentation of human rights issues. Through fieldwork, computerized databases and regular statistical and descriptive reports, PHRIC collects, stores, and disseminates comprehensive information on a wide variety of violations of Palestinian human rights in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. PHRIC also documents major human rights violations against Palestinians in Israel and against Israeli peace activists.

PHRIC fieldworkers and researchers obtain information on human rights violations in the field through systematized questionnaires, affidavits and interviews, as well as through secondary sources. The information is stored in human rights databases and used as the basis of reports by PHRIC and outside researchers.

PHRIC-International, based in Washington DC, distributes the reports produced by PHRIC in Jerusalem, and serves as an international information center. It is a project of the Human Rights Research Foundation. (From 1986-1989, PHRIC and PHRIC-International published under the name: The DataBase Project of Palestinian Human Rights.)

CHOICE library review (January 1990):

PHRIC compiles "...documentation and commentary essential to understanding human rights problems in one of the world's most sensitive areas."

Publications by PHRIC

- ❑ Transfer! Illegal Expulsion Policy Reactivated (December 1992/January 1993)
- ❑ Palestinian Prisoners Hunger Strike to Protest Deteriorating Conditions (Nov. 1992)
- ❑ Settlement Freeze — What Does it Really Mean? (September/October 1992)
- ❑ International Legal Standards on Conditions of Detention (September 1992)
- ❑ The Impact of the Work Permit System on Palestinian Workers in Israel (September 1992)
- ❑ New Israeli Measures Restricting Palestinian Workers (July/August 1992)
- ❑ Recreating East Jerusalem (PHRIC and PGRIC, May/June 1992)
- ❑ Targeting to Kill: Israel's Undercover Units (March/April 1992)
- ❑ Detention and Interrogation Of Palestinian Detainees: Torture, Deaths in Detention & Prison Conditions (Feb. 92)
- ❑ Israeli Settlement In The West Bank: Status Report (January 1992)
- ❑ Children and Detention (August-September 1991)
- ❑ Israeli Settlement And Its Consequences: 1991 (June-July 1991)
- ❑ Settler Violence: Making Room for Settlement Expansion (May 1991)
- ❑ New Pass System Renders 75-100,000 Palestinians Jobless in April (April 1991)