



URGENT UPDATE 9.9.2024 THE VILLAGE OF ZANUTA AGAIN FACES THE RISK OF DEPORTATION

1. In the framework of the ruling by the High Court of Justice on July 29th, 2024 regarding the petition submitted on behalf of the residents of Zanuta concerning their return to their village after their violent expulsion by settlers, the court ruled as follows: **"With regards to taking measures for the return of the residents of the villages of Zanuta and Khirbat Um Darith to their place of residence - the respondents stated in the hearing that there is a willingness to prepare for the return of the villagers at a time agreed between the parties, this part of the conditional order is redundant. The respondents will coordinate with the residents regarding a concrete date when they will be prepared to return to their place of residence. It goes without saying that the respondents believe that they will not be satisfied with providing just backup for the return of the residents to their villages, but that they will work to enforce the law as much as necessary"** (emphasis not in the original).
2. However, since the residents of the village of Zanuta returned to their land in accordance with the ruling of the High Court, the authorities are doing everything in their power to thwart the final court ruling, and are permitting the continuous entry of settlers, led by the settler Yinon Levy, into the residential compound of the residents, while police called to the scene claim that these settlers are allowed to enter their private lands and the residential compound of the villagers.
3. The refusal of the police to remove the settlers trespassing on the private lands and in the residential area of the village, in clear contradiction of the duty of the police to enforce the crime of trespassing, constitutes a violation of the duty of the regional authorities to uphold the court's ruling and to prevent the area from flaring up, after it was subject to severe violence and the expulsion of the residents by the same settlers who the police now allow, to enter the village.
4. Further evidence that the actual goal of the regional authorities is to thwart the verdict and prevent the residents from returning to their land, is the fact that the only issue in which the authorities bother to intervene is that of claims of illegal construction in the village, this despite the fact that this issue was not part of the verdict (contrary to the claim heard again and again from police officers, administrative personnel and the military).
5. The representatives of the authorities take an extremely hostile and draconian approach and prevent the residents from not only restoring the buildings (which has not been done so far anyway) but also from engaging in minor actions such as laying out temporary cloth sheets to protect against the scorching sun, following the destruction of structures by violent settlers and the refusal of the authorities to enforce the law in the area.

6. The confiscation of the cloth sheets used by the villagers to cover and protect themselves from the sun, is carried out in cooperation with the same settlers who expelled the villagers. Settlers enter the village and photograph the cloth sheets for inspection officials, who in turn come and exercise their powers according to the demands of the settlers.
7. With Haqel's intervention, the residents submitted an urgent request to the General of the Central Command, COGAT and the head of the Civil Administration requesting the immediate restoration of the village's buildings and the restoration of the situation to what it was prior to the destruction that took place, and in particular to permit actions designed to enable basic human existence, until a decision is made regarding the regulation of the village, in coordination with the archeology department.
8. In response to the residents' request and after a meeting was held by the petitioners' attorney with Lt. Col. Adam Avidan, Head of Infrastructure at the Civil Administration, a letter was received on September 4th, 2024 in which he suggested that the residents move to an area located about 2.5 km north of the current village in a remote area adjacent to areas A and B near Dahariya within lands declared as state lands where the Civil Administration will prepare a plan for them. In his letter he stated that a response to the proposal was required within 30 days or another alternative should be offered on behalf of the residents. Insofar as the proposal is rejected by the residents, Lt. Col. Avidan stated that the meeting that was held serves as a notification of the intention to carry out enforcement in the current location of the village within the 30 days. In his letter, he added that no new construction activity in the village or construction of any type of building will be allowed, regardless of the ongoing discussion regarding the alternative.
9. Haqel states that: the state is threatening the residents with destruction of the remainder of the demolished building in the village if the residents accept the offer to evacuate the village and move to the area adjacent to areas A and B. There is no doubt that the state's proposal at the present time, precisely with the return of the residents to their village by order of the High Court after the previous violent expulsion, is intended to formalize and complete the deportation of the residents of the village of Zanuta where the settlers began their efforts to ethnically cleanse Area C of its Palestinian residents. The state ignores any historical and proprietary connection of the residents to the village who have in their possession documents proving their rights to hundreds of dunams of private land in the village and forcing them to be displaced to an area in which they have no property rights and where there are other Palestinian landowners present.

For further details:

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