

## Urgent Update regarding the Village of Zanuta – 22.09.2024

1. On September 18<sup>th</sup>, Haqel submitted an urgent contempt of court request to the High Court of Justice on behalf of the residents of the village of Zanuta who have been **transferred** yet again. The residents, who returned to their village just a few weeks ago following a ruling of the High Court, have been mercilessly persecuted by settlers and Israeli authorities and were finally forced to leave **a second time**. Israeli authorities gave an ultimatum to destroy the remaining buildings in the village if the villagers did not agree to their offer to move to another suggested location or if another alternative was not offered on behalf of the residents.
2. During the weeks following their return, the authorities totally refused to act to protect the residents and evict the settlers who were present in the residential complex day and night. The representatives of the authorities were concerned with only one thing - removing and confiscating the temporary cloth sheets that the residents used for shelter, after settlers decimated all the roofs in the village. Not a single roof remained intact. The residents appealed to the authorities to allow them to use immediate and urgent means to maintain basic living conditions in view of the demolition of the village and its destruction by settlers in retribution attacks. In response to this request, the respondents informed the residents that they would not allow them to build anything in their residential complex, as the area is designated as an archaeological site.
3. The State's refusal to restore the buildings in the village and its claim that the village is located on an archeological site, contradicts the position of the archaeological expert submitted with the request. The opinion stated that in the current situation there is no archaeological obstacle to engaging in minimal construction to restore the destroyed buildings, as long as they take place on the existing concrete foundations.
4. Moreover, the legal opinion of renowned international law experts attached to the residents' request, warns against a war crime being committed in the village of Zanuta regarding forced deportation being carried out by the state. The experts emphasize that:

**“The allegation that there is an archeological site in the area does not fall under the exception to forcible transfer established in Article 49 (2). Therefore, it does not justify the forcible transfer of the residents of the village from their place of residence. Nor can the above action be justified by the obligation of the military commander to maintain public order in the area, inter alia due to the violent circumstances in which the residents were initially expelled, which are a far cry from public order. In the case at hand, after fulfilling their commitment to the court to enable the residents of Zanuta to return to their village, the authorities, by way of act and omission, have created conditions which forced the residents to leave the village. In doing so, they have violated the prohibition against forcible transfer entrenched in Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which is regarded as forming part of the international law”.**

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