



To:

Ms Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Brussels, 10 April 2018

**Re: Imminent demolition of the entire Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in Israel**

Dear High Representative Federica Mogherini,

We write to you as representatives of Israeli, Palestinian and European civil society organisations to draw your attention to the forthcoming demolition of Umm al-Hiran, a Bedouin village in the Naqab (Negev) in southern Israel. If this demolition goes ahead, the Israeli authorities will forcibly displace about 350 villagers and thus set a dangerous precedent for the evacuation of around 70 000 Palestinian Bedouin citizens of Israel living in villages that the Israeli Government has continuously refused to recognise.

On 21 March 2018, the Israeli authorities posted eviction orders on every house in Umm al-Hiran announcing its complete destruction at some point between 15 and 29 April 2018.<sup>i</sup> The Government's discriminatory plan is to build a Jewish-only town<sup>ii</sup> upon the ruins of the village, after evicting all its Bedouin residents. The villagers have been fighting this plan before all levels of courts for almost 15 years. The demolitions will leave the Bedouin families homeless, as there is no agreed housing alternative.<sup>iii</sup> Indeed, Israel's displacement policies increase poverty and seriously hinder the economic development of Bedouin communities in Israel.<sup>iv</sup>

Moreover, Israel's forced eviction policies blatantly violate international human rights law<sup>v</sup> and should be seen in the context of increasing institutionalised discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. A further example of this entrenched discrimination is illustrated in the ongoing debates around the Jewish Nation State Bill, which seeks to further undermine the fundamental democratic principles on which the EU-Israel partnership is based.<sup>vi</sup>

The EU has repeatedly encouraged Israel to guarantee equal rights for all its citizens in both law and practice, including ensuring an equitable, fair solution to the unrecognized Bedouin villages.<sup>vii</sup> Therefore, at this critical point we call on you to urge Israel to halt the forthcoming demolition of Umm al-Hiran, in line with adherence to international law and the State's duty to protect every citizen's rights regardless of their race or national belonging.

We look forward to receiving your response to our concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Michel Tubiana  
EuroMed Rights President

Josianne Gauthier  
Secretary General, CIDSE

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-notifies-bedouin-village-that-it-will-be-razed-entirely-next-month/>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9186?mc\\_cid=abf0bf2f03&mc\\_eid=e54e05fc1b](https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9186?mc_cid=abf0bf2f03&mc_eid=e54e05fc1b)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/9319>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.cidse.org/publications/palestine-israel/no-place-like-home.html>

<sup>v</sup> UN CESCR, General Comment 7: The right to adequate housing (Art. 11(1) of the Covenant): Forced evictions, para. 3.; ICCPR, Art. 12, Art. 17

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2017-007745&language=DA>

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2017-000898&language=EN>