

## House Demolition Notices in Hares

*21 November, 2011*

This report is to be read in conjunction with the reports written on 7th Oct. 2011 after the first two visits of IWPS to investigate the serving of house demolition orders on 7 houses in Hares.

A third visit was made on 21st November in order to learn of any subsequent developments and to gather more information about the situations of the affected families. The following information was obtained from M. who spoke on behalf of the families in the east of the village.

All families have now obtained legal support from the Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre in Ramallah. This is a not-for-profit organization and families will need to pay for their services only when their cases actually come to court. Papers for all cases have now been sent from there to the Civil Administration in Beit El settlement. They will eventually be filed for a court hearing and until that happens I was told that the families who are building new houses cannot continue to build. Once the case is brought to court they can continue until a court order is issued for them to stop. The process could take many years and M expressed the hope that a political solution to the conflict would be found before that: "This can only be solved by a political solution. The courts won't solve this," implying there is no legal remedy in the present conflict. He said it could take several years to go through the courts – there are families whose cases drag on more than 10 years.

Before starting to build, families all sought permission and never received it. There is no room at all left for new buildings in the part of Hares which falls in Area B, which would be a safer area to build in. The edges of the village are in Area C (30% of the village housing) and this is where all the affected houses are situated and where there is room for expansion. But it is also where virtually no permissions to build are granted even though the need is very pressing. Neither is it possible to build extra floors on existing buildings because their foundations are not strong enough. As M said, "Why should the Israelis be interested in Hares when they've got Revava and Barqan [nearby illegal settlements]."

The Oslo Accords of 1993 divided the West Bank into Areas A, B and C. Area A (10 %) covers the Palestinian towns and cities where (theoretically) the Palestinian Authority (PA) has total control; Area B (30 %) covers areas where Palestinians are in control of civilian matters but Israel retains control of security (deeply affecting all aspects of civilian life). Villages are usually in this area; and Area C (60%) is where Israel maintains full control over all matters, including settlements and large areas of land around settlements. It is the misfortune of some villages such as Hares to have these arbitrary lines drawn through the middle.

### **Situation of the Affected Families**

M gave me the following information about the families in the east of the village:

3 houses are being built so that sons can marry and move into them. At present all these sons live with their families. The 4th house is for a family of parents with 3 young children. Their present housing (where I met them) is over-crowded having 4 small rooms in total: sitting room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. They badly need larger accommodation.

**Recommendation**

That IWPS keep in touch with these families to monitor the situation and in particular to visit the other families in the east of the village. See confidential report for contact details.