Humanitarian Coordinator calls on Israeli authorities to stop destruction of humanitarian aid and respect international law

Jerusalem, 18 May 2016

The UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Robert Piper, today condemned the demolition and confiscation of donor-funded humanitarian assistance by the Israeli authorities in the Palestinian community of Jabal al Baba.

On 16 May, the authorities demolished seven homes and confiscated materials for three other ones. Nine Palestine refugee families, comprising 49 members were left without shelter as a result, 22 of them children. The materials were part of a humanitarian aid package for vulnerable Palestinian Bedouin families, provided by the UN's Humanitarian Pooled Fund earlier this year.

"Despite the obligation on Israel under international law to facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of relief to those who need it, humanitarian relief to vulnerable communities like Jabal al Baba is increasingly under attack," said Mr. Piper.

Jabal al Baba, located to the east of Jerusalem in an area planned for the expansion of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement (the E1 plan), is one of 46 communities in the central West Bank considered at high risk of forcible transfer. The destruction of homes and of livelihoods creates pressures on households to move, exacerbating the risk of forcible transfer which would be considered a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Over 600 structures have been demolished or confiscated across the West Bank already in 2016, far exceeding the total for all of 2015. In their wake, over 900 people have been displaced from their homes and a further 2,500 have seen their livelihoods affected.

"Once again, we call on Israel to respect the rights of these vulnerable communities and to leave these households in peace," said Mr. Piper.

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