State of Palestine

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PM Hamdallah Calls on the International Community to Stop Israeli Destruction of Palestinian Villages

Ramallah – Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah today called on the international community to step in and stop Israel from destroying Palestinian villages. "Once again, we call on Israel to abide by international law and we ask the international community to stop Israel from destroying Palestinian villages," Hamdallah said.

Israel has plans to destroy the villages of Susiya and Umm Al Khair, both located in the Hebron governorate. Israeli officials allege that the buildings were constructed without the necessary permits; yet Israeli authorities have systematically refused to grant the villagers any building permits. This policy has repeatedly been criticized by the EU, the US and the UN.

In May 2015, the Israeli High Court had approved the demolition of Susiya; a decision which caused an international outcry. In light of harsh international criticism, no demolitions took place and the villagers continued their efforts to have their master plan approved by the Israeli authorities, a move which would eventually legalize the village.

The negotiations have been ongoing until two weeks ago, when Israel abruptly halted the dialogue. During a hearing on Monday, the Israeli High Court gave the Ministry of Defense two weeks to decide whether or not to continue negotiating with the residents of Susiya. In case of a negative outcome, demolitions could be imminent, threatening to leave 450 residents homeless.

Jamal Dajani, Director of Strategic Communications & Media for the Prime Minister, denounced Israel's policy of forcing Palestinians out of their homes in Area C and East Jerusalem. "Demolitions are pushing Palestinians to the brink; they are losing any hope for peace," Dajani said.

In recent years, the village of Umm Al Khair has been demolished repeatedly. The last demolition took place in April 2016, when Israeli tanks demolished six homes and agricultural facilities, without prior warning. Its 130 inhabitants are constantly harassed by Israeli settlers: Just last week, settlers attacked a 60-year-old resident. Meanwhile, the Israeli settler NGO Regavim actively works towards the demolition of the village through the filing of lawsuits and legal injunctions against the villagers.