



Right Hon Philip Hammond MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
City of Westminster
London
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Email: fcocorrespondence@fco.gov.uk

For the attention of: Right Hon Philip Hammond MP

29 October 2015

Dear Mr. Hammond,

Re: Imminent unlawful forced eviction of the Palestinian Ghaith-Sub Laban family from their family home in occupied East Jerusalem any day after or on Thursday 26 November 2015

As lawyers committed to the protection and promotion of Palestinian human rights, we urgently write to express our extreme concern and need for action on the imminent forced eviction of the Palestinian Ghaith-Sub Laban family from their family home in occupied East Jerusalem any day after or on **Thursday 26 November 2015**. Eight members of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family, including two young children, are facing unlawful forced displacement:

- 1) Mustafa Numan Sub Laban (65 years old)
- 2) Nora Ghaith-Sub Laban (59 years old)
- 3) Ahmad Sub Laban (36 years old)
- 4) Rafat Sub Laban (27 years old)
- 5) Lama Sub Laban (22 years old)
- 6) Ruba Qadamani-Sub Laban (Ahmad's wife) (31 years old)
- 7) Mustafa Ahmad Sub Laban (9 years old)
- 8) Kinan Ahmad Sub Laban (3.5 years old)

This letter follows our previous letter dated 13 April 2015 on this case, in which we expressed our deep concern over two attempts to forcibly evict the Ghaith-Sub Laban family in contravention of legal procedures while a pending appeal against the family's eviction order was due to be heard.

We strongly welcomed the Foreign Office reply dated 1 May 2015, where you expressed your shared concerns about the potential forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family. You further indicated that you were raising the case with the Israeli authorities; that you had met with the family in their home and would attend the Israeli District Court hearing on 31 May



2015 to hear the family's appeal against the revocation of their protected status tenancy; and that you would continue to monitor the case closely.

On 11 October 2015, the District Court issued its decision that the family's appeal had been dismissed. A Court Order was subsequently made for the family to evict themselves from their family home within 45 days. This deadline expires on 26 November 2015. In principle, this means the family's forced eviction from their home can then take place any day after or on this date. The petitioner, the Galetzia Trust, who brought the case against the family to the Israeli court system, is able to initiate proceedings for the execution of the eviction order before the 45 days deadline expires, so that the eviction order can be executed the day the deadline expires on 26 November 2015.

We are hugely appalled that Ghaith-Sub Laban family, who have lived in their family home for over 60 years since 1953, and who have “protected tenant” status under Israel's Protected Tenant Law of 1972, are facing forcible eviction within a month or less. As well as appearing to violate their “protected tenant” status under domestic Israeli law, we consider that the Ghaith-Sub Laban family’s pending forced eviction would amount to a violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the individual or mass transfer of protected persons. It must be emphasised that the category of protected persons includes Palestinians living in occupied East Jerusalem, who should accordingly be protected from forced evictions.

In addition, and as outlined in our previous letter, we consider that the family's forced eviction would violate a number of international human rights law provisions, including: the right to adequate housing; the right to protection of home and family life from arbitrary or unlawful interference; the right to non-discrimination; the right to access to justice; and the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

We further reiterate our significant concern that the Ghaith-Sub Laban family's pending forced eviction is a direct result of their Palestinian identity, and is part of Israel’s ongoing and discriminatory policy of unlawfully forcibly displacing Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank to make way for expanding illegal Israeli settlements. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates that there were at least 265,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in the occupied Palestinian territory as of July 2015, of which 5,775 were reported displaced between 2009 and early April 2015 following evictions and demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Requirement for urgent action

We are firmly of the view that the pending forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family from their home at any date after or on Thursday 26 November 2015 would be unlawful, arbitrary and deeply discriminatory. It is our understanding from the Foreign Office letter dated 1 May 2015 that British diplomats are committed to closely monitoring this case, but it



is unclear what further action, if any, has been taken since the Court decision of 11 October 2015, to halt their eviction.

As such, we respectfully urge the Foreign Office and British Consulate in Jerusalem to take the following urgent steps to protect the Ghaith-Sub Laban family from imminent forced eviction:

1. To ensure that the case is discussed in bilateral dialogue between the Foreign Office and the Israel authorities with a view to preventing the family's pending forced eviction from their home;
2. To issue a public statement of concern on this case which emphasises the critical need for the Israeli authorities to prevent the pending forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family;
3. To engage with other EU member states on this matter with a view to publishing a joint statement of concern which emphasises the critical need for the Israeli authorities to prevent the pending forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family; and
4. To prioritise acting on similar cases of unlawful forced displacement taking place in occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, and to consider appropriate actions that can be taken alone or with other states to influence a change of policy from Israeli authorities on this grave human rights issue.

We look forward to receiving your written response and thank you in advance for any intervention you can provide in this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,

Tareq Shrourou (Director) and Natalie Sedacca
Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights

CC: British Consulate General Jerusalem
Law Society in England and Wales
Bar Human Rights Committee