

west bank



# al jabal: a study on the transfer of bedouin palestine refugees



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UNRWA and BIMKOM extend their gratitude to the Mukhtars, the Jahalin Projects Committee and the Salamaat Jahalin Bedouin families of al Jabal and Abu Nwar for sharing their time and experiences with the research teams.

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## i) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Israeli Civil Administration is preparing plans for a centralized *Bedouin Village* in Area C of the West Bank. The village is one of a number of options being proposed by the Israeli authorities for the future of the West Bank's mobile pastoralist community; the Bedouin. The majority of the Bedouin in the West Bank today are Palestine refugees, originating from tribal territories in what is now the Negev Desert. The livestock-dependent Bedouin facing transfer<sup>1</sup> into centralized semi-urban settings today are perhaps the last sector of the Palestine refugee population to experience overnight transformation from a traditional rural society to one based on an urban wage-labour setting. The threat the Bedouin Palestine refugees face today mirrors—albeit on a significantly smaller scale—the plight of the vast majority of Palestine refugees over 60 years ago when they were forcibly exiled from hundreds of hamlets, villages and towns in pre-1948 Mandate Palestine and became residents of densely populated refugee camps.

While government resettlement programmes have introduced Bedouin townships across the region, to date only one such project has been carried out by the Occupying Power targeting the Bedouin Palestine refugee population in the West Bank. The *'Arab al Jahalin* village—the focus of this report—is comprised of 150 Bedouin Palestine refugee families who were transferred out of their rural kinship groups in the eastern Jerusalem periphery into a centralized location in three stages between 1997 and 2007. As the Israeli authorities advance planning for the second such Bedouin village in the West Bank, it is to the residents of *'Arab al Jahalin* village that the remaining rural Bedouin Palestine refugees today are turning for advice and lessons learned as they call for international protection to reject any such transfers and to be returned to their traditional tribal territories in the Negev.

While the Bedouin townships in the Negev and across the region have been subject to rigorous study from multiple angles, the West Bank village of *'Arab al Jahalin*—the only example of the centralization of the mobile pastoral Palestine refugees in the West Bank to date—has never been the focus of research. There is no body of literature available to inform stakeholders wishing to assess the impact of transfer and centralization into an urban setting on the Bedouin Palestine refugee population. Recognizing this gap in the literature, BIMKOM and UNRWA carried out a joint anthropological study of the *'Arab al Jahalin* village in order to demonstrate the day-to-day realities of the Bedouin Palestine refugee residents following their

transfer. This joint report is intended to shed light on the situation of the transferred communities. While a number of conclusions are drawn from the field research, this report does not offer recommendations. Rather, it stands as a record of the current state of affairs for a pastoralist Palestine refugee population in rapid transition against their will from a rural to urban environment as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli authorities.

This report is comprised of three main parts. Part I presents a background to the Bedouin Palestine refugee population living in the Jerusalem periphery today, including the process of the creation of the *'Arab al Jahalin* village within the context of the occupation. Part II presents six case studies based on five months of field research, the methodology of which is laid out below. A detailed examination of the case studies reveals the varied ways in which the lives of different residents in the *'Arab al Jahalin* village have been affected by the transfer. Part III presents the conclusions of the study. The two main conclusions that emerge from the case studies' analysis are that the centralization of rural communities against their will has resulted in a situation which 1) is socially non-viable and 2) is economically non-viable. The transfer of the rural Bedouin communities to the *'Arab al Jahalin* village in three waves starting in 1997 has left them with no available social or sustainable economic assets with which to satisfactorily rebuild their lives in the new environment. Fifteen years after the transfers began, residents of the village are today still struggling to maintain the fundamental elements of their traditional social order and of their pastoral livelihoods. The report clearly demonstrates that financial compensation secured through litigation has not ensured social, economic or cultural security for the Bedouin Palestine refugees in the *'Arab al Jahalin* village. It shows that, under these circumstances and pending a durable solution to the refugee problem, the most viable option for residents of the village is to exercise dual residency practices, living partially in the village and partially maintaining the mobility of their traditional livelihood by returning to rural locations of Area C, a practice deemed illegal by the Israeli authorities. While the practice of dual residency enables families to better own the pace and direction of their lives following the transfer, it sustains their vulnerability by requiring Bedouin to return to areas where they are at threat of home demolition and eviction. In addition, the practice of dual residency splits family units, thereby entailing fundamental changes in family roles and daily practices.

Both in the 'Arab al Jahalin village and in the rural communities now at threat of transfer, this joint BIMKOM/UNRWA study concludes that sustainable rural development and secured access to natural resources from their current rural locations are the most viable solutions for Bedouin Palestine refugee communities in the Jerusalem periphery wishing to

safeguard their social and cultural fabric and to enable a solid economic basis for progress and development. These are the essential conditions which would enable the Bedouin Palestine refugee communities to drive the process of modernization according to their desired timing, pace and direction.

Most livestock in al Jabal is intensively fed and permanently penned between town houses



## ii) METHODOLOGY

This joint BIMKOM/UNRWA study set out with the broad enquiry of understanding the day-to-day realities of residents in the 'Arab al Jahalin village within the context of their transfer in 1997 and subsequent waves. Given the wide scope of the enquiry, a combination of research methodologies was developed in cooperation with representatives of the target community. In light of the essentially human element to the task, an anthropological approach was selected as the principle research lens. Following UNRWA/BIMKOM consultations with al Jabal committee members and with the village's traditional leaders in February 2012, the proposed study and its research methodologies were agreed upon and approved by village representatives. Residents of al Jabal were informed by the committee that a research team would be working in the village for five months from February to June 2012. Once drafted, committee members and the village's traditional leaders commented on the report prior to publication.

Three key research methodologies were applied:

**i) Participatory observation** was carried out by a team of four field researchers over a period of five months. Two female field researchers focused on women residents in al Jabal, accompanying women from different kinship groups within the village as they went about their daily lives. A male field researcher focused on the experiences of men in al Jabal, accompanying those men still working livestock on

their daily shepherding routes, accompanying others in search of wage-labour employment and spending time with traditional community leaders and local youth. At the request of the al Jabal community to include a comparative element to the study, a fourth researcher worked with traditional families in Abu Nwar, a livestock-dependent rural Bedouin kinship group living a similar lifestyle to that of al Jabal residents prior to their transfer.

**ii) In-depth interviews:** The team of four field researchers worked with BIMKOM technicians to hold in-depth interviews with community members in order to understand the planning history of the village. Tools included maps, plans and aerial photographs dating back to the late 1940s, a number of which are included in the report.

**iii) Desktop research:** As far as possible given limited records, publications about the transfers were collected from archives including those of the United Nations, legal organizations representing the communities at the time of the transfers, human rights reports and media libraries.

The final report is a fusion of the materials collected using three research methodologies during the research period of February to June 2012. Throughout the research period, the UNRWA/BIMKOM team met regularly to share field journals, to discuss findings and to build visual tools - including plans, maps and photographs - into the resulting analysis.



Part 1 introduces the Bedouin Palestine refugee population and outlines their recent history as a traditionally mobile pastoralist people living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank of the occupied Palestinian territory. As rural Bedouin communities living in the Jerusalem periphery today face the threat of transfer and centralization into semi-urban settings, Part 1 recounts the history of the creation of the 'Arab al Jahalin village (al Jabal), which is the result of the centralization of ten such rural kinship groups who were evicted from their homes by the Israeli authorities from 1997 onwards. The land from which the Bedouin were evicted is now inhabited by Israeli citizens and is part of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement, recognized as illegal under international law.

## 1.1 Introduction

From 1997 onwards, some 150 families of livestock-dependent Bedouin Palestine refugees living in Area C<sup>2</sup> of the West Bank have been transferred by the Israeli authorities. The majority of the families—all from the Jahalin tribe—were evicted by the Israeli authorities from their dispersed rural kinship groups to make way for the expansion of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement in the Jerusalem periphery. The relocation site is today a satellite to the Palestinian town of Eizariya, formally known as the 'Arab al Jahalin village or simply "al Jabal"—the mountain.

In 2005, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) initiated discussions with the remaining rural Palestine refugee Bedouin communities - numbering approximately 2,300 individuals<sup>3</sup> - located inside the Ma'ale Adummim municipal area about the transfer of all remaining Palestinians residing inside the area to alternative locations on the "Palestinian side" of the Barrier. Discussions were halted, however, after diplomatic pressure froze Israel's "E1 plan" to expand the Ma'ale Adummim settlement and complete the building of the Barrier around the area known

as the Ma'ale Adummim "bubble." In 2011, the ICA once again resumed its study of potential sites for the relocation of Bedouin Palestine refugees and confirmed to the UN their intention to transfer the remaining communities out of the Ma'ale Adummim bubble. The expansion of the 'Arab al Jahalin village is one of the options being studied for the transfer of some communities and plans for a large scale "Bedouin village" in the Nweima area of the Jericho periphery are expected to be deposited by the ICA for public objection in 2013.

This joint BIMKOM/UNRWA study of the 'Arab al Jahalin village examines how transfer from small dispersed kinship groups into a single centralized location has affected the Bedouin Palestine refugee families since 1997. First providing the background to the Bedouin Palestine refugee population in the Jerusalem periphery in the context of the occupation and outlining the creation of the al Jabal community, this report will focus on how the traditionally mobile-pastoralist community lives today following their transfer.

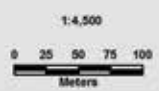




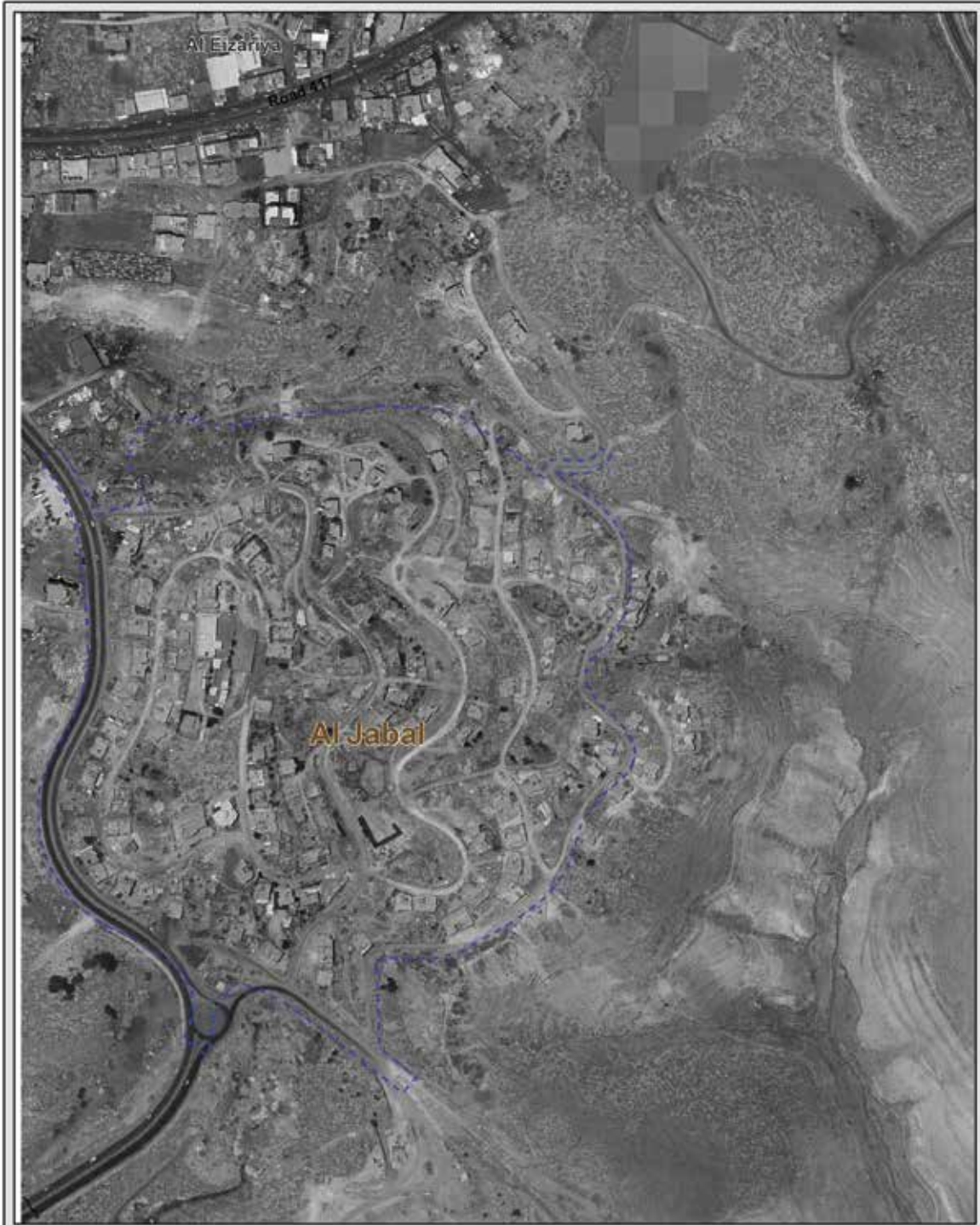
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### Al Jabal 1994

SPOP Plan No. 1627



8



### Al Jabal 2012

SPQP Plan No. 1627

1:4,500



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## 1.2 Who are the Bedouin Palestine refugees in al Jabal?

The Bedouin of the Jahalin tribe originate from the Tel Arad region of the Negev desert. The *Salamaat*, the *Saraya* and the *Dawaheek* make up the three clan groups of the Jahalin tribe, which stems from the 'Arab el Huwaytaat confederation'<sup>4</sup>. Predominantly comprised of desert-dwelling pastoralists, the confederation has its roots in the central region of the Arabian Peninsula. The residents of al Jabal are all from the Salamaat clan of the Jahalin tribe.

Sustainable natural-resource management in arid regions requires pastoralists to be mobile in order to maintain optimum bio-diversity levels. With increasing desertification on the Arabian peninsula, many Bedouin pastoralists fanned northwards in search of richer fodder for their livestock in the wake of the Muslim conquests and onwards.

With strict honour codes informing a traditional justice system, maintaining small social groups based mainly—though not exclusively—on kinship ties, originally served the Bedouin to protect both the environment and family assets, including honour. While much of the Bedouin population is today experiencing transition from a traditional pastoralist economy towards wage-labour commercialism, traditional social structure is still largely observed amongst the rural Bedouin Palestine refugee communities in the West Bank.

While their mobility has been vastly restricted and most now operate a dual economy (combining livestock management with wage labour in urban centres), rural Bedouin communities in the West Bank remain small and mainly kinship-based. Their use of space within the community continues to reflect the protective element of their society, promoting privacy for women and preserving family honour.

According to tribal history, from 1949, the majority of the Negev Bedouin were displaced from their ancestral lands by the Israeli authorities; including the Jahalin Bedouin in the Tel Arad region. The Jahalin fled their tribal territories to the edges of the Negev before splintering into neighbouring Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank in 1951.<sup>5</sup> They have remained in forced exile from their tribal territories ever since.

From mid-1951 onwards, most of the Jahalin Bedouin entering the West Bank registered as refugees with UNRWA, but rather than seeking accommodation in refugee camps, the majority of families maintained their traditional pastoral economy and many sought out the isolated range land and natural water resources of the central West Bank. Along the route of the open water resource of Wadi Qelt, small kinship groups of the Bedouin Palestine refugees established seasonal migration patterns between Jericho and Jerusalem where they enjoyed open access to the lucrative Jerusalem livestock market.

Daily life became increasingly challenging for the Bedouin under Israeli occupation. From 1967 onwards, large swathes of the West Bank were assigned for military use and the building of Israeli settlements, directly hampering the Bedouin's ability to access natural resources central to the survival of

their traditional livelihood. With increasingly limited mobility, the Jahalin selected locations along their established migration routes in the Jerusalem periphery and settled permanently in their kinship groups, securing ad hoc land-use arrangements with local Palestinian landowners throughout the 1970s. Such agreements ranged from simply securing the blessing of a land owner to reside on the land, to the payment of monthly rent or the sharing of any agricultural profits resulting from land use on a seasonal basis. Unbeknownst to the Bedouin at the time, *"the area in which they settled would soon become one of the most strategic geographical regions in the occupied territory."*<sup>6</sup>

By 1995, the majority of the livestock-dependent Bedouin communities in the West Bank became residents of the newly-created Area C when the land they lived on was allocated to full Israeli military and civil control under the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The newly formed Palestinian Authority was limited in its ability to assist Palestinians in Area C since the area fell under Israeli administration. The policies and practices of the Israeli authorities in Area C rendered the daily lives of Palestinian residents increasingly unsustainable and put the traditionally mobile pastoralist population at increasing risk of forced

displacement. Key policies and practices identified as triggering the forced displacement of Palestinian herders from Area C included<sup>7</sup>:

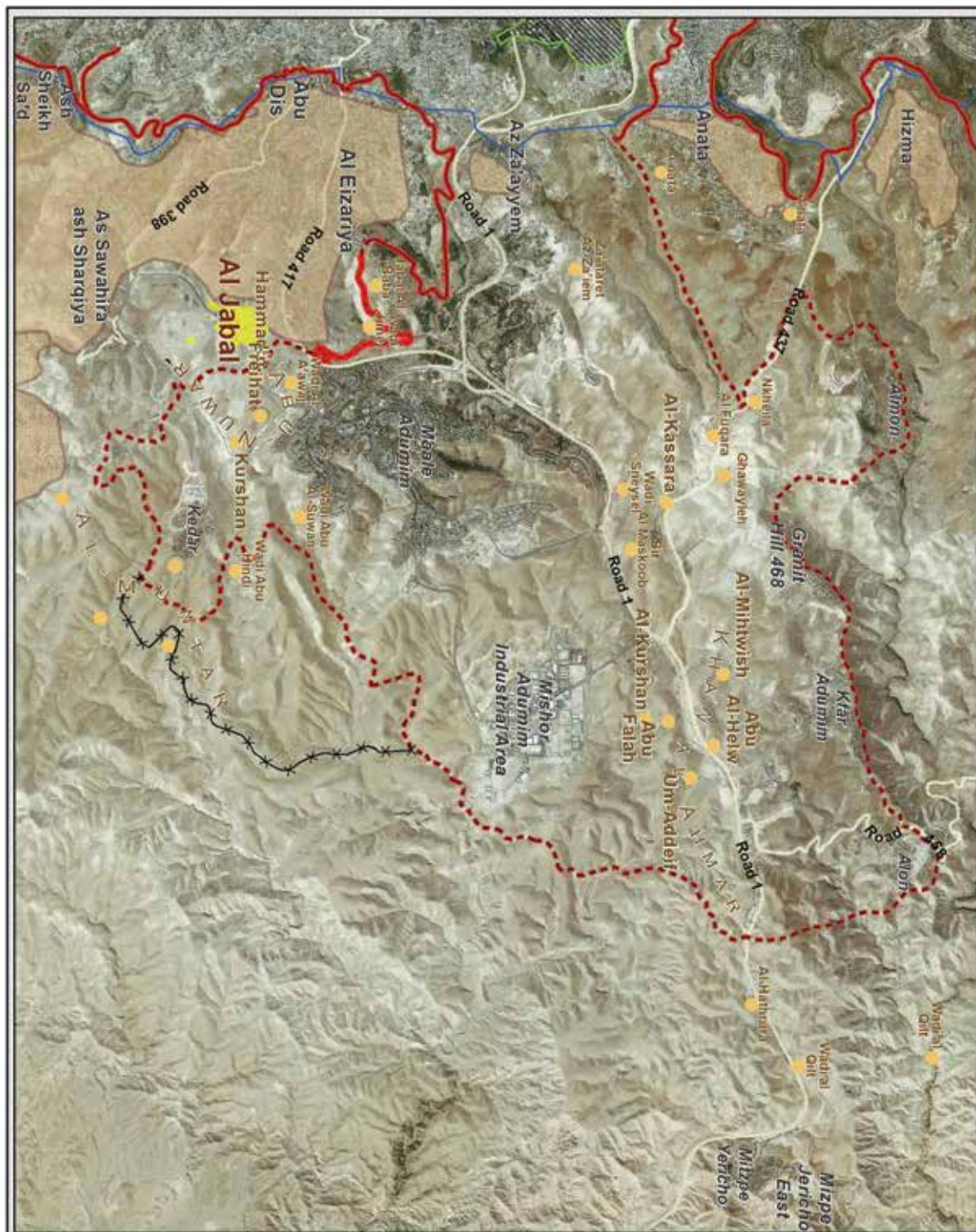
- i) The Barrier and its associated permit regime, resulting in tightened movement restrictions for Palestinians and preventing access to natural resources and commercial centres including East Jerusalem<sup>8</sup>;
- ii) The zoning and planning policy, resulting in the administrative demolition of structures built without an ICA construction permit<sup>9</sup>;
- iii) The settlement policy<sup>10</sup>, resulting in increasingly restricted land use for Palestinians and the threat of physical and psychological violence.

By the mid-1990s, increasingly restricted mobility, growing economic insecurity due to lack of access to natural resources, and the continuous threat of administrative demolition due to lack of building permits<sup>11</sup> increased social instability and prevented community investment in long-term plans. Amidst worsening conditions, when the Israeli authorities verbally informed communities in the late 1980s that they must permanently vacate the Ma'ale Adummim area<sup>12</sup>, then home to ten separate kinship groups from the Salamaat clan of the Jahalin Tribe, the small Salamaat Jahalin kinship groups were steadfast in their decision to resist transfer. Despite accumulating pressure caused by the threat of transfer by the Israeli authorities, the Salamaat groups continued to run their dual economies—managing diminished numbers of livestock by employing intensive feeding mechanisms and increasing their dependence on

bought fodder while supplementing their income with ad hoc employment in nearby Israeli settlements.<sup>13</sup> Recognizing the threat to their traditional livelihoods, many communities became increasingly committed to providing education for their children as the need for supplementary coping strategies increased.

Despite numerous attempts by the Salamaat Jahalin Bedouin to convey their need to remain in their rural communities to the Israeli authorities through legal intervention<sup>14</sup>, the relatively simple steps towards safeguarding their traditional livelihood by ensuring access to natural resources and approving basic infrastructure in their existing rural locations were never offered to the Bedouin by the ICA. Increasingly, Bedouin communities accepting assistance from international and local organizations implementing rural recovery schemes (including shelter rehabilitation, primary schooling, and solar power initiatives in Area C) have received demolition or eviction orders by the ICA<sup>15</sup>. With most attempts by the Bedouin to engage with the international community in rural recovery initiatives of their own design ultimately considered illegal by the ICA<sup>16</sup>, participatory-led modernization initiatives remain unfeasible in the current political climate. Unspecified compensation and transfer into a concentrated environment not conducive to the promotion of the pastoral economy or the safeguarding of centuries-old social customs remains today the only option being proposed by the ICA for the “modernization” of the Bedouin in the Ma'ale Adummim bubble and other parts of Area C.





**Regional Map**



1:80,000  
0 20 40 80 1  
Kilometers

### 1.3 Bedouin transfer and the creation of al Jabal

What actually happened during the al Jabal transfer process? Ten separate kinship groups of Salamaat-Jahalin Bedouin were evicted from their isolated rural communities into one concentrated space next to a municipal garbage dump, forming a satellite to the town of Eizariya. The rural spaces from which the Bedouin were evicted rapidly became new urban neighbourhoods of the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adummim, recognized as illegal under international law. The centralization of 150 families into a condensed location on the margins of an urban environment enforced the transformation of the traditional economy and social fabric of the incoming Bedouin Palestine refugees. In addition, the move ignited deep discontent between the local community of Abu Dis as the historical owners of the al Jabal land and the incoming Bedouin to whom the land was allocated as "state land" by the Israeli authorities. Ultimately, as a result of the transfer, the transitioning Bedouin are today experiencing the radical reshaping of their social, economic and commercial landscapes.

The transfer of the 150 Salamaat Jahalin Bedouin families living in the area targeted for the expansion of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement took place in three waves from 1997. Prior to the transfers, an Area C hillside named *Raghabneh* was home to one Salamaat pastoralist kinship group of approximately 12 households. In 1994, the Israeli authorities informed the dispersed rural kinship groups in the shadows of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement that they would be transferred to the centralized site of Raghabneh, located outside the municipal boundary of the settlement<sup>17</sup>. The Bedouin resisted the proposal on a number of counts; stating that the concentration of the dispersed groups into a single location would destroy their traditional livelihood and the social fabric of their small kinship groups; the selected location was in close proximity to a large-scale garbage dump posing significant health hazards, and the land selected by the ICA for the future Bedouin village was already owned by Palestinians from Abu Dis. Legal proceedings commenced with the Bedouin Palestine refugees consistently refusing to accept transfer to Raghabneh by the Israeli authorities<sup>18</sup>.

On 28 May 1996, the Israeli High Court rejected the Bedouin's final appeal against eviction on the basis that they lacked property rights in the area and gave them three months to evacuate voluntarily<sup>19</sup>. The Bedouin Palestine refugees refused to evacuate, many referring anecdotally to their flight from the Negev

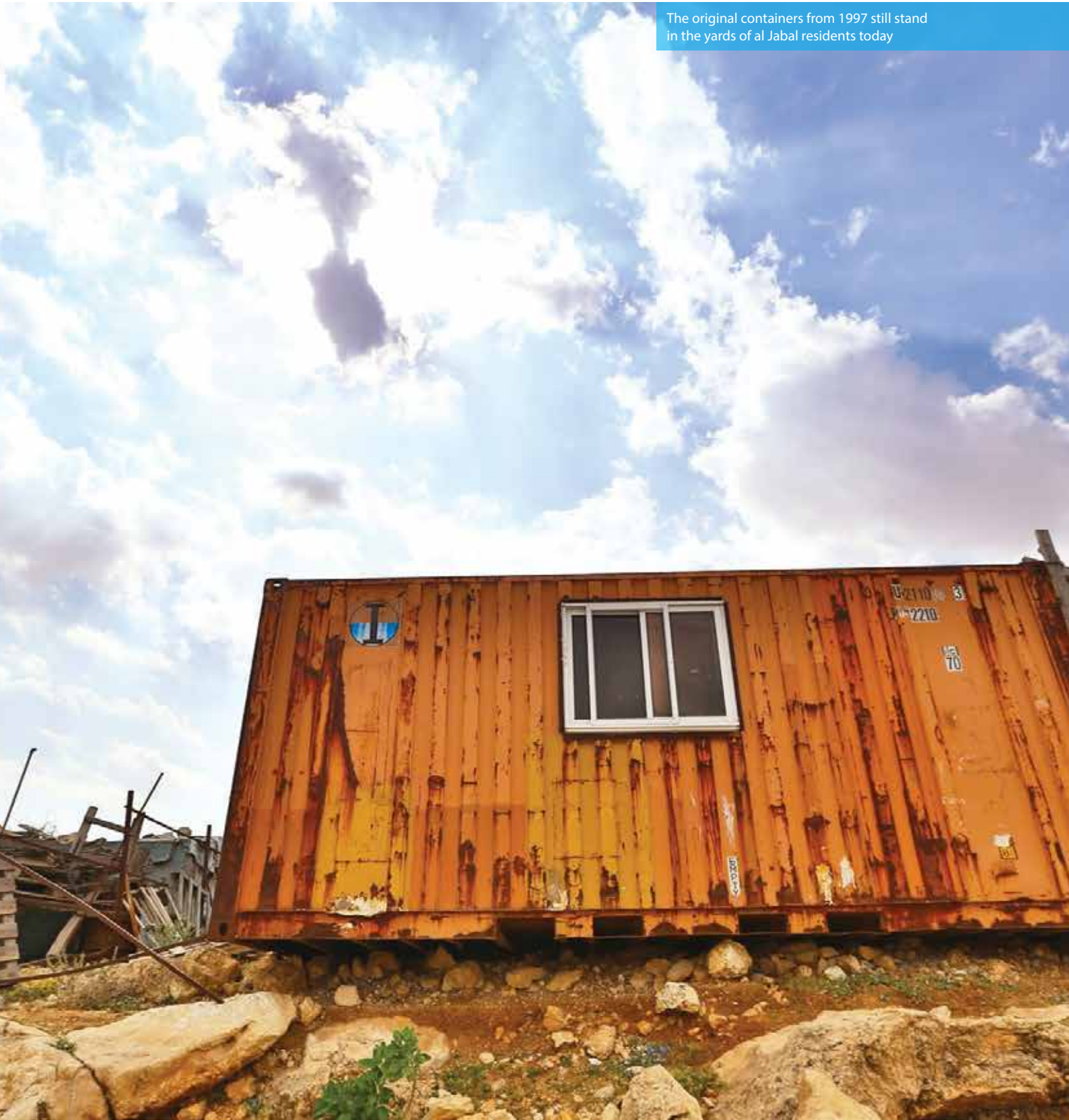
and their subsequent plight as refugees experiencing multiple counts of dispossession and displacement. Throughout all legal proceedings against the eviction threat, the Bedouin Palestine refugees stated return to their tribal territories in the Negev as their preferred solution<sup>20</sup>.

Throughout 1997, the Israeli authorities demolished all structures belonging to 65 Salamaat Jahalin families living in clustered communities of four kinship groups in the eastern part of an area known to the Bedouin as Abu Suwan<sup>21</sup>—an area where plans for the expansion of Ma'ale Adummim settlement (neighbourhood "06") had been granted full approval. The displaced families were taken in buses to the Raghabneh hillside where their possessions had been pre-positioned in shipping containers scattered amongst the 12 families already residing on the northern boundary of Jerusalem's Municipal garbage dump. Each incoming family received emergency humanitarian assistance from international and local organizations, including UNRWA<sup>22</sup>, and the community's private lawyer began negotiations with the ICA to secure compensation for the 65 families. No deal was reached initially, and the families continued to live in tents and metal containers in alien social groups for over three years, with no infrastructure on the Raghabneh hillside, which would later be re-named as the Arab al Jahalin village. In 1998, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights condemned the transfer:

*'The Committee notes with deep concern the situation of the Jahalin Bedouin families who were forcibly evicted from their ancestral lands to make way for the expansion of the Ma'aleh Adumim and Kedar settlements. The Committee deplores the manner in which the Government of Israel has housed these families in steel container vans in a garbage dump in Abu Dis in subhuman living conditions. The Committee regrets that instead of providing assurances that this matter will be resolved, the State party has insisted that it can only be solved through litigation.'*

(United Nations (1998) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights concluding observations on Israeli's initial report UN Doc. E/C.12/1/Add.27, 4 Dec 1998 Paragraph 12)

The original containers from 1997 still stand in the yards of al Jabal residents today





The next Bedouin community to be evicted consisted of 35 families in three kinship groups living in an extended cluster known to the Bedouin as the south side of *Bir al Maskoob*, the area intended for the *Tsemach Hasadeh* neighbourhood of the settlement, located in south-west Ma'ale Adummim. Like the evictions of the first wave, following the continuous refusal of the community to leave the area voluntarily, on 17 February 1998, all structures in the community were demolished and all possessions removed from the location to Raghabneh. Unlike the first wave however, all 35 families of the second wave returned to Bir al Maskoob the same night, refusing to leave the demolition site.

Legal proceedings to secure an injunction order for the community to remain in its "rural location" began<sup>23</sup>. On 1 March 1998, the community's lawyer secured a High Court injunction, allowing the Bedouin to remain in Bir al Maskoob on the condition that they enter into negotiations with the Israeli Civil Administration concerning their transfer to Raghabneh<sup>24</sup>. The community was immediately re-established in its original location, but community members report that the injunction was not viewed as a success since the court had effectively endorsed the eventual transfer of the community to Raghabneh. Negotiations over compensation lasted for approximately 11 months, and the first set of conditions proposed by the Israeli authorities were successfully increased by approximately 20 per cent by the community lawyer during the negotiation period<sup>25</sup>. In the final agreements, families in all waves were issued with plots of land of between half a dunum (500m<sup>2</sup>) and two dunums (2000m<sup>2</sup>) according to family size; financial compensation between 15,000 NIS and 38,000 NIS according to family size; water connection; and community access to 3000 dunums of range land<sup>26</sup>. Once land plots had been issued and basic infrastructure installed in Raghabneh according to the agreed compensation packages, the community was given 90 days to leave Bir al Maskoob and move to Raghabneh<sup>27</sup>. The location was subsequently renamed the 'Arab al Jahalin Village. The 35 families of this second wave left their rural homes in Bir al Maskoob one-by-one to move to the "village" when their new homes were ready. When the second wave (35 families) received compensation packages from the ICA, the first wave (65 families) contracted the same lawyer to negotiate compensation for them as well.

The third wave of Jahalin families to be incorporated into al Jabal consisted of 50 more families from the Salamaat clan. As outlined, twelve of these families already lived in the Raghabneh area prior to 1967, while a further 38 families had moved close to the outskirts of Raghabneh to avoid demolition by the ICA during

the establishment of Ma'ale Adummim the late 1970s and during the first two waves of the al Jabal evictions in 1997 and 1998<sup>28</sup>. When approached by the Israeli authorities and told they would be incorporated into the town plan for the 'Arab al Jahalin village, this third wave agreed to enter into negotiations with the Israeli authorities. Their reasons for doing so were based on the fact that their kinship group had already been overrun by the creation of the al Jabal village. Those families residing in (and very close to) Raghabneh Hill prior to the transfers had effectively lost their sense of community since other groups of Salamaat Bedouin had been transferred to the same site, entirely spatially transforming the original community which had previously been kinship-defined. Negotiations over conditions for their incorporation into the village lasted several years, and in 2007, the third wave of Salamaat Bedouin was officially incorporated into al Jabal. Due to their geographical positioning, being already located on the outskirts of the newly-forming 'Arab al Jahalin village, many families were not moved at all in this third wave; rather, they were allocated plots of land in their own locations<sup>29</sup>.

The 'Arab al Jahalin village is inhabited by over one hundred Bedouin Palestine refugee families who were transferred from their rural kinship groups in the Jerusalem periphery during 1997 and 1998. The locations from which the majority of the families were transferred are today home to the settler population of Ma'ale Adummim. Comparing their situation to the experiences of the broader Palestine refugee population who were forced to flee their predominantly rural communities and live in crowded refugee camps in the late 1940s, the Jahalin often refer to al Jabal as "Al Mukhayem" ("the camp"). Today, the approximately 39,000 residents of Ma'ale Adummim, the third largest settlement in the West Bank, enjoy sophisticated infrastructure and public services including 79 kindergartens, 20 schools and seven swimming pools<sup>30</sup>. During their decades of residency in the same location prior to their eviction, Bedouin lived in structures made of metal and wood with no permitted link to either water or electricity networks. Today, from the unpaved streets of the village referred to as a "refugee camp"—where the settlement of Ma'ale Adummim dominates the view—the grim irony of their situation does not escape the Bedouin Palestine refugee group. The mayor of the settlement refers to Ma'ale Adummim as "a shining pearl in the State of Israel; a city with a high quality of life, educational achievements, developing commerce and many residents who are involved in contributing to constantly-improving community life."<sup>31</sup> As affirmed by the International Court of Justice, all Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law.<sup>32</sup>





**Jahalin Location  
Prior to Displacement**

**Year 1994**





### Maale Adumim Expansion

Year 2012



Part 2 presents the field-based research undertaken for this study in two sections. First, the village of al Jabal as it is today is presented geographically, spatially and socially. The picture conveyed is that of an unkempt semi-urban environment on a hillside between the Palestinian town of Eizariya and the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adummim and beside the largest garbage dump in the West Bank. Against this backdrop, the residents of al Jabal are introduced through a series of six case studies reflecting a cross section of the population. In order to support understanding of al Jabal residents' lives prior to the transfers, the first case study depicts a family living in a rural Bedouin community today. The second case study presents a father of six who de-stocked on entry to al Jabal but due to ongoing unemployment is now planning to leave al Jabal and return to shepherding. The third introduces a 55-year-old woman who lost her central role as livestock production manager as a result of the transfer. Without day-to-day duties to carry out, she rarely leaves her house. The fourth case study depicts a young educated woman who is unemployed but reluctant to marry since having children would end her career aspirations. The fifth study introduces a 19-year-old youth with limited education who supports his family by engaging in ad hoc wage labour. The last case study presents the life of a teacher who already lived on the hillside where al Jabal was created, prior to the transfers. A short analysis of each case study locates the individual lives within the broader context, outlining the challenges faced by a traditionally mobile pastoralist population living under Israeli occupation as they transition, against their will, from rural to urban.

Al Jabal today



## 2.1 What is al Jabal today?

Like many residential areas of the hilly West Bank, the Palestinian towns of Eizariya, Abu Dis and A-Sawahreh A-Sharqiya are built on high ground. Their boundaries to the south and east sides are defined by local topography where steep valley inclines create natural borders beyond which construction becomes unfeasible. From such Jerusalem periphery neighbourhoods, municipal territories for agricultural and pastoral use stretch away to the east. Like other Palestinian residential areas in the eastern Jerusalem periphery, these three urban centres are today cut off from East Jerusalem by the Barrier which was begun in this area in 2004, instantly severing the periphery neighbourhoods from their centre of social, cultural, religious and commercial life. It is at the crossroads of these three locations on semi-arid range land belonging to the people of Abu Dis that the 'Arab al Jahalin village—al Jabal—was created by the Israeli authorities. As Raghabeh Hill drops away steeply into the valley of Wadi abu Hindi, the Bedouin village clings onto the geographical fringes of the summit, a ramshackle circular-shaped semi-urban residential satellite to its Palestinian neighbours.

Houses in al Jabal today are all legally connected to water and electricity supplies but are at varying stages of construction: some families, for example, were officially incorporated into al Jabal as recently as 2007 in the third wave so are still building their homes. Streets in the village are half paved and half dirt track. Empty spaces in the village are often used as burning sites for household waste; electricity connections—while legal—are often ad hoc and seemingly precarious, with cable in many cases looping down to ground level over the streets. A walk through the village of al Jabal gives the stranger a mixed impression of a somewhat ragged semi-urban environment where the large size of individual houses, a committee building and a sizeable mosque indicate the comparative wealth of residents, but where the visible lack of care for the communal spaces in between these planned elements suggests an underlying dysfunctional state of affairs. At the top of the village, a new secondary school stands in stark contrast to the battered primary school which is housed in sub-standard structures—including metal containers—without glass in the windows, without an effective toilet system, and without basic equipment. To complete the visual incongruity, on the same hillside and bordering the southern boundary of al Jabal sits the Jerusalem Municipal Garbage

Dump. The dump is the largest in the West Bank, and waste from both Israeli settlements and Palestinian towns in the Jerusalem governorate are deposited at a rate of 700 tonnes per day. Of the many hazards stemming from the proximity of the al Jabal village to the dump site is the presence of high levels of toxic gases. These gasses not only pose an immediate health threat to residents, but also cause internal and surface combustion at the dump site leading to explosions, land subsidence, surface fires and other safety hazards. High numbers of pests thriving off the site and its surroundings include rats, packs of dogs, cockroaches and flies, all of which pose significant health threats to livestock, the young and those of less robust health<sup>33</sup>.

With natural growth increasing the population, the original ten kinship groups making up 150 Salamaat Jahalin families now stand at a population of approximately 220 families, or 1,500 people. Following the recognition of al Jabal as a Palestinian village, an official village council committee (the *Jahalin Projects Committee*) was established in order to administer the site and manage relations with both the Palestinian authorities and the ICA. Each kinship group is represented in the committee of ten members, voted in by residents on a four-yearly rotational basis. While two traditional leaders (*makhatir*) of the Salamaat Jahalin also reside in al Jabal and continue to provide guidance on issues pertaining to Bedouin custom and social management, their roles have been significantly reduced as a result of the creation of al Jabal. Today, the *makhatir* are consulted on decisions affecting the village, but they are not part of the council which directs matters of administration and manages project work. This is because the position of *mukhtar* is of considerably higher standing than that of committee member so neither *mukhtar* chose to run for election. While they therefore maintain their positions as leaders, an inevitable shift in the social fabric of the Salamaat Jahalin has taken place since the creation of the council committee. Where previously loyalty to a *mukhtar* had secured social protection, today al Jabal residents are administered by a council. This shift away from the traditional decision-making body has reduced the dependency of al Jabal residents on the inherited leadership system formerly in place. *Makhatir* are no longer solely responsible for ensuring comprehensive social cohesion and residents now depend on the ability of the council to ensure equitable service provision.

## 2.2 Case studies and situational analysis

The body of this report unpacks the transfer of the Salamaat Jahalin to al Jabal by offering a short analysis of the experiences of al Jabal residents, presented here in six individual case studies. The report uses data collected over a period of five months by a team

of field researchers sharing the day-to-day realities of residents of al Jabal, and of one rural community—Abu Nwar—which is facing the current threat of transfer into al Jabal. (NB: All names in the case studies have been changed in respect of privacy.)

### Case study 1:

#### Eid and Miriam - a rural pastoralist family today facing transfer into al Jabal

*“Women are prisoners in al Jabal,” she says. “Here in Abu Nwar, my children can run freely—safe from cars and city life. They study in the town and then they come home and live the life we choose.” (Miriam)*

Eid and Miriam have eight children. Their eldest is a 20-year-old daughter, Khadija, the second is Musa, an 18 year-old-son. The family lives in their extended kinship group of 30 families in a rural cluster in the shadow of the Ma’ale Adummim settlement, one kilometer from the al Jabal village. The group is the largest social cluster of four separate kinship groups in the area of Abu Nwar. As with the vast majority of rural Bedouin families in the Ma’ale Adummim bubble, the family runs a dual economy; Eid works part time in the industrial zone of Mishor Adummim while Miriam and her children manage 75 head of livestock, including 40 milking ewes, providing a viable secondary income to the family economy. Musa is

the family shepherd, Miriam the production manager, and Khadija runs household affairs including cooking and washing while sharing child-care and milking duties with her mother. All children of school age in the family walk 1.5km to school in al Jabal every morning and return together in the afternoon to their cluster of metal shacks in Abu Nwar. The household is spread out over a rocky hillside with two animal pens on the higher slope; the kitchen and public space as a central unit and separate storage and sleeping shacks to the sides. Ad hoc connections to both water and electricity sources allow the family to run indoor lighting, a washing machine and a small fridge for dairy products and veterinary medicines. Relatives

Abu Nwar





in neighbouring households use similar spatial constructs with open areas between residential units.

The family's day is tightly scheduled, with duties clearly defined by seasonal production cycles. From March until June, early in the morning Miriam and Khadija milk the livestock before Musa takes the herd into the hills to the east of the community and Eid travels to work in the industrial zone. Khadija then prepares breakfast for the family and helps the children get ready for school while Miriam begins the cheese-making process. During the morning, Khadija prepares food in a social group of seven or eight women from her community, while Miriam takes the cheese from the previous day's production into Eizariya to sell to her network of private clients, built up over twenty years. On her way home, Miriam buys food and any necessary household goods from shops in Eizariya. Before the introduction of the permit system, Miriam used to travel alone to Jerusalem twice a week to sell the family's cheese products to private clients and at the dairy market. Following the closures, her inability to access Jerusalem has cut off her access to over half of her client base, and the family has gradually de-stocked year-by-year since 2000 due to the significantly reduced income. In the afternoons, the women of the kinship group support each other with the second round of milking duties, sharing communal time as the younger children play in and around the milking pens. When the family re-gathers in the early evening, Eid and Miriam sit with their children and eat dinner as a family. Later, the older children finish their homework while others play or watch television; bedtime is normally early.

From June until October, Eid and Miriam move with their livestock to the villages in the northern Jerusalem periphery where they have a long-standing link with local agriculturalists, herding their livestock on stubble fields in exchange for providing support in the hay harvest. Khadija and Musa run the household

in Abu Nwar during the harvest season, supported by other families in the extended kinship group. During the early winter months, the family reunites in Abu Nwar, feeding their livestock on hay gathered in the north and barley-mix bought in Eizariya until rain-fed range land begins to supplement the intensive feeding mechanisms from mid-winter onwards.

When the Israeli authorities informed the al Jabal community in late 2011 that the Abu Nwar clusters would be the first to be transferred out of their rural kinship groups into extended areas of the al Jabal village, Eid and Miriam and their family—like countless others facing the enforced end of their traditional economy—opposed the plan, citing both social and economic reasons for their position. Economically, they said, the move to al Jabal would oblige the family to sell its' livestock since there is no space in the centralized location to keep a herd. This would leave Eid and Miriam and their eight children dependent on Eid's part-time income. They would use any financial compensation to build a permanent house for which upkeep costs would be significantly higher than for their current home in Abu Nwar. Socially, the move would splinter the kinship group, merging the 30 families of Eid and Miriam's community - and other rural groups—into the wider clan group of al Jabal.

The families of Abu Nwar and other Bedouin in the Ma'ale Adummim area are happy that they live close enough to al Jabal to allow them to access a service centre since the establishment of any services requiring infrastructure is not permitted in their own communities, but they insist that they must live far enough away from al Jabal to enable their community to maintain its identity, formed by kinship ties and the traditional economy. They ask to stay in their current locations and be permitted to legalize basic infrastructure and improve shelter conditions. They ask for their traditional mobility to be respected and their access to natural resources secured.



**Case Study 1:** Eid, Miriam and their family live in a rural location close to al Jabal. The family and its traditional kinship group is currently facing the threat of imminent transfer following the confirmation by the Israeli authorities that their area will be one of the first to be targeted for transfer. The Abu Nwar area is known as “G block” by the Israeli authorities and has been planned since 2005 as a future neighbourhood of the Ma’ale Adummim settlement as part of the E1 development plan.<sup>34</sup> The way of life in the Abu Nwar community today reflects the way of life of the majority of current al Jabal residents prior to their transfer. The deep-rooted reservations and fear about transfer reported by this family anecdotally echo the overwhelming voice of the Bedouin population throughout the Ma’ale Adummim “bubble”, all of whom are facing the threat of similar transfers to centralized semi-urban areas within close range of built up Palestinian towns and cities in the near future.<sup>35</sup>

In the fifteen years since the first transfers to Raghabneh Hill in 1997, rural Bedouin communities have witnessed the evolution of the “Bedouin village” concept as al Jabal grows and as the Israeli authorities introduce plans for the second “Bedouin village”. Like Eid and Miriam, targeted families are pragmatic, weighing up their own needs and wants for their projected futures while analysing the potential pros and cons of life in al Jabal for its current residents. Many such rural families use al Jabal as a service centre today or have family members living there so have regular first-hand experience of the village. One certainty is that the Israeli authorities’ messaging surrounding the creation of al Jabal—that Bedouin need to modernize and live in legal housing located close to services and formal employment—is dismissed outright by the vast majority. Bedouin residents of al Jabal maintain that they were forcibly centralized in order to depopulate the land they lived on for settlement expansion and that any reference by the Israeli authorities of supporting human development was purely a smoke-screen against the political driving force behind the transfer. They also claim that the forced centralization of ten different social groups into one semi-urban location has destroyed their traditional pastoral economy and altered their tribal customs to a degree where they are no longer recognizable. Further case studies will focus on these aspects of the al Jabal transfer.

*Modernization* therefore remains a central theme to the debate for rural communities like Abu Nwar,

which are at threat of transfer today. Residents of non-planned rural Palestinian communities in Area C currently find themselves in a situation where the policies and practices of the Israeli authorities prevent them from developing since any type of basic infrastructure needs a construction permit. These restrictions effectively hold such communities, including the Bedouin Palestine refugee community, in a vacuum from which the only way out being offered by the Israeli authorities is to vacate their homes and potentially to accept a relocation package including land and money to live in new locations (chosen by the Israeli authorities) if they wish to “modernize.” Yet the historical experience of al Jabal residents and the tribal memories of the initial flight of the Jahalin from their territories in the Negev inform the rural Bedouin communities that if they were to accept such an offer, they would be at high risk of foregoing their traditional economies and the tribal customs which together make up the core fabric of their life-view.

Bedouin Palestine refugee families now facing this decision certainly acknowledge that today many of the Bedouin herders in the Ma’ale Adummim area rely less on livestock and more on external sources of income for their economic stability due to a combination of shifting political, economic and environmental conditions. They also acknowledge that with the pull of employment in urban centres and the lack of sustainable access to natural resources to profitably rear livestock, young men from rural communities are increasingly seeking wage labour in cities. Equally accepted is the fact that increasing amounts of families are ensuring their children receive a formal education in the knowledge that they will need to compete in the wider Palestinian employment market as their traditional economy continues to decline. Many Bedouin are keen to communicate the message that they are not against modernization and that they are indeed already involved in an ongoing process of adapting their lives to the changing conditions in the world around them, as far as the policies and practices of the Occupying Power allows<sup>36</sup>. Aware of the lessons learned by the Salamaat Jahalin Bedouin Palestine refugees during the transition process into al Jabal, communities currently facing transfer threats are calling for their return to their tribal territories in the Negev and, pending that return, they are calling for sustainable rural development and full access to natural resources in their longstanding locations and seeking the support of the international community to stop the transfers.

### Case Study 2:

#### Abu Na'if – Father of six who completely de-stocked on entry to al Jabal

*“If the Israelis catch me going back to the desert life, they will say I am not respecting the deal. I will tell them I tried the life they planned for me and it didn't work.” (Abu Na'if)*



Abu Na'if is in his mid 40s and used to live on the hillside today known as the “07” neighbourhood of Ma'ale Adummim. Today, Abu Na'if has a wife and six children and lives in a modest stone house on the northern side of al Jabal. In the yard outside Abu Na'if's house, one metal shack houses a handful of goats and another metal shack houses Abu Na'if's elderly mother who prefers to maintain elements of her traditional life-style by living in a make-shift shelter in the open air. Prior to their transfer to al Jabal in 1999, Abu Na'if had around 65 head of livestock; today he has six. When Abu Na'if and his family moved to al Jabal, he had two young sons who now remember little about the rural life they were born to. Four further children were born over the next decade as immediate residents of al Jabal.

On entry to al Jabal, Abu Na'if rapidly found a part-time job as a street cleaner in the Ma'ale Adummim settlement. Two years later, his permit was not renewed, and since 2001, Abu Na'if has been dependent on daily paid labour in Palestinian towns and villages in the area and has spent many months of each year entirely without work. For three months of the year, his family benefits from placement on UNRWA Job Creation Projects but they remain below the poverty line. On seeking an explanation for the non-renewal of his work permit, Abu Na'if was told that he had a new security file with the Israeli

authorities, although he claims never to have been arrested or accused of any criminal or political offence outlawed by the Occupying Power.

Facing a bleak economic future, Abu Na'if has now started to re-stock his herd, aiming to revive his traditional income. The process is slow, and he is concerned about the lack of adequate rangeland in the areas surrounding al Jabal which already sustain ten resident families in al Jabal and their herds, as well as the livestock from rural communities in the area. As his herd grows, Abu Na'if is rehabilitating a number of animal shelters in a wadi to the east of al Jabal where he plans to keep his stock. The move back to the rural area means that Abu Na'if, his mother and his two oldest sons will leave their family home and be absent for up to seven months of the year. His wife and four children under the age of 15 will stay alone in al Jabal. Reluctant to split his family, Abu Na'if sees no other option but to return to the livelihood he knows in order to support them. His wife is daunted by the prospect of running the family alone, but supports her husband's decision based on both the family's need for an income and her growing fear for Abu Na'if's well-being since she feels he is becoming increasingly downtrodden. When he has no work, Abu Na'if spends his days sitting on a metal chair outside the family house, joined by other unemployed men from al Jabal. Together they sit to pass the time.



**Case Study 2:** Decisions on family economy and individual family management are not, and have never been, centralized in Bedouin culture. The Bedouin in al Jabal therefore have varied financial situations and cannot be categorized as one unit. Compensation from both the ICA and the Palestinian Authorities offered the wealthier incoming Bedouin the opportunity to build permanent houses without the threat of demolition. Some chose to supplement the compensation by selling their livestock and using the profit to build larger houses, while poorer families used the compensation to pay off outstanding debts and only constructed small tin shacks in al Jabal in which they continue to live today. Wherever positioned on the financial scale prior to the transfer, the majority of the incoming Salamaat families sold off most or all of their livestock, believing their traditional livelihood impossible to sustain in the more highly populated environment of al Jabal. Men sought wage labour in nearby Israeli settlements and Palestinian urban centres, often finding positions on a part-time basis only, if at all. The de-stocking had a severe impact on both the economic and the social environments of the Bedouin, reducing most dual-economy families to a single and often ad hoc income.

The Israeli Civil Administration verbally refers to the creation of al Jabal as a highly successful project, having brought Bedouin communities closer to employment opportunities and local services. In reality, the capacity of local Palestinian service centres, al Eizariya and Abu Dis, to increase their service and employment provision to accommodate the influx of over a thousand Bedouin refugees little matches the Israeli vision today. Three years after the establishment of al Jabal, the second intifada saw the intensification

of the permit regime restricting Palestinian movement, and in 2004 the Barrier was built—entirely cutting off the urban satellites from their capital city and trade centre, Jerusalem. Soon after the Barrier was completed in this area, the once-active trading hubs of the eastern Jerusalem-periphery neighbourhoods experienced rapid economic decline, and local residents once dependent on Jerusalem-based commerce were struck hard by unemployment. As a result, the Bedouin newcomers increased the case load of local health and education facilities without being able to find alternative incomes with which to contribute to the local economy, having mostly given up their livestock in order to adapt to the semi-urban environment which offered limited access to natural resources. The incoming Bedouin Palestine refugees found themselves increasingly socially isolated as a result of their transfer to al Jabal, with fewer economic opportunities.

The lack of sustainable employment in Palestinian urban centres led Bedouin Palestine refugees to seek employment in nearby Israeli settlements, specifically in Ma'ale Adummim and in nearby industrial zone Mishor Adummim. While some Bedouin had worked in settlements in the area prior to the transfer, the phenomenon increased following the second intifada and the building of the Barrier, after which Palestinian opportunities for economic development decreased. The over 90 residents of al Jabal currently employed in settlements work almost exclusively as guards or labourers, but dependency on settlement employment poses a range of risks to Palestinians. Foremost, Palestinian access to work in settlements is governed by a permit system open to review on a regular basis. Job security can therefore be

swayed by political developments and many al Jabal residents report that permits are frequently revoked in the name of “security.” Further, examples of threats to economic sustainability while dependent on employment in settlements include the planned completion of the Barrier in the area whereby al Jabal residents now working daily in these settlements will be separated from their work places by a concrete wall; movement control policies including security profiling will then apply to all Palestinian workers needing to cross the Barrier on a daily basis to access employment—including the Bedouin of al Jabal.

Today, up to 15 years after the first wave of families was transferred into al Jabal, some families which initially de-stocked to adapt to the new urban environment are now returning to livestock-dependency since they have been unable to meet the costs of household maintenance and urban living due to high levels of unemployment. For some, like Eid, this demands that they move out of al Jabal in order to rebuild their stock. Once re-built, the ex-shepherds can re-join their traditional sector in the wider Palestinian economy where pastoralists enjoy strong links with rural and urban market societies in order to sell off excess milk, meat and other traditional products. Both men and women make a substantial contribution to the pastoral economy in Bedouin society. For those communities still living in rural kinship groups, and for al Jabal residents prior to the transfer, elements of pastoral production managed by the men include livestock health and herd management, shepherding, sheering, and the marketing of livestock and meats. The women milk the herd, make the dairy products, and predominantly manage the control and distribution of those products, often maintaining a client base over several decades. Bedouin women also provide support services and ensure that the domestic unit adapts appropriately to the seasonal demands of the pastoral calendar in a lifestyle directly informed by the family livelihood. But for the al Jabal residents who kept part of their herd as they transferred from their rural locations or who are now re-stocking in order to rebuild a pastoral economy, livestock management is no longer pursued in the traditional way. A number of strategies normally observed throughout the non-Bedouin Palestinian herding population, but not traditionally adopted by the Bedouin herders, have been employed by the Salamaat Bedouin in order to adapt the pastoral livelihood to their new residential conditions as much as possible. Livelihood management strategies employed in al Jabal today include:

- i) Families live permanently in al Jabal with their livestock. Between October and May, these families graze their stock in four areas within

walking distance of al Jabal, returning in the afternoons. For the rest of the year the livestock is permanently penned and intensively fed.

- ii) Families originally built houses in al Jabal but returned to live permanently in rural areas close to their original locations in the Ma’ale Adummim municipal area in order to maintain their livelihoods and their traditional social structure. These families travel daily to al Jabal to access health and education services.
- iii) Families whose men move with the livestock to parts of Area C in the north of the West Bank on a seasonal basis in order to access natural resources. Their wives and children remain in al Jabal throughout the school year and may visit the northern locations during school holidays.
- iv) Families which live permanently in al Jabal but keep their livestock with relatives in the nearby rural Bedouin communities in the Ma’ale Adummim Bubble, which are now targeted for transfer.

Two of the four adaptive coping mechanisms oblige the majority of the al Jabal families which are still working with livestock, or have recently returned to livestock, to be only partial residents in al Jabal because they cannot collectively sustain their livelihoods as permanent residents in a semi-urban environment. This return to the rural areas from which they were initially transferred is contrary to the intentions of the Israeli authorities which aimed to centralize the Bedouin communities in one location. Those Bedouin who leave al Jabal and return to the rural life are therefore specifically vulnerable to eviction and demolition by the Israeli authorities. The newly-forming stock management strategies require livestock and their keepers to be housed outside al Jabal in order to access adequate water and range-land; this lifestyle subsequently sustains community vulnerability and carries high logistical costs with regard to transport of stock, shepherds and produce for trade. The practice also demands the fragmentation of the family unit. Of particular note is that only 10 pastoralist families are permanent residents of al Jabal today. The majority of men living there permanently no longer have livestock and either work in nearby Israeli settlements or are unemployed. The broader socio-economic profile of the permanent al Jabal residents therefore reflects the instability of a traditional people attempting—without comprehensive support or guidance—to transition into an alien environment. The community does not yet have a sustainable economic foundation and for the majority of the permanent residents, the forced forgoing of the pastoral economy is having harsh social repercussions as well.



### Jabal Pasture Land

- Area B
- Area B Nature Reserve
- Jabal Pasture Land
- Separation Barrier
- Under Construction
- Projected
- Dismantled

1:21,000  
0 100 200 300 400  
Meters



### Case study 3: Um Majid—a 55-year-old woman who lost her role as livestock production manager on entry to al Jabal

*“Moving to brick houses sets up walls between people.” (Um Majid)*



Um Majid was in her late 30 when her family was transferred to al Jabal with 64 other families in the first wave of displacements throughout 1997. Her home, along with all other structures in her rural community, was demolished by the Israeli authorities on a winter morning and her family's belongings were trucked up to Raghabneh Hill and placed in metal shipping containers randomly scattered across the hillside. With six children under the age of 12, Um Majid and her husband rigged up plastic sheeting against their new shipping container and created a make-shift shelter which would be their home for the next two-and-a-half years. Unable to maintain their livestock without adequate animal shelter or access to rangeland from the new semi-urban location, the family sold off half of their stock soon after being transferred and moved the remaining half to a nearby Bedouin community where relatives agreed to sustain them in return for all profits until the family could reclaim their stock. Her husband did not find alternative employment and at the age of 12 Majid (their oldest son) found informal work in a local car wash and soon dropped out of school.

When the community's lawyer secured compensation for the group, Um Majid and her family added the capital from the sale of half of their livestock and built a three bedroom house out of stone on the site of their original shipping container. The rusted container stands today in the yard of their home and is used for storage. Other kinship groups being transferred to al

Jabal had also begun to build on their newly allocated plots, surrounding Um Majid's house with families unknown to her. With six young children to raise, Um Majid found the on-tap water supply and electricity in her new home a relief following their years in the shipping container. With her rural duties of collecting wood, fetching water from the well and hand-washing clothing taken over by domestic appliances and no livestock to manage, she had no reason to leave her new home on a day to day basis. The presence of unknown neighbours made going out of the house to visit extended family members elsewhere in al Jabal a challenge to the traditional spatial use employed by Bedouin women.

“Moving to brick houses sets up walls between people”, says the now over-fifty Um Majid, patting the stone walls of her house as she remembers her rural life. There in the small kinship community, her home was always open to visiting relatives arriving to share duties and daily tasks. Today, her older daughters run the domestic side of the al Jabal household and Um Majid sits in front of the television eating junk food from Eizariya supermarkets. She still doesn't have a relationship with her neighbours and only leaves the house for medical treatment for an ongoing cataract problem, or occasionally for weddings and funerals of extended family members. For a few minutes every day, Um Majid sits on the balcony of her stone house to breathe some fresh air.

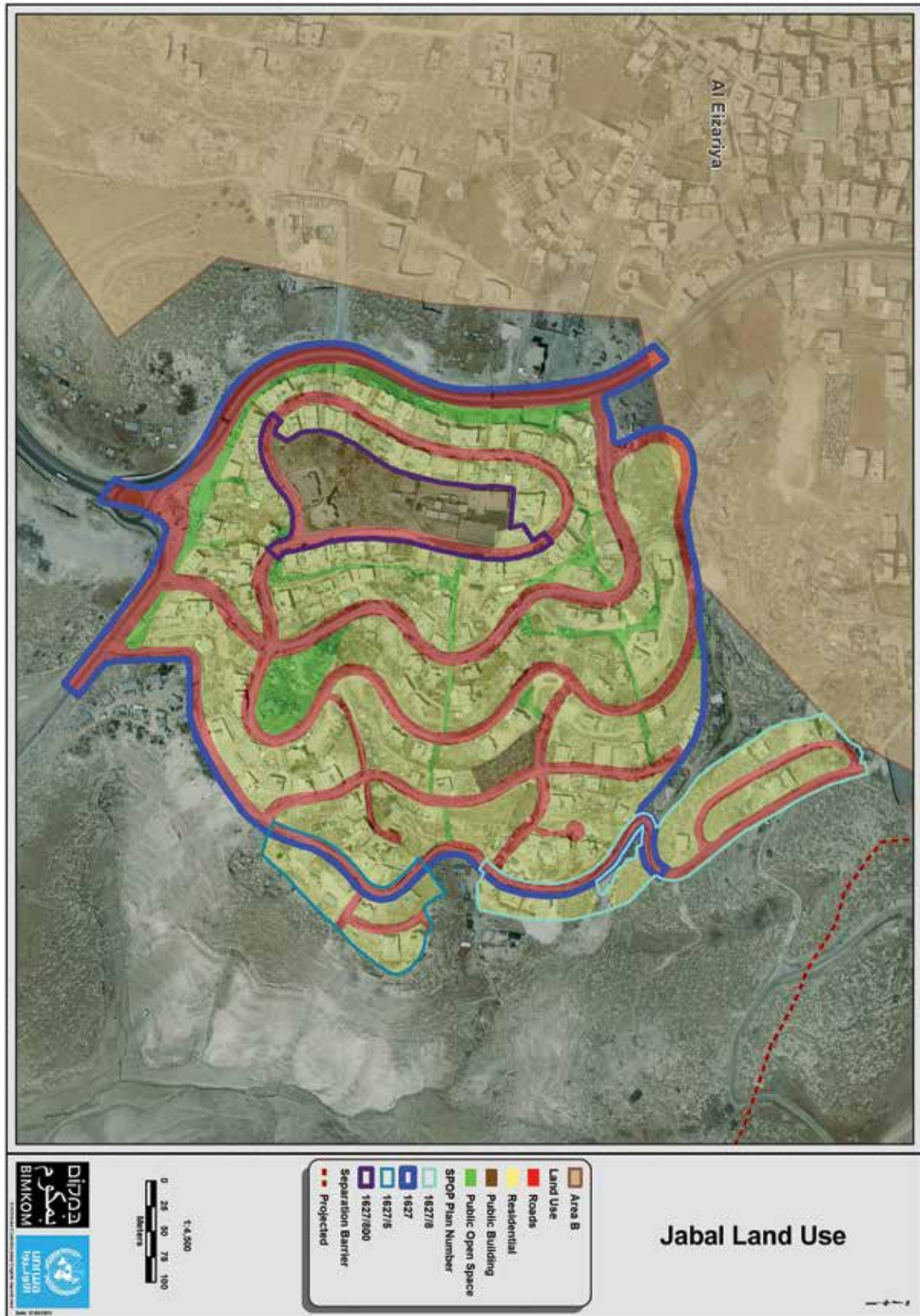


**Case Study 3:** For families like Um Majid's which completely de-stocked or housed-out their livestock for no profit on arrival to al Jabal, both men and women in the newly condensed Bedouin society faced high levels of unemployment. With the loss of the herd, women's expertise in pastoralist production system management was rendered immediately redundant and women's economic function in the family was transformed from mainly productive to mainly consumerist overnight. Due to these radically shifted boundaries, the transfer to al Jabal for women who once fulfilled a traditional role in scattered rural locations has required the greatest adaptation. Families obliged to de-stock during the transfer became entirely dependent on their men as bread winners in the urban society and the economic contribution of women entirely ceased. In the course of the transfer to al Jabal, the generation of women who were born and married in rural communities was stripped of the pivotal duties which had defined their role in the family. Many such women in al Jabal report a sense of having lost their vitality since the transfer, now leading inactive lifestyles and noting a rise in weight gain and related illnesses such as diabetes and heart disorders.

Despite the change in a woman's contribution to the family economy, her position is still celebrated in the Bedouin society of al Jabal. Appreciated by all, it is clear that the introduction of domestic appliances such as ovens, refrigerators and washing machines has greatly eased the strenuous physical lifestyle led by Bedouin women in traditional rural communities. Women who no longer milk livestock, make and market dairy products, collect water and wood, hand-wash clothes and cook over a fire find themselves with much more free time since duty is no longer the central consumer of a woman's day.

While in non-traditional societies this time can be invested in alternative income generation or leisure activities, neither of these concepts are currently viable for the older Bedouin women whose social make-up remains crafted by traditional concepts, less than one generation after their transfer. The sudden pace and imposed nature of change as the Bedouin Palestine refugees were forced into a process of social transition has simply not allowed the customary norms of traditional communities to adapt to new social, spatial and commercial realities.

As a Bedouin woman coming from a traditional community, Um Majid's freedom of movement is linked directly to her duties as household and livestock production manager, since this is what her days would normally have been filled with. Her family's previous position in a rural kinship group promoted communal duty-sharing amongst community members who lived side-by-side in an interactive social environment where child-rearing, household duties and economic activities were carried out together within the geographical boundaries of the community. Without these traditional duties, movement outside the home is not required on a regular basis since the concept of movement without duty has not yet become normalized in tribal custom. On arrival to al Jabal where nuclear families live in individual housing units often separated from their kin, day-to-day duties are no longer communally shared and the sense of community dissolves. The physical boundaries of the incoming women are immediately reduced since their concept of mobility has been traditionally defined by the social security of the kinship group. For younger women, the implications of moving from a kinship group into a densely populated location can be yet more pronounced.





#### Case study 4: Nawal-a young educated woman, unemployed and reluctant to marry

*“Here in al Jabal, our Bedouin customs make it difficult for us girls to move around the village. We have so many neighbours now, and they are not from our families. It didn’t use to be like that. In our old communities, the girls could visit one another and help each other with housework. We used to visit the old women and keep them company. Today, you don’t see girls doing that. Now you see lots of women who need to walk in the streets wearing the ‘burka’. This was not common at all before we came to al Jabal.” (Nawal)*

Despite many girls completing their education, female unemployment is high in al Jabal



Nawal is 19-years-old and lives with her parents and four younger brothers and sisters in a house on the south-west side of al Jabal, overlooking the municipal rubbish dump. She and her family came to al Jabal as part of the second wave, finally moving in to the new family home in the year 2000 when Nawal was 7-years-old. In preparation for entry to al Jabal, the family sold off its livestock and came to al Jabal with no form of traditional income. Nawal’s father already had a part-time job as a gardener in Ma’ale Adummim settlement, which later became a full-time job, with Israeli labour rights being awarded in 2011 following legal intervention by a private lawyer. As a newcomer to al Jabal, Nawal was registered into a primary school in Eizariya which she walked to every morning, at first chaperoned by her mother. Nawal made friends with local Eizariya children at her school and spent her free time in and around the homes of non-Bedouin urban families, as well as in al Jabal. Later, when a Bedouin-only school was built in al Jabal, Nawal was moved back there to complete her education. With no reason to go into Eizariya on a daily basis, Nawal’s world

immediately shrunk and she lost contact with most of her non-Bedouin friends. Nawal focused hard on her studies as she progressed through her school years, planning a future in the private sector. In her final exams, Nawal achieved 84 per cent and was highly praised by the school for her consistently high-level academic record. But by the time she had finished her schooling, the Barrier had been built between Abu Dis and Jerusalem, effectively sealing off Nawal’s access to the employment market, and all other aspects of her capital city. Jobs in Eizariya and Abu Dis dried up and Nawal found herself staying at home day in and day out. Today at age 19, Nawal is eligible to marry but reluctant to do so, as she would be obliged to leave her family home and spend her days alone in an empty house, her husband out working, or seeking work, on a daily basis. Motherhood would also cut off Nawal’s prospects of employment, which still dominate her hopes. And so she stays at home, running household duties and supporting her mother in the care of her siblings. She rarely leaves the house, having no official reason to do so.

**Case Study 4:** Nawal's story reflects the situation for the majority of young women in al Jabal before they marry. It is now common for the Salamaat girls to take the academic lead over the boys at the al Jabal school, but on finishing secondary school both boys and girls face high levels of unemployment. Since livestock management from al Jabal is no longer viable for more than ten or so families, most school leavers no longer have traditional roles to assume in the family business. While young men have more opportunities to find ad hoc or unofficial employment (see Case study 5), women's options are more restricted and the village council estimates that less than ten of the over 200 hundred women of eligible working age in al Jabal are engaged in full-time employment, mostly as teachers.

While a number of traditional hand-craft projects have been introduced by humanitarian and development actors as alternative employment opportunities for women without livestock in al Jabal, marketing challenges have never been overcome, and the concept is not yet a sustainable solution. Young educated women are therefore almost exclusively left without access to employment and, in addition, there is a lack of activities which would allow them to come together as a group. Women in al Jabal speak fondly of the Job Creation Programme led by UNRWA as much for the social aspect of joining women's

income-generation projects as for the much needed financial reward. The social isolation experienced by young women in al Jabal stands in stark contrast to the vibrant social context of their former rural existence. This social isolation is further exacerbated by the spatial design of al Jabal village which is not conducive to protecting the privacy of women. In Bedouin culture, the more densely populated a location, the more a woman's privacy needs to be protected and respected. In traditional communities, this is directly reflected by the spatial lay-out of structures within a kinship group. For example, in rural Bedouin communities, residential units are not located in areas used as public thoroughfares and people needing to pass a home will normally pass behind the structure rather than in front of it, in order to uphold the customary respect for privacy. To the contrary, the town planning of al Jabal is structured in a circular shape where all streets loop into other streets; effectively creating public thoroughfares in front of every home. The lack of ability to respect women's privacy when using al Jabal's public spaces confines the boundaries of a woman's "safe" spaces to the four walls of her house, rather than to the geographical boundaries of her community as it used to be. In reference to the experiences of the broader Palestine refugee population as they entered UNRWA refugee camps in the late 1940s, the Bedouin Palestine refugee residents of al Jabal often refer to the village as "al Mukhayem" ("the Camp").



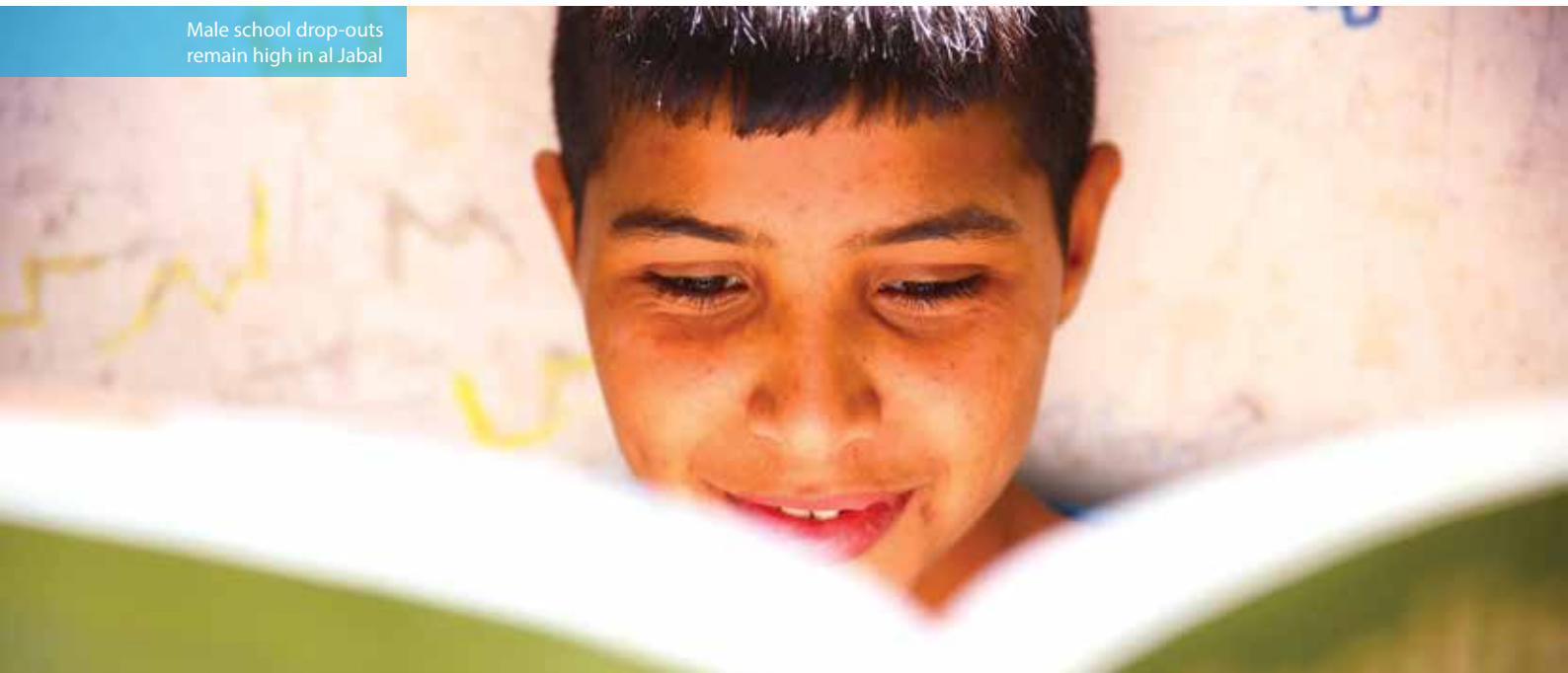
As is often the case with a regular refugee camp dynamic, the density and social make-up of the al Jabal population affects both men and women in the village. The merging of ten separate communities not only challenges the customary use of space for women; it also increases the possibility for social tensions between kinship groups which would traditionally live at considerable distance from one another in order to maintain social and economic harmony. Levels of social tension in al Jabal are tangibly high, according to residents and organizations working in the village. Unemployment, challenges to Bedouin Palestine refugee customs and the frustrations of poverty are provided as key triggers

to the increasing social unrest. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms between Bedouin kinship groups employ the use of space as a key intervention. Physically removing one's family and one's tent from a potentially un-harmonious situation is a recognized and much-applied way to dilute immediate tensions and invite a negotiated resolution. In al Jabal, it is clearly no longer possible to pick up your home and move away from a tiresome neighbour. The results of this heightened tension in the village can be seen to manifest in some of the behavioural aspects of the younger generation, specifically in the male youth for whom many of their parents predict a bleak forecast, both socially and economically.

### Case Study 5: Ahmed—a young uneducated man who supports his family through ad hoc labour in urban settings.

*“School gets you a certificate, but unemployment is high even for graduates. A certificate doesn't feed your family these days.” (Ahmed)*

Male school drop-outs remain high in al Jabal



Ahmed is 19 years old and lives with his family near the centre of al Jabal. Born in his family barracks near to the rural Bedouin community of Abu Suwan, Ahmed dropped out of school at age ten to share full-time shepherding duties with his father who suffered from poor health. When the family was obliged to give up its livestock in 2007 to move to al Jabal, his mother lost her contributory role to the family economy and Ahmed became the main breadwinner in the family since his father's health had further

deteriorated and his brothers and sisters were too young to work. Ahmed was 14 years old and had not completed his education, leaving ad hoc labour as the only option for employment. Over the past five years, as the key family breadwinner Ahmed has developed an income system made up of informal labour opportunities, exposing him to a wide range of experiences.



Today, as a tall, thin young man with heavily gelled hair, a pensive gaze and a brand-marked leather jacket, Ahmed says his shepherding days seem a world away. While shepherd boys meeting up with their livestock in the hillsides would once compete for honour through a display of prowess in desert skills, now the al Jabal boys compete against one another using hairstyles, money, fashion and urban know-how. He speaks of initial friction with the local youth in Eizariya and Abu Dis who were reluctant to share their informal economic systems with the incoming Bedouin youth seeking to join in the same systems. In addition to livestock management, Ahmed's skill-set now includes metal collection, bread delivery, butcher shop cleaning, roadside touting and hard labour for a landscaping company. His income, while insecure, provides food and medicine for his family.

**Case Study 5:** The city environment offers the opportunity of informal employment to children and youth who would not have traditionally contributed cash to the family economy in their rural communities prior to the transfer to al Jabal. Attracted to the possibility of earning money at an earlier age, male youth from al Jabal with access to the urban setting often become prematurely part of the economy. While a percentage of earnings from ad hoc employment are handed to the head of the household for contribution to the family economy, child bread-winners have their own social hierarchies to fulfil in al Jabal and the surrounding urban areas of Eizariya and Abu Dis; cash plays a significant role therein. Eager to taste the social power assumed by having an economic function, numerous youth in the Salamaat families in al Jabal drop out of school to look for work in unskilled labour positions for an unofficial wage in nearby Palestinian towns and Israeli settlements. Parents in al Jabal report being deeply concerned for their children as they fail to complete their education and increasingly integrate with the urban youth population in an environment of poverty

potentially—they say—prone to drugs and crime. Fathers facing unemployment are less and less able to convince their sons that their economic lives will be any different if they complete their education. Male youth frequently justify dropping out of school early on the basis that even if they were highly qualified, they would still not be able to find better jobs than the ones available to them from their mid-teens onwards.

With incomplete education, male youth school drop-outs are obliged to seek employment at the lower end of the job scale and must often find ad hoc solutions. One such solution for al Jabal youth is the Jerusalem Municipal Garbage Dump located on the southern boundary of the al Jabal community. The dump receives over 700 tonnes of Israeli and Palestinian waste per day, causing deep concern for the health of local residents and in particular for the health of the marginalized treasure hunters who use the waste as a source of income. An estimated 150 youth from the larger al-Eizariya/Abu Dis community are today informally employed in the highly competitive industry of collecting scrap metal and other recyclable materials from the dump; over 30 of them are Bedouin children and youths from the 'Arab al Jahalin village. It is reported that they secure their access to the dump by paying bribes to the Israeli security guards that manage the site. Scrap metal scavenged from the dump is sold by weight to metal collectors in nearby Eizariya.

One grim irony regarding the proximity of al Jabal to the Municipal dump is that use of the site to dump garbage is tightly restricted to registered vehicles only. In the al Jabal community, there is no comprehensive waste collection and therefore no such registered vehicle. This leads Bedouin families to burn their household waste outside their own houses in the village since they do not have a vehicle to transport their waste a distance of less than 500 metres to the dump.

**Case Study 6:  
Abu Nimer—a teacher who lived on the hillside which became “al Jabal” prior to the transfers.**

*“Bedouin is our blood, not our job description.”(Abu Nimer)*



Abu Nimer’s family has lived on Raghabneh Hill – where al Jabal is located – since the 1970s. His family is one of the original twelve families who were not transferred to al Jabal but rather watched as al Jabal was created around them in the late 1990s.

Since the early 1950s, Abu Nimer’s family lived in the Hebron hills where they had set up home following their flight from their tribal territories in the Negev desert. Abu Nimer’s father was a well-known sheikh, and in the early 1970s, he responded to a request from some of the families in his care to join them in the Jerusalem periphery since they were in need of his leadership. The sheikh therefore moved his family and his livestock northwards and set up a new home on Raghabneh Hill. As grazing land began to shrink in the Jerusalem periphery due to the construction of settlements and military zones, the family began to gradually sell off its livestock and the sheikh encouraged his sons to pursue higher education and to find a career path. When Abu Nimer graduated from university in the late 1980s, he found a job as an Arabic teacher and the family sold its remaining livestock. Abu Nimer married and set up home in a traditional Bedouin tent near his father’s home in the community.

As Bedouin families started to be imported to the Raghabneh hillside beginning in 1997, Abu Nimer and his extended family of 12 households scattered across the area knew that significant change to their rural habitat was imminent. Using money saved from his teaching job, Abu Nimer and his family built a simple two-bedroom mud-brick home on the site where their tent had been, aiming to protect their privacy as the population of the hillside increased by 500 per cent overnight. As legal steps were taken to secure compensation for the incoming families, the resident group of twelve families looked on. Their small rural community had been entirely transformed into a semi-urban village and their new neighbours—no longer from their own extended family—were being compensated with land and money. As a result of the creation of al Jabal, Abu Nimer and his family had been inflicted with the same loss of privacy and traditional spatial use as the Bedouin being transferred, but without recognition by the authorities. Legal proceedings initiated by the group to secure compensation spanned several years and was finally realized in 2007. Abu Nimer used the money to turn his mud-brick home into a stone house, and the infrastructure to add a second floor for his oldest son once he marries is already installed.

Today, Abu Nimer teaches Arabic in a nearby college and the family relies primarily on his salary, with irregular earnings contributed by his oldest sons. Like many Palestinians working in Jerusalem, when the second intifada erupted, Abu Nimer lost his work permit and was consequently left unemployed. The years it took him to find a new job that did not require him to cross the checkpoints into Jerusalem were difficult times for the family.

Abu Nimer's five children (three boys and two girls) are now all in, or soon to reach, early adulthood. Their oldest sons both work part-time as guards in the Mishor Adummim industrial zone. The youngest son in the family is keen to follow his brothers prematurely into the employment market and frequently plays truant from school in order to find ad hoc labour. His parents are worried that he will not be able to achieve high-enough results to get into university and will work like his brothers, dependent on work in settlements. Their daughters, keen to follow in their fathers footsteps, both hold Bachelor degrees and one holds a Masters degree. Both, however, struggle to find consistent employment and work either on a volunteer basis or as substitute teachers in Eizariya schools and institutes whenever a position arises. Unemployment is frustrating for the girls who feel that there is wider opportunity in the West Bank's larger cities of Ramallah or Jericho but the commute from al Jabal can be expensive and timely; relocating to live away from their families as young unmarried women is out of the question for their parents.

**Case Study 6:** Abu Nimer and his family were one of the original 12 families living as one kinship group in the rural setting of Raghabneh Hill before the concept of the al Jabal village was initiated by the Israeli authorities. His story, while not reflective of a majority in al Jabal, represents the experiences of the small kinship group which effectively became the

host community to the Bedouin being transferred. Abu Nimer and his family are also exceptional in al Jabal as they are one of a handful of Bedouin families which had chosen to gradually de-stock over a period of thirty years following the Israeli occupation in 1967 and had replaced, at their own pace, their traditional incomes with education followed by public- and private-sector professions. While they experienced the forced shrinking of their spatial boundaries as a result of the creation of al Jabal, they did not suffer the socio-economic shock experienced by the vast majority of Bedouin families being transferred who were forced to end their traditional livelihoods as a result of the transfer.

Abu Nimer and the few other residents of al Jabal who kept their established professions throughout the transition of Raghabneh Hill into al Jabal believe that they owe their financial security to the alternative skills they developed as young men. Unusually for Bedouin at the time, their families had encouraged them to enter into higher education and move away from livestock management as a primary income. Their children, like them, have mostly followed the same route and are qualified to enter the job market at a higher level than the majority of the incoming herding families.

The creation of al Jabal has not therefore interrupted the economic systems of families already engaged in public and private sector employment. Decades before the transfers, these families had made the choice to move gradually away from the traditional economy and diversify their skills-sets. However, such residents of al Jabal remain concerned for the viability of the village today since they remain the successful minority and therefore live in an environment where the majority is unemployed and social unrest continues to grow.



## Al Jabal conclusions

The four key conclusions to this study are presented in Part 3 against the backdrop of the broader plight of the Palestine refugee population. Finding al Jabal neither socially nor economically viable, the study demonstrates that the practice of dual residency is currently the most effective coping strategy for residents of al Jabal. Those who continue to manage livestock by leaving al Jabal to live seasonally in rural areas are more able to safeguard both their traditional economy and their social fabric than those who completely de-stocked at the time of transfer. The practice of dual residency, however, increases the vulnerability of the Bedouin Palestine refugees since their return to rural parts of Area C puts them once again at risk of administrative demolition by the Israeli authorities and harassment by the settler population. That al Jabal residents increasingly practice dual residency indicates the failure of the al Jabal concept. Instead, the report proposes that the voice of the Bedouin be heard. Bedouin communities in Area C call for sustainable rural development in their current locations and secure access to natural resources. This call has never been considered by the Israeli authorities for Bedouin communities living in locations earmarked for settlement expansion.

### 3.1 The refugee plight

With the occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank including East Jerusalem ongoing, and a durable solution to the Palestine refugee problem yet to be arrived at, the plight of the Jahalin Bedouin Palestine refugees in al Jabal reflects—albeit in a vastly less violent context—a number of the common elements of the Palestine refugee experience since 1948. These include: displacement from and dispossession of traditional territories and other properties; the centralization of a predominantly rural population into densely populated urban or semi-urban environments; ongoing counts of dispossession and displacement; the dilution of traditional decision-making bodies; and friction over land, housing and property rights when Palestine refugees are settled against their will by the Israeli authorities onto land

owned by other Palestinians. This report illustrates that elements which were first experienced by the Palestine refugee population over 60 years ago are ongoing today as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli authorities outlined in the introduction to this study. Indeed the *makhatir* of al Jabal refer to the eviction of the Jahalin from the land in and around the Ma'ale Adummim settlement and their transfer to al Jabal as “Our own mini Nakba.” Since the question of Palestine remains unanswered, conclusions proposed today about the current situation of a specific Palestine refugee group—in this case the Bedouin of Area C—are delivered with the ultimate call for a just and durable solution to the Palestine refugee problem as their foundation.

### 3.2 The case of al Jabal

In focusing in on one particular Palestine refugee group, the Bedouin Palestine refugees, and their plight today in Area C of the West Bank where thousands now face the threat of transfer out of their homes and communities, this report has turned to the experiences of the 150 Bedouin Palestine refugee families to have been transferred to date.

Prior to their transfer to al Jabal, the small Salamaat Jahalin kinship groups had the socio-cultural make-up of semi-mobile pastoralist groups in which lifestyle was largely informed by livelihood. While, like all Palestine refugees, the Bedouin Palestine refugees

had experienced being severed from their territories as a result of the 1948 conflict, they did not experience the multiple social and economic challenges of being processed into densely populated refugee camps on their entry to the West Bank. Instead, the Bedouin Palestine refugees splintered into small kinship groups and scattered throughout the West Bank with their livestock in order to maintain their mobile lifestyle. The formation of al Jabal was therefore the first experience of being centralized into a semi-urban location in the history of the Jahalin Bedouin Palestine refugee population. While conditions for residents of Area C had become increasingly

challenging as a result of the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territory, the vast majority of the rural Jahalin Bedouin refugee communities maintained their social structures with the operation of dual economies (traditional pastoral economy boosted by ad hoc labour in local Israeli settlements and Palestinian towns) providing clear social and economic roles for both men and women. Today, as they adapt to the al Jabal environment in an echo of

the plight of all rural Palestine refugees entering urban camp environments in the early 1950s, the Salamaat Jahalin are experiencing rapid transformation having effectively been severed—against their will—from the “fundamental elements in their economic, commercial and social universe.”<sup>37</sup> Set out below are a number of conclusions that clearly emerge from this joint BIMKOM/UNRWA study undertaken on Bedouin life today in al Jabal.

### 3.3 Al Jabal: Socially non-viable

Centralizing scattered pastoralist groups into one location is in itself an oxymoron. The forced environment of Al Jabal, which is likened by residents to the refugee camps established by UNRWA for other Palestine refugees in the 1950s, is a spatial concept which was rejected outright by the Bedouin prior to its implementation. Today, neither social nor economic integration is currently evident in al Jabal on a sustainable level. While transfer to a planned environment potentially provides improved living standards, safety from demolition, proximity to services and increased economic opportunity for residents, damage sustained to the very core of the Bedouin’s social fabric as a result of the transfer to al Jabal has not been considered in drawing up the criteria for measuring success. Yes, families are adapting to the practical aspects of life in al Jabal, but this is not a measure of a project’s success, rather a measure of human resilience.

Merging separate kinship groups into one space against their will instantly dissolves a community’s sense of spatial security; movement corridors carved out by decades of social laws and traditional economic movement in one’s own rural kinship group suddenly no longer exist. Of key note, residents of al Jabal are not traditionally one community, but ten separate kinship groups between which strict social laws operate, including a restriction on the free movement of women should men of a different group be present. As a further reflection of the experiences of Palestine refugees entering UNRWA refugee camps in the early 1950s, during the decades it might take to carve out new corridors in the dense social environment of al Jabal, there is little sense of spatial security for residents, and especially the women. This instability is symbolically embodied in the physical aspects of al Jabal today—a hillside of houses in differing stages of construction, partially and non-asphalted roads, improvised (though legal) electricity and water connections in most areas, and close proximity to the municipal rubbish dump from which dangerous gasses, an overwhelming stench and clouds of black

smoke from spontaneous surface combustion often emit.

On paper, al Jabal is home to over 1,500 people, yet the streets are very often entirely empty. Why? The residential density and subsequent close proximity of different kinship groups to each other was alien to the incoming Bedouin and instantly triggered a restriction on women’s movement around al Jabal. Additionally, while the communal buildings are used to varying degrees, no sense of communal use of public space prevails in al Jabal since the concept is mostly alien in rural communities. Further, tens of “resident” families are seasonally or permanently absent from al Jabal in order to pursue the pastoral economy in rural areas. Permanent residents—often female-headed households whose husbands and eldest sons live for extended periods of the year in rural locations with the family livestock—stay mostly unobserved inside their houses. The social isolation in al Jabal, both reported and observed, is in stark contrast to the vibrant social fabric of rural Bedouin kinship groups located only moments away from al Jabal today, where families operate a dual economy and maintain social harmony. During research in the rural communities surrounding al Jabal, numerous heads of households presented researchers with keys to the houses they had built in al Jabal following the transfer. Behind locked doors, these houses stand unfurnished and uninhabited. In explanation, people said that their families cannot live a life of their choice in al Jabal.

A further spatial element causing social instability for al Jabal residents is the ongoing conflict with the Abu Dis community, who are the traditional owners of the land allocated for al Jabal by the Israeli authorities. Once again, in an echo of the friction between incoming Palestine refugees and those Palestinians who were indigenous to the West Bank and Gaza in the Mandate of Palestine pre-1948 who were obliged to host the newcomers, the Jahalin report that the continuous friction between the Bedouin Palestine



refugees and the host community of Abu Dis onto whose land they were transferred from 1997 onwards serves to instil a perpetual sense of insecurity in the Bedouin. While their transfer has presumably secured al Jabal residents against further displacement and dispossession by the Israeli authorities, the Salamaat Jahalin believe that they remain vulnerable to further displacement in the future since the Abu Dis

community, who have historic claim to the al Jabal land, could potentially take measures to reclaim it. The Bedouin Palestine refugees in al Jabal therefore view their presence there as a temporary one, a reality which reflects their ongoing insecurity and prevents residents from nurturing a sense of ownership for the space they have been forced to inhabit.

### 3.4 Al Jabal: Economically unviable

Through an economic lens, it is apparent that payments of compensation issued to the incoming Salamaat families by both the ICA and the PA were largely invested in house construction on land allocated to each family. Many families sold off their livestock prior to the move, channelling the profits into the completion of building works, and thus lost the income (and gender roles) generated by the traditional economy. Others continued to keep their stock in rural locations at risk of eviction/demolition by the ICA and continued to operate a dual economy; with some family members working the livestock and other family members seeking employment in local urban centres, both Palestinian and Israeli. While incoming families had varying financial situations at their times of transfer, they exclusively encountered one reality previously not experienced: the cost of living in a house is significantly higher than the cost of living in a shack. But options for regular employment for a traditionally shepherding society with comparatively low levels of education were relatively few, and remain so today. On a regular morning in al Jabal, groups of middle aged men sit in patches of shade outside their houses, calling out greetings to passers by, who also have no job to go to. For those who do find work, the majority of employed Bedouin throughout the West Bank inhabit the fringes of the job-market, filling marginalized positions of unskilled labour. With sudden additional household costs and most having lost their traditional economy on arrival in al Jabal, the Salamaat Jahalin Bedouin Palestine refugees met a new level of financial challenge.

Employment for al Jabal men who no longer sustain livestock is largely in ad hoc daily-paid labour, while those with full-time employment mostly work as labourers in Israeli settlements, specifically Ma'ale Adummim and the Mishor Adummim industrial zone. Dependency for employment on settlements introduces a specific economic vulnerability for Palestinian workers whose job security depends on a volatile political context. The currently frozen plans

to complete the building of the Barrier on its planned route in between al Jabal and Ma'ale Adummim would subject the Bedouin to rigorous security checks on a daily basis in order to access their place of work.

Alternative options are few, leaving youth and young men in al Jabal to develop their own ad hoc incomes. One such home-grown industry is the collection of scrap metal from the nearby municipal garbage dump, and its re-sale to local traders in Eizariya. This activity comes with its own clear set of risks to the health and safety of the youth engaging in it as they come into daily contact with toxic gases and raw sewage in a landscape known for both internal and surface combustion on a regular basis.<sup>38</sup>

Through the education lens, male pupil drop-out levels are high in al Jabal, with students reporting limited incentive to complete secondary level education. Concerned parents report that it is hard to motivate their children who see that levels of unemployment are already high amongst al Jabal residents who have completed their education, basic wage labour does not require school qualifications and advanced career prospects in the Palestinian sector are low for the marginalized Bedouin refugees<sup>39</sup>. While girls achieve higher levels of education than boys, Al Jabal's women are almost all unemployed with the exception of a rare handful of high achievers who work mostly as teachers in local schools. Competition for skilled positions is high in the Palestinian sector and local culture does not encourage women to seek jobs in Israeli settlements.

With such a reality, the economic forecast for the current al Jabal community is bleak; with increasing levels of poverty projected as the influence of emerging political factors intensifies. Residents speak with deep concern of the Israeli authorities' intention to expand al Jabal for the transfer of additional Bedouin families to the same location, saying that it can only accelerate their common descent into poverty.

### 3.5 Dual residency the most viable option for now

The differing impacts of the transfer on individual families are a result of the multiple and complex social, cultural and economic challenges experienced by the Bedouin during the process of change. In simple terms, this can be reflected in the extent to which previously pastoralist families de-stocked as a direct result of the transfer. For example, those families which were obliged to entirely de-stock during the move to al Jabal and had few alternative income generation strategies have experienced the most acute impact of the transfer due to the instant (and forced) loss of the socio-economic system which they had operated in their rural communities. Comparatively, those families which kept all or part of their herd during the transfer and developed new livestock-management strategies have experienced a lesser degree of severance from their social and economic realities during the process of transfer. In short, they have been able to maintain a greater sense of ownership over the pace and type of change to which their traditions have been subjected.

But of the dozens of these families which kept some or all of their livestock when they were moved to al Jabal, only ten live there permanently today, matching their stocking rates with the available rangeland and water resources in the immediate vicinity. For the others, lack of access to adequate natural resources in the Jerusalem periphery coupled with lack of space in al Jabal to effectively sustain penning and intensive feeding obliges shepherding families to be absent from al Jabal for extended periods of the year, operating a dual residency which allows them to best exploit the benefits of both town and countryside. For them, al Jabal is not viable for permanent residency

as it does not enable the pursuit of either their traditional economy or the social structures of their choice. Families maintaining residency both in al Jabal and in rural locations utilize al Jabal as a service centre while the rural locations they inhabit for the vast part of each year are their primary residences. Al Jabal is thus used for service provision only and can be reached relatively easily within the small geographical boundaries of the West Bank.

Of note, not all of today's permanent residents of al Jabal were livestock-dependent before 1997. Indeed, not all of today's residents were physically transferred to al Jabal since twelve families were already resident on the sparsely inhabited hillside before its selection by the Israeli authorities as a transfer site. For these twelve families - mostly the Hirsch group - the experience of the transfer was different again and merits clarification. These families had largely de-stocked gradually decades before the transfer and moved closer to urban centres in order to pursue higher education and formal employment. They had chosen, at their own pace and in their own direction, to initiate the process of transition away from their livestock-dependent traditions, while maintaining Bedouin kinship-led social structures. The influx of over 100 families to their hillside destroyed the ability of their kinship group to function in its traditional way. For example, Hirsch women - who had not physically been transferred - were affected in the same way as the incoming rural women due to the sudden proximity of alien Salamaat families. The Hirsch economy, however, was not directly affected by the transfer, since it was already largely urban in nature and not dependent on livestock.

### 3.6 Sustainable rural development as good practice – owning the pace of change

Dual residency carries with it a specific vulnerability for the transferred Salamaat, since families returning to rural locations from al Jabal become once again at risk of eviction or demolition by the Israeli authorities. As such, while dual residency sustains traditional economies and social custom, it provides little permanent security to families who adopt it and, on return to the rural sites, they are obliged to return to living in sub-standard shelter without basic infrastructure and are once again at threat of potential demolition by the ICA due to lack of building permits for that shelter.

Residents in al Jabal exclusively report that the practicalities of day-to-day household management have greatly simplified as a result of the transfer. There is no question that living in homes with infrastructure greatly eases the strenuous day-to-day physical demands on Bedouin engaged in household management. For Bedouin in al Jabal, domestic hardware is used for cooking, washing clothes and refrigeration, and all houses have a bathroom and at least one toilet. It is globally recognized that basic infrastructure significantly improves living standards and that it is entirely feasible to install such

infrastructure using low-impact environmentally sustainable methods in existing rural communities. With legal connections to water and electricity, rural Bedouin families could run washing machines, fridges, cookers and internal lights, just like al Jabal residents. The rural development approach would support Bedouin to govern the pace and direction of their own social, economic and cultural development from within, rather than being evicted from their homes and moved to centralized sites with established infrastructure in pre-selected locations where families have no ownership over their own development.

The rural development solution comes at a lower financial cost and is more sustainable for duty bearers, including the Occupying Power, yet it has never been proposed to the Bedouin by the Israeli authorities in areas of the West Bank earmarked for settlement expansion. Sustainable rural development in their own kinship groups remains the call of the Bedouin communities today being targeted for transfer to centralized sites. They deeply fear a repeat of the al Jabal initiative.

Smoke rises over al Jabal from the adjacent garbage dump



## EPILOGUE

The zoning and planning policy upheld by the Israeli authorities in Area C restricts Palestinian application for building permits on 70 per cent of the land in Area C while 350,000 Israeli settlers in the same area have been issued with construction permits. With calls for sustainable development in their rural locations rejected by the Israeli authorities, the Salamaat Bedouin were unable to install basic infrastructure in their rural communities. Within weeks of the first transfers in 1997, the building of the “06” neighborhood of Ma’ale Adummim settlement went ahead exactly on the site of the Bedouin expulsion.

While the Israeli authorities await in 2013 the results of an environmental study to inform the viability of expanding al Jabal towards the Municipal Garbage dump for the transfer of additional Salamaat families, other locations in the West Bank are now in the advanced stages of preliminary planning as potential sites for the transfer of other rural Bedouin communities in Area C. The process of transfer of the protected population introduced by the Israeli authorities in Area C by the creation of al Jabal is thus being repeated without a comprehensive review of the process itself, or of the effect that “centralization” has had on the Bedouin Palestine refugee population to date. Two new sites in the Jericho area are under extensive scrutiny and initial plans for a total of 800 plots in the Nweima area of the Jericho periphery are expected to be deposited for public objection

in 2013.<sup>40</sup> Despite such advanced planning by the Israeli authorities for the future of the pastoralist community of Area C, the majority of Bedouin groups targeted to live in the “Bedouin village” proposed for the Nweima area have yet to be informed of the initiative (time of writing April 2013). The number of residents proposed by the Israeli authorities for this new “Bedouin village” will be at least four times the size of the al Jabal population.

In 1997 and 1998, those Bedouin who refused to negotiate the terms of their transfer were evicted from their communities by court order and under forceful circumstances. While the Israeli authorities informed the Israeli High Court of Justice in September 2012 that negotiations with the Bedouin regarding their transfer would be peaceful, the question of what the Israeli authorities would do should the Bedouin refuse to leave their homes remains to be seen. In December 2012, following the Palestine Liberation Organization’s successful bid for status as a non-Member Observer State in the UN General Assembly, the Government of Israel announced that it would advance with the E1 settlement expansion plans on land partially inhabited by the Bedouin. Based on the historical record, construction within E1 and the completion of the Barrier around the Ma’ale Adummim “bubble” would require the transfer of all remaining Palestinian communities out of the area.

## End notes

- 1 The focus of the paper is on the socio-economic/humanitarian impact of the proposed move in light of the known socio-economic/humanitarian repercussions following the 1997 transfer rather than the legal implications.
- 2 The 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) divided the West Bank into three zones, A, B and C. While some control was given to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Areas A and B, Israel kept full military control and civil control, including zoning and planning, in Area C, which today constitutes approximately 60% of the West Bank. Although the Oslo Accords called for the gradual transfer of powers and responsibilities in Areas C to the PA, this was frozen in 2000.
- 3 OCHA (2011) *Bedouin relocation: Threat of displacement in the Jerusalem periphery*
- 4 A Bedouin confederation, or "hilf," is the largest Bedouin unit and is composed of a number of tribes (two or more) which cluster together in order to secure mutual protection, power and/or political sway.
- 5 UNRWA (2012) *Bedouin Palestine refugees: The Jahalin Tribe in the eastern Jerusalem periphery*
- 6 *Ibid*
- 7 UNRWA (2010) Area C Herders Fact Sheet
- 8 In July 2004, the International Court of Justice found that 'The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law;' International Court of Justice (2004) *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Advisory Opinion of 09 July 2004* p.201
- 10 By 2013, '70% of Area C is included within the boundaries of the regional councils of Israeli settlements (as distinct from the municipal boundaries) and therefore off-limits for Palestinian use and development.' OCHA (2013) *Area C of the West Bank – Key Humanitarian Concerns*
- 11 OCHA (2009) *Restricting Space: The planning Regime applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank: 'Palestinian construction in approximately 70 percent of Area C is almost completely prohibited. In the remaining 30 percent, a range of restrictions make it extremely difficult for a Palestinian to obtain a building permit. In this context, Palestinians wishing to build must do so "illegally" (e.g. without a permit) and live with the risk that their structures may be demolished by the ICA'* p.13
- 12 ARIJ (1997) *The Jahalin Vs Ma'ale Adummim* p.2
- 13 UNRWA (2012) *Bedouin Palestine refugees: The Jahalin Tribe in the eastern Jerusalem periphery*
- 14 From 1993 until the evictions which began in 1997, the Jahalin acquired legal representation, many of them from the society of 'St Yves'. ARIJ (1997) *The Jahalin Vs Ma'ale Adummim*.3
- 15 In 2013, Khan al Ahmar School, Khan al Ahmar Kurshan, Wadi Abu Hindi, Abu Nwar and al Muntar all have ongoing court cases following demolition orders being issued by the ICA on structures donated by the international community to improve living conditions and coping strategies of the Bedouin communities facing expulsion from the Ma'ale Adummim area.
- 16 Any project requiring infrastructure in Area C requires a permit from the ICA, application for which depends on conditions including the provision of land ownership documents and the approval of the area for Palestinian construction under the zoning and planning policy. Failure to obtain a construction permit can result in the administrative demolition of a structure by the Israeli authorities.
- 17 ARIJ (1997) *The Jahalin Vs Ma'ale Adummim*
- 18 ARIJ (1997) *On the legal fight of the Jahalin*
- 19 Human Rights Watch (2010) *Separate and Unequal* p.408-410
- 20 ARIJ (1997) *On the legal fight of the Jahalin*
- 21 20 United Nations (1997) *Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories*. A/52/131/Add.1 Paragraph 345 <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/4C81C17287F8CF4D05256514002E437E> 'On 27 January, some 200 police and border police evacuated five Bedouin families, numbering some 30 persons, from the vicinity of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement in the second stage of the evacuation of the Jahalin tribe from the area. A number of Bedouin from nearby encampments joined the families at the site and the men put up mostly passive resistance. At least one man was forcibly dragged down a hill and five people were reportedly injured...Uzi Zerahiya, the head of the Bethlehem regional office of the Coordinator of the Government's Activities in the Territories stated that the Bedouin were being removed in stages in the hope that they would see that the Civil Administration was intent on carrying out the High Court's decision to move the tribe and would therefore choose to leave on their own.'
- 22 UNRWA Commissioner General's address to the General Assembly (A/53/13 1998 Paragraph 201) <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/B31EBC6196D144CB052566B1007BFF25> 'In July, October and November 1997, UNRWA provided food, tents, and household items to 94 Bedouin families (904 persons) from the Jahalin tribe who had been evicted in connection with the expansion of a settlement near Jerusalem.' And (A/52/13 1997 Paragraph 194) <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/581CB-B3020659A840525655B006B84A2> 'In January and February 1997, UNRWA provided food, tents and household items to 40 Bedouin families from the Jahalin tribe who had been evicted in connection with the expansion of a settlement near Jerusalem.'
- 23 IHCJ 1242/98. Abdullah Salem Sa'ida Jahalin et al v Civil Administration for Judea and Samaria and the Military Commander of Judea and Samaria <http://elyon1.court.gov.il/files/98/420/012/E16/98012420.e16.htm>
- 24 *Ibid*
- 25 An agreement was signed between the community's lawyer and an advocate from the High Court of Justice Department of the State Attorney's Office on 07 February 1999
- 26 The Bedouin report that they are unable to make use of the full 3000 dunums since they are not permitted to over-night in the given area. This leaves the majority of the allocated land either over-grazed or undergrazed, negatively affecting land productivity.
- 27 *Ibid*
- 28 Personal testimonies collected during field research
- 29 Traditional community leaders and the *Jahalin Projects Council* confirm personal testimonies
- 30 <http://www.maale-adummim.muni.il/Page.asp?Id=135>
- 31 <http://www.maale-adummim.muni.il/Page.asp?Id=128>
- 32 Cite to ICJ wall opinion, *supra* note 5.
- 33 Two separate environmental studies on the impact of the dump on the health of local residents will be completed in 2013.
- 34 G block was planned for the first time with the plan for E1n # 420/4 which received final approval in 1999 (BIMKOM).
- 35 On 10th October 2012 Israeli High Court supports ICA's commitment to finding a 'peaceful solution' for the future of the Bedouin in the Khan al Ahmar area of Ma'ale Adummim 'bubble' within one year.
- 36 Personal testimonies collected during field research (UNRWA/BIMKOM 2012)
- 37 'Dawn Chatty, *From Camel to Truck: the Bedouin in the Modern World* (New York: Vantage Press, 1986), p.30
- 38 'In recent years it has transpired that there is a danger of collapse of the site due to the steep slopes where the waste was dumped and due to internal combustion in the site. Such combustion occurs when waste is not correctly compacted and ignites as a result of exposure to explosive gases and volatile materials. Without proper treatment these burnings can last for years below and on the surface of the ground. A collapse can cause grave environmental damage and even endanger lives.' Informal translation of Ministry of Environment Protection response to Ma'ale Adummim appeal to the High Court, case 10611/08, from 22.2.09.
- 39 Personal testimonies gathered during field research from MoE staff at the Arab al Jahalin School, with community members and with students at the school.
- 40 ICA officials verbally informed UN officials of this time line during a meeting in November 2012.



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العنوان البريدي: ص.ب: ١٩١٤٩، ٩١١٩١ القدس الشرقية  
هـ: القدس: ٥٨٩٠٢٢٤ (+٩٧٢ ٢) ف: ٥٨٩٠٢٧٤ (+٩٧٢ ٢)  
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وكالة الأمم المتحدة لإغاثة وتشغيل  
اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في الشرق الأدنى