

Palestinian Bedouin community faces demolition after Israeli court ruling, warns UN rights office

A Palestinian Bedouin community is under threat from a demolition order within days, to make way for Israeli settlement expansion, the UN human rights office, [OHCHR](#), warned on Tuesday.

Spokesperson Liz Throssell said that the imminent destruction of buildings used by Khan al Ahmar al Helu residents comes after the Israeli High Court ruled against any further delay.

“The community is home to 181 people – more than half of them children,” Ms Throssell told journalists in Geneva, noting that it is “at high risk of forcible transfer” owing to Israeli practices and policies “that coerce people and communities to move”.

The Khan al Ahmar al Helu community has spent the last decade opposing the move in a part of the central West Bank called Area C.

In total, around 7,000 people from 46 Bedouin communities live there “and we are concerned about all of them”, the OHCHR spokesperson said, noting that the community is located near existing “large Israeli settlements”.

Describing Israel’s planning policy as “discriminatory” and incompatible with international law, Ms Throssell explained that “most properties are considered illegal” because planning permits are not granted to Palestinians in the area.

In an appeal to the Israeli authorities, the OHCHR spokesperson said that if the demolitions went ahead, “people would lose their homes, children would lose their schools” and residents “would lose their community”.

Such a development would “likely amount to forced evictions” and violate the community’s right to housing, Ms Throssell said.

She added that once demolitions take place, the community is expected to be encouraged to move about 10 kilometres away to a suburban area on the outskirts of East Jerusalem.

Such a move is “not really appropriate for a community that has animals and needs grazing”, Ms Throssell said, adding that this had happened before, affecting 150 Bedouin Palestine refugee families between 1997 and 2007.

“The demolition itself may not amount necessarily to forced eviction – the people may try to stay in the area,” she said. “But as you can imagine, it really increases the risk of forced transfer, so our main call to the Israelis, is not to proceed with the demolition of this community.”

Ms Throssell added that international humanitarian law prohibits the forced transfer of the population of an occupied territory, regardless of the motive.