

PALESTINIAN LAND TO BE ANNEXED

While countries all over the world are facing the threat of COVID 19, Palestinians not only face that threat with few health resources, but news has come from Churches for Middle East Peace that Israeli authorities appear to be planning in July to annex part of the West Bank, formalizing the de facto process of Palestinian displacement and land expropriation that has been happening for decades.

Palestinians living in Area C are trying to resist the demolition of their homes and the confiscation of their lands. They are also forced to fight for their basic needs, like access to clean water. According to the Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq, some 300,000 Palestinians in more than 100 communities in the occupied West Bank lack proper access to clean water "Several European nations led by France, and including Ireland, Sweden, Belgium, Spain and Luxembourg, have reportedly expressed support for threats of punitive action in a bid to deter the new Israeli government from carrying out the move to annex with a green light from Washington."

While Israelis demolish Palestinian homes, why aren't we as individuals and churches speaking out in defense of their rights as people of faith?

If you have suggestions, share your ideas with the Peace and Justice Network of Presbytery.

For more background information, read on:

On November 18, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that the US no longer considers Israeli settlements inconsistent with international law, reversing a 1978 Department of State legal opinion that asserted that inconsistency, a position the US has affirmed since that time.

Since the 1967 War, when Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza began, Israel has established more than 230 settlements in the West Bank, with more than 800,000 settlers living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (In 2005, Israel removed roughly 8,000 settlers living in the 21 settlements from Gaza, but it continues to subject the Gaza Strip to a blockade.) On Dec. 8 of last year, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated his plan to annex the Jordan River valley and West Bank settlements. Netanyahu spoke about annexing the Jordan Valley because without it, Israel would not be able to fully control the West Bank militarily. It is also an attempt to isolate it from Jordan.

The current annexation plan aims to target Palestinian sovereignty and historical ownership of the land. In light of the US-sponsored "deal of the century" and in the context of ongoing Arab normalization with Israel, this deals a severe blow to Palestinian statehood and international law.

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