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Date: 26.10.2015
In respond please cite: 31490

To:
The Prime Minister of Israel,
Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu
1 Ben Gurion Complex
Jerusalem

Urgent!

Greetings,

Re: **Sharp protest to consideration of the comprehensive revocation of status in Israel for East Jerusalem residents living in neighborhoods beyond the Separation Wall**

1. I am writing to you on behalf of HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual (hereinafter: **HaMoked**), a human rights organization, which acts, among other things, to protect the rights of the residents of East Jerusalem and their family members, to request your urgent attention and response to the following.
2. Yesterday, October 25, 2015, it was reported in various media outlets that during one of the meetings of the security cabinet held in the past two weeks, you announced you were considering the blanket revocation of the permanent Israeli residency status of the inhabitants of East Jerusalem, living in the neighborhoods located beyond the separation wall.
3. If these reports are true, we wish to voice our sharp protest and profound shock that such an unacceptable suggestion has even been raised. Such a proposition, which should never have been made, is not in accordance with neither Israeli law nor international humanitarian law and absolutely contravenes Israel's values as a democratic state. We shall explain.
4. As you know, the residents of East Jerusalem, including those residing in neighborhoods beyond the separation wall, are the native inhabitants of this land and they were born in this land. They are not foreigners who came from abroad; rather their city was annexed by Israel in 1967. It is also well-established that Israel desires the territory of East Jerusalem but is not interested in its inhabitants, treating them over them years as foreigners from abroad, whose status may be revoked without a second thought.



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5. However, the residents of East Jerusalem – who are recognized as protected persons under international humanitarian law – were forced upon the annexation of the territory in which they lived, in order not to be stripped of their rights in their city of birth, to accept permanent status from Israel; a status the loss of which means their expulsion from their homes and native land, leaving them without legal status anywhere in the world.
6. Furthermore, in 2003, the Israeli Government approved the route of the separation wall around Jerusalem, including its route through the neighborhoods where live those residents whose status you now announced you consider revoking.
7. On July 2005, the Israeli Government adopted Resolution No. 3783, which concerned preparations on part of various government bodies and the Jerusalem Municipality for the provision of services to those Jerusalem neighborhoods left on the other side of the separation wall.
8. High Court petitions against the separation wall route, which were filed by permanent residents living in these neighborhoods, were rejected, partly because of the state's undertaking to minimize as much as possible the harm to the rights of these residents (see HCJ 6193/05 **Residents' Council of Ras Khamis v. The Competent Authority under the Arrangement of Seized Land Law**).
9. However, Israel did not meet its obligations given to the residents of the neighborhoods beyond the separation wall as well as to the Court, and neglected looking after these neighborhoods and their residents for many years. This conduct makes Israel directly responsible for the deterioration in the condition of these neighborhoods and the condition of their residents, with all that it entails.
10. In view of Israel's failing conduct towards the residents of the neighborhoods beyond the separation wall, its long-standing indifference towards their harsh predicament and its disregard of its obligations towards the local residents, by virtue of their being permanent Israeli residents, as well as protected persons under international humanitarian law – in view of all of these, the current proposal, if it had in fact been raised, constitutes an insult added to injury.
11. In light of the above, we urge you to withdraw your intention to consider the blanket revocation of the status in Israel of the permanent residents who live in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the separation wall.

Respectfully,

Dalia Kerstein, Executive Director

cc: Mr. Yehuda Weinstein, Attorney General