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### Diplomatic Briefing

*Subject: Heightened Risk of Mass Demolitions in Firing Zone 918, Masafer Yatta, South Hebron Hills*

*Date: 20 June 2025*

### Summary:

Recent measures taken by High Planning Council and the Military Commander post heightened risk of mass demolitions of structures in Firing Zone 918 Palestinian villages. As one of the litigating lawyers in the area I urge your government to take immediate interest in the matter to prevent irreversible humanitarian harm, forcible displacement and ethnic cleansing of Masafer Yatta.

### Key Developments:

- On 18 June 2025, Israel's High Planning Council instructed its subcommittees to consider all planning and zoning requests **in Firing Zone 918 based on the position of the Israeli military commander** of 17 June 2025, who asserts the area is needed military trainings, wherein no civilian spatial planning requests are approved.
- This directive specifically targets old structures with pending permit requests and plans that were submitted prior to recent amendments in the military laws and regulations starting 2020.
- Scores of long-standing applications—submitted prior to regulatory changes in 2020—will now be summarily rejected. Villages such as Sfai and Majaz, whose plans are scheduled for review on 20 July 2025, are at **imminent risk of mass demolition and displacement** unless an interim injunction is issued by the court in subsequent legal proceedings.
- **An upcoming 20 July hearing** on village plans in Sfai and Majaz expedites the demolition of these villages in their entirety

### Legal and Humanitarian Concerns:

- The directive appears to breach both **Israeli law** and **international humanitarian law** obligations in the occupied West Bank, particularly protections against forced population transfer and the extensive and unwanton destruction of civilian property without imperative necessity for military operations under the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as the prohibition of ethnic cleansing.

- In fact, this directive violates the principle of legality. It illegally invalidates the applicable pre-2020 law, circumvents standard planning procedures and **precludes any consideration of legal, humanitarian, or planning-based arguments**, effectively stripping residents of due process.
- Demolition of structures also include **villages located in the northern-western "dry area" of the Firing Zone whereby residents are not slated for eviction.**
- Notably, **illegal Israeli outposts within the same zone continue to be built and remain untouched**, raising serious concerns discriminatory enforcement but more importantly population replacement and ethnic cleansing.

**Requested Diplomatic Engagement:**

I respectfully urge your government to:

1. **Seek immediate clarification** from the Israeli authorities regarding the legal basis for the High Planning Council's directive, the intent of the Military Commanders 17 June notification, and request data on expected impact of the directive on Palestinian villages in the Firing Zone 918 especially Sfai, Majaz, Jinba, Tuba, Fakhit, Tabban.
2. **Demand the immediate revocation of the High Planning Council's directive and an immediate moratorium** on all demolitions in the Firing Zone, especially during the current armed conflict with Iran and Hamas.
3. **Demand the immediate eviction of all illegal outposts in the Firing Zone 918** especially those built and extended after the start of the Hamas-Israel war on 7 October 2023.
4. **Organize urgent diplomatic on-site visits to all threatened villages** to provide material support that increases local resilience
5. **Monitor the upcoming 20 July hearing** on village plans in Sfai and Majaz and request observer access.
6. **Express grave concern via appropriate diplomatic channels** regarding the imminent risk of forcible population transfer and extensive mass destruction of entire villages in the Firing Zone 918 and urge adherence to legal obligations.
7. Consider **engaging the UN bodies and other governments** regarding developments on the ground.

Sincerely,

Dr. Netta Amar-Shiff, Adv.