Food Security Sector
Livelihood assets demolitions response guidelines

Introduction

Among the West Bank population, the Palestinians that reside in East Jerusalem, in the Seam Zone, and in Area C are at increasing risk of displacement, and exposed to settler violence. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the forced displacement of Palestinians is driven by a number of occupation-related policies.

Area C is home to approximately 300,000 Palestinians currently residing in 532 residential areas. Many of these residential areas are located entirely in Area C, but, in other cases, the area is part of a larger community, partly located in Areas A or B. The planning and zoning regime applied by the Israeli authorities, including the ways in which public land is allocated, makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain building permits in most of Area C. Even basic residential and livelihood structures, such as a tent or a fence, require a building permit.

The demolition of Palestinian residential and livelihood structures is the most direct trigger of forced displacement in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Such demolitions have a grave humanitarian impact on the lives and livelihoods of those affected. Demolitions often impact the most vulnerable Palestinians, already less able to cope with such social and economic shocks.

This situation impedes the development of adequate housing, infrastructure and livelihoods in the Area C Palestinian communities, and has significant consequences for the entire West Bank population. A World Bank report, for example, estimated that if businesses and farms were permitted to develop in Area C, this would add as much as 35 percent to the Palestinian GDP in 2011 (World Bank, 2013). Those Palestinian residents who attempt to stay are often left with no choice but to build without authorization to meet their basic needs, and to continue their original livelihoods activities.

Forced displacement has devastating short and long-term socio-economic consequences, resulting in increased poverty and food insecurity, decreased living standards, and increased dependence on humanitarian assistance, as resilience is further eroded. It also produces a devastating psychological impact on those affected, exacerbated by the repeated occurrences of displacement for generations of Palestinian refugees since 1948.

The displacement and dispossession of hundreds of Palestinian men, women and children in the State of Palestine each year must be brought to an end and the policies and practices placing thousands of others at-risk of displacement must change. Families that have been displaced must be allowed to return to their land and homes, in safety and dignity, and be
given access to an effective remedy for the harm that they have suffered from the destruction of land, homes and properties.

Agricultural-related livelihoods in Area C are considered highly important and essential as it is the sole or main source of income for thousands of families, mostly Bedouin, throughout the affected communities. The destruction of key agricultural assets continues to disrupt rural poor’s livelihood, resulting in loss of income opportunities and increasing the risk of displacement.

Violence by Israeli settlers undermines the physical security and livelihoods of Palestinians living under Israel’s prolonged military occupation. This violence includes physical assaults, harassment, takeover of and damage to private property, obstructed access to grazing and agricultural land, and attacks on livestock and agricultural land, among others. In recent years, many attacks have been carried out by settlers living in settlement “outposts,” small satellite settlements built without official authorization, many on privately-owned Palestinian land. The risk of displacement of vulnerable families as a result of settler violence is an issue of increasing concern. Settler violence creates pressure and constant hardship on some Palestinian communities, particularly when combined with other difficulties, such as access and movement restrictions and house demolitions. Displacement has serious immediate and longer-term physical, socio-economic and psychological impacts on Palestinian families and communities.

**Principal Objective of this guidelines:**

To ensure a coordinated, timely and effective response to destruction of properties, in order to prevent displacement in the occupied West Bank of the State of Palestine.

**Specific Objective:**

To mitigate the impact of sudden, external man-made shocks resulting from infringement of IHL, which prevents households from continuing their traditional livelihood activities, and puts at risk their food security status.

**Operational framework**

In order to ensure full coverage of all areas and FSS-related needs, FSS partners are invited to plan their interventions in any affected areas of the West Bank and Jerusalem, with particular consideration for Area C.

The main triggers for interventions are thus expected to be:

a. Destruction of property/confiscation of assets.

b. Destruction of property/loss of livelihoods assets as a result of settlers violence.

Upon receipt of the MoA and/or OCHA – focal point trigger, the FSS team share with partners gaps that may require further support. Interested partners can immediately signal their interest, and conduct deep technical in-depth household level assessments in the affected location, in cooperation with other involved partners, and based on their capacity to respond vis-à-vis the agreed criteria.

Any intervention and assistance will be provided:
Upon actual loss and/or damage to livelihoods as a result of exceptional and unforeseeable incidents;

Once damages to livelihoods have been assessed;

When external assistance is not likely to be provided by other agencies/funding;

When the beneficiaries accept the assistance at any point and positively take part in the process (e.g.: by providing requested documentation)

Irrespective of the beneficiaries’ refugees status (i.e. to affected refugee and non-refugee populations alike).

For the response mechanism it is agreed that:

✓ OCHA and/or MoA will trigger the response.

✓ Active partners identified as FSS focal points (FSS responders) with allocated resources to intervene (e.g.: members of consortium of NGOs) will conduct the technical assessment based on the trigger, within the first 48 hours.

✓ FSS responders will carry out the response based on their resources and criteria. MoA should be notified at the time of response, not later than 72 hours of carrying out the response, and complying with a specific format available from MoA or FSS. FSS should be in copy on the feedback.

✓ The format is composed by a general part that summarizes the response, and a section that specifies the list of beneficiaries, including households (HHs) details, with the aim of avoiding duplication of assistance. The section related to the HHs details will be filled out by the implementing partners under their responsibility of ensuring respect of confidentiality and informed consensus from the beneficiaries. Each FSS partners will implement this task according to its own internal procedures.

✓ The MoA will be held responsible for keeping HHs details confidential, according to MoA internal procedures. MoA is committed to share with implementing partners copy of the document describing MoA commitments concerning confidentiality and data protection.

✓ In case of identified gaps, the FSS will trigger other partners response in close coordination with MoA and OCHA.

Profile of direct beneficiaries

Farming and herding communities: Palestinian farming and herding communities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are among some of the worst affected people by loss of livelihoods as a result of demolitions/eviction/land confiscation. Mostly poor and often marginalized, such communities are heavily reliant on small-scale subsistence farming and herding activities, and their ability to recover from evictions and demolitions is minimal.

Bedouins: Traditionally relying on access to land they have grazed or cultivated for centuries. 50-60% of West Bank Bedouins live in tents or tin shacks in Jordan Valley. Located in Area C, these Bedouin communities are particularly vulnerable to demolitions and land confiscations as many locations have been designated by the Israeli authorities to become closed military zones. Seasonal movements of Bedouin should be respected and taken into account when responding to demolitions. Thus, uninhabited and not in use structures should be considered eligible as long as it is confirmed that they are somehow used, even seasonally, and that they represent a means of living for the affected households.
Area of interventions

Demolitions endanger the security and sustainability of affected communities/families’ lives and livelihood. FSS seeks to build resilience for communities and families, and to give them the choice of maintaining their lives and livelihood in their communities and their homes. For a series of reasons, herders communities have currently limited their nomadic lifestyle at a minimum level. Families are linked to access to basic services like health and education, which are provided close to where they stay. Supporting their traditional livelihoods and preventing further displacement is an important protection measure.

Demolition and confiscation activities usually target all components and means of living which makes the affected community/household vulnerable to loss of their main source of income, and thus triggering the possibility of being displaced if they are not supported to cope with this shock.

It is suggested that the support by FSS partners is provided in case of:

- Destruction and/or confiscation of property affecting animal feeding assets and equipment (fodder, drinkers and feeders). Prior to any fodder distribution activity, very close coordination should take place with MoA, and FSS through the Livestock Working Group.

- Destruction and/or confiscation of property affecting animal production activities, like animal shelter, storage structures, drinkers for livestock, equipment, and other assets (e.g.: fencing, barriers, etc...).

- Destruction and/or confiscation of property affecting water facilities related to agriculture (e.g.: water tanks, irrigation pipes/network, agricultural cisterns and/or water harvesting facilities).

- Destruction and/or confiscation of property affecting crop production structure/facilities (e.g.: irrigated open fields, greenhouses, field crops, trees and retaining walls).

- Destruction and/or confiscation of property affecting milk and food processing equipment.

- Destruction and/or confiscation of property affecting food items at household level.

Types of response

As the rationale behind the response to demolition is to support immediate needs as well as to protect affected agricultural-related livelihoods from being interrupted or stopped, the type of response may vary according to specific situations and availability of resources.

In principle, the response should:

- Avoid further harm to the affected communities
- Cover immediate food needs
- Contribute to re-establish affected livelihoods
- Provide support in order to alleviate damages caused by major loses

The response can be item-specific or providing other means of support in order to help affected HHs to absorb the shock. In case demolished/confiscated equipment should be replaced, FSS partners should actively be engaged in providing affected household with those items. This should be undertaken by carefully assess the situation at household level, in deep and clear consultation with the beneficiaries. With regard to specifications of materials and standards of goods and assets provided, FSS responders will have to crosscheck them with MoA and FSS.