



On 25th April, WHO visited Jabal al Baba and Khan al Ahmar with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) and Medico International to demonstrate its support for communities in Area C facing potential demolition of homes and humanitarian structures, including health clinics.

All buildings in Jabal al Baba have been threatened with demolition since November 2017. The building housing the mobile clinic in Khan al Ahmar is also threatened with demolition. There was a court hearing for the community on 25th April, but the decision was postponed for another week to 3rd May. Both communities are part of an area marked E1 plan by Israeli authorities for the expansion of settlements east of Jerusalem. Together they comprise a population of more than 1,600 residents.

PMRS is one of 10 health cluster agencies running 22 mobile health clinics to 189 communities in Area C of the West Bank. Area C comprises over 60% of the West Bank that is under Israeli civil and military control. Communities living in this Area are among the most vulnerable in the occupied Palestinian territory, facing violence from Israeli settlers and the military, night raids on their homes, destruction of their crops and livelihoods, and substantial barriers to development including demolitions of buildings and displacement. From 2009 to April 2018 there were at least 5,441 structures demolished, of which over 80% were in Area C. The structures included 917 that were donor-funded and 498 related to water and sanitation. Over 45,000 people have been directly affected by demolitions and 8,681 people displaced.

The threat to communities in Area C prevents the development of infrastructure and critical

services, including health facilities and infrastructures for the adequate provision of water, sanitation and mains electricity. Among the approximately 300,000 Palestinians living in Area C, almost half (47%) have no connection or an irregular connection to the water network. The threat over communities creates insecurity, anxiety and fear.



In 2017, seven mobile clinics run by PMRS, UNRWA and Humanity & Inclusion were denied permits by Israeli authorities to access communities they previously served regularly in Area C. On top of this, funding shortages undermine the continuity of service delivery to already vulnerable communities. Since the beginning of 2018, 35 clinics have closed and 82 are at risk of closure due to funding shortfalls.

Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, Head of WHO Office in the occupied Palestinian territory, stated: “The right to health should be respected, protected and fulfilled for all Palestinians, including those living in Area C. This means ensuring that the members of the public can access the health services they need, as well as ensuring that communities are able to develop the infrastructures necessary to improve the underlying social determinants of health – such as structures for water and sanitation, electricity and livelihoods. Ensuring the right to the highest attainable standard of health for all means proactively putting in place policies that empower individuals and communities to realize healthy living at all stages of life. The coercive environments that many residents of Area C face is clearly a barrier to achieving this.”

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