[MP’s Address

Xxxxx

Xxxxx

Xxxxx]

[Date]

Dear [Title and Name] MP,

**Re: Imminent unlawful forced eviction of the Palestinian Ghaith-Sub Laban family from their family home in occupied East Jerusalem on 30 November 2015**

As my representative in the UK Parliament, I am writing to you to express my extreme concern regarding the imminent forced eviction, in violation of international law, of the Palestinian Ghaith-Sub Laban family from their home in occupied East Jerusalem, scheduled for Monday 30 November 2015. **Eight members of the family, spanning three generations, are facing unlawful forced displacement purely on the basis of their Palestinian ethnicity, in order to be replaced by Israeli settlers**. These include grandmother Nora Gaith-Sub Laban, three of her children, and two of her grandchildren aged three and nine.

I ask that you contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) urgently requesting that the UK follow up on the action it has already taken on this case, taking immediate steps to do all that is possible to prevent this unlawful eviction that will force the Gaith-Sub Laban family from the home in which they have lived for 62 years, rendering them homeless.

As such, I respectfully ask that you strongly urge the FCO and British Consulate in Jerusalem to take the following urgent steps:

1. To ensure that the case is discussed in bilateral dialogue between the Foreign Office and the Israeli authorities with a view to preventing the family's pending forced eviction from their home;
2. To issue a public statement of concern on this case which emphasises the critical need for the Israeli authorities to prevent the pending forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family;
3. To engage with other EU member states on this matter with a view to publishing a joint statement of concern which emphasises the critical need for the Israeli authorities to prevent the pending forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family;
4. To ensure that, now that the appeal against eviction has been rejected, a representative of the British Consulate in Jerusalem follow up on the previous visit to the Gaith-Sub Laban residence by visiting again to hear the families concerns and by being present on the scheduled day of eviction, 30 November 2015, to support the family’s right to their home; and
5. To prioritise acting on similar cases of unlawful forced displacement taking place in occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, and to consider appropriate actions that can be taken alone or with other states to influence a change of policy from Israeli authorities on this grave human rights issue.

It will be gratefully appreciated if you would keep me informed of any action that you have taken regarding this request and of any response from the FCO.

Yours Sincerely,

[Name]

[Address

xxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxx]

[Email]

**Additional Information**

In 1953, the Gaith-Sub Laban family entered into a protected lease agreement with the Jordanian government custodian that took over “absentee” property following the 1948 hostilities. The agreement was renegotiated with the Israel custodian in 1967 following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, giving the family “protected tenant” status under the Protected Tenant Law of 1972. This allows them to remain as long as they continue to pay rent and live in the house. In 2010, the Israeli Guardian of Absentee Property passed the property’s ownership to the Galetzia Trust. This trust is related to a number of Israeli settler organisations, including Ateret Cohanim, an Israel settler organisation which has publicly declared its aim of creating a Jewish majority within the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem’s Old City and which believes that any property that has belonged to Jews at any point in the past should be given to Jewish owners. The organisation claims that Jews lived in the property prior to 1948.

On 14 September 2014, on the basis of testimony provided solely by settlers affiliated with Ateret Cohanim, a Judge in the Magistrate’s Court, herself a settler, held that the family had deserted the property and have not been living there between the year 2000 and the present time, and that they had thus lost their protected tenancy status. This is despite the fact that the family has continued to reside there and to pay rent throughout this period. This decision was predicated on testimony from Israeli settlers living next door and associated with Ateret Cohanim, who claimed that they have never seen the Gaith-Sub Laban family and do not know them, and is further predicated on allegations that the level of payments made for utility bills are too low to demonstrate that the family lives there. It was additionally decided that the family had nullified their protected tenancy status on the basis that they had installed an air-conditioning unit without a permit, a decision that would appear to contradict the finding that they do not live there. No testimony was heard from the Gaith-Sub Laban family or any supporting witnesses. It is clear that both the witnesses and the judge hearing the case had a major conflict of interests regarding its outcome. The Israeli District Court upheld this eviction order on 11 October 2015, and on 2 November 2015 the family received notice that they will be forcibly evicted on 30 November 2015.

As well as appearing to violate their “protected tenant” status under domestic Israeli law, the Ghaith-Sub Laban family’s pending forced eviction would amount to a violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the individual or mass transfer of protected persons, a category that includes Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. In addition, the family's forced eviction would violate numerous provisions of international human rights law, including: the right to adequate housing; the right to protection of home and family life from arbitrary or unlawful interference; the right to access to justice; and the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The facts of the case make clear that the Ghaith-Sub Laban family's pending forced eviction is a direct result of their Palestinian identity, in clear violation of the United Nations Convention To End All Forms Of Racial Discrimination, and is part of Israel’s on-going and discriminatory policy of unlawfully forcibly displacing Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank to make way for expanding illegal Israeli settlements. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates that there were at least 265,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in the occupied Palestinian territory as of July 2015, of which 5,775 were reported displaced between 2009 and early April 2015 following evictions and demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The action already taken on this case by the FCO in the first half of 2015 is highly commendable, including a visit to the Ghaith-Sub Laban family home by an official from the British Consulate General in Jerusalem, as well as commitments to raise the case with the Israeli authorities, to attend the District Court hearing of the family’s appeal against the eviction, and to continue to monitor the case. Given that the appeals process in the Israeli Court has failed to halt the unlawful forced eviction of the Ghaith-Sub Laban family and the date of this eviction is now imminent, it is more important than ever that the UK government build on its earlier good work and follow through on its commitment to this case, taking all action possible to prevent this forced eviction.

For further information see:

Lawyers For Palestinian Human Rights, Urgent Action: <http://bit.ly/1WHBwvl>

Avaaz Petition: <http://bit.ly/1cmID6t>

[www.StopNorasEviction.com](http://www.StopNorasEviction.com)

[https://www.facebook.com/StopNorasEviction](https://www.facebook.com/StopNorasEviction?__mref=message" \t "_blank)