

Support Bil'in's struggle

"Just as a simple man named Gandhi led the successful non-violent struggle in India and simple people such as Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela led the struggle for civil rights in the United States, simple people here in Bil'in are leading a non-violent struggle that will bring them their freedom. The South Africa experience proves that injustice can be dismantled."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, during a visit to Bil'in on 27 August 2009

Adeeb Abu Rahmah, a leading activist and organizer from the West Bank village of Bil'in has been held in detention since his arrest during a demonstration on 10 July 2009 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqaO8IFYuM0>). Thousands of Israeli and international solidarity activists who have demonstrated alongside Adeeb against the theft of Bil'in's lands over the past five years can testify to his unshakable commitment to non-violence and dignified action.

Adeeb who has been detained for over three months, is not suspected of committing any violence, but was indicted with a blanket charge of "incitement to violence". A judge had initially ruled that Adeeb be released with restrictive conditions, but an appeal filed by the military prosecution had the decision overturned, and he was remanded until the end of legal proceedings. Trials for Palestinians in Israeli military courts often last over a year. Adeeb is the sole provider for his 9 children, wife and mother.

Adeeb's arrest is part of the Israeli military's most recent attempt to crush Bil'in village's ongoing popular non-violent resistance campaign. A wave of night raids and arrests targeting protesters and the leadership of Bil'in's Popular Committee began concurrently with preliminary hearings in a lawsuit against two Canadian companies responsible for the construction of an Israeli settlement on Bil'in's land.

On 23 June 2009, the Canadian court heard the preliminary arguments for a suit brought by Bil'in against two companies registered in Canada (Green Park International & Green Mount International). The village is seeking justice against the construction of settlements on its lands under the 2000 Canadian Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Statute.

Israeli forces have arrested 27 residents, 11 of which are under 18. Sixteen Bil'iners remain in Israeli detention, nine of which are minors. Some of the arrestees have reported being questioned about Bil'in's lawsuit in Canada during their interrogation.

Overwhelming support and outcry from the international community have contributed to what appears to be the end of the night raids (the last raid took place on 30 September 2009). While soldiers have stopped coming to arrest demonstrators in the night, the aftermath of the raids has left Bil'in with large legal fees/bails and 16 remaining residents in Israeli detention. In defiance of the pressure from

Israeli authorities, the village continues to hold weekly demonstrations. Bil'iners protested in solidarity with Adeeb Abu Rahme http://www.bilin-ffj.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=207&Itemid

continue their struggle, they need your support.

What can you do?

Attempts to criminalize the leadership of non-violent protests were curbed in the past with the help of an outpouring of support from people committed to justice all over the world.

1. Please protest by contacting your political representatives, as well as your consuls and ambassadors to Israel (<http://www.embassiesabroad.com/embassies-of/Israel>) to demand that Israel stops targeting non-violent popular resistance and release Adeeb Abu Rahmah and all Bil'in prisoners.

2. The Popular Committee of Bil'in is in need of funds in order to pay legal fees both for the trial in Montréal and for representing the arrested protesters in the military courts. Please donate to the Bil'in legal fund through PayPal. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation in the US or Canada contact: bel3in@yahoo.com .

https://www.paypal.com/il/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_flow&SESSION=k4ZholcAVBPPNIUuxdCnalkM3aXYNBZoDS7Q9RRdtnGGrTz3JICjj_-K27q&dispatch=5885d80a13c0db1ffc45dc241d84e9538c532da79baccf7c1009429e47706c4e
The Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements

Background

The West Bank village of Bil'in is located 12 kilometers west of Ramallah and 4 km east of the Green Line. It is an agricultural village, around 4,085 dunams (988 acres) in size, and populated by approximately 1,780 residents.

Approximately 55% of Bil'in's agricultural land has been declared 'State Land' by Israel and confiscated for the construction of the settlement bloc, Modi'in Illit. Modi'in Illit holds the largest settler population of any settlement bloc, with over 42,000 residents and plans to achieve a population of 150,000.

Prior to 1948, Bil'in spanned 4,085 dunams. Starting in 1982 and again in 1991, around 1,980 dunams were taken. Another 260 dunams were taken for construction of the Wall in 2005.

In 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that the Wall was contrary to international law, particularly International Humanitarian Law. The Court went on to rule that Israel's settlements are illegal under the same laws, noting that the Wall's route is intimately connected to the settlements adjacent to the Green Line, further annexing 12% of the West Bank to Israel.

Despite the advisory opinion, early in 2005, Israel began constructing the separation Wall on Bil'in's land, cutting the village in half in order to place Modi'in Illit and its future growth on the "Israeli side" of the Wall.

In March 2005, Bil'in residents began to organize almost daily direct actions and demonstrations against the theft of their lands. Gaining the attention of the international community with their creativity and perseverance, Bil'in has become a symbol for popular resistance. Almost five years later, Bil'in continues to have weekly Friday protests.

Bil'in has held annual conferences on popular resistance since 2006, providing a forum for activists, intellectuals, and leaders to discuss strategies for the non-violent struggle against the Occupation.

Israeli forces have used sound and shock grenades, water cannons, rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas grenades, tear gas canisters and 0.22 caliber live ammunition against protesters.

On 17 April 2009, Bassem Abu Rahma was shot with a high-velocity tear gas projectile in the chest by Israeli forces and subsequently died from his wounds at a Ramallah hospital.

Out of the 75 residents who were arrested in connection to demonstrations against the Wall, 27 have been were arrested after the beginning of a night raid campaign on 23 June 2009.

In addition to its grassroots movement, Bil'in turned to the courts in the fall of 2005. In September 2007, 2 years after they initiated legal proceedings, the Israeli High Court of Justice ruled that due to illegal construction in part of Modi'in Illit, unfinished housing could not be completed and that the route of the Wall be moved several hundred meters west, returning 25% of Bil'in's lands to the village. To date, the high court ruling has not been implemented and settlement construction continues.