

# Don't demolish our school!

## Ras at-Tin as a case study

### The situation of schools for herder communities in Area C

Bimkom's mapping and analysis of some 260 paths that connect 130 Area C herder villages (Bedouin and non-Bedouin) to the schools which the children of the communities attend, shows that level of access to the schools is low and the level of difficulty is high. As a result, it is a significant effort for many students to reach their schools, and some are simply unable to get there.

Our analysis shows that 64% of the paths that connect the children's homes to the schools in which they study (a total of 169 paths), are greater than two kilometers in length. 37% of the paths (98 in total) are even longer than five kilometers.

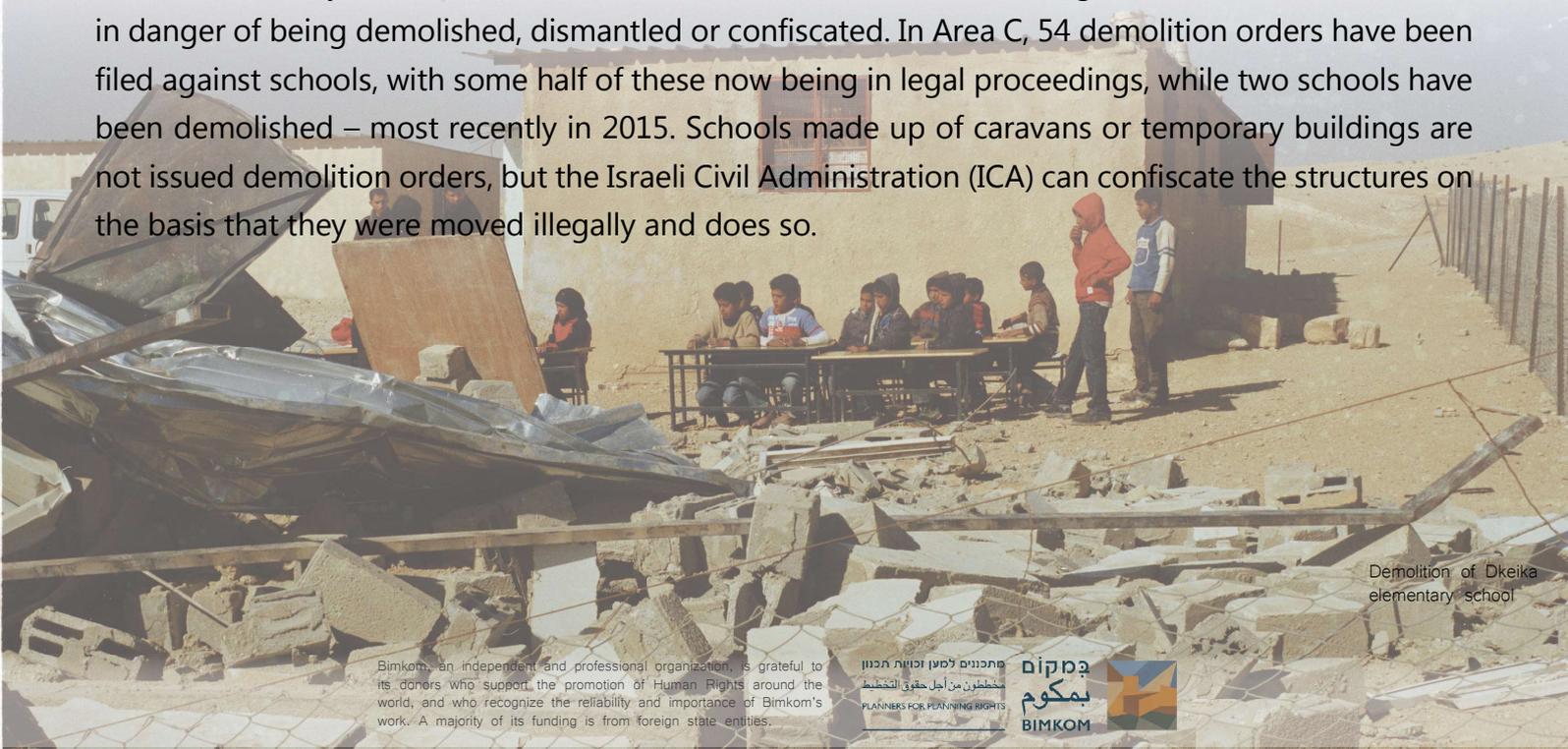
Some 43% of the paths that connect schools to communities include difficult walking, meaning that a significant proportion of children have a long and hazardous way to get to school on a daily basis. In times of harsh weather, some of the roads become impassible. It is therefore not surprising that many students miss out on studies and even stop them altogether.



The way to Wadi Abu Hindi school from Al Muntar

### Demolition orders and actual demolitions of schools in Area C

Given the great difficulty in getting to schools, many communities, placing great importance on their children's education, attempt to establish local schools, shared by several nearby villages, in order to increase their children's ability to attend. However, Israel's planning policy in Area C severely limits any Palestinian development, including the establishment of schools, thus there is a real danger to any school built. Many such schools have received demolition orders and a significant number of them are in danger of being demolished, dismantled or confiscated. In Area C, 54 demolition orders have been filed against schools, with some half of these now being in legal proceedings, while two schools have been demolished – most recently in 2015. Schools made up of caravans or temporary buildings are not issued demolition orders, but the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) can confiscate the structures on the basis that they were moved illegally and does so.



Demolition of Dkeika elementary school



## Ras at-Tin

Now, one remote community has set up its own small school for its younger students. But this school, built by the residents themselves, is under real threat of demolition in the coming days. We need your help now to keep the school standing! The village is a community of herders, mostly Bedouins from the Ka'abna tribe who were originally from the South Hebron Hills area. In 1971, after being expelled from their lands, the residents came to the northeastern edges of Ramallah, where they found a space where they could continue their traditional herding lifestyle. More than twenty years ago, due to a lack of grazing areas, they moved to the Ras at-Tin area and settled there with the consent of the landowners. It should be noted that these are undisputed privately owned lands.

According to the statutory plan for this area (Plan S / 15 approved during the British Mandatory era), the area is defined as agricultural but according to the provisions of the plan, a school may be built there, such that there is no legal barrier to the school's establishment. However the Israeli authorities have a new interpretation of the provisions of the plan, and do not approve building permits by virtue of the Mandatory plans.

In addition, the Civil Administration does not recognize the unique way of life of the herder communities and has two general approaches to them: home demolitions and attempts to relocate the residents. This is the case for Ras at-Tin, one of some 40 Bedouin communities from the central West Bank, that are expected to be forcibly removed to the planned town of Nuweima, north of Jericho. In this way, some 12,000 Bedouins are to be resettled in a limited area without reference the needs of the residents, their way of life and their culture. For now, this particular plan has been halted but the Israeli intentions of demolition and expulsion have not been abandoned.

The path connecting the homes and the new school in Ras at-Tin to the old school in Mughayir



Children in Ras at-Tin



Even in normal times, few Ras at-Tin children regularly attend the “nearest” school in the distant village of Mughayir. Today with the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, and required physical distancing, they may not come to the school – and they cannot learn remotely due to lack of electricity, internet and computers. The best solution for them is a school in their own village.

The Ras at-Tin school is of immense importance to its students. For many it is their only chance to be part of the education system because it is near to home: those who have never been to school; those who dropped out of school; and those who were often absent because of the long and hard way to school – and now the virus. The demolition of the school will deprive these children of the only option to exercise their right to education.

Bimkom prepared an expert opinion highlighting the importance of the school to the community as part of a petition to the district court, however the court approved the demolition. An appeal against this decision has been submitted to the Supreme Court, but we cannot be sure that it will be successful.

## We need you to speak out for the children of Ras at-Tin!

The school of Ras at-Tin – under threat of demolition