



The Jewish National Fund is trying to displace another Palestinian family from Silwan

## Description

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JNF

The Shaludi family are the target of one of the latest disputes in a campaign of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement, carried out by the Israeli occupation in [Silwan, East Jerusalem](#). They have lived in their home in the Wadi Hilweh neighbourhood since 1964, but attempts are now being made to forcibly displace them. And the Jewish National Fund (JNF) are at the centre of these actions.

## JNF trying to remove Shaludi family from their Silwan home for 62 years

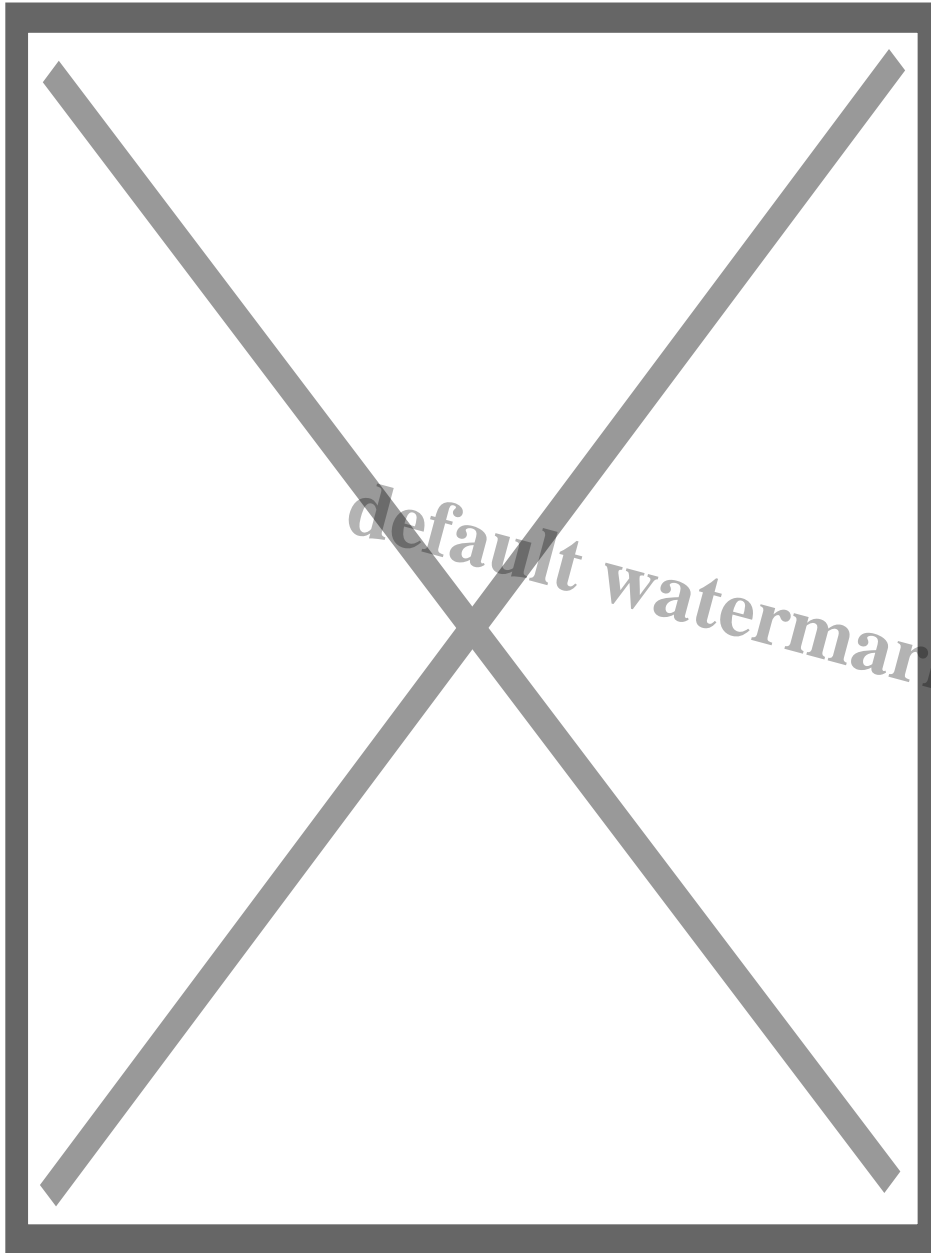
The eviction order follows a legal battle of more than three decades over ownership of the property, which is now held by Heimanuta, a subsidiary of the JNF. It was issued by the Israeli occupation's Execution Office following years of court proceedings concerning ownership of the property. According to Peace Now, the family was instructed to vacate the property by 24 June after Heimanuta sought to enforce a court ruling in its favour.

The Shaludi family have lived continuously in the house for more than 60 years. Abed Shaludi, who was born in the property, said his parents rented the house in 1964 and three generations of the family have since lived there.

He says:

My parents rented this house in 1964. I was born here 55 years ago, and here my four children were born. I have memories from every corner of this house. I cannot imagine

myself in another place? No one can give anyone the right to expel a person from his home and his land. This is an injustice and a crime.



## legal proceedings were inactive since the 1990s

Abed Shaludi said his family do not understand why the eviction was now being enforced after legal proceedings had remained inactive since the 1990s.

The property originally belonged to Haj Musa Sumarin, a Palestinian resident of Silwan. After Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967, the house was classified as "absentee property" under Israel's Absentees' Property Law. Under that legislation, property belonging to individuals defined

as 'absentees' can be transferred to the Custodian of Absentee Property.

In 1991, ownership of the house was transferred to Heimanuta, a company wholly owned by the Jewish National Fund. Shortly afterwards, legal action began against the Shaludi family. The first lawsuit aimed to remove the family from the property. But the court ruled they were protected tenants and could remain in the house.

Several years later, Heimanuta returned to court, arguing the family's protected tenancy had ended. And, in 2004, the court accepted that argument. It then ruled in favour of the company. But implementation of the eviction did not occur straight away. This was because another legal case concerning ownership of the property was still before the courts.

That separate legal challenge focused on whether Sumarin had actually been an absentee under Israeli occupation law. Court rulings concluded he had not, because he continued living in Jerusalem until his death in 1983. But the occupation's courts said it found that some of his heirs were considered absentees. This finding allowed the transfer of the property to remain valid.

## JNF plays key role in displacing Palestinian residents of silwan

But according to Peace Now, and the Shaludis, the JNF was informed of the outcome of those proceedings. And the eviction order is now only just being enforced more than twenty years later.

Hagit Ofran is an Israeli peace activist and director of Peace Now's [Settlement Watch project](#). She tells the Canary the JNF plays a key role in the displacement of Palestinians in Silwan.

They have been responsible for the declaration of some 15 properties as 'absentee properties', and then received them from the government. In parallel, they made an agreement with the settlers, to let them do the legal proceedings for evicting the Palestinians, and then granting the houses to the settlers.

The Shaludi family's situation is part of a decades-long wider campaign of ethnic cleansing by 'Israel' in occupied East Jerusalem. It is yet another example of how the Absentees' Property Law is used to [steal Palestinian-owned property](#) and transfer it to settler organisations.

Israel's [Absentees' Property Law of 1950](#), defined any Palestinian who fled or was forcibly displaced from their home during the Nakba of 1948 as an 'absentee'. This is the case even if they remained within the borders of what became 'Israel'.

## Absentee Property Law is manipulated to favour Jews

Following the 1967 annexation of East Jerusalem, the Israeli occupation applied the law to the area. This meant many East Jerusalem Palestinians, who were forced to move to the occupied West Bank or Gaza, had their properties permanently seized. The law transferred all their movable and immovable assets to the 'Israeli state'.

The Absentee Property Law empowers [Israel](#) to seize property. So it is manipulated to dispossess Palestinians and transfer their assets to illegal Jewish settlers and their organisations. Human rights organisations, including [Adalah](#) and [Peace Now](#) have also documented settler-related organisations utilising fabricated paperwork to ultimately transfer the property to settler groups or the [Jewish National Fund](#)

The Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan is located immediately south of Jerusalem's Old City. The Israeli occupation's colonial project involves consolidating its control over East Jerusalem. This is especially true when it comes to the Old City and al Aqsa Mosque Compound. East Jerusalem is regarded by Palestinians as the future capital of a Palestinian state. But [Israel](#) claims the city is its unified capital. This is why it is attempting to forcibly displace Palestinians from areas such as Silwan.

## Legalising the illegal

Discriminatory legislation such as the Absentee's Property Law legalises the illegal actions of settlers, and Israeli occupation demolition orders, so-called ["archaeological"](#) excavations, settlement expansion and [eviction orders](#) are all used to forcibly displace Palestinians. Illegal Jewish settlements and tourist parks are taking their place in the occupation attempts to erase all signs of Palestinian history and heritage, and Judaise Silwan and the area.

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In solidarity with the Shaludi family, Peace Now, Ir Amim and other activists organised a protest in Silwan following the eviction order. They called on the JNF to halt the removal of the family.

The Shaludis continue looking for ways to remain in their property while campaigners call for the eviction to be stopped. It is unclear as yet whether further legal action will delay or prevent the eviction.

This criminal settler colonial organisation, responsible for dispossession and ethnic cleansing, has a [branch in the UK](#). It is a registered charity.

Featured image via [StopTheJNF](#)

By [Charlie Jaay](#)

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- 8. news
- 9. palestinian
- 10. silwan
- 11. the
- 12. trying

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