INTRODUCTION & PROBLEM ANALYSIS:
The threat of displacement through house demolitions and evictions makes daily life insecure for many Palestinians on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. In 2014 the threat became reality for more than 1,200 Palestinians. EAPPI and RHR contribute to protect vulnerable populations, many of them Bedouin villages. An Israeli plan to relocate around 7,000 Bedouin residing in 46 small villages in Area C is put in action, resulting in acute need for protective presence as well as legal assistance. Since 2011, NCA has deployed 70 Norwegian Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) to the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) to provide protective presence, report and refer cases to other organisations in the humanitarian system. As a partner of both EAPPI and NCA, Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) handled a total of 223 legal cases between 2011 and 2014 which in many cases had a life-changing impact on the daily lives of the individuals and communities they represented.

RESULTS:
EAPPI’s incident reports to the UN system and referrals to other organisations have been crucial to ensure both humanitarian and legal assistance to Palestinians on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. In 2014, EAs submitted a total of 473 incident reports to the UN on settler and military violence and harassment, demolitions, land confiscations, army incursions, clashes, and child arrests. NCA’s direct support enables RHR to continue their legal interventions on behalf of vulnerable residents of the South Hebron Hills, Bethlehem and Hebron areas.

Focus on Susiya, summer 2015: International media and delegations visited. Ecumenical Accompanier Dianna from Canada is interviewed.
Photo: Leif Magne Helgesen/Norwegian Church Aid/EAPPI
Between 2011 and 2014, RHR’s work resulted in 10 km² of land being returned to their owners, 10 demolition orders being frozen and farmers being seen working their land with army protection. Both EAPPI’s and RHR’s involvement in the Bedouin village Susiya in South Hebron Hills continued with high intensity over the summer of 2015, awaiting the final ruling of the Israeli High Court. EAPPI ensured support to Susiya during seven weeks of the summer through around-the-clock protective presence in the village by a total of nine EAs - one of them deployed by NCA. Through its networks NCA, EAPPI and RHR have also advocated directly to ministers and government officials as well as through news and social media, resulting in political pressure on Israel from both within and internationally. The solidarity and support from EAPPI and RHR has contributed to strengthen the vulnerable population’s resilience to withstand the occupation.

LESSONS LEARNED:
The need for interventions of EAPPI and RHR, as well as the humanitarian system at large, has increased over the past years as the situation for Palestinians on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem is deteriorating. The work of EAPPI and RHR has not changed the political situation but has made an important difference to vulnerable individuals and communities. Combining protective presence, advocacy and legal assistance protective has – not least in the Susiya case - proved to be effective in raising international awareness and ensuring political pressure that may lead to change in Israel’s respect for International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law.

PROJECT/PROGRAMME SCOPE:
With an annual number of EAs reaching 127-130 in the years between 2011 and 2014, EAPPI covered almost 190 villages on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. In the same period, RHR represented Palestinian land owners in 28 villages. EAPPI and RHR are components of NCA’s Fait Communities and Peacebuilding program, which is fully funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Total support to EAPPI and RHR totals NOK 13,700,000 mill. and NOK 3,650,000 respectively for the years 2011 through 2015.

SOURCES:

PARTNERS:
World Council of Churches, Rabbis for Human Rights