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Press release:

## **HJC issues order asking the state to explain why an illegally-built park in a settlement isn't demolished**

**The Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) issued an interlocutory order, asking the state to explain within 60 days "why it wouldn't take all necessary measures to execute the demolition orders" of a park in Modi'in Ilit.**

A little over a year ago, on April 22, 2009, Palestinian residents of Na'alín filed a petition to the High Court of Justice assisted by human rights group Yesh Din. The petition requested implementation of demolition orders issued for the park, built at the entrance to the West Bank settlement of Modi'in Ilit.

The park was built in part on private lands belonging to the petitioners, the brothers Muhammad and Hamed Alhawaja, and includes some 22 acres of lawns, strolling paths, playground facilities and an amphitheater. Its construction lasted five years, from 2002 to 2007.

The Civil Administration issued cease-work orders and demolition orders for the site in 2006, but ten months later, in May 2007, has yet to enforce them. That month, it announced that "As for further treatment of the work done in the area, if such is necessary, it will be determined according to procedures and priorities."

Last Thursday the HJC held a hearing in the case, and after the hearing the court issued the interlocutory order.

"This case demonstrated a horrid phenomenon: an Israeli governing body invaded an area outside its jurisdiction, stole a piece of farmland belonging to the villagers of Na'alín, and by abusing the owners' inability to access it, built a park there. We welcome the interlocutory order and furthermore demand that a criminal investigation be opened against the people involved in this illegal project", said Attorney Avisar Lev of the Yesh Din legal team.

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