

Bringing Hope: Stories of Resilience and Relief



In the Face of numerous challenges, the Housing Development and Infrastructure Support (HDIS) project has become a lifeline for families struggling to hold on to their homes and dignity in East Jerusalem. This project, driven by the Palestinian Housing Council's mission to provide safe, secure, and adequate housing, has not only protected homes but also empowered communities to face difficult realities with renewed strength and hope. The success of this Project is reflected in the stories of the families who have benefitted from it, each one a testament to resilience, determination, and the hope that this project fosters.

Take Bahjat Abu Sarhan, a father of six, who embarked on a journey to provide his family with a home they could call their own. For years, they lived in overcrowded conditions in his parents' house, sharing just one bedroom, a bathroom, and a kitchenette. In determination to give his children a better life, Bahjat spent nearly four years and 50,000 euros proving his ownership of the land where he planned to build their new home. In 2020, when the building permit finally came through, he faced another hurdle—Financial strain. They had exhausted their savings and could not complete the critical requirements that enabled them to inhabit his house. However, with a grant from PHC, they were able to finish construction, and today, the family lives in a home that fits their needs. Today, when Bahjat walks through the doors of his finished house, he isn't just opening the door to a building—he's opening the door to a future filled with hope, where his children can dream and thrive.

Then there's the story of Taghreed and Khalid Al-Sayyad, a couple who faced the threat of losing their home in Silwan. In 2008, occupation authorities issued a demolition order for the house. Determined to stay, Khalid took matters into his own hands and demolished part of the house to avoid losing everything. The financial strain of rebuilding and obtaining the necessary permits was overwhelming—they had to sell possessions just to cover the costs. They explained that even after restoring their home, they still lived in constant fear of harassment. But with help from the PHC, they finally secured all the legal paperwork, keeping

their home safe, with the legal documents they obtained through the support of this project, they now feel confident to stand up to any authorities threatening to demolish their home, resisting the fear tactics they had previously used. Their story highlights both the financial and emotional toll of staying rooted in Jerusalem, where the threat of displacement is a daily reality.



Figure 1 Beit Safafa, Family Home.

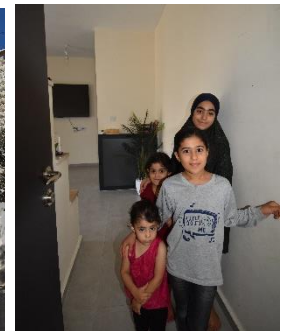


Figure 2 Bahjat's Family in their new home.

Another example from Beit Safafa is determination in the face of adversity. Having lived in his family's home since the 1950s, he had added a modest extension during his college years—a decision that led to a demolition order. After 23 years and an expenditure of nearly 175 thousand Euros, he finally secured the permits for the extension and even received permission to build a second floor. A much-needed financial boost came from the PHC's grant, a change that allowed him to finish the construction and ensure his family's security. For this resident, this marked the end of a long, exhausting battle and brought him peace of mind that his family's home was no longer under threat.

This project goes far beyond simply constructing houses—it's about restoring dignity, protecting homes, and empowering families in East Jerusalem to face the uncertain future with strength and confidence. Through financial aid, legal assistance, and infrastructure support, the project has helped families reclaim their homes and their sense of ownership. As the PHC's work grows, its impact deepens, bringing hope and stability to more families. For Palestinian Families, our homes represent much more than just four walls; they are symbols of resilience, a testament to our determination to create a future despite ongoing challenges.

