

For Immediate Release

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The problem of illegal garbage dumping in the West Bank – An old problem

(Jerusalem – April 13, 2005) – Caritas Jerusalem expresses its concern over the recently published media item in the Haaretz Newspaper "**Israel to dump 10,000 tons of garbage a month in the West Bank**" (April 4, 2005 – English Edition - <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/560414.html>). This news article summarizes the Israeli plan to bring garbage from Israel and deposit it in the West Bank. It states in the opening paragraph: "Israel has decided to transfer garbage beyond the Green Line for the first time since 1967." However, this is not exactly an accurate description of this issue. While this indeed might be the first time since 1967 that Israel plans to bring garbage from across the Green Line into the West Bank, it is a well known fact that the Israeli settlements have been illegally dumping garbage in the West Bank for many years creating an environmental disaster.

A new mountain of burning toxic refuse - The Haaretz article outlines a new plan to place garbage in a former stone quarry between the settlement of Kedumim and Nablus. Most other dumping events



are not so organized. They normally start out small, but seem to grow as time goes on. One area particularly hard hit has been the region of Tulkarem. "It began recently when the current mountain of smoking refuse started as a very small dump site on just a few dunams," said Mrs. Madeeha Al Araj, a community activist working with Civic Forum, a Palestinian NGO, in the Tulkarem region. Mrs. Al Araj continued: "Now it is a large mound of smoking garbage covering a huge area. People cannot believe it when they see it"

Photo above: This mound of burning garbage is located between Farun and Asbet Shufa just south of Tulkarem (Photo: M. Al Araj)

A physician from Tulkarem, Dr. Ziad Al Hajj Kasem has been working with a couple (pictured right) from the region negatively affected by this new illegal dump site which is located only 100 meters from their home. Mr. Khaled Hassan Merain, 50, and his wife, Subhiyyeh Halil Saeed are under Dr. Kasem's care for their respiratory problems. This family also has a three month old baby suffering day and night from this environmental nightmare. Mr. Merain said: "We cannot plant anything near our home because the new plants will be burned due to the fires that come from this dump. This smoke is killing us. We can't breathe. We suffer day and night from this problem. This is no environment for humans, especially a 3 month old child." This new illegal dump is harming the villages of Farun and Asbet Shufa which are located just to the south of Tulkarem city in the Northwestern West Bank.



Caritas Jerusalem calls for the end of all illegal dumping in the West Bank and Gaza and for the immediate steps to be taken by the responsible parties to rectify the personal and environmental damage already done. -END-

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