

## **UN: Israel demolished homes of 1,177 Palestinians in Jerusalem and West Bank in 2014**

Since the beginning of 2015, Israeli authorities destroyed 77 structures, displacing 110 Palestinians.

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By Amira Hass

Since the beginning of 2015, the Civil Administration of the Israel Defense Forces has demolished 77 homes, livestock pens, farm buildings and other structures of Palestinians in Area C of the West Bank, since they were built without building permits. As a result, 110 people, around half of them children, lost their homes at the height of the winter, according to a report compiled by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Between January 19 and January 26, the Civil Administration demolished 41 structures, OCHA said, far higher than the weekly average for 2014 of nine demolitions per week. In the seven-day period, Civil Administration inspectors delivered 45 construction stop orders and two demolition orders.

In 2014, the Civil Administration demolished the homes of 969 Palestinians — a total of 493 homes and ancillary structures — built without permits, in Area C of the West Bank, which under the Oslo Accords is under exclusive Israeli control. In East Jerusalem seven Palestinian buildings were demolished, including two on January 29 in the Jabal Mukkaber neighborhood. Buildings were also torn down in Isawiyah, Shoafat and Ras al Amud. In East Jerusalem, 208 Palestinians were displaced in 2014 after Israel demolished 97 buildings. In 2014, according to OCHA figures, the Israeli authorities destroyed 590 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem, displacing 1,177 people.

The 41 structures demolished by the Civil Administration between January 19 and January 26, according to OCHA, were in Bedouin and other pastoral communities in the area of Hebron, Jericho, Ramallah and Beit Iksa, northwest of Jerusalem. They included buildings that were donated by European humanitarian organizations. Construction stop orders were issued for a park funded by donor nations in the Yatta area and buildings in the Ramallah area and near Tubas, in the northern Jordan Valley.

On January 23, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, James W. Rawley, expressed his concern over the Israeli authorities' recent spate of demolitions of Palestinian homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. "In the past three days, 77 Palestinians, over half of them children, have been made homeless," said Mr. Rawley. "Some of the demolished structures were provided by the international community to support vulnerable families. Demolitions that result in forced evictions and displacement run counter to Israel's obligations under international law and create unnecessary suffering and tension. They must stop immediately," Rawley said.

Israel's planning policies very much limit the ability of Palestinians to build in East Jerusalem, discriminating against them compared to Jews. In Area C — the majority of the West Bank — except in certain exceptional cases, Israel does not allow Palestinians additional construction relative to the natural population growth, and does not allow connecting hundreds of communities with some 300,000 Palestinian residents to infrastructure (according to OCHA figures). Therefore, the three options facing people are living in crowded housing and difficult conditions, moving to the Palestinian enclaves in Areas A and B or building without permits, and out of a lack of choice repeated building with no permits.