

# *Israel Orders Punitive Demolition of Four Palestinian Homes in West Bank*

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Ramallah, July 5 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have issued punitive demolition orders for the homes of four Palestinian families over allegations that their relatives were involved in attacks on Israeli forces as the regime's forces kidnapped 30 Palestinians in West Bank raids. On Tuesday morning, Israeli forces raided Deir Abu Mashaal village in Ramallah, storming three homes belonging to the families of young men who were shot dead during an attack in East Jerusalem last month.

According to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, 22 people from the three families will be left homeless by the punitive demolitions. Israeli forces also raided the town of Silwad in the Ramallah district and delivered a demolition order to the family of Malik Ahmad Hamid, who was shot, injured and detained following an attack near the illegal Israeli settlement in April.

In many cases, the Palestinians are forced to demolish their own homes in an attempt to avoid paying hefty demolition costs to Israeli municipal authorities or paying heavy fines and legal costs which normally end in no useful result but destruction of the homes anyway. This is while Israel continues construction of its illegal settlements across the West Bank, despite the latest UN Security Council resolution against the measure.

Rights groups have warned that residents of Deir Abu Mashaal and Silwad have recently faced an escalating wave of “collective punishment” and restrictive measures on a routine basis, including mid-night home raids, arbitrary arrests and installation of roadblocks. “This automatic form of retaliation has become a matter of policy for the military, in a cynical abuse of its power to mistreat civilians,” Israeli NGO B’Tselem said last week.

The Israeli work permits of the family members of the alleged assailants have been revoked and family visitation permits of nearly 250,000 Palestinians to enter Jerusalem have been cancelled, B’Tselem said. Israeli authorities also refuse to return the bodies of the slain Palestinians to their families, alleging that funeral ceremonies of the Palestinians killed by Israeli forces incite violence against the regime.

B’Tselem slammed Israel for disrupting the lives of more than 10,000 innocent people in Silwad over no specific charges, noting: “This disruption of daily life is morally and legally indefensible, and is entirely based on a policy of violence that cynically exploits the military’s authority in order to abuse and intimidate a civilian population.”

The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed new tensions ever since Israeli forces introduced restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem in August 2015. More than 300 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in the ongoing tensions since the beginning of October 2015.

The Tel Aviv regime has tried to change the demographic makeup of Jerusalem over the past decades by constructing settlements, destroying historical sites and expelling the local Palestinian population. Palestinians say the Israeli measures are aimed at paving the way for the Judaization of the city.

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