

Rights group says Israeli demolition of Palestinian homes amounts to ethnic cleansing

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Israeli machinery demolish a Palestinian house located near Yatta in the southern area of the West Bank town of Hebron. (Photo: AFP)

Ramallah, November 6 (RHC)-- A human rights group says a recent Israeli demolition operation, which displaced dozens of Palestinian inhabitants in the occupied West Bank, amounts to “an ethnic cleansing.”

“The operation was conducted under the Israeli annexation and settlement-expansion schemes, which can only be described as an act of ethnic cleansing against the indigenous Palestinian population,” the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) said in a report on Thursday.

Late on Tuesday, the Israeli regime’s bulldozers, heavily guarded by soldiers, razed to the ground a Bedouin village in the vicinity of Tubas in the Jordan Valley, leaving homeless dozens of inhabitants of the village, half of whom were children.

The bulldozers proceeded to demolish 70 civilian properties, including storerooms and residential tents that sheltered 11 families composed of 60 persons, mostly children, PCHR said. Some sources earlier said that the Israeli demolition of the village displaced 73 villagers, including 41 children.

According to the report, the tented homes, animal shelters, latrines, and solar panels were among the structures that had been razed in the area.

The demolitions were preceded by the confiscation of several Palestinian vehicles and other possessions. The Israeli soldiers also raided Palestinian homes in the area and confiscated money and precious items from local residents.

On Wednesday, the displaced families were seen trying to salvage their belongings from the wreckage in the freezing rain.

A Palestinian aid group has provided tents as temporary shelter for those who lost their homes, but residents said they were not sufficient for the village's families, including children. They said villagers were now sleeping on the rubble of their destroyed shacks.

PCHR has called on the international community and UN bodies to uphold their legal and moral duties and to urgently intervene to curb Israel’s ongoing crimes against the Palestinians.

The European Union on Thursday called on Israel to stop demolishing Palestinian homes and buildings in the occupied West Bank and withdraw its threat to demolish Palestinian schools, slamming the move as “an impediment toward the two-state solution.”

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