

Israel demolishes over 50 Palestinian structures in two weeks

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A bulldozer escorted by Israeli forces demolish a Palestinian-owned structure in an area of the occupied West Bank.

United Nations, July 25 (RHC)-- The United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says Israeli authorities have confiscated large swathes of land and demolished more than 50 Palestinian-owned structures across the occupied West Bank in a time span of two weeks.

The OCHA said in its biweekly 'Protection of Civilians' report covering the period between June 28 and July 18 that some 47 of the targeted structures were demolished in Area C, which constitutes 61 percent of the West Bank and has been designated as 'firing zones' for Israeli military training.

Four structures were demolished in East al-Quds, including one home destroyed by its owners to avoid paying the fines issued by Israeli authorities. On four occasions, said the OCHA, Israeli forces conducted military training exercises near 13 Palestinian herding communities in Masafer Yatta area, south of al-Khalil. The drills restricted the access of Palestinians to basic services and put their safety at risk.

As a result, 40 people, including 21 children, were displaced, and the livelihoods of about 500 others were affected, OCHA added. An Israeli court recently approved the forcible eviction and expulsion of 1,144 people, including 569 children, living in Masafer Yatta.

In early July, Israeli authorities demolished a 200-meter-long concrete wall around a water spring facility near Nablus. The demolition directly affects access to water and the livelihoods of at least 22 households, comprising 132 people.

Israeli forces have on numerous occasions issued demolition and construction halt notices and flattened Palestinian houses in the area, accusing the owners of lacking building permits. A United Nations study says such permits are "virtually impossible" to obtain.

Critics say the demolitions are political in nature and part of the regime's policy of dispossession and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Israel occupied the West Bank, including the western part of the holy city of al-Quds, in 1967. It later annexed East al-Quds, which Palestinians want as the capital of their future state.

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