

Report reveals Israel expands demolition of Palestinian homes in West Bank

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Tel Aviv, February 10 (RHC)-- Israel has expanded demolition of Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank in defiance of international law and despite condemnation from across the world. An Associated Press report said the demolition of Palestinian homes across the occupied territories had increased since a far-right cabinet led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office.

The report, based on interviews and witness accounts of Palestinian victims, said the demolition campaign is part of the new cabinet's broader battle for control of east al-Quds, captured by Israel in the 1967 war. In the most recent campaign of destruction, Israeli authorities started to demolish 14 Palestinian homes in occupied East al-Quds last week.

The pretext is that the homes were built without a permit. Israeli authorities rarely, if ever, approve such permits for Palestinians. The demolitions began by order of Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

Palestinians regard ministers of the new cabinet, not least Ben-Gvir, as fascist for publicly advocating the expulsion of Palestinians and the demolition of their homes, supporting extremist Israeli groups attacking Palestinians, and stirring incitement to racism against Arabs and non-Jews. Many more Palestinian buildings are expected to be demolished since Israeli authorities have handed demolition notices to the owners.

Ratib Matar's family built three apartments on an eastern slope overlooking the ancient landscape of al-Quds before his granddaughters, now 4 and 5, were born. The 50-year-old construction contractor moved in with his brother, son, divorced daughter and their young kids — 11 people in all, plus a few geese. But Matar was never at ease. At any moment, Israeli officers could knock on his door and take everything away. That moment came on January 29.

"Our construction is under siege from Israel," Matar said. "We try really hard to build, but in vain." Ben-Gvir posted a photo on Twitter of bulldozers clawing at Matar's home.

Last month, Israel demolished 39 Palestinian homes, structures and businesses in east Jerusalem, displacing over 50 people, according to the United Nations. That was more than a quarter of the total number of demolitions in 2022.

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