

UN reports Israel demolishes 52 Palestinian structures

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United Nations, December 15 (RHC)-- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says Israeli authorities have demolished more than 50 Palestinian structures in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds within the past two weeks.

The UN office said in a statement that 52 buildings were razed by Israeli forces in those areas on the pretext of lacking a building permit. The OCHA said a total of 49 structures were demolished in the West Bank. Israeli forces also brought down three buildings in East Jerusalem al-Quds between November 24th and December 7th, causing displacement of 67 Palestinians and causing harm to around 860 others.

Israel justifies the demolition of Palestinian homes by claiming that they lack building permits, despite the fact that Israel does not provide such permits to Palestinians. Moreover, Israel orders Palestinians to demolish their own homes or pay the demolition price to the municipality if they refuse to tear down their houses. Palestinians as well as the international community consider Israeli demolition politics in the

occupied territories illegal.

Separately, the European Union said in a statement that 200 Palestinian families are expected to be evicted from their homes in East Jerusalem al-Quds following court decisions in favor of settler organizations. “In the last several years, the number of eviction decisions has increased in particular in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan [neighborhoods], where entire communities of close to 200 families are at risk,” it said in a statement.

According to the statement, 14 families have already lost their homes in Batan al-Hawa neighborhood since 2015, and more than 80 other households are facing eviction demands and are at imminent risk of displacement.

The EU also reiterated its strong opposition to Israel's settlement expansion policy and actions taken in this context, including evictions. “This policy is illegal under international law and its continuation undermines the viability of the [so-called] two-state solution, the prospect for a lasting peace and seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem (al-Quds) serving as the future capital” of both Israel and Palestine, the EU statement highlighted.

Israel occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – besieged since 2007 – during the six-day Arab-Israeli war in 1967. Shortly after capturing East Jerusalem al-Quds, the Tel Aviv regime expanded the municipal boundaries of the city to take in large areas of land on which it later constructed settlements.

At the same time, it sharply limited the expansion of Palestinian neighborhoods, forcing many in the increasingly crowded areas to build illegally. More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

The UN Security Council has condemned Israel's settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

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