

# *Demolitions begin in occupied East Jerusalem's Silwan*

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**A view of the predominantly Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan [File: Thomas Coex/AFP]**

Ramallah, June 29 (RHC)-- Violence erupted after the demolition of a Palestinian business by Israeli forces began in the al-Bustan area of the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan on Tuesday.

Israeli forces accompanied by bulldozers entered the Palestinian neighbourhood and destroyed a butcher's shop in Silwan. Soldiers used tear gas and batons to push back residents and Palestinian activists as they carried out the demolition. At least four Palestinians were injured in the confrontations, according to the Palestine Red Crescent.

Al Jazeera's Harry Fawcett, reporting from Silwan, said Israeli soldiers arrived in large numbers early on Tuesday and there were "significant confrontations." "We spoke to the family [that owned the butchery] and they said Israeli forces came in and attacked them using tear gas and other means – a violent start to these demolitions. But this is not just about one shop. There are 20 other units that are in the same situation in this neighbourhood," he said.

Israeli forces also fired rubber-coated steel bullets to disperse angry Palestinians amid calls through mosque loudspeakers for residents to gather to protect their homes, witnesses said.

On June 7, the Jerusalem municipality issued a series of demolition orders to residents of the al-Bustan area in Silwan. The 13 families affected, consisting of some 130 people, were given 21 days to evacuate and demolish their houses themselves. Failure to do so would mean the municipality would destroy the houses and families would have to cover the demolition costs – an estimated \$20,000.

"This is how it works in occupied East Jerusalem," said Fawcett. "Families are given a 21-day order which says either demolish your own home once this order has lapsed, or we will do it and then charge you a \$20,000 fine for the trouble of having to demolish your home." He added an Israeli law has made it difficult for Palestinian families to appeal the demolition orders before the courts.

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