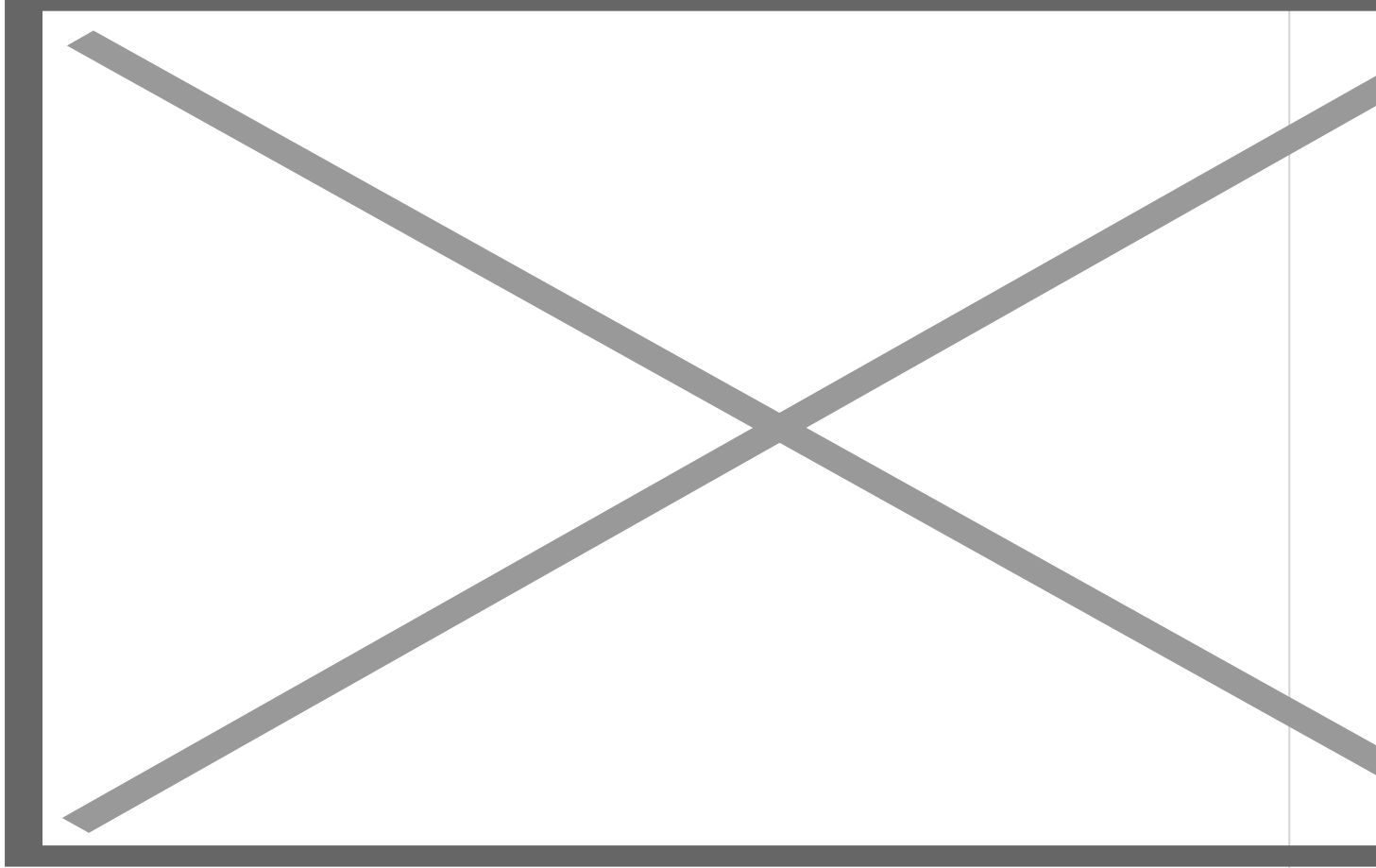


Israel forces Palestinian to demolish own store as illegal settlements grow

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A file photo shows a Palestinian using a crack hammer to self-demolish his house in al-Quds. (Via Wafa news agency)

Ramallah, January 16 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have forced a Palestinian to demolish a commercial unit in the occupied al-Quds, as Tel Aviv continues to press ahead with its illegal settlement expansion and land grab policies across the Palestinian territories despite international outcry.

The Palestinian media reported on Thursday that the Israeli authorities left Jamal Mohammad Ali with no choice but to totally knock down a commercial store belonging to him in Shuafat refugee camp. The Palestinian resident had to begin demolishing the structure, which had an area of 150 square meters and was still under construction, with his own hands to avoid paying unreasonable demolition costs to the Israeli municipality.

Also on Wednesday, Israeli forces tore down about a dozen Palestinian-owned buildings and structures in the occupied West Bank city al-Khalil. They forced their way and carried out a large-scale demolition campaign east of Yatta town, south of al-Khalil.

At least five houses, five agricultural facilities, and a water well were demolished during the campaign. Israel routinely demolishes Palestinian houses in the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds, claiming that the structures have been built without the so-called permits, which are almost impossible to obtain. They also sometimes order Palestinian owners to demolish their own houses or pay the costs of the demolition if they do not.

The Tel Aviv regime plans to force out Palestinian families from different neighborhoods in East al-Quds in an attempt to replace them with settlers. The United Nations has reported a 21 percent increase in the number of Palestinian structures that were confiscated or destroyed this year.

The international community considers Israeli settlement construction illegal under international law. Nearly 700,000 Israelis live in illegal settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

Heights by establishing two new settlements in the region within the next four years
The UN Security Council has in several resolutions condemned Tel Aviv's settlement projects in the occupied Palestinian lands.

The theft of land across the occupied territories has pushed residents into a crowded enclave surrounded by walls, settlements, and military installations. In May, Israel's land grab in the occupied West Bank sparked a war between the military and Palestinian resistance groups in the Gaza Strip that lasted 11 days.

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