

Israeli forces raze four Palestinian-owned homes and structures in West Bank

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In this file photo, an Israeli bulldozer demolishes a Palestinian-owned home while Israeli occupation forces watch the process.

Ramallah, December 15 (RHC)-- In the latest escalation against Palestinians, Israel has demolished several Palestinian-owned homes and other structures in the occupied West Bank. Israeli forces destroyed four homes located in the village of al-Jiftlik, north of the ancient city of Jericho on Tuesday,

under the pretext that they were built without so-called permits in Area C of the occupied West Bank, which is under Israeli military rule.

Also in the West Bank, Israeli military forces knocked down 17 metal barns Palestinians use to raise livestock. Livestock is an important sector of the Palestinian economy, contributing up to 46 percent of total agricultural income.

The head of the village council, Ahmad Abu Ghanem, told Wafa news agency that soldiers stormed into the village and proceeded to demolish the four homes with a bulldozer. "The destruction left several families homeless, and the demolition operations are still ongoing," he said.

The Israeli army routinely demolishes Palestinian houses in the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds, claiming that the structures lack so-called construction permits, a pretext widely used by the apartheid regime. The construction permits are almost impossible to obtain. Almost 75 percent of applications for a permit by Palestinian residents of al-Quds are rejected by the Israeli municipality, according to rights groups.

The demolitions come within the context of forcing out Palestinian families from different neighborhoods across the Occupied Palestinian territories and replacing them with illegal Israeli settlers. Israeli settlers have also been aiding the Israeli occupation army in the illegal destruction of structures owned by Palestinians.

Based on an internal official document it had obtained, Haaretz newspaper uncovered on Monday there is a close cooperation between Israeli illegal settlers and the Israeli local authorities to report any Palestinian construction work in the occupied West Bank in an effort to dispossess Palestinians.

The document revealed that through an online platform, Israeli settlers provide tip-offs on any activity carried out by Palestinians, not only on house constructions, but also activities such as "digging wells" and "planting trees."

Critics are expecting more escalation against Palestinians as Israel's most far-right and pro-settler administration in its history is being sworn in during one of the deadliest years for Palestinians.

Since the beginning of 2022, Israeli occupation forces have demolished more than 320 structures in the occupied West Bank and al-Quds, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Between 600,000 and 750,000 Israelis occupy over 250 illegal settlements that have been built across the West Bank since the 1967 occupation. The UN Security Council has in numerous resolutions condemned the Tel Aviv regime's settlement projects in the occupied Palestinian lands.

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