

# *Israel's Ben-Gvir orders demolition of Palestinian homes in East al-Quds during Ramadan*

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Palestinian Mahmoud Najajreh points at his demolished house, in Masafer Yatta, south of al-

## **Khalil, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on May 31, 2022. (By Reuters)**

Tel Aviv, March 8 (RHC)-- Israel's so-called national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has ordered the regime's forces to press ahead with the demolition of Palestinian homes that have purportedly been built "without permits" in occupied East al-Quds during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

According to the Israeli public broadcaster KAN, the Monday announcement comes despite the fact that the occupying regime has not carried out home demolitions during Ramadan in the past years in order to avoid tensions with Palestinians and their subsequent retaliatory operations. Ramadan, during which Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, is set to start later this month.

Meanwhile, the Israeli daily newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth said Israeli police warned Ben-Gvir that the fasting month of Ramadan could be extremely dangerous to implement the measure, as Palestinians are already stretched to the limit amid rising tensions across the occupied West Bank.

The demolition of Palestinian homes across the occupied territories has increased since the extremely far-right Israeli administration led by prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office.

Palestinians regard ministers of the new cabinet, especially far-right Ben-Gvir and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, as racist and fascist for publicly advocating the expulsion of Palestinians and the demolition of their homes, supporting Israeli extremist groups repeatedly attacking Palestinians, and stirring incitement to racism against Arabs and non-Jews.

Last week, Smotrich caused an uproar when he said the Palestinian town of Huwwara, south of Nablus, should be "wiped out." "I think the village of Huwwara needs to be wiped out. I think Israel should do it," he was quoted as saying by Israeli media outlets on March 1.

Smotrich's remarks were met with condemnations from the European Union and many countries around the world as incitement of violence and terrorism. The office of the European Union Representative in al-Quds condemned the remarks as "unacceptable," saying, "They incite to indiscriminate violence in a situation which is already extremely tense."

Israel routinely demolishes Palestinian houses in the occupied West Bank and East al-Quds. The regime alleges that the homes were built without a permit. However, the Israeli regime rarely, if ever, approves such permits for Palestinians. The Israeli forces also sometimes order Palestinian owners to demolish their own houses or pay the costs of the demolition.

Israel has already occupied thousands of square kilometers of Palestinian agricultural land to construct and expand new illegal settler units in various areas in the West Bank.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and al-Quds. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. The United Nations Security Council has condemned Israel's settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

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