



# ICAHD

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions  
الحركة الإسرائيلية ضد هدم البيوت  
הוועד הישראלי נגד הריסת בתים

**Resisting Apartheid, Building a Shared Democracy**

## DEMOLITION AND DISPLACEMENT REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2017

November has seen widespread demolitions throughout the occupied West Bank (including occupied East Jerusalem), with 33 structures demolished, 60 people displaced- 34 of whom are children- and more than 327 people affected by them. In the Naqab desert, Israel, 5 demolitions of residential structures were carried out. With most of the demolitions happening this month in Occupied East Jerusalem, the annual total of demolitions in the city alone has risen to 155, displacing at least 211 people.



### **Punative Demolitions**

Two Punitive demolitions have been carried out this month in the village of Beit Surik in the Ramallah region and the village of Yatta in South Mount Hebron, displacing a further 11 people, including seven children. Since the beginning of 2017, eight homes have been demolished or sealed on punitive grounds, displacing 44 Palestinians.



*Al Muntar school, photo by Lys Arango*

With two new schools- Al Muntar and Wadi as Seek- slated for demolition, more than 60 schools in the West Bank are currently at risk of demolition and hundreds of children are fighting for their right to education on a daily basis.

For the first time, Israeli authorities have issued a military order, which stipulates the destruction/removal of entire Palestinian communities rather than individual structures built without permits. The order was originally enacted, and used a number of times in the past, for the evacuation of unauthorized settlement

outposts; however, in 2015 the order was amended so it can be applied against Palestinians too. This month alone, **the Israeli army has issued these orders to three Palestinian herding communities: Ein al Hilwe and Um Jmal in the northern Jordan valley, and in Jabal al Baba in the Jerusalem periphery.** The latter is in the area of the E1 settlement plan, designed to link Ma'ale Adumim with Jerusalem. As a result, a total of 520 structures, including 130 previously provided as aid, are at risk of destruction or seizure, and 419 people, about half of them children, are at heightened risk of forcible transfer.

We are witnessing a significant risk of entire villages being demolished, schools under threat of demolition, a rise in self demolitions and numerous demolition orders issued to Palestinians throughout the country. There is great concern to the already vulnerable communities in Area C –area under full Israeli civil and military control – and in occupied East Jerusalem.

- The Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality reported that on 1 November 2017 Israeli authorities uprooted crops and demolished structures in the Naqab desert; in Tal as-Saba (Tel Sheva), a Bedouin planned town, a ditch and a fence were demolished. Later on that day, in the Bedouin recognized village of Gasir as-Sirr, a palm grove was uprooted.
- On 2 November 2017, in the Al 'Arrub refugee camp, a structure was demolished, affecting 16 people from three households.
- On Tuesday, 7 November 2017 Israeli soldiers carried out several demolitions in the Jordan Valley region: three houses in the village of Al Jiftlik-ash-Shuneh were demolished, displacing 38 people from three. The same day, in the village of Furush Beit Dajan, Nablus, a storehouse was demolished affecting 20 people from two households,
- On 8 & 9 November 2017 Israeli officials, escorted by police forces, carried out demolitions and uprooted trees in the unrecognized Bedouin communities in the Naqab desert. A structure was demolished in Karkur; at Umm Batin dozens of young olive trees were uprooted and a fence was destroyed; near Abu Talul village Israeli forces uprooted dozens of young olive trees and destroyed dozens of large straw bales as well as a fence; On Thursday at Bir Hadaj they demolished a grocery store and a fence; At Abu Karinat near 'Ararat, they destroyed a shack and a fence.
- On 8 November 2017, three demolitions took place in occupied East Jerusalem: in the neighborhood of Ras al 'Amud two structures were demolished affecting seven people. In the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah a structure was demolished affecting five people.

- Two cases of self demolitions took place in Silwan, occupied East Jerusalem: On 11 November 2017 a Palestinian family of five had to self-demolish parts of their own house after the Israeli authorities issued them with a demolition order on the grounds of illegal building. The Al Dweik family who live in the Al-Bustan neighborhood of Silwan had little choice after the municipality ordered them to either demolish the house themselves or bear the costs of the municipality's demolition- some 80,000 NIS (US\$ 22,000). Demolitions aren't new to residents in Al-Bustan as 88 of the houses there are slated for demolition leaving around 1,570 residents under threat of displacement.
- On Monday 13 November 2017 late at night the Abbasi family demolished their small shop they built two years ago, after the Jerusalem municipality threatened to demolish it on the grounds of illegal construction. The municipality informed the Abbasi's two weeks prior to the demolition that if they didn't demolish their shop within 30 days, its crews will demolish it and they will be liable to pay for the demolition costs.

The residents of Al-Bustan have been embroiled in a decades-long battle that begun in the late 1970's after the Israeli government embarked on a plan to build a national park in the area, with the city's master plan defining the area as an open space where construction was prohibited, according to Israeli rights group B'tselem. Due to the designation, residents have long faced great difficulties contending with demolition orders issued against the homes that were built there without permits-mostly in the 1980's- due to the increased population in the area. The municipality began issuing demolition orders and indictments to homes in Al-Bustan in 2005 as part of Israeli authorities' plan to establish the Jewish site "King David's Garden" in Silwan and around the "Holy Basin", which includes many Christian and Muslim holy sites. Silwan is one of many Palestinian neighborhoods in Occupied East Jerusalem that has seen an influx of Israeli settlers at the cost of home demolitions and the eviction of Palestinian families.

- On 15 November 2017, several demolitions and confiscations took place in occupied East Jerusalem: Dozens of policemen and soldiers raided the neighborhood of Al 'Isawiya in the early hours of Wednesday morning and proceeded to demolish two structures. Special forces surrounded a building that was under construction and demolished it. The Israeli authorities claimed the building was being built without a legal building permit although the case was pending in court upon a decision. The demolition occurred with no prior notice, clearly violating the Israeli court's own decision and preventing the owner of any chance for due process. The demolition affected six people from two The second demolition had left six people affected. The same day, three structures were confiscated by Israeli authorities in Wadi al Joz, affecting 21 people from three households.

Testimonies collected by the Applied Research Institute -Jerusalem (ARIJ) found that the procedures to apply for Israeli-issued building permits were lengthy, sometimes lasting for several years, while the application costs could reach up to 300,000 shekels (\$79,180). As four out of five Palestinians in Occupied East Jerusalem live under the poverty line, applying for costly building permits is nearly impossible, leading to only 7% of the building permits that are issued in Jerusalem to go to Palestinian neighborhoods.

- Early morning on Wednesday 15 November 2017 Israeli soldiers and border police forces entered the West Bank village of Beit Surik, Northwest of Jerusalem and demolished the home of Nimer al-Jamal who carried out a shooting attack in September 2017. The punitive demolition caused significant damage to two other apartments in the building. The demolition left 11 people displaced. Israel made frequent use of

punitive home demolitions until 2005, when the government decided to stop employing the measure. However, in 2014 it was brought back to use. On 16 November 2017, a number of demolitions took place: Israeli forces had demolished a Palestinian house in the village of Ni'lin, west of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, claiming the family had built the house illegally. The Awad family managed to salvage some of their belongings before the demolition ended, leaving the family of eight homeless. Another Ni'lin family was handed a demolition order under the same pretext that Nearly all Palestinian applications for building permits in Area C – which comprises of 62% of the occupied west bank- are denied by the Israeli authorities, forcing communities to build illegally, and placing them under the constant risk of demolitions at the hands of Israeli forces.

- The same day, in the Naqab desert, the unrecognized Bedouin village of Al Arakib was demolished for the 120<sup>th</sup>. From there, the police forces moved to a small Bedouin dwelling near Tel Sheva and forced an owner of a tent and his family to demolish their tent in which the family resided.
- Later that day, in Tubas, Jordan Valley, the Al Hadidiya herding community had 2 structures demolished by Israeli authorities, affecting 152 people from 24 households.
- in Yatta, Hebron region, a punitive demolition was carried out. The Israeli security forces demolished a room in the home of Khaled Mahamreh, a Palestinian who carried out a shooting attack last year in Tel Aviv. The house was already partially demolished, but after Israeli authorities discovered that the family remained to live in the partially demolished house it moved to demolish the remaining room and seal the house completely, leaving the family of 8 homeless.
- On 21 November 2017 a structure was demolished in Rantis, Ramallah affecting 14 people.
- The same day, two homes were demolished in the recognized Bedouin village of Bir Hadaj in the Naqab desert.
- On Wednesday, 22 November 2017, large scale demolitions took place all around the occupied West Bank: In occupied East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities demolished a building under construction consisting of two apartments – 170 square meters each – owned by Mohammad Abu Khdeir in the Shu'fat neighborhood. In Al 'Isawiya, a 140 square meter house- which has been under construction for two years- owned by Sharif Mohassan was destroyed affecting six people. Two days prior to the demolitions residents of Al 'Isawiya – which is located right by the Hebrew university- held a vigil in the entrance to their neighborhood protesting the escalation of home demolitions. Another two apartments were demolished in the Northern neighborhood of Beit Hanina, owned by Issam Al-Rajabi. The house, built in 2009, was divided to accommodate his married son. Mr. Al-Rajabi and his family – a wife and eight sons, all but one of whom is under the age of 18 – lived in the other unit, 150 square meters in size. Despite the demolition order stipulating an area of 30 meters to be demolished, the Jerusalem municipality took down the entire house; In the Jordan Valley, a residential structure was demolished in the village of Al Jiftlik –abu al 'ajaj, displacing five people and an animal barn was demolished in the village of Al Jiftlek-ash-Shuneh affecting 11 people. In Furush Beit Dajan, Nablus a caravan trailer was demolished, irrigation pipes and a vegetable garden were damaged and a water tank was emptied and destroyed affecting nine people; In Halaweh, Masafer Yatta, South Mount Hebron, Israeli forces demolished a residential structure and an animal barn displacing four people; In the village of Battir, Bethlehem, two structures including a house owned by Nidal Abdullah- who had previously had his home demolished- were demolished, affecting

eight people. In Karkur, a structure in an unrecognized Bedouin village in the Naqab desert was demolished.

All the structures demolished that day were based on the grounds of Illegal building.

- On the 24 November 2017, a structure was demolished in Umm Tuba, occupied East Jerusalem affecting four people.
- On Sunday 26 November 2017, the Wafa news agency reported that Jamal Omar Abu Tair demolished his own home in the town of Umm Tuba, occupied East Jerusalem, after he received a demolition order on the grounds of not having a legal building permit. The Israeli authorities conditioned him that he either moves to demolish his own home or he will have to bare the cost of the demolition fee. Many Palestinian families Like Abu Tair are forced to demolish their own homes to avoid the high cost of fighting the decision in court or even paying the Jerusalem municipality's demolition fee.
- On 27 November 2017, a structure was demolished in Al Bowereh (Aqabat Injeleh), Hebron affecting 10 people.

### **Communities facing heightened risk of forcible transfer**

#### **Kafr 'Aqab, Jerusalem**

At the beginning of November 2017, Israeli authorities have published their intention to demolish an entire neighborhood in Kafr 'Aqab, occupied East Jerusalem. The Al Matar neighborhood consists of six Palestinian owned buildings, each containing 6-7 floors and all together 138 apartments. The neighborhood's mosque, built inside one of the buildings, will be demolished as well. As oppose to other demolitions, the buildings are scheduled to be blown up using explosives. The buildings are located on the route of a planned road designed to connect Jerusalem to the Qalandiya checkpoint. Kafr 'Aqab is located within the Jerusalem municipal boundaries and most of its residents hold Israeli ID'S, however, since 2002 when it was physically severed from the rest of the city by the Separation Wall, the neighborhood receives almost no municipal services although the residents living there continue to pay their taxes and are entitled to services. The buildings were built in the past two years and according to the owners, around 200 families have bought or rented apartments in them spending large sums of money to secure a house in one of the only neighborhoods that offers new residential housing for East Jerusalem Palestinian residents.

#### **Um Jmal & Ein al Hilwe, Northern Jordan Valley**

On 16 November 2017 the United Nations office for the coordination of Humanitarian affairs (OCHA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories issued an urgent statement describing the events that took place in the area: On 9 November 2017, the residents found on the side of a nearby road a military order, dated 1 November 2017, demarcating an area of some 550 dunums (around 135.9 acres), which includes the area of the two communities, where all property should be removed from within eight days. According to a rapid field assessment carried out by OCHA, a total 129 people, of whom 61 are children, currently live in the two communities, including 15 households residing in the area all year round and five on a seasonal basis. Within the designated area there are 140 structures, of which 29 are residential, 60 are livestock-related structures (the residents own 1,390 heads of sheep, 655 cows and 20 camels), and the rest are kitchens, latrines and solar panel units. Nearly half of all these properties are donor-funded

structures provided as humanitarian assistance. The land in the affected area is owned either by the Latin Patriarchate or privately by individual Palestinians. However, none of the communities has a planning scheme and, consequently, all structures lack Israeli-issued building permits. One of the communities (Um Jmal) is also partially located in an area designated as a 'firing zone' for military training, where access is prohibited. On 11 November 2017, the communities' lawyer filed an objection against the order with the Israeli military commander, which should be answered within seven days, during which enforcement measures are unlikely. If the objection is rejected, there is an option to petition the Israeli High Court of Justice. This is apparently the first time that this military order, which stipulates the destruction/removal of entire communities rather than individual structures built without permits, is being applied against Palestinians. The order was originally enacted, and used a number of times in the past, for the evacuation of unauthorized settlement outposts; however, in 2015 the order was amended so it can be applied against Palestinians too.

### **Jabal al Baba, E1, Jerusalem periphery**

The Bedouin community of Jabal al Baba in the E1 area are under immediate threat of forcible transfer after receiving a military order on 16 November 2017 that declared part of the land as a "Restricted Area"- a map was attached to the order designated the targeted area. The order was issued on 1 November 2017, but the community received it only on the 16th. The order gave the community eight days to remove all the property from the designated area which is a privately owned by the Vatican. This order is similar to the order issued in the Jordan valley for the Ein al Hilwe community. a letter to the Israeli court of appeals was sent immediately by a lawyer from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Jabal al Baba is located in the heart of Israel's contentious E1 plan, which aims to connect the illegal settlement block of Ma'ale Adumim to Jerusalem. The plan would further isolate occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and sever the Palestinian territory from north to south. The Jabal al Baba community is home to more than 300 People, who mostly originate from the Naqab desert in the South of Israel. After being displaced from there in 1948 they moved to dwell in the area, which is located today in what is Area C, making it under full Israeli administrative and military control. While numerous houses in the community have been demolished in the past, the residents continue to build and to remain on their land. But the new practice of issuing a demolition order for the entire community will pose an incredible challenge for the steadfast residents.

### **Campaigns and Activities**

- On the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017, as part of a campaign trying to stop the planned demolitions of the two communities of Um Jmal and Ein al Hilwe in the Jordan Valley, a petition was issued By the "Valley Coalition" (a coalition of Israeli organizations that oppose the Israeli occupation) to the Israeli president and Israeli military commandos in charge of issuing the order. By the end of November the petition managed to get more than 1,600 Israelis to sign the petition. <https://my.zazim.org.il/p/valley>
- On 18 November 2017, dozens of Israelis went out on a solidarity visit in the communities of Um Jmal and Ein al Hilwe in the Jordan Valley to show their solidarity and support with the residents and to protest against the planned demolitions.
- In an act of resistance, the Jabal al Baba community erected a massive 100 by 30 meter message with rocks, on their land in the West Bank, reading: "We shall remain." Three hours later, dozens of Israeli forces stormed the village with military vehicles and destroyed the stone monument.

- A campaign to stop the planned demolition of the Jabal al Baba community has been started on Avazz and has collected more than 880,000 signatures so far. [https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stop\\_the\\_bulldozers\\_loc/](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stop_the_bulldozers_loc/)