

Demolitions of Palestinian buildings in the West Bank

Israel has been demolishing Palestinian homes, schools, water and electricity infrastructure, and other structures in Area C of the West Bank as part of a deliberate policy. The policy appears aimed at driving Palestinians out of large parts of Area C into urban areas, facilitating Israel's de facto annexation of the Area C. The demolitions center on three strategically important areas: the South Hebron Hills, the so-called E-1 area between Jerusalem and the Ma'ale Adumim settlements, and the Jordan Valley. In addition to Area C, Israel also carries out demolitions in East Jerusalem.

Demolitions of all Palestinian structures in the West Bank¹

- Since the beginning of **2009** when Netanyahu became PM up till now, Israel has demolished **5293** Palestinian structures in the West Bank, displacing **8540** people from their homes.
- Since the beginning of **2017** up till now, Israel has demolished **414** structures, displacing **657** people from their homes.
- Some **12,500** Palestinian structures in Area C of the West Bank currently have outstanding demolition orders issued by Israel, which could be implemented at any moment.

Demolitions of EU-funded humanitarian structures in the West Bank (subset of the above)²

- Since the beginning of **2009**, Israel has demolished some **400** EU- and member state-funded structures, worth over **€ 1.2 million** in EU assistance.
- Since the beginning of **2017** up till now, Israel has demolished **80** EU- and MS-funded structures worth over **€ 273,000** in EU assistance.
- These figures only cover the EU contribution to the humanitarian structures, not their full cost.

European response and compensation-seeking

- The EU's response to the demolitions of its projects has so far been rather timid: statements of protest and attempts at dialogue with Israel. Since December 2014, the EU and member states have also been mulling the possibility of seeking compensation from Israel.
- In October 2017, for the first time, a group of **8 EU countries** (Belgium, France, Spain, Sweden, Luxembourg, Italy, Ireland and Denmark) submitted a demarche to the Israeli government, demanding that Israel either restitutes recently demolished and confiscated projects or provides compensation for them. The demarche relates to demolitions and confiscations of school facilities and solar panels in two West Bank communities in August, worth € 31,252 in EU assistance. The text [says](#): "We still hope that our demands for restitution can be met without preconditions as soon as possible, otherwise Israel will have to provide compensation without delay".

Latest developments: communities under imminent threat

- Following very recent moves by the Israeli authorities, several Palestinian communities in strategically sensitive areas are now under imminent threat of demolitions that could raze the entire communities and forcibly evict hundreds of people. This includes the communities of **Jabal al-Baba** and **Khan al-Ahmar** in the periphery of Jerusalem, several communities in the Jordan Valley, and the well-known village of **Sussiya** in the South Hebron Hills.

¹ Source: UN OCHA figures as of 7 December 2017.

² Source: [EU Six-Month Report on Demolitions and Confiscations of EU funded structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem](#), October 2017; and UN OCHA figures as of 7 December 2017.

- The EU issued a [statement](#) on 24 November warning against these demolitions and on 4 December, EU diplomats [visited](#) Sussiya to express their concern. On 29 November, a group of [US Senators](#) wrote to Netanyahu urging him not to demolish these communities.

Permit system

- Israel demolishes Palestinian buildings formally on the grounds that they do not possess building permits. However, **only around 1% of Palestinian permit applications are being granted** in Area C, leaving Palestinians and international donors little choice but to build without permits.
- While demolishing Palestinian structures built without Israeli permits, Israel continues to expand its **settlements** which are illegal under international law and to retroactively legalise settler **outposts** also built without Israeli permits.

What international law says

- According to the UN, Israel as the occupying power bears the primary responsibility to protect the Palestinian population in the West Bank and to ensure that its basic needs are met. It is obliged to facilitate humanitarian aid and access, and is prohibited from destroying private or public property, unless absolutely necessary for military operations. The Israeli planning and zoning regime that restricts Palestinian development and facilitates settlement expansion is discriminatory and runs contrary to international law, according to the UN.

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