

UN says Israeli forces demolished, seized 30 Palestinian structures in West Bank



United Nations, July 30 (RHC)--The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says Israeli authorities have either demolished or seized 30 Palestinian structures in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds, displacing more than two dozen people in two weeks.

In its bi-weekly report published on Thursday, the UN office said the demolitions occurred from 14 to 27 July and displaced 25 people and affected around 140 others. All the demolitions took place in the so-called Area C of the West Bank, whose management of resources, planning, and construction are under the full control of Israel.

The Tel Aviv regime strictly restricts Palestinian construction or development to less than once percent of the area. The report, carried by Palestine's official Wafa news agency, said in one incident on July 21, Israeli authorities demolished a structure on the outskirts of the southern West Bank city of al-Khalil (Hebron), which was planned to be used as a COVID-19 testing center.

At least three other structures were demolished under Israel's Military Order 1797, which permits the removal of "unauthorized" buildings within 96 hours from the delivery of a notice.

Rights groups have time and again raised concern over procedure, which largely bars affected people from being heard before a judicial body, the report added.

The Area C accounts for more than 60 percent of the occupied West Bank, and forms a significant part of a future Palestine state under the so-called two-state solution.

Israeli authorities usually demolish Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank, claiming that the structures have been built without permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain. They also sometimes order Palestinian owners to demolish their own homes or pay the demolition costs to the municipality if they do not.

Since early March, when the COVID-19 emergency started, Israeli authorities have demolished or seized 19 inhabited homes that were in place prior to that date, displacing 104 Palestinians, the OCHA said, adding the buildings were demolished since they lacked Israeli-issued permits.

Furthermore, Israeli authorities forced owners of seven additional inhabited homes to demolish their buildings following the issuance of demolition orders.

Since the start of the emergency, 282 Palestinian structures of all types have been demolished or seized due to lack of building permits in breach international humanitarian law, the report said.

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