



Six-Month Report on Demolitions and Confiscations of EU funded structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem

July – December 2018

Summary

During the reporting period destruction and seizure of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem continued.

From July to December 2018 over 264 Palestinian owned structures were impacted by demolition, seizure, sealing off, or eviction. Almost one third of the incidents took place in East Jerusalem, with an increasing trend. As a result of the demolitions, 296 Palestinians including 146 children were displaced.

Of the structures (such as classrooms and residences) targeted over the six month reporting period, 25 structures were funded by the EU or EU Member States for a value of nearly €107,299.

Moreover, 42 schools in Area C¹ and eight schools in East Jerusalem have pending demolition or "stop work" orders and face the risk of full or partial demolition due to lack of building permits. Half of these schools have received EU or Member State funding. Demolitions of the schools would severely impact Palestinian children's right to education.

The total number of demolitions in 2018 (January-December) amounted to 461 structures in area C and East Jerusalem, a 10% increase compared to 2017. Of the structures targeted during 2018, 51 were EU funded humanitarian aid structures worth over €168,000.

In general, development in Area C and East Jerusalem is tightly restricted by the Israeli authorities through means such as limiting or refusing permits for construction of buildings and structures. Palestinians are therefore left with almost no other choice but to build without permit. Since 1967 99.8% of land allocated in the West Bank (area C) has been allotted to Israeli settlements.²

The practice of enforcement measures such as demolitions and confiscations of humanitarian assets are contrary to Israel's obligations under International Law, including provisions of International Humanitarian Law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and cause suffering to ordinary Palestinians.

¹ Over 60% of the West Bank is considered Area C, where Israel retains near exclusive control, including over law enforcement, planning and construction.

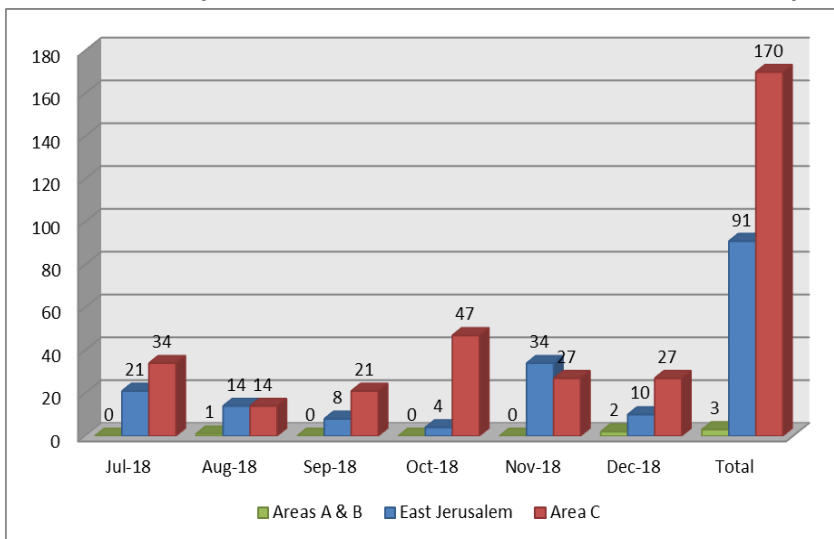
² Peace Now, February 2019

1. GENERAL DEMOLITION FIGURES

264 structures were targeted throughout the West Bank from July 2018 to December 2018. Of these structures, 91 were located in East Jerusalem and 170 in Area C. Overall, 34% of all structures targeted in the second half of 2018 were located in East Jerusalem (see table 1). The demolitions in the reporting period resulted in the displacement of 296 Palestinians and adversely impacting the livelihoods of nearly 2,000 people.

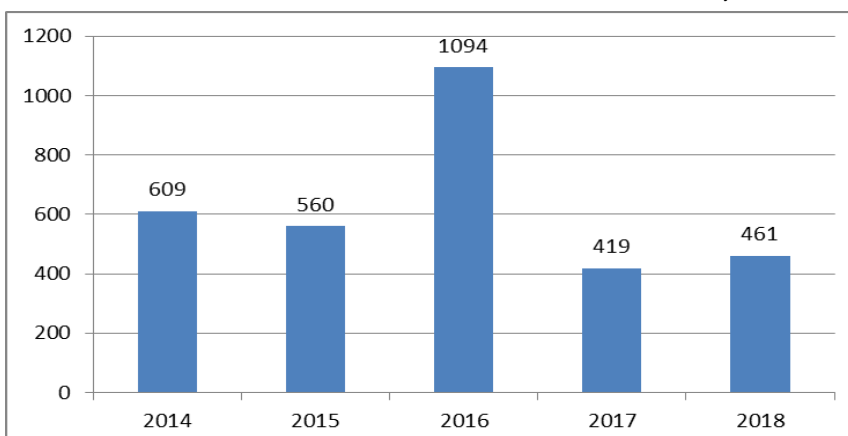
During the reporting period East Jerusalem witnessed a monthly demolition average of 15 structures, a slightly higher pace than in 2017 when, on average, 13 structures were demolished per month.

Table 1: Monthly number of structures demolished or seized, July 2018- December 2018



The total number of demolitions in 2018 was 461. This amount to approximately 38 structures demolished per month. This number is higher than in 2017 (35 structures per month), but well below that of 2016 (91 structures/month), the highest year on record (see table 2). East Jerusalem recorded a 25% increase in the number of structures demolished throughout 2018 compared to 2017.

Table 2: Annual number of structures demolished or seized, 2014-18

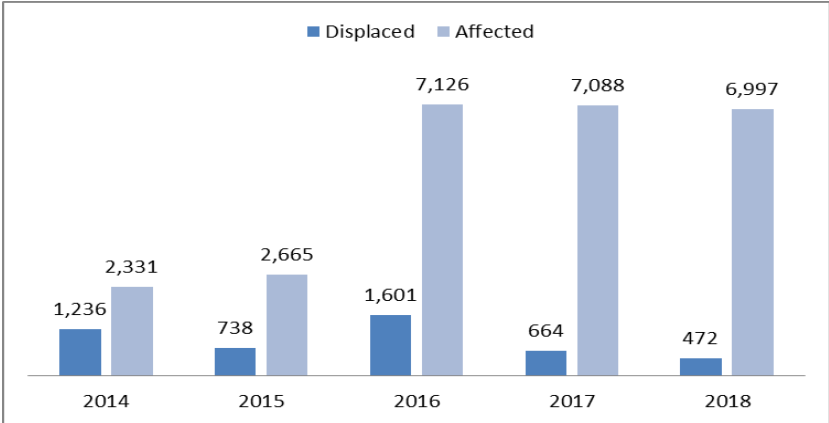


For reference, an estimated number of more than 13,000 Palestinian structures in Area C currently have outstanding demolition orders issued by the Israeli Civil Administration due to lack of required

building permits.³ These pending demolition orders could be implemented at any moment. Less than 1% of Area C and about 13% of East Jerusalem are covered by an approved planning scheme for Palestinians, which is a pre-condition for a permit to be issued, and most of these areas are already built up.⁴ At least a third of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack an Israeli-issued building permit, potentially placing over 100,000 residents at risk of displacement.⁵

Displacement of Palestinians (472 persons) as a result of demolitions decreased by almost one third in 2018, compared to 2017, whereas the number of Palestinians affected by loss of livelihood or service related structures largely remain the same, close to 7,000 people (see table 3).⁶

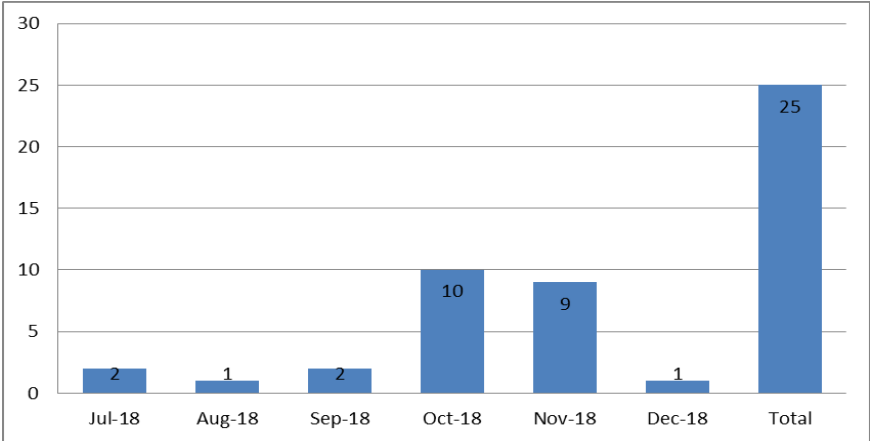
Table 3: Annual trends of people being displaced



2. DEMOLITION OF EU-FUNDED STRUCTURES AND STRUCTURES FUNDED BY EU MEMBER STATES

A total of 25 structures funded by EU or its Member States were demolished or seized in the second half of 2018 (see table 4) with material losses valued at €107,000.⁷ The number of demolitions represents less than half the numbers of demolitions of EU funded structures in the same period of 2017 (57 structures).

Table 4: Monthly number of EU and EU Member States (MS) structures demolished/seized



³ According to Civil Administration figures, from January 2000 to mid-2016, Palestinians filed 5,475 applications for building permits. Only 226 (about 4%) were granted. ICA data also says there was a 3% approval rate in 2018.

⁴ OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

⁵ OCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin, December 2017.

⁶ OCHA

⁷ For reference, the financial loss in 2017 was €272,602. In 2016 the loss was €557,378 and in 2015 it was €206,000.

October 2018 showed the largest number of EU-funded structures demolished or seized in a single month since May (see table 4).

The total financial loss for EU and MS for the 12 months of 2018 was € 168,000 (51 structures).

For reference, between 2009 (when recording began) and 2018 approximately 480 EU and EU Member States funded structures worth over €1.45 million have been demolished or seized.⁸

3. TRENDS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

- In total, 50 schools in Area C and East Jerusalem have pending demolition or "stop work" orders, which place them at risk of being fully or partially demolished, due to lack of building permits which are near impossible to obtain. Half of the schools at risk have been provided with some form of assistance from the EU and its Member States. This is of particular concern since every child has the right to access to education and States have an obligation to protect, respect and fulfil this right, by ensuring that schools are inviolable safe spaces for children.
- Since 2009, approximately 750 structures funded by ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations) worth, approximately €3.3 million, have been subjected to orders for demolition, stop-work or eviction, and are therefore under threat.
- During the reporting period the Israeli High Court of Justice rejected all petitions related to its 24 May ruling, which allowed the demolition of the entire Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al Ahmar-Abu al Helu. An earlier injunction against demolitions expired on 12 September, leaving the community, which is home to 35 families comprising 188 people, more than half of whom are children, at risk of mass demolition and forcible transfer. On 21 October the Israeli Security Cabinet confirmed, but also decided to postpone, the demolition of the Palestinian Bedouin village of Khan al Ahmar by "granting an extension of several weeks in order to exhaust the negotiations for evacuation by agreement". Following the postponement of the demolition, the Israeli authorities dismantled structures they had installed at a proposed relocation site (Al Jabal West); however, concerns about a mass demolition and transfer of the community remain.
- In the largest single demolition in Jerusalem in recent years, the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem demolished on 21 November 2018 approximately twenty shops in Shufat refugee camp under the pretext they were built without a permit.
- In Silwan, located close to the Old City, hundreds of Palestinians have pending eviction cases filed by settler organizations.

4. EU ACTION DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

During the reporting period the issue of demolitions continued to be raised by the EU with relevant Israeli interlocutors. In addition, the following actions took place.

⁸ For the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the financial losses incurred due to demolitions accounts for an average of 1% of its 2014-2018 budgets for humanitarian aid for the West Bank.

- On 04 July 2018 a Statement by the Spokesperson on the demolitions of structures in Abu Nuwar and on preparations for demolishing the Palestinian community of Khan Al-Ahmar was issued.
- On 18 July 2018 a Statement by High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the latest developments regarding the Palestinian community of Khan al-Ahmar was issued.
- On 07 September 2018 a Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the latest developments regarding the planned demolition of Khan al-Ahmar was issued.
- On 24 November 2018 a Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest demolitions and Israeli settlement plans was issued.
- On 26 November 2018 a local EU statement on the dismantling of school classrooms in Ibziq in the West Bank was issued.