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## Building demolitions in the Occupied West Bank



On the 7th September, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published a report called 'Under Threat: Demolition Orders in Area C of the West Bank'. The report shows that an estimated 13,000 Palestinian-owned structures are currently under threat of demolition, the majority being on Palestinian-owned land. Nearly 4,500 of the outstanding 11,000 demolition orders affect Palestinian Bedouins.

Area C covers 60% of the West Bank, which was temporarily divided into three parts – A, B and C – under the *1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* (Oslo II), signed by Israel and the

Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). Area C was supposed to be transferred to the Palestinian Authority by the end of 1998 but Israel has maintained military control of the area. According to the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, Israel retains control of security and land management and 'views the area as there to serve its own needs'.

**Area C is a home to approximately 300,000 Palestinians currently residing in 532 residential areas. Many of these residential areas are located entirely in Area C, but, in other cases, the area is part of a larger community, part of which is located in Areas A or B.**

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, there are also about 356,000 Israelis residing in 135 settlements and some 100 settlement 'outposts' established in Area C; both are considered to contravene international law, while the settlement 'outposts' are also considered illegal under Israeli law.

**The planning and zoning regime applied by the Israeli authorities, including the ways in which public land is allocated, makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain building permits in most of Area C. Even basic residential and livelihood structures, such as a tent or a fence, require a building permit.**

Of the 11,134 demolition orders, 570 were classified as ready to be carried out immediately. During the first half of 2015 the Civil Administration demolished 245 Palestinian structures in Area C. Another 2,454 orders were on hold due to legal proceedings, while 8,110 demolition orders were classified as 'in process'.

The OCHA report can be found at:

[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/demolition\\_orders\\_in\\_area\\_c\\_of\\_the\\_west\\_bank\\_en.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/demolition_orders_in_area_c_of_the_west_bank_en.pdf)

The B'Tselem report 'Israel's Civil Administration steps up efforts to expel Area C Palestinian communities' can be found at: [http://www.btselem.org/planning\\_and\\_building/20150903\\_demolition\\_wave](http://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building/20150903_demolition_wave)



The European Union recently built a school for a small Palestinian community living in the South Hebron Hills. The school was built without planning permission (which would have been impossible to obtain) under the EU's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection programme. The military has already issued a demolition order and can demolish the school at any time it chooses.

