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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

DEMOLITIONS AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK JANUARY 2012

الهدم والتهجير القسري في الضفة الغربية المحتلة
كانون ثان/يناير 2012

KEY FACTS

- ▣ Almost 1,100 Palestinians, over half children, were displaced due to home demolitions by Israeli forces in 2011, over 80% more than in 2010.
- ▣ 4,200 additional people were affected by the demolition of structures related to their livelihoods.
- ▣ Israeli forces destroyed 622 structures owned by Palestinians, a 42% increase compared to 2010. This included 222 homes, 170 animal shelters, two classrooms and two mosques (one twice).
- ▣ The number of rainwater cisterns and pools destroyed in 2011 (46), was more than double last year (21), with tens of other related structures vulnerable to future demolition.
- ▣ Most demolitions (90%) and displacement (92%) occurred in already vulnerable farming and herding communities in Area C; thousands of others remain at-risk of displacement due to outstanding demolition orders.
- ▣ In East Jerusalem, there was a significant decrease compared to previous years, with 42 structures demolished*. However, at least 93,100 residents, who live in structures built without a permit, remain at risk of displacement.
- ▣ Over 60% of the Palestinian-owned structures demolished in 2011 were located in areas allocated to settlements.
- ▣ 70% of Area C is off-limits for Palestinian construction, allocated instead for Israeli settlements or the Israeli military; an additional 29% is heavily restricted.
- ▣ Only 13% of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction – much of which is already built up, compared with 35%, which has been expropriated and zoned for the use of Israeli settlements.
- ▣ Ten out of 13 communities visited by OCHA in Area C reported that families are being displaced because Israeli policies make it difficult for them to meet basic needs. The inability to build was one of the main triggers for this displacement.

1. **The forced displacement of Palestinian families and the destruction of civilian homes and other property by Israeli forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have a serious humanitarian impact.** Demolitions deprive people of their homes, often their main source of physical and economic security. They also disrupt their livelihoods, reducing their standard of living and undermining their access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, education and health care.
2. **The impact on families' psychosocial well-being can be devastating.** Women often feel a loss of control over domestic matters and a heightened sense of insecurity while men experience increased stress and anxiety. For many children, the demolition, along with the disruption to education and increased tension in the home, results in depression, anxiety and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.
3. According to Israeli authorities, demolitions are carried out because structures lack the required building permits. **In reality, it is almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain permits. The zoning and planning regime enforced by Israel in Area C and East Jerusalem restricts Palestinian growth and development, while providing preferential treatment for unlawful Israeli settlements.** This treatment includes the approval of master plans and the provision of essential infrastructure, participation in the planning process, and the allocation of land and water resources.

