

Humanitarian Bulletin

occupied Palestinian territory

AUGUST 2017



OCHA

1967/2017
50 YEARS
OF OCCUPATION

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© Photo by OCHA
Internally displaced children next to their temporary shelter, Beit Hanoun, Gaza, August 2017.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Gaza energy crisis: nearly 40 per cent of areas planted with seasonal vegetable crops are at risk due to irregular irrigation; outages of 18-20 hours a day continue to undermine basic services.
- Funding shortages jeopardize the continuation of shelter cash assistance to about 29,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, still displaced from the 2014 hostilities.
- Some 180 Palestinians displaced in East Jerusalem since the beginning of 2017, following the demolition of their homes on grounds of lack of building permits; hundreds at risk of eviction in the context of court cases filed by Israeli settler groups.

AUGUST FIGURES*

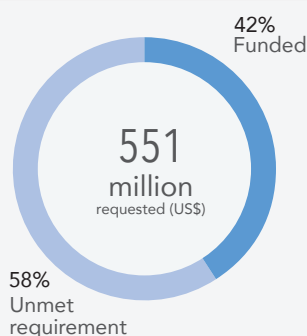
Palestinian killed (direct conflict)	1
Palestinian injured (direct conflict)	135
Israelis killed (direct conflict)	0
Israelis injured (direct conflict)	2
Structures demolished in the West Bank	35
People displaced in the West Bank	59

* Casualty figures cover 1-28 Aug

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN 2017

551 million
requested (US\$)

42% funded



Overview

Many Palestinians in East Jerusalem are subject to a coercive environment due to a range of Israeli policies, including home demolitions and forced evictions, highlighted in this month's Bulletin. The hardship generated by this environment is illustrated by the case of the Shamasneh family, who have lived in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood since 1964, and were forcibly evicted from their home on 5 September, following a protracted legal battle. As has occurred in other evictions, the home was immediately handed over to Israeli settlers. This is the first such eviction in Sheikh Jarrah since 2009. The advancement of four Israeli settlement plans in Sheikh Jarrah would, if approved, lead to the eviction of over 70 additional Palestinian residents, and likely result in restrictions and tensions that will undermine the living conditions of Palestinian residents of the area.

In East Jerusalem, as in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel is obliged under international law to ensure the welfare of the protected population, and refrain from changing the status and demographic composition of, or transferring its own population to, the occupied territory. On his first visit to Israel and the oPt in late August, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, reiterated the international community's position that settlement activity "is illegal under international law [and] an obstacle that needs to be removed" if a two-state solution is to be implemented.

The Secretary-General also visited the Gaza Strip, which he described as "one of the most dramatic humanitarian crises that I have seen in many years working as a humanitarian in the United Nations." Three years after the 2014 conflict, Palestinians in Gaza are still struggling to cope with the impact of successive hostilities, the Israeli blockade, the internal Palestinian divide and the dramatic deterioration in electricity supply.

Electricity outages ranging from 18 to 20 hours a day continued in August, impacting the availability of essential services, and undermining Gaza's already fragile economy, including agriculture. As reported in this month's Bulletin, some 30,000 out of 80,000 dunums planted with seasonal vegetable crops are at risk due to irregular irrigation, with dairy cattle farmers and poultry breeders also facing significant losses. The longer-term impact of the electricity crisis may result in farmers losing the motivation and the means to obtain capital to invest in an increasingly insecure enterprise.



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In response to the electricity crisis in Gaza, in July, humanitarian agencies in the oPt appealed for US\$25 million for urgent lifesaving interventions in the health, water and sanitation, and food security sectors.

On 24 August, US\$ 2.5 million was disbursed from the oPt Humanitarian Fund, a local pooled fund managed by OCHA on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator, to cover some of the urgent needs identified in the Gaza appeal. During his visit to Gaza on 30 August, during his visit to Gaza, the Secretary-General also announced an allocation of US\$4 million from the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), the UN's global emergency response fund, to support some of the identified interventions.

These allocations help ensure the provision of basic services through the end of the year, but additional support to mitigate the worse impacts in the areas of health, water, sanitation and food security, is required.

Additionally, as reported in the Bulletin, 29,000 people in Gaza remain displaced by the 2014 hostilities, with over 19,000 still awaiting funding for reconstruction. There is also a funding shortfall for temporary shelter cash assistance (TSCA), to enable families to rent accommodation until their homes are reconstructed or rehabilitated. The funding deficit is also affecting programmes for the 235,000 children who were identified to be in need of child protection services, including psychosocial support, in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the oPt. Currently, the 2017 HRP is only 42 per cent funded, with some US\$ 233 million received of the US\$ 551.9 million requested.

In Gaza, the Secretary-General appealed “to the international community to strongly support humanitarian aid in Gaza” while acknowledging that “the solution for the problems of the people of Gaza is not humanitarian.” He concluded his visit to Gaza with two appeals: “The first, an appeal for unity. Yesterday, I was in Ramallah. Today, I am in Gaza. They are both parts of the same Palestine. So, I appeal for the unity, in line with the principles of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. The division only undermines the cause of the Palestinian people.”

His second appeal was for “a credible political process in order to address the problems that exist and to allow for the two-state solution to be implemented, removing the obstacles on the ground. But, at the same time, together with that political process, a program of action to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people.”

*UN Secretary-General
announced allocation of
US\$4 million from UN's
global emergency response
fund to support Gaza
interventions.*



Energy crisis takes its toll on Palestinian farmers in Gaza

Some 38 per cent of planted crops at risk of total loss

The severity of electricity outages in the Gaza Strip continued in August, ranging from 18 to 20 hours a day. This had a detrimental impact on the availability of essential services and undermined Gaza's already fragile economy.

The energy crisis has taken its toll on the agricultural sector and 30,000 out of 80,000 dunums planted with seasonal vegetable crops across the Gaza Strip are at risk of total loss due to irregular irrigation. This is directly linked to shortages in the electricity supply needed to support sufficient pumping hours from water wells. The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) estimates that up to 60 per cent of the demand for water is unmet as a result of electricity outages.



PALESTINIAN INTERNAL DIVIDE AND ENERGY CRISIS: BACKGROUND

The energy crisis that began in 2006 worsened dramatically in mid-April 2017 following a dispute between the Palestinian authorities in Ramallah and Gaza over the funding and taxation of fuel for the Gaza Power Plant. In May the Ramallah-based government cut payments to Israel for electricity it purchases for Gaza. In June, Israel reduced the 60 per cent of the total supply of electricity it supplies by 33 per cent. While the de-facto authorities in Gaza have arranged to purchase fuel from Egypt, the quantity has fluctuated and is insufficient to return to the pre-April situation when power outages ranged from 14 to 16 hours per day (March 2017). These developments have been compounded by the salary crisis. In March 2017, the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority (PA) cut the salaries of 62,000 employees in Gaza by 30-50 per cent. Additionally, since 2014 around 22,000 employees recruited by the Hamas authorities have received less than half of their salaries on an irregular basis. The direct impact on staff and families spreads to the wider economy as a result of declining consumption.

30,000 out of 80,000 dunums of cropped land in Gaza at risk of total loss due to irregular irrigation directly linked to shortages in the electricity supply.

Farmers operating in the south-eastern communities of the Gaza Strip such as Shoka and Fuhkhari, plus parts of Khuza'a and Tuemat, are particularly affected. Farmers in these areas were already completely reliant on water pumped from the south-west of the Gaza Strip since the high salinity of underground water in these areas renders it unsuitable for irrigation.

Before April 2017, farmers in these areas were already paying 100 NIS per pumping hour. Since the crisis began, prices have increased by 40-50 per cent, leaving farmers with the hard choices of paying the additional costs, which often involves taking loans, or going further into debt; raising the cost of the produce and losing competitive advantage; decreasing the period of irrigation and therefore reducing the quality of the produce; prioritizing types of vegetable that can survive on minimal water; or abandon farming altogether. Many farmers have discontinued the irrigation of their crops and have abandoned cropped land for cattle grazing.

KHAN YOUNIS FARMERS MOST AFFECTED BY ELECTRICITY CRISIS

Farming by Tareq al-Omour, a 44-year-old father of six from Khan Yunis governorate, has been severely hampered by the ongoing electricity crisis.

In February, Tareq invested some 16,000 NIS in planting eight dunums of land in the al Fukhari area with four types of vegetable: eggplant, zucchini, Armenian cucumber and cantaloupe. Due to the high salinity of underground water in this area, farmers rely entirely on water pumped from the far west of the Gaza Strip through 8 to 10 kilometer water carrier lines. Prior to the latest energy crisis, Tareq paid 100 NIS per pumping hour for water.

In April when the electricity crisis worsened and the pumping of water became more expensive, Tareq had to pay 160 NIS per pumping hour.

As a result, Tareq was no longer able to afford the cost of irrigating his crops. To accommodate the new reality, he destroyed the crops that needed more irrigation than others, starting with the eggplant crop. As the power crisis continued, he could no longer afford to irrigate the remaining crops; in May 2017, he destroyed his cantaloupe and Armenian cucumber crops as well, leaving the zucchini. Even the zucchini, he could only afford to irrigate irregularly, which affected their quality and reduced the level of productivity, from 5 to 2 tons per dunum. Tareq estimates his loss at 10,000 NIS.

"As any other farmer, I wait until the end of the season to be able to afford to buy new things for my house or carry out house repairs. My current losses destroyed my plans for buying a new refrigerator and carrying out house repairs", said Tareq, who provides for a total of 10 people.

Asked about his future farming plans, he said: *"Due to the losses, I will not plant any crops this summer. I am unable to afford it, but also I cannot risk further unexpected losses. I am thinking of planting peas in the winter and depending on the rainfall, I may also plant cabbage"*.

"Due to the losses, I will not plant any crops this summer. I am unable to afford it, but also I cannot risk further unexpected losses."

Tareq al Omour, farmer from Gaza



Estimates from the Palestinian MoA suggest that eastern Khan Yunis is the agricultural area most affected, with anticipated losses in actual investment, as high as 60 per cent; in North Gaza and Gaza governorates losses are estimated at 40 per cent. Poor irrigation is also expected to reduce orchard and fruit tree productivity by 20 to 30 per cent, with losses of more than 170 million NIS. More than two-thirds of potato production is kept in refrigerated storage systems that need unbroken electricity. If the situation is not resolved, an estimated 24 million NIS will be lost due to crop damage and increased refrigerator operating costs.

The longer-term impact of the electricity crisis is that farmers will lose the incentive and ability to secure capital for investment in highly insecure businesses. As a result, agricultural land requiring costly irrigation may be planted with crops requiring less irrigation, which are normally significantly less profitable. Such a shift would not only drastically reduce farmers' incomes, but would also limit the quality and quantity of agricultural products (plant and animal) available in the Gaza Strip. This could lead to price increases and restricted access by vulnerable groups to items needed to meet basic dietary needs unless protective measures are put in place. In the long run, an increasing number of vulnerable, less resilient and moderately food secure households are at risk of food insecurity, leading to greater aid dependency. Any additional cuts to electricity will further exacerbate the challenges listed above and make agricultural production activities dependent on electricity even less viable.

Planned and ongoing interventions in the food security sector

In response to the worsening situation, humanitarian agencies in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) appealed to the international community in July to provide \$25 million in humanitarian funding for urgent interventions to stabilize the situation in the Gaza Strip. Of this funding, \$8.8 million were for 14 interventions in the food security sector that included food assistance, cash for work, recovery support, promoting resilient livelihoods, increasing production capacity of agricultural assets, and enhancing the income of vulnerable men and women. As of 25 August, 37 per cent of the appeal for the food security sector had been received and six interventions can be implemented.

133 of the proposed interventions in Gaza were part of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) launched in December 2016. Of these, 34 interventions costing \$215 million were presented by the food security sector but could not be implemented due to lack of funding.

The food security sector (FSS) is continuing to evaluate the short-term and anticipated long-term agricultural impact of continuing power cuts. In partnership with OCHA, the FSS monitors developments through established indicators, including the Coping Strategies Index¹ that monitors the retail price of some essential vegetables. The FSS also worked with MoA and PNGO to release a paper identifying the key impact of electricity cuts on the agricultural sector.

37 per cent of the \$8.8 million appeal for the food security sector had been received and six out of 14 interventions can be implemented.

Three years on from the 2014 conflict, 29,000 people remain displaced

The hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups from 8 July to 26 August 2014 were the most devastating in the Gaza Strip since the start of the Israeli occupation in 1967. They resulted in the deaths of 2,251 Palestinians, including at least 1,462 civilians, and 71 Israelis, of whom five were civilians. Over 11,000 Palestinians were injured, including hundreds of people left with a long-term disability, and huge numbers of the population, particularly children, were traumatized. The destruction or severe damage of some 17,800 housing units left approximately 100,000 people displaced. Gaza's infrastructure, businesses and agricultural land also sustained significant damage. Three years on, most of Gaza's population is still struggling with the aftermath of the conflict to varying extents.

Serious violations of international humanitarian law by both sides occurred during the hostilities but accountability has remained elusive. Israeli criminal investigations into alleged violations of the laws of war led to the prosecution of soldiers in one case of looting.² No meaningful investigations have been carried out by the Palestinian authorities.

Over 5,500 families displaced at the end of the 2014 conflict are still displaced. 19,200 IDPs have not been allocated any funding for reconstruction and see no end in sight to their displacement.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Based on the cases registered by the IDP Working Group (see background box), some 29,000 (over 5,500 families) of the 100,000 people displaced at the end of the conflict were still displaced at the end of August 2017. The homes of approximately one third of those still displaced (9,800 people) are currently being reconstructed, while the other 19,200 IDPs have not been allocated any funding for reconstruction and see no end in sight to their displacement.

Lack of funding is the primary reason for ongoing delays in reconstruction. According to the Palestinian Authority's National Office for Gaza Reconstruction, only two thirds of the approximately \$500 million needed for the reconstruction of totally destroyed homes have been disbursed, as of July 2017.³

To a lesser extent, reconstruction has been also slowed down due to restrictions on imports of basic construction materials into Gaza, imposed by Israel citing security concerns. However, restricted materials have been entering regularly via the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) agreed in 2014 by the UN, the Palestinian Authority and Israel.⁴

According to the IDP Working Group, the majority of IDPs (88 per cent) reported that they were residing in rented accommodation, with the others remaining in or next to their damaged homes (7 per cent), with relatives (3 per cent), or in makeshift shelters/ caravans (2 per cent). Given the limited housing stock, it is believed that some of the families in the first category are in fact renting space in the homes of their extended families or in units not intended for residential use.

The housing shortage in Gaza continues to be an issue of concern. An oPt UN Country Team report highlighted that the housing shortage has increased from 71,000 housing units in 2012 to 120,000 today, mainly due to natural population growth alongside the conflict-related reconstruction efforts.⁵

THE IDP WORKING GROUP (IDPWG)

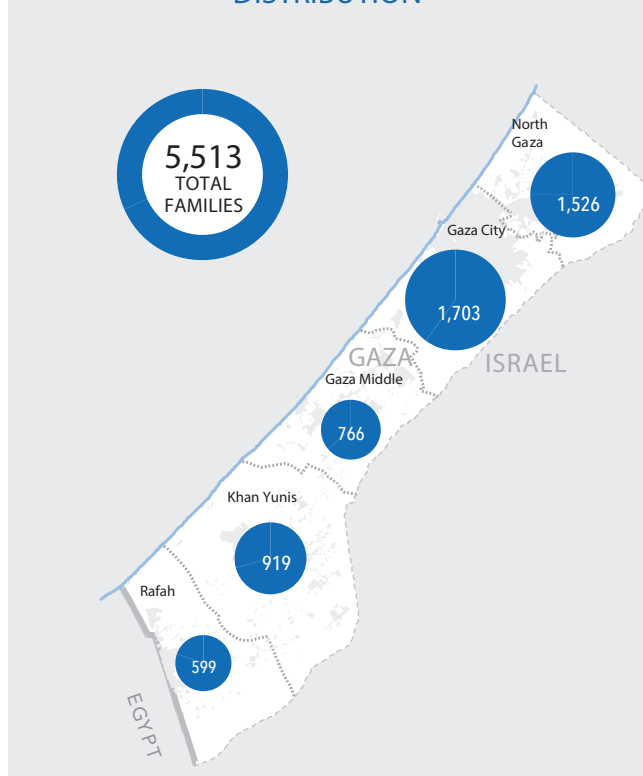
The IDPWG was established following the 2014 hostilities by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group to monitor and share information on IDPs and ensure an integrated response to their needs. It is chaired by OCHA and includes all UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and local authorities involved in the delivery of assistance to IDPs. During the second half of 2015, the IDPWG carried out a re-registration and vulnerability profiling survey targeting over 16,000 IDP households for the purpose of enhancing humanitarian coordination, programming and advocacy.⁶

Temporary shelter cash assistance (TSCA) of \$200 to \$250 per month per family has been the primary form of assistance provided by the humanitarian community to eligible families, enabling families to rent accommodation until their homes are reconstructed or rehabilitated. The distribution of TSCA has been disrupted due to significant funding shortages: UNDP, which is expected to cover some 500 IDP non-refugee families, has not distributed any TSCA since the beginning of 2017, while UNRWA, which is responsible for some 4,500 displaced refugee households, exhausted its cash reserves for this response in June 2017.

Another 450 non-refugee families from the Ash Shujaiyeh area of Gaza city have been receiving payments from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PCRS) as part of a one-year-project funded by Turkey, due to end in December 2017. Currently UNDP needs \$1.5m and UNRWA needs \$4m to cover their caseload through 2017.

Uncertainty about interruptions to TSCA has generated fears of eviction and further relocation by families unable to afford rental payments. Anecdotal evidence collected by humanitarian partners supporting IDPs indicates that the interruption of TSCA has resulted in debt accumulation and the adoption of negative coping mechanisms such as withdrawing children from school to cut expenses and/or engaging children in income generation. Such cases are referred to the Education or relevant cluster for assistance.

FAMILIES STILL DISPLACED BY GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION



Uncertainty about interruptions to Shelter Cash Assistance has generated fears of eviction and further relocation by families unable to afford rental payments.

HARDSHIPS FACED BY DISPLACED PALESTINIANS IN LONG-TERM RESIDENCE IN CARAVANS

During the 2014 hostilities in Gaza, Khader al-Masri and his wife and children moved out of their home in Beit-Hanoun and sought refuge for one night at an UNRWA school in the same area. They then moved to Jabalia, as shelling intensified, where they stayed in another UNRWA school until the ceasefire, 51 days after the beginning of the hostilities. The family returned to their home in Beit-Hanoun but found it completely destroyed, as a result, they reverted to a new UNRWA school “collective center” in Beit-Hanoun. After making five moves between UNRWA and public schools, the family was provided with two caravans by the Palestinian ministry of Works in mid-October.

Khader is currently unemployed and completely dependent on UNRWA assistance for food provided to those classified by UNRWA as suffering from abject poverty. He described living in the caravan as a “deadly solution. The place is suffocating, reptiles get into the caravan and dig holes, and the temperature is very high in summer and very low in winter”. Khader’s nephew who resided in a caravan was killed when the caravan door fell on him, his sister-in-law miscarried and his brother suffered burns to his hand as a result of electricity short circuits. In another incident, part of the caravan’s roof collapsed onto Khader’s children, no one was injured.

Khader’s seven children (aged between 1 and 12 years of age) suffer from skin problems caused by mosquitos and other insects. Water piped from the municipality comes once every three days so drinking water has to be purchased and the electricity is switched off for fear of deadly short-circuits.

Khader’s children suffer from psychosocial stress and their academic achievement has fallen significantly: several of them are failing classes in subjects in which they were previously performing well.

In fact, Khader explained that his daughters have refused to return to school after the summer because they did not have school uniforms or backpacks. He said that he had been desperately seeking someone to loan him money for the school equipment.

“We hope that winter never comes and we don’t like the summer”, Khader said. One of his daughters added, “Winter is very cold and we cannot move, and in summer it is burning hot and we cannot breathe”.

With support from UNRWA, and after the delay of reconstruction due to ownership issue, Khader may get his house rebuilt in the near future. Although the house will be smaller in size, conditions for the family will improve drastically. Khader’s case was also referred to organizations who are attempting to provide the necessary support for his daughters to be able to attend school.



200,000 children still in need of psychosocial support

The trauma experienced during successive hostilities, combined with ten years of Israeli blockade and internal Palestinian divisions, have taken their toll on the resilience of the two million people who live in the coastal enclave, half of whom are children.

An assessment conducted by UNRWA in May 2017 as part of its Community Mental Health Programme on the well-being of Palestinian adult and child refugees, concluded that 30 per cent of young children are experiencing serious issues, such as hyperactivity (restlessness, fidgeting or easily distracted) and emotional symptoms (being unhappy, scared or worried). Around 48 per cent of adults attending UNRWA clinics experience “poor wellbeing”.⁷ Both children and parents reported emotional problems, many of which they attributed to conflict, the blockade and Palestinian divisions with ramifications on electricity supplies.

In 2016, the Humanitarian Needs overview (HNO) identified 235,633 children in need of child protection services including psychosocial support. This number has decreased only marginally (3 per cent) in 2017. Those in need include vulnerable children living in the Access Restricted Area (ARA) near the fence with Israel, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and children from the most marginalized, socio-economically vulnerable and underserved communities across the Gaza Strip.

In 2016, child protection and psychosocial support services provided by 29 organizations reached about 195,400 children (83 per cent of the target for 2016). In the first half of 2017, 42,500 children (19 per cent of the target) were reached. Services include individual case management, structured group and individual psychosocial support, life skills education, child-parent interaction programmes, expressive arts, Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) risk education, and sports and recreational activities.

One of the significant challenges is the political division between the administrative authorities in Gaza and the West Bank. This contributes to the humanitarian crisis and falling levels of humanitarian funding that undermine response capabilities.



*This section was
contributed by UNICEF*

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Girls ages between 7-14 enjoying a recycling activity in Forsan al- Ghad Family Centre, Beit Hanoun, 2017.

PROTECTION CLUSTER SERVICES PROVIDED AND FUNDING LEVELS FOR 2016 AND 2017

Activity	2016	Aug. 2017
# of children in need of protection services including Psychosocial Social Services	235,633	228,966
# of children reached	195,402	42,528
Percentage of people reached	83%	19%
Protection cluster funding requirement(US\$)	45.9m	53.8m
Protection cluster actual funding received (US\$)	\$31.2m	\$31.5m
Percentage of funding	68%	59%

Source: HRP 2016 and 2017, and FTS OCHA

At least 260 Palestinians living in 24 residential buildings in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood are under threat of eviction.

Significant increase in risk of displacement in East Jerusalem

Recent developments in East Jerusalem highlight the coercive environment affecting many Palestinian residents of the city. Four recently-advanced settlement plans in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood threaten with eviction over 70 Palestinian residents. In total, at least 260 Palestinians living in 24 residential buildings in the area are under threat of eviction in cases brought against them by Israeli settler organizations, the General Custodian and/or Israeli individuals.⁸ The number of demolitions of homes and other structures – another key pressure on Palestinians in East Jerusalem – is almost as high as in 2016, which saw the highest number of demolitions since 2000. In July, the Israeli Prime Minister gave his support to a plan that would absorb a number of West Bank settlements into the Jerusalem municipality while administratively separating Palestinian localities beyond the Barrier from the municipality, dramatically altering the city's demographic composition.⁹

Whether as a result of a demolition or an eviction, displacement generates humanitarian need: it deprives people of their homes, disrupts their livelihoods and access to services, and often has a devastating psychosocial impact, particularly among children.

Settler activity in Palestinian residential areas

Israeli settlers are targeting densely populated Palestinian residential areas of East Jerusalem, in particular the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, At-Tur (Mount of Olives), Wadi Joz, Ras al-Amud and Jabal Mukabbir. Over 3,000 Israeli settlers now reside in these areas, either in houses expropriated using the Absentee Property Law on the basis of alleged prior Jewish ownership, in buildings purchased from Palestinian owners, or in residences custom built and financed by settler organizations.¹⁰ The impact on Palestinian areas includes restrictions on public space, residential growth and freedom of movement, along with increased friction and violence. In the most severe cases – in the Old City, Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah – settler expropriation has resulted in loss of property and the eviction of long-term Palestinian residents.

The Sheikh Jarrah residential neighbourhood is a key target for settlement activity owing to its strategic proximity to the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) and to the Old City. The area is already the site of a number of Israeli government institutions, including the police and border police headquarters, the Ministry of Justice, and the national insurance building, which is currently under construction. The Shepherd Hotel was expropriated by the Israeli authorities in 1967: the final stages of a new settlement is underway on the site. On another plot of land in Sheikh Jarrah an office building has been constructed for the Amana Association, a settler organization (See map).¹¹

In late 2008 and 2009, more than 50 Palestinians, including 20 children, were forcibly evicted by the Israeli authorities from their homes in the Karm al Jaouni area of Sheikh Jarrah¹² based on claims the properties had been owned by Jewish individuals or associations prior to 1948. A 1970 Israeli law acknowledges such claims despite the fact that Jews who lost their properties during 1948 received compensation and alternative housing, primarily in neighbourhoods previously inhabited by Palestinians. The law does not permit Palestinians who owned land or property in areas before 1948 that are now part of the State of Israel and were declared 'absentees' to regain their former possessions.

Following the eviction of the Palestinian residents, the homes were immediately handed over to settler groups that already occupy several other buildings in the area. As of 31 August, a total of 23 households comprising around 100 people (30% of them children) have eviction cases filed against them by Israeli settler organizations. The eviction proceedings, in which the families are named as defendants, are primarily based on alleged non-payment of outstanding rent, the building of extensions without the required building permits, and claims that the families are responsible for disturbances and threatening behaviour against their neighbours. According to plans submitted to the Jerusalem municipality, the settlers ultimately intend to demolish all properties in this area to make way for a new Israeli settlement.

In late 2008 and 2009, more than 50 Palestinians, including 20 children, were forcibly evicted by the Israeli authorities from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah based on claims the properties had been owned by Jewish individuals or associations prior to 1948.



Home demolished in Jabal al Mukabbir, displacing a family of four, including a disabled girl, 8 August 2017

COERCIVE ENVIRONMENT

Many Palestinians throughout the West Bank are at risk of displacement and/or forcible transfer due to a coercive environment generated by Israeli policies and practices that create pressure on residents to leave their communities. These practices include the demolition or threat of demolition of homes, schools and livelihood shelters; plans to relocate communities to urban townships; restrictions on access to natural resources; denial of basic service infrastructure; and the lack of secure residency, often implemented in connection with the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements. Palestinian Bedouin and herding communities across Area C, with a population estimated at 30,000, and Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are those most at risk of forcible transfer. A key component of the coercive environment is the restrictive and discriminatory planning regime which makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain the requisite Israeli building permits.¹³

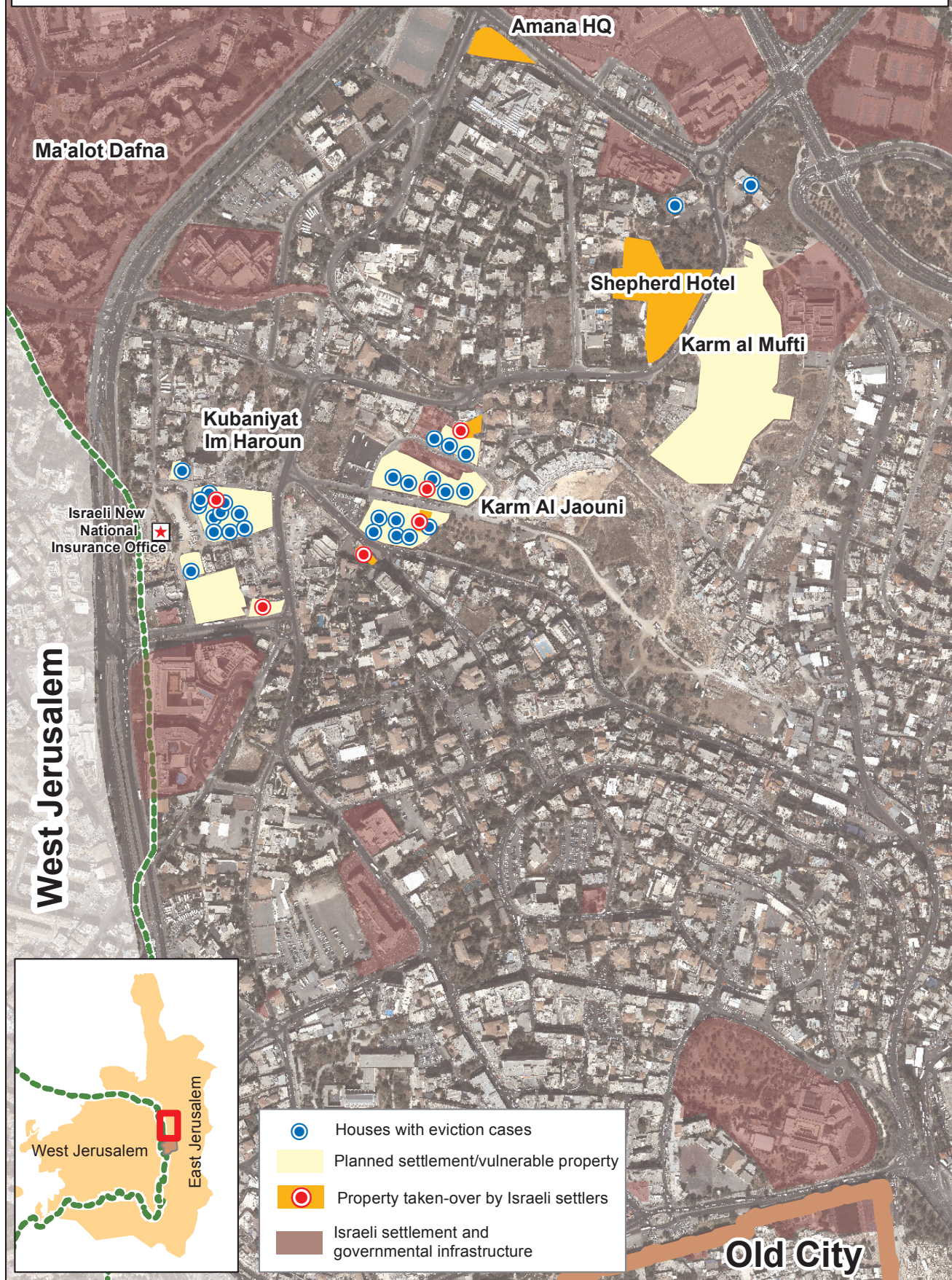
Israeli law does not permit Palestinians who owned land or property in areas before 1948 that are now part of the State of Israel and were declared 'absentees' to regain their former possessions.

Settler organizations have also targeted Kubaniyat Im Haroun in the west of Sheikh Jarrah. There has been an ongoing ownership dispute in this area between the Palestinian residents and the Israeli Custodian General,¹⁴ acting on behalf of Israeli individuals who claim to have owned the land before 1948, and other Jewish owners. The majority of Palestinians residents in this area refugees living in generally dilapidated conditions with more than one nuclear family living in each house. A protracted legal battle came to an end in September 2010 when the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Custodian General and other Jewish individuals. Concurrently, individual eviction cases have been filed against 35 households in the area with a population of 140 people of whom more than a third are children.

Settlement plans in Kubaniyat Im Haroun pose threat of further evictions

In July 2017, the Jerusalem Regional Planning Committee discussed plans for new settlement units, including four plans for the Kubaniyat Im Haroun neighbourhood. Two of the plans (14029 and 14151 for a three and five-storey building respectively) envisage the demolition of two residential buildings, placing 17 Palestinian households with 74 people at risk of displacement. There are also plans for a nine-storey building to house the Or Shameach Yeshiva campus (also known as the Glassman campus) and an additional six-storey office building. Although these plans target empty plots of land and do not entail evictions, they will further change the demographic character of the neighbourhood and create a contiguous belt of settlement units and Israeli government buildings throughout Sheikh Jarrah.

Sheikh Jarrah: Settlements and Palestinians at Risk of Displacement



On 5 September, Israeli authorities evicted the Shamasneh family of eight from their home in which they lived since 1964, and handed it over to Israeli settlers.

THE EVICTION OF THE SHAMASNEH FAMILY

The Shamasneh family have lived in their home in Kubaniyat Im Haroun since 1964 but have become the subject of eviction proceedings initiated by the Custodian General and the Israeli landowners. The family of eight, including one child, are at imminent risk of forced displacement, including 84-year-old Ayoub Samasneh and his 78-year-old wife. Between 1972 and 2009, the family paid annual rent to the Custodian General, but the latter then refused to renew the rental contract on the instructions of the heirs of the original Jewish landowner. Although some of the Palestinian families in Kubaniyat Im Haroun come under the provisions of the Protected Tenants Act 1972, the Israeli High Court has ruled that the Shamasneh family are not considered protected tenants and that their landlords are allowed to evict them.

The family recently received an eviction order from the execution office of Israel's Enforcement and Collection Authority stating that the Shamasneh family must vacate its home by 9 August or face forcible eviction. On 14 August, the family's lawyer requested a temporary restraining order to delay the eviction.

On 17 August 2017 at a hearing in the Jerusalem magistrate's court, the Shamasneh family lawyer requested an injunction to delay the eviction on the grounds of the land registration procedures applied to the Shamasneh house. Different plot numbers were cited in the eviction order from those in the court ruling of 2013. The lawyer for the settlers claimed that the two numbers were the same building and was allowed to submit documents to this effect. At a subsequent hearing on 21 August, the judge rejected the Shamasneh's request for an order to temporarily delay the eviction. The family lawyer is requesting permission to lodge an appeal against the magistrate's court's ruling. However, on 5 September, the family was evicted and the house was handed over to Israeli settlers.



© Photo by OCHA.

84-year-old Ayoub Shamasneh, on the day he and his family were evicted, 5 August 2017.

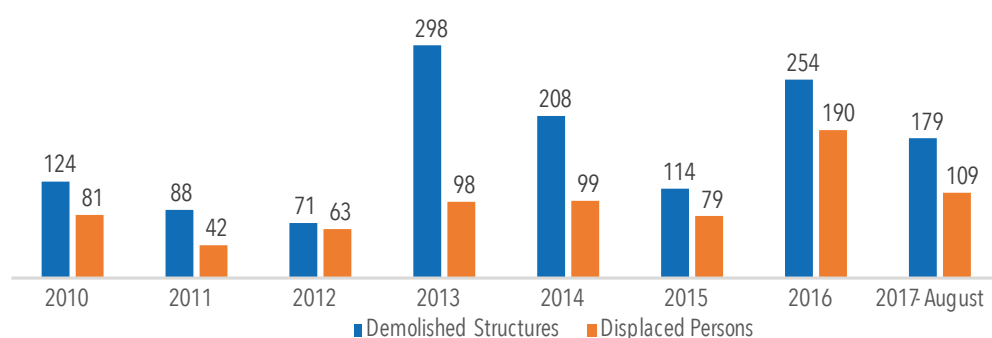
Demolition Trends in East Jerusalem

From January to August, the Israeli authorities demolished 107 structures in East Jerusalem due to the lack of building permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain. This has resulted in the displacement of 179 people, including 107 children, and otherwise affected another 471 people. The communities most heavily affected were Jabal Mukabbir, Beit Hanina, al Isawiya and Silwan which, combined, accounted for 75 per cent of demolition incidents documented this year and 70 per cent of all structures demolished.

East Jerusalem, accounted for a third of all demolitions (108 out of 321) and a third of all people displaced (179 out of 499) in the West Bank since the beginning of 2017. Around 25 per cent of structures demolished in East Jerusalem in 2017 were inhabited, while agricultural or livelihood-related structures accounted for some 39 per cent of all demolitions (See chart). The average number of people displaced in 2017 as a result of demolitions in East Jerusalem has slightly increased compared with the monthly average in 2016 (22.3 vs 21.2). In East Jerusalem 35% of confiscated land has been dedicated to Israeli settlement use; only 13% of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction, much of which is already built-up. At least a third of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack Israeli-issued building permits, which are difficult to obtain, potentially placing over 100,000 residents at risk of displacement.

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DEMOLITIONS IN EAST JERUSALEM



Endnotes

1. The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) is a tool for rapid measurement of household food security and the impact of food aid programs in humanitarian emergencies. The original manual, written in 2003, was based on a collaborative research project implemented by WFP and CARE in Kenya.
2. Latest figures from Military Advocate General 24 August 2016 (in Hebrew only): <http://www.law.idf.il/163-7588-he/Patzar.aspx?pos=7>
3. Information provided by the Shelter cluster in August 2017.
4. The GRM has facilitated imports of 2.3 million tons of construction materials (cement, aggregate and rebar). Nearly 120,000 people whose homes were damaged or destroyed have purchased cement through the GRM. Almost 380 large-scale construction projects have been completed through the GRM and another 330 are underway.
5. UNCT, Gaza Ten Years Later, July 2017, available at: <https://unsco.unmissions.org/gaza-ten-years-later-report-july-2017>
6. See OCHA, Gaza: Internally displaced persons, April 2016.
7. The UNRWA assessment used the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index, hence the result showing poor wellbeing.
8. UNOCHA. East Jerusalem: Palestinians at Threat of Eviction. November 2016. URL: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/east-jerusalem-palestinians-risk-eviction>.
9. 'Netanyahu backs major expansion of Jerusalem to include nearby settlements, Times of Israel, 27 July 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-backs-major-expansion-of-jerusalem-to-include-nearby-settlements/>
10. See OCHA, Chapter 3, Settlement in East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns, March 2011, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_jerusalem_report_2011_03_23_web_english.pdf
11. 'The Amana House: A New Settlement in Sheikh Jarrah', Peace Now, 4 May 2016. <http://peacenow.org.il/en/amana-house>
12. See OCHA, The Case of Sheikh Jarrah: Updated Version, October 2010, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/case-sheikh-jarrah-october-2010>
13. See 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview for the occupied Palestinian territory
14. The Custodian General is the legal entity that serves as a trustee of any property in East Jerusalem which, prior to Israel's occupation and annexation of the area in 1967, was held by the Jordanian Custodian of Enemy Property.