



Arabic lesson in the Ras at Tin school, at risk of demolition. © Photo by OCHA

HIGHLIGHTS

- 21 donor-funded aid structures demolished or seized.
- Donor-funded school faces imminent risk of demolition.
- Nearly a third of all structures targeted were requisitioned without prior notice.
- Freeze on the demolition of inhabited homes announced on 1 October in East Jerusalem.

OVERVIEW

In September, the Israeli authorities demolished, forced people to demolish or seized 76 Palestinian-owned structures, all on grounds of a lack of building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. A total of 136 people were displaced as a result, and nearly 300 others had their livelihoods or access to services affected.

Since the declaration of the COVID-19 emergency on 5 March 2020, 461 Palestinian-owned structures have been targeted in this context and 572 people displaced, representing a 31 per cent increase (for both figures) compared with the equivalent period in 2019, and the highest such figures in four years. [In a statement issued on 10 September](#), the Humanitarian Coordinator for the oPt, James McGoldrick, called on the Israeli authorities to immediately stop unlawful demolitions, which have “increased the needs and vulnerabilities of Palestinians, who are already trapped in the abnormality of prolonged military occupation.”

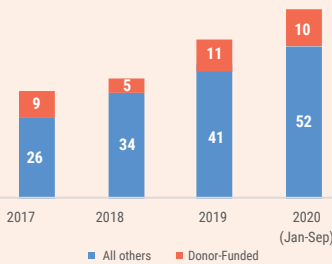
Of the structures targeted in September, 21 had been provided as humanitarian aid for over 30,000 euros; this is the largest number of aid structures demolished or seized in a single month so far in 2020. Another five donor-funded structures, which cost over 40,000 euros, were handed demolition or stop-work orders.

Over 30 per cent of the structures targeted in September have been dismantled and seized. This practice, which has been on the rise in recent years, is based on military regulations allowing the summary requisition (without prior notice) of “newly installed” structures defined by an Israeli Civil Administrator (ICA) inspector as “movable”. These regulations were amended in August 2020 to extend the period to conduct such requisition to 90 days from the installation of the structure (up from 60 days previously).

Another nine structures were demolished on the basis of Military Order 1797, which allows for the removal of unlicensed structures deemed as “new”, within 96 hours of

STRUCTURES DEMOLISHED/SEIZED

Monthly Averages



SEPTEMBER FIGURES

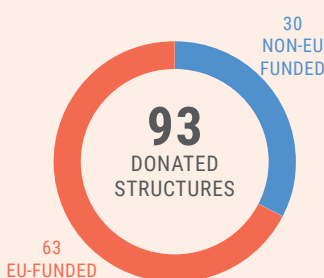
STRUCTURES TARGETED

East Jerusalem	17
Area C	59
Area B	0
Area A	0

PEOPLE IMPACTED

Displaced	136
Affected	287

ASSISTANCE DEMOLISHED/SEIZED IN 2020



the issuance of the “removal order”. These legal tools and related procedures are of serious concern, as they prevent or significantly narrow the ability of affected people to be heard before a judicial body.

Fifteen of all structures targeted this month (homes, water and sanitation facilities and animal shelters), including eight of the aid structures, were in the Massafer Yatta area of Hebron governorate, which is declared closed for Israeli military training (‘Firing zone 918’). In that context, the Israeli authorities have been seeking for years to evict the 1,400 Palestinians residing in 14 herding communities in this area.

The Palestinian Bedouin community of Ras at Tin (~200 people), in the Ramallah governorate, is also located in a ‘firing zone’ and faces a range of pressures that, combined, create a coercive environment and a risk of [forcible transfer](#) for residents. Twice this month, the Israeli authorities dismantled and seized the ceiling of a donor-funded school in this community, alongside building materials, chairs and tables. The school began operating on 6 September 2020, serving 50 Palestinian children, who previously had to walk five kilometres to reach the nearest school. The entire building is expected to be demolished soon, following the green light recently given to that effect by an Israeli court. Currently, there are 52 schools in Area C and East Jerusalem with pending demolition or stop-work orders.

Also of concern, in September, the Israeli government allocated some US\$6 million to the recently established ‘Settlement Affairs Ministry’ to survey unauthorized Palestinian construction in Area C, [according to an Israeli media report](#). The authority for monitoring and law enforcement in this matter, however, is with the ICA, which receives separate funding. About 0.6 per cent of Area C has a planning scheme approved by the ICA, where Palestinians are allowed to legally build, most of which is already built-up.

In East Jerusalem, 15 structures were demolished during the month, eight of which were demolished by their owners, following the issuance of demolition orders. Self-demolitions have significantly increased this year, accounting for half of all targeted structures in East Jerusalem. This is attributed to a legislative amendment imposing fines for every additional day of usage of a structure slated for demolition.

On 1 October, in response to legal action taken by a human rights organization, the Israeli authorities indicated that they would freeze the demolition of inhabited homes in East Jerusalem in the context of the ongoing pandemic. However, in the absence of a complementary freeze on the accumulation of fines, self-demolitions are likely to continue.

Also in East Jerusalem, in three separate rulings issued in September, Israeli courts ordered the eviction of 12 Palestinian families from their homes in the Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhoods, and the handover of the properties to Israeli settler organizations. One of the evictions is due by 5 November and the rest over the course of 2021. Over 200 families in East Jerusalem are at risk of eviction due to similar court cases filed against them.

For many Palestinian communities across the West Bank, the coercive environment they face also involves the destruction of property by Israeli settlers. In a worrying incident on 17 September near Biddya village (Salfit), Israeli settlers demolished an agricultural structure belonging to Palestinian farmers and uprooted 445 fruit trees. According to Israeli sources, the settlers claim ownership over the land and intend to establish a new settlement there, despite the lack of building permits or official approval.

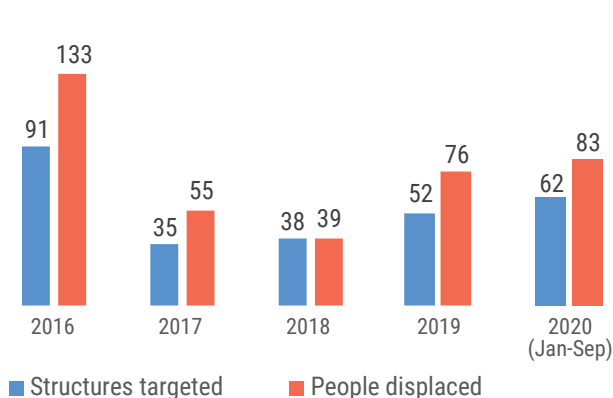
WEST BANK DEMOLITIONS / SEIZURES / SEALINGS – SEPTEMBER 2020

	Structures demolished	People displaced*		People Affected**	
		All	Children	All	Children
East Jerusalem	17	50	22	87	45
Area C	59	86	45	200	103
TOTAL	76	136	67	287	148

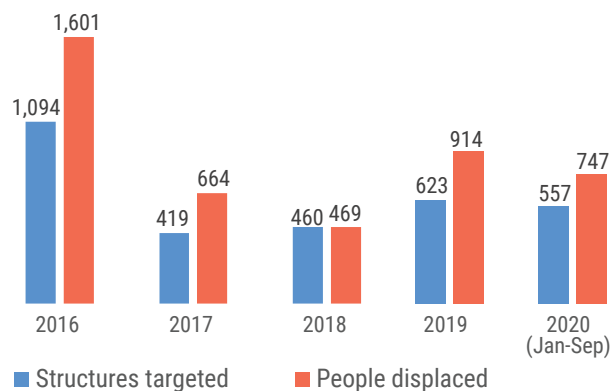
* Includes all people who had a structure used as their habitual place of residence demolished.

** Includes all people who had any of their property, other than their residence, demolished. Displaced and affected are mutually exclusive categories, i.e. people counted under the former are not included in the latter.

MONTHLY AVERAGES OF STRUCTURES TARGETED AND PEOPLE DISPLACED



TOTAL STRUCTURES TARGETED AND PEOPLE DISPLACED



DEMOLITION/SEIZURE OF DONOR-FUNDED AID STRUCTURES - SEPTEMBER 2020

Date	Community	Governorate	Type of structure	Number of structures	Type of incident	Estimated cost in euros
30 September	Fasayil al Wusta	Jericho	Residential structures, livelihood metal shed, storage metal shed, fencing	4	Seizure	5,035
30 September	Mantiqat Sh'ib al Butum	Hebron	Residential shelter, mobile latrine	2	Demolition	3,534
30 September	Halhul	Hebron	Latrine	1	Seizure	1,007
30 September	Ar Rakeez	Hebron	Residential structures	4	Demolition	10,602
29 September	Khirbet Yarza	Tubas	Residential shelters	2	Demolition (MO1797)	2,974
29 September	Ein ar Rashash	Ramallah	Water well	1	Demolition	3,200
24 September	Kisan	Bethlehem	Solar panel system	1	Seizure	N/A
14 September	Hebron	Hebron	Agricultural structure	1	Seizure	3,483
10 September	Ras at Tin	Ramallah	Roof of school	0*	Seizure	1,213
6 September	Ras at Tin	Ramallah	School construction materials	0*	Seizure	1,350
2 September	Wadi as Seeq	Ramallah	Residential shelters	3	Seizure	666
2 September	Jinba	Hebron	Residential shelters	2	Demolition	2,478
Total				21		35,542

* These items are not counted as structures in OCHA's tracking system.

DEMOLITION OR STOP-WORK ORDERS AFFECTING DONOR-FUNDED AID STRUCTURES – SEPTEMBER 2020

Date	Community	Governorate	Type of structure	Number of structures	Type of incident	Estimated cost in Euros
22 September	Ein Samiya	Ramallah	Residential shelters	4	Stop-work order	11,076
8 September	Ras al Tin	Ramallah	School	1	Demolition order	30,000
Total				5		41,076

TARGETED DONOR-FUNDED AID STRUCTURES

