



## One Year Report on Demolitions and Seizures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem Reporting Period: 1 January – 31 December 2022 <sup>1</sup>

### Summary

In 2022, a total of 953 structures were demolished or seized throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem - the highest number recorded since 2016. Of structures demolished, more than 80% (781) were located in Area C. In total, 1,031 individuals have been displaced and 28,446 affected as a result of demolitions. All but 35 of the structures were targeted for lacking building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain in Area C and East Jerusalem.

Of the structures targeted in the twelve-month reporting period, 101 structures were funded by the EU or EU Member States (valued at EUR €337,019), representing the third highest financial injury since 2016.

In East Jerusalem, the number of structures being demolished by their owners has risen significantly, from 34% in 2021 to 51% in 2022. Area C continued to experience a rise in targeted structures located in Bedouin and Herding communities. Of concern was also the seizure of structures based on Military Order 1797, which provides only a 96-hour notice and very limited grounds for legally challenging a demolition. A trend observed in Area A and B was the increase in demolitions of structures based on punitive grounds. Demolition orders and waves of demolitions in the communities of Masafer Yatta and Al Walajah were of great concern.

The 6-year high demolition number recorded in 2022 was accompanied by a spike in the scale and severity of settler violence; 849 settler incidents recorded in 2022, representing a 58% increase compared with 2021 and a 123% increase compared with 2020.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2022, Israeli authorities have continued to carry out demolitions of Palestinian structures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Demolitions have negatively affected Palestinian communities and have resulted in the continued displacement of Palestinians. Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in that context, such as forced transfers, evictions, demolitions and confiscations of homes, are illegal under international humanitarian law. Under international humanitarian law, the destruction of property by an occupying power in occupied territory is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.

<sup>1</sup> UN OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) Demolition Database last accessed 06 February 2022. All information disclosed in this report is susceptible to change at any time depending on new available data.

While the planning and building laws in the West Bank largely benefit the Israeli settlers' population through regulated development, they serve the opposite purpose when applied on Palestinian communities, preventing their development and dispossessing them of their land. Area C, which is under full Israeli control, constitutes 60% of the West Bank and it is also here that the majority of the West Bank's natural resources lie. 60% of Area C is designated as either firing zones, state land, survey land, national parks or nature reserves, thereby blocking Palestinian development including industrial development. In the remaining 40%, Palestinian construction is largely restricted as building permits are almost never granted to Palestinians, leaving them with the only option of building without permits and thus exposing themselves to the threat of demolition.<sup>2</sup>

According to Israeli authorities, Palestinian homes and other structures in Area C are being demolished on the grounds that they were built without Israeli-issued building permits. As recorded by OCHA, between 1988 and 2016, the Israeli Civil Administration issued over 16,000 demolition orders located in Area C with such justification.<sup>3</sup>

Demolitions in the West Bank have a devastating, long-lasting social and economic effect on Palestinian families and their children, making them further dependent on humanitarian assistance. In particular, the mental wellbeing of children are being impacted. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, many children suffer the trauma of watching their homes and schools being destroyed. According to OCHA, "the impact on children can be particularly devastating, including depression, anxiety, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder".<sup>4</sup>

## **2. GENERAL DEMOLITION FIGURES**

### **2.1. Material Damage: Monthly and Annual Number of Structures demolished or seized**

From 1 January to 31 December 2022, a total of 953 structures were demolished or seized throughout the West Bank, of which 143 were located in East Jerusalem, 781 in Area C and 29 in Areas A and B<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 1: Monthly number of structures demolished or seized**

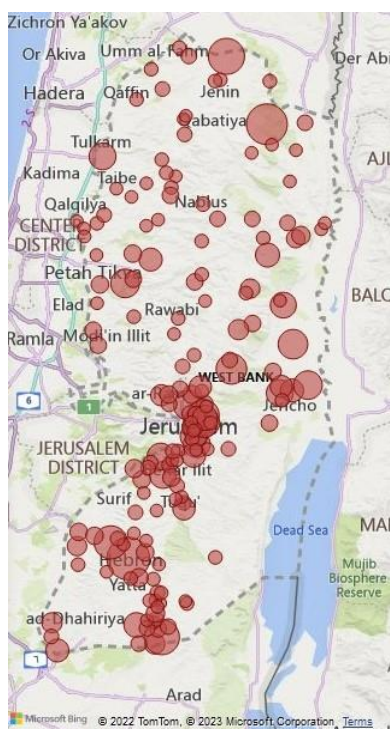
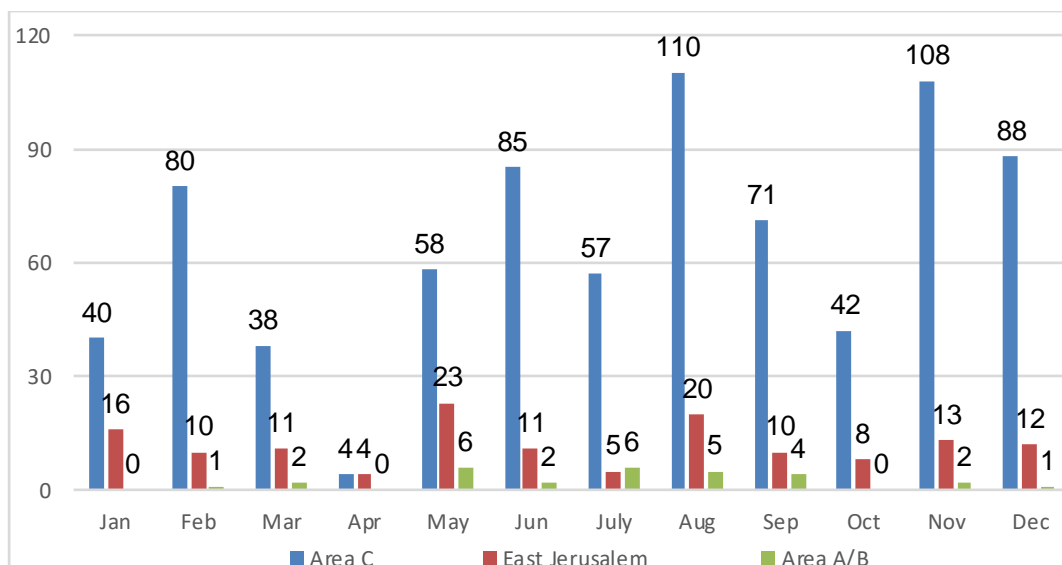
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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.btselem.org/planning\\_and\\_building](https://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/most-palestinian-plans-build-area-c-not-approved>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/raided-and-razed/raided-and-razed.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Source: UN OCHA



Source: UN OCHA

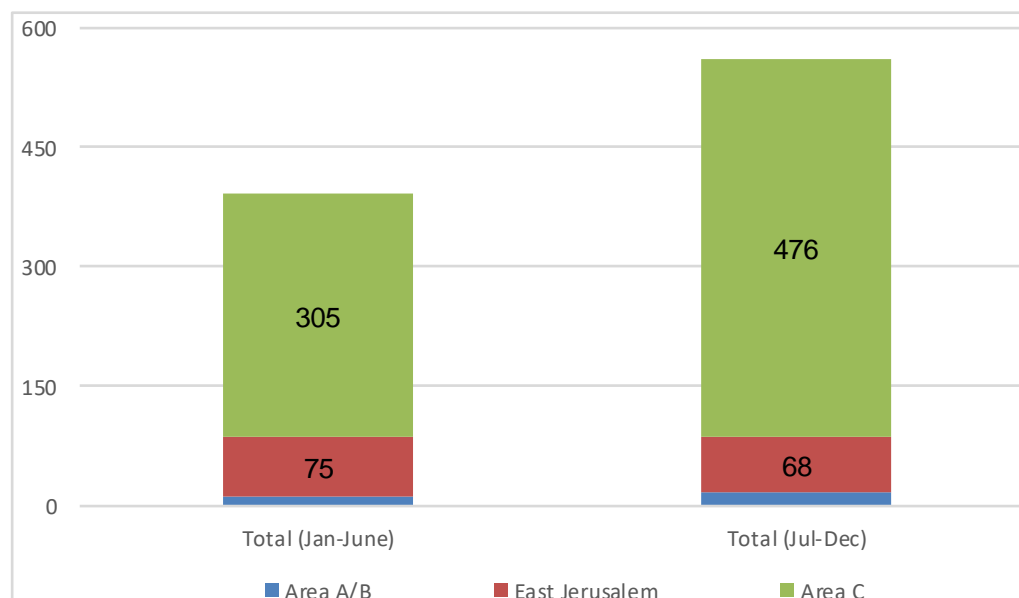
As reflected in Table 1, the number of Palestinian-owned structures demolished or seized in August 2022 (135 structures) was the highest in 2022. More than 80% of the targeted structures in August were located in Area C. August was also the month with the second highest number of demolitions in East Jerusalem (20) and Area A/B (5).

The month of April experienced a relatively low number of demolitions attributed to the month of Ramadan, during which the Israeli authorities customarily halt most demolitions. The number of demolitions in April (8) was three times less than in April of the previous year (24).

The map to the left shows the location of the demolitions and seizures during the reporting period. Demolitions and seizures took place in all governorates, with concentrations in the areas in East Jerusalem and the 'greater Jerusalem' area, the Jordan Valley and the southern Hebron area.

Areas that were particularly affected were Jerusalem (26%), Hebron (22%), Jericho (12%), Bethlehem (8%), Ramallah (7%), Nablus (7%), Jenin (5%), Salfit (5), Tubas (4%), Tulkarem (2%), and Qalqilya (1%)

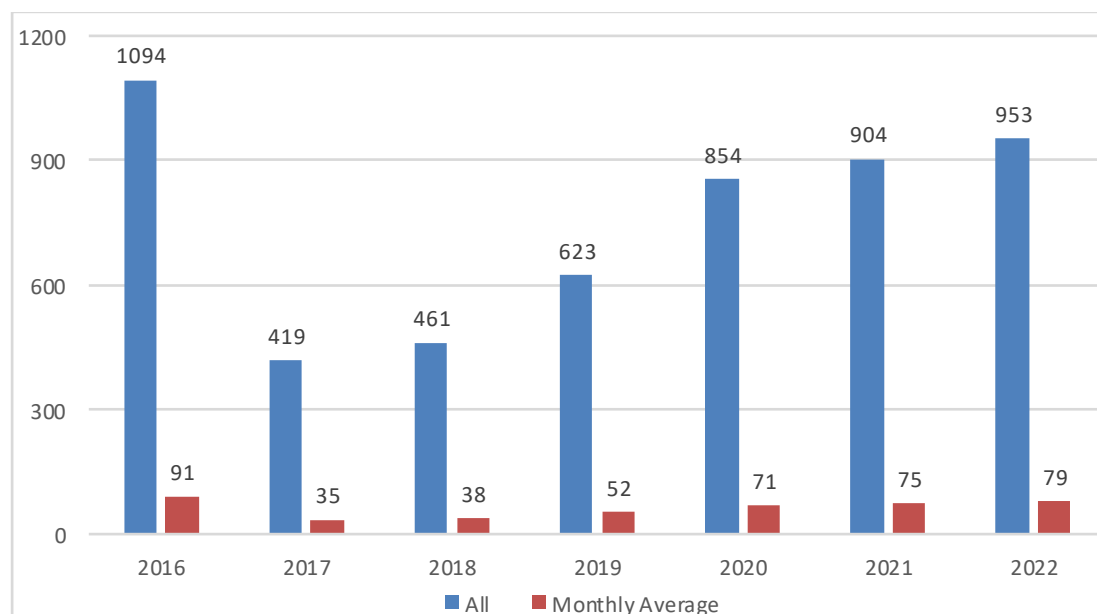
**Table 2: Jan-June demolition/seizure in comparison with July-Dec demolition/seizure**



Source: UN OCHA

The number of demolitions in second half of the year (Jul-Dec) is 562, representing a 43% increase compared to the first half (Jan-June), which is 391. A reason for this was particularly the increase in demolitions in Area C, rising from 305 in the first half to 476 in the second half. This represents a more than 50% rise in demolitions in the second half of 2022, in comparison to the first half.

**Table 3: Annual number of structures demolished or seized, and monthly averages**



Source: UN OCHA

Table 3 demonstrates that the number of demolitions in the West Bank has risen continuously over the last 5 years, and is the highest since 2016. In total, 953 structures were demolished or seized, with 781 in Area C, 29 in Area A/B and 143 in East Jerusalem. All but 35 of the structures were targeted for lacking building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain in Area C and East Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2. Human Damage: Monthly and Annual Number of People Displaced and Affected by demolitions or Seizures

**Table 4: Monthly number of people displaced<sup>7</sup> and affected<sup>8</sup> by demolitions or seizures**

<b>2022</b>	<b>All Displaced</b>	<b>All Affected</b>
January	93	163
February	102	696
March	37	289
April	17	7
May	162	7900
June	89	6474
July	81	748
August	135	488
September	57	8784
October	84	178
November	109	382
December	65	2337

*Source: UN OCHA*

The month of May saw the highest number of displaced people in 2022 (162), with 85 being Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem neighborhoods.

The high number of people affected in September is due to two separate incidents, on 20 September, the Israeli authorities sealed off two artesian water wells in Area B in Kur and Ar Ras both in Tulkarm,

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<sup>6</sup> Source: OCHA

<sup>7</sup> Includes all people who had a structure used as their habitual place of residence demolished.

<sup>8</sup> Includes all people who had any of their property, other than their residence, demolished. Displaced and affected are here