

DISPLACEMENT UPDATE: ABOUT 4,000 PALESTINIANS DISPLACED IN THE WEST BANK IN 2023

FEBRUARY 2024

In 2023, **around 4,000** Palestinians were displaced due to policies and practices implemented by the Israeli authorities or Israeli settlers, all contributing to a coercive environment in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem:

- A total of **1,152** Palestinians, including **575** children, were displaced when the Israeli authorities demolished or forced them to demolish their homes citing lack of Israeli-issued building permits.
- **173** Palestinians, including **70** children, were displaced when the Israeli authorities demolished their homes on punitive grounds.
- **921** Palestinians, including **394** children, were displaced during Israeli forces operations, where **222** structures were destroyed.
- At least **1,539** Palestinians, including **756** children, were displaced from their homes or communities in Area C of the West Bank amid Israeli settler violence, access restrictions, and shrinking access to grazing land.
- **200** Palestinians, including **82** children, were displaced from H2 area and **Masafer Yatta** in Hebron, citing increased movement restrictions imposed on their communities by Israeli forces as the primary reason.



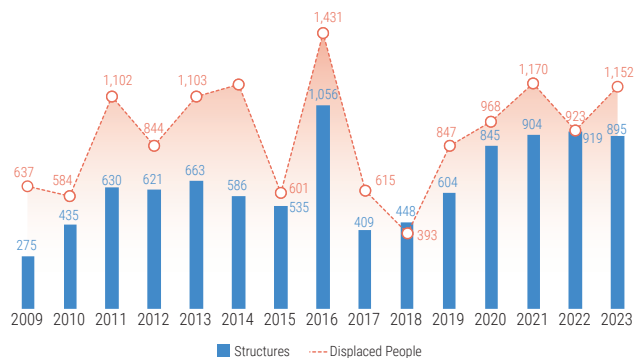
A Palestinian child sitting on the rubble of his families demolished house in Jabal Al Mukkabir, East Jerusalem. Photo by OCHA

The above numbers, representing Palestinians displaced in the West Bank, are the highest ever recorded by OCHA for a single year. OCHA has recorded the displacement of Palestinians due to demolitions systematically since 2009. While the highest rate of displacement in 2023 was caused by settler violence and access restriction, this phenomenon may not capture the full scope of Palestinians being displaced in the West Bank due to multiple coercive factors, including demolitions of Palestinian homes and property, systematic discrimination against Palestinians, Israeli forces arrests and often violent operations. Insofar as such actions are committed by or with the approval or acquiescence of the Israeli authorities to force Palestinians to leave their homes and lands or constitute actions that create conditions which force Palestinians to leave their homes and their lands, such actions raise concerns of forcible transfer, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

DISPLACEMENT DUE TO DEMOLITION FOR LACKING ISRAELI-ISSUED BUILDING PERMITS

Most structures demolished in the West Bank are targeted for lacking Israeli issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain under Israel's discriminatory planning and permit laws and policies.

STRUCTURES DEMOLISHED AND PALESTINIANS DISPLACED DUE TO LACK OF PERMITS

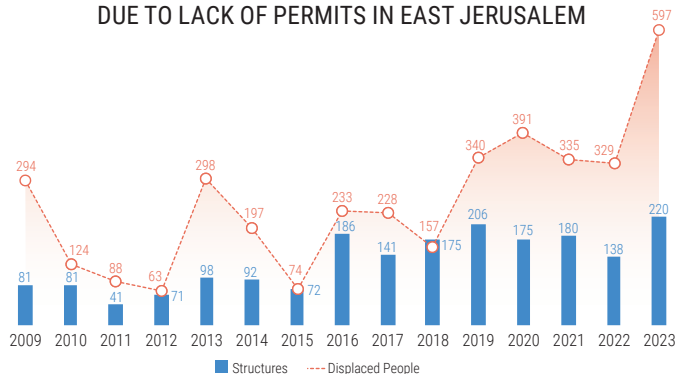


*For more breakdowns see our live charts at ochaopt.org/data/demolition.

In 2023, 895 structures were demolished in this context, representing 76 per cent of all demolished structures. Some 214 of these structures were homes to 1,152 Palestinians, including 571 children, all of whom were displaced. The remaining structures were not inhabited, but their destruction often undermined people's livelihoods or access to services. Some 106 of the demolished structures had been provided by donors as humanitarian assistance, mainly in response to previous demolitions; these included 14 residential structures.

A total of 597 of those displaced in this context lived in East Jerusalem, where demolitions are often carried out by the owners, forced by the Israeli authorities to do so. In 2023, 117 of the 220 structures demolished in East Jerusalem (50 per cent) were destroyed by their owners following continuous Israeli orders and threats and to avoid fines and other measures taken against them. 354 people were displaced in such demolitions. This is the the highest number of displacement and demolished structures in a single year since 2009 in East Jerusalem.

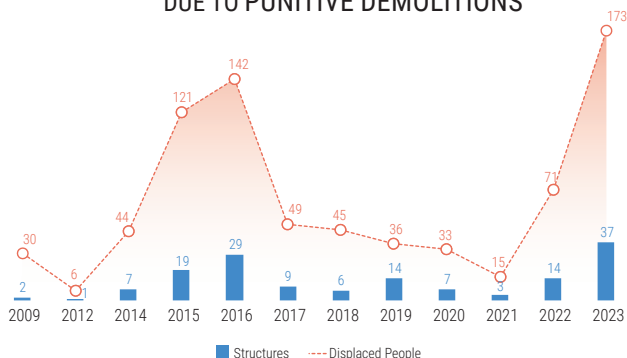
STRUCTURES DEMOLISHED AND PALESTINIANS DISPLACED DUE TO LACK OF PERMITS IN EAST JERUSALEM



DISPLACEMENT DUE TO PUNITIVE DEMOLITIONS

During 2023, Israeli authorities punitively demolished or sealed 37 homes and one agricultural structure belonging to the families of Palestinians allegedly responsible for attacks targeting Israelis in 2022 and 2023, displacing 173 Palestinians, including 70 children. This is more than double the 2022 figure (71 people).

STRUCTURES DEMOLISHED AND PALESTINIANS DISPLACED DUE TO PUNITIVE DEMOLITIONS

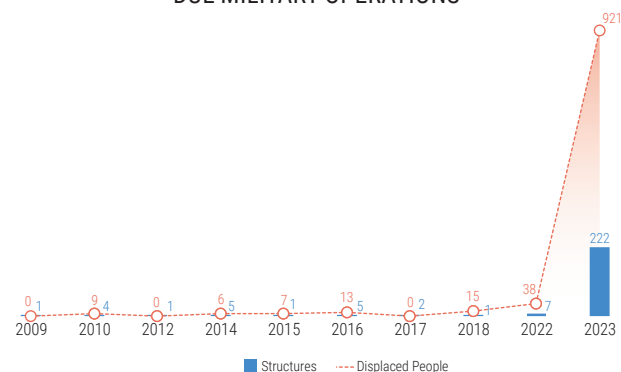


Seventeen of these structures were in Area B, nine in Area A, four in Area C and seven in East Jerusalem. These punitive demolitions are a form of collective punishment and prohibited under international law. Such demolitions permanently displace families and may also amount to forcible transfer.

DISPLACEMENT DUE TO DEMOLITION AND DESTRUCTION DURING OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY ISRAELI FORCES

An additional 222 structures were destroyed during Israeli forces operations, mainly in Area A, leading to the displacement of 921 Palestinians, including 394 children. These account for 40 per cent of all Palestinians who had their homes demolished in 2023 across the West Bank. Such operations often involved unnecessary and disproportionate use of force, including methods and means more appropriate to the conduct of hostilities such as airstrikes and the use of shoulder-fired explosive projectiles in densely populated areas, resulting in wanton destruction of property and infrastructure, particularly in the north of the West Bank. The most prominent flashpoints were the refugee camps of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams. During such operations, Israeli forces bulldozed roads, damaging water, and sewage networks within those urban areas, affecting hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

STRUCTURES DEMOLISHED AND PALESTINIANS DISPLACED DUE MILITARY OPERATIONS



DISPLACEMENT DUE TO ISRAELI SETTLER VIOLENCE AND ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

At least 1,539 Palestinians were displaced during 2023, citing Israeli settlers' violence and shrinking access to grazing land as the main reasons, compared with 774 people in 2022. Of them, 1,208 (81 per cent) were displaced in the aftermath of 7 October, amid a significant increase in violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, including physical attacks and death threats. Those displaced have moved to towns or other rural areas that they consider safer. Most of those displaced were in the governorates of Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron, which also have the highest number of Israeli settlement outposts. At least fourteen

Palestinian communities were completely displaced during 2023 and now stand empty. In some of these communities, Israeli forces demolished the remaining structures, including at least two schools. (OCHA has no systematic collection of this displacement data before 2022)

Additionally, in Masafer Yatta and H2 area in Hebron, a total of 34 families comprising 200 people, including 82 children were displaced during 2023, citing heightened access and movement restrictions imposed by Israeli forces, coupled with an increase

in search and arrest operations since 7 October 2023, and the military trainings particularly in Masafer Yatta. These restrictions have further exacerbated already difficult living conditions of the Palestinians residents, and contributed to a coercive environment that has pressured residents to move out.

Unlike displacement following home demolitions, these figures are not exhaustive and comparative data is not available before 2022, although the latest levels of displacement in this context are not believed to have occurred in previous years covered here.

COMMUNITY DISPLACEMENT BY DEMOLITIONS AND SETTLER-VIOLENCE (JAN-DEC 2023)

