



**UN Coordinator for Aid to Palestine condemns continued obstruction of relief items to Palestinian communities**

*Jerusalem, 10 November 2016*

The UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Piper, today condemned the Israeli authorities' continued obstruction of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank.

On 7 November, the Israeli Civil Administration and the Israeli army seized nine donor-funded tents (two of which were not yet erected) in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Khirbet Tell al Himma in the northern Jordan Valley. The structures were all provided as humanitarian aid, following earlier demolitions in the same community on 27 September 2016, which left the affected families without shelter or kitchens.

Nearby, Israeli settlers have recently established a new settlement outpost (next to Giv'at Sal'it settlement) and have been impeding access of Khirbet Tell al Himma herders to some of their traditional grazing areas.

"Targeting the most vulnerable of the vulnerable and preventing them from receiving relief - especially as winter sets in - is unacceptable and runs counter to Israel's obligations as an occupying power," said Mr. Piper. "Sadly, we are seeing more and more of this."

In 2016, there has been a dramatic rise in demolitions by Israel of donor-funded humanitarian assistance, with 286 such structures demolished or seized so far this year - a 165 per cent increase from the total in 2015. About one quarter of the structures targeted this year were in Palestinian Bedouin communities located within or near the area allocated to the E1 settlement expansion project. These come in the context of a dramatic rise in the overall demolition rate for 2016, which exceeds any year since the UN began systematic monitoring in 2009.

"Through a combination of law, policy and practice, Israel is building an increasingly coercive environment in Area C of the West Bank. This is both illegal and creating an entirely new reality on the ground," added Mr. Piper.

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