

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## **Israel and the Occupied Territories: Evictions and demolitions must stop**

Israel's unjustified destruction of thousands of Palestinian and Arab Israeli homes as well as vast areas of agricultural land has reached an unprecedented level and must stop immediately, Amnesty International said today.

Over the last three and a half years, Israeli armed forces have demolished more than 3,000 homes, leaving tens of thousands of men, women and children homeless or without a livelihood.

In a report released today -- *Israel and the Occupied Territories. Under the rubble: House demolition and destruction of land and property* -- Amnesty International said: "The grounds invoked by Israel to justify the destruction are overly broad and based on discriminatory policies and practices."

*"The authorities gave us different justifications for refusing us the building permit...Each time we succeeded to challenge or disprove the reason they had given us for the refusal, our application was rejected on different grounds. We spent thousands of dollars on this process. In the end we understood that it was hopeless and we built our home without a permit."*

The home of Salim and 'Arabia Shawamreh in the village of 'Anata has been demolished four times and is now again under threat.

According to the United Nations, more than 2,000 homes in Gaza have been destroyed in the last three years and 10 percent of the agricultural land. In the West Bank, almost 90% of Israel's fence/wall is being built on occupied territory and at least 600 homes have been destroyed.

In the Occupied Territories, demolitions are often carried out as collective punishments for Palestinian attacks or to facilitate the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements. Both practices contravene international law and some of these acts are war crimes.

Discriminatory planning and building policies make it practically impossible for Israeli Arabs and Palestinians to obtain building permits.

In Israel, the demolition of homes for lack of building permits in the Arab sector is a recurrent phenomenon, whereas demolition of homes without building permission in the Jewish sector is almost unheard of.

Forced evictions and house demolitions are usually carried out without warning with families given

little or no time to leave their homes and salvage their possessions.

Most cases of house demolition and destruction of land are not subject to legal supervision or appeal.

Amnesty International is calling on Israel to halt all unlawful destruction of homes and land, including for the expansion of Israeli settlements and/or for the building of the fence/wall in the Occupied Territories.

The Palestinian Authority is called upon to take measures to prevent attacks by Palestinian armed groups on Israeli civilians.

Amnesty International is also pressing for other States, particularly the US, to stop the sale or transfer of weaponry and equipment that are used to commit unlawful destruction of homes and other human rights violations..

For a copy of the executive summary of the report, *Israel and the Occupied Territories. Under the rubble: House demolition and destruction of land and property* please go to:  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engmde150402004>

For a copy of the full report, *Israel and the Occupied Territories. Under the rubble: House demolition and destruction of land and property* please go to: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engmde150332004>

#### Public Document

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