



Six-Month Report on Demolitions and Confiscations of EU funded structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem

March 2017 - August 2017

Summary

During the reporting period there has been a reduction in the destruction and seizure of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank, particularly in Area C compared to 2016. At the same time such violations in East Jerusalem continued at almost the same high level as last year.

From March to August 2017, over 150 Palestinian owned structures were impacted by demolition, seizure, sealing off, or eviction throughout the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem. Almost 60% of the incidents took place in East Jerusalem. This brings the total number of affected structures since the beginning of 2017 to 330, resulting in the displacement of over 500 Palestinians including 290 children.

Of the structures (such as classrooms and solar panels) targeted over the 6 month reporting period, 19 structures were funded by the EU or EU Member States (EUMS) for a value of nearly 130,000 €. This brings the number of EU funded structures targeted since the beginning of 2017 to 72, constituting 22% of all Palestinian owned structures targeted by the Israeli Authorities, compared to 17% in 2016. For reference, between 2009 (when recording began) and 2017, some 400 EU/EUMS funded structures worth over 1.2 million € have been demolished or seized. It is worth mentioning that the majority of assistance provided by the EU and its Member States still reaches its recipients despite the continued targeting of EU funded structures.

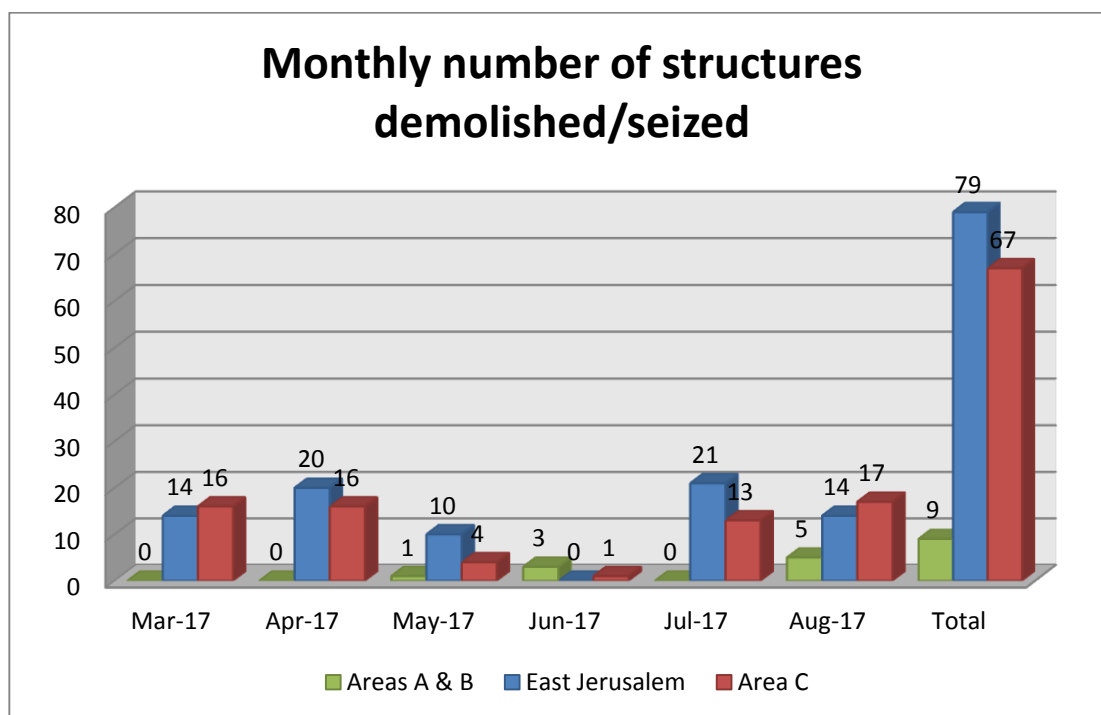
Seizure of EU funded structures have picked up in August as well as the confiscation of equipment and materials for the implementation of EU funded projects. It is too early to assess if this constitutes a trend towards seizures becoming a more widely used modus operandi.

Demolitions, confiscations and seizures are executed by the Israeli authorities on the grounds that the structures have been erected without building permits. For the past years approximately only 1% of the building permits requested by Palestinians in Area C were granted.

1. GENERAL DEMOLITION FIGURES

The number of structures (155) targeted throughout the West Bank from March to August 2017 shows a declining trend in the destruction and seizure of Palestinian property compared to 2016. The number of targeted structures ranged between 30-36 structures per month, with the exception of May and June which showed an even further decline in demolitions (4-15 structures) representing the months leading up to and during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan when the Israeli Authorities normally ease their enforcement on seizures and demolitions. The number of structures targeted in East Jerusalem (79) surpassed the number of structures targeted in Area C (67) during the reporting period.

The structures targeted since the beginning of 2017 represent a 55% decline compared to the 2016 monthly average (41 vs 91). The overall decline in demolitions in 2017 is seen only in Area C, where there has been a sharp decrease in incidents. By contrast, demolitions/evictions in East Jerusalem witnessed a monthly average of 14 structures, almost the same high pace as in 2016, which saw more demolitions than in any other year since 2009 (see annex I).¹ A third of all structures targeted in 2017 were located in East Jerusalem.



The demolitions in the reporting period resulted in the displacement of over 200 Palestinians and adversely impacting the livelihoods of a further 1,300 people.

An estimated number of 12,500 Palestinian structures in Area C² currently have outstanding demolition orders issued by the Israeli Civil Administration due to lack of required building permits.³ These pending demolition orders could be implemented at any moment.

¹ Source: OCHA

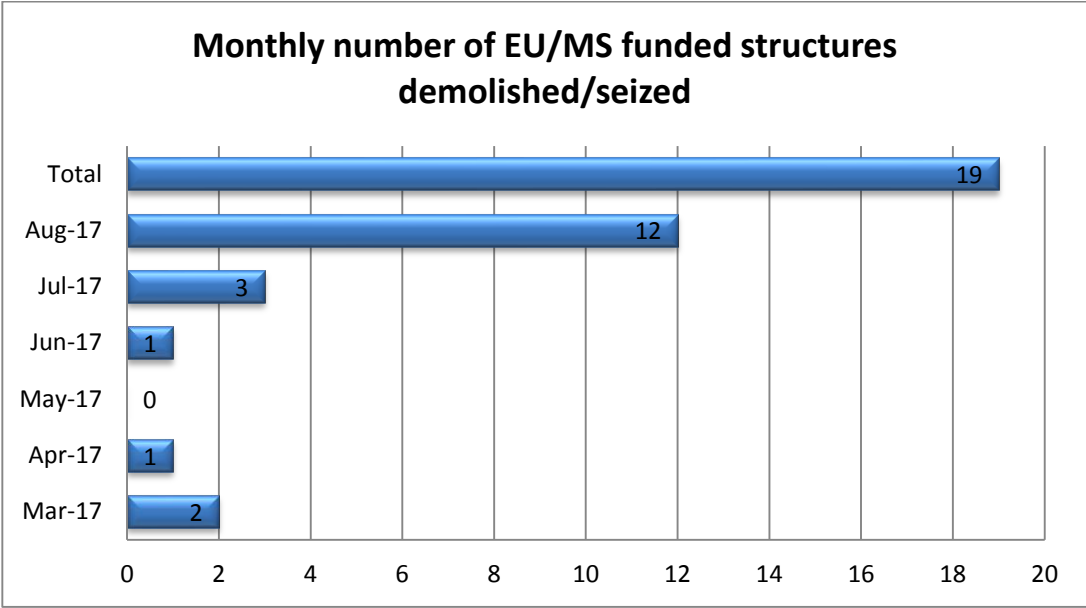
² Source: OCHA, Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin, January 2017

³ Structures at risk of demolition are structures that have received demolition orders, stop-work orders, or eviction orders by the Israeli authorities.

For reference, between 2014 to mid-2016, only 1% of the building permits requested by Palestinians in Area C were granted (16 permits granted from 1,253 applications).⁴ Between 2010-2015, only some 8% of all building permits in Jerusalem were given in Palestinian neighborhoods (714 out of 9,106 permits given).⁵

2. DEMOLITION OF EU-FUNDED STRUCTURES AND STRUCTURES FUNDED BY EU MEMBER STATES (EUMS)

During the reporting period, 19 structures funded by the EU or EUMS with a total value of 127,158 € were destroyed/seized. These numbers are low compared to the previous reporting period when January was particularly high, with 47 EU and EUMS structures demolished during one month.



The village of Jubbat adh Dhib adjacent to Bethlehem was targeted twice during the reporting period. In June 96 solar panels were dismantled and its elementary school was confiscated in August on the day before school term started and solar units serving the school, kindergarten and community centre of Abu Nuwar were confiscated in August.

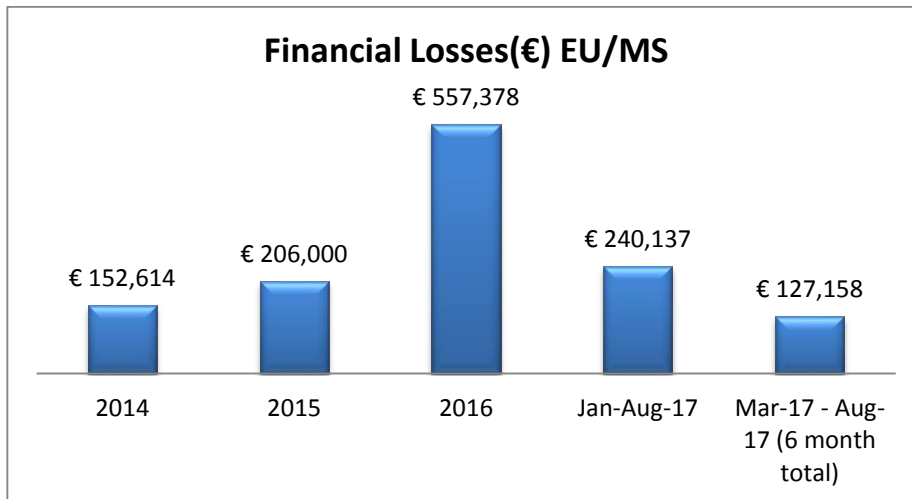
Several Bedouin communities located in the area adjacent to East Jerusalem known as "E1"⁶ were also targeted.

A total of 72 structures funded by EU or its Member States have been demolished or seized since the beginning of 2017 with material losses valued at 240,000 €. In total 22% of all structures demolished in 2017 was EU funded, compared to 17% in 2016. A further 100 EU funded structures worth over 700,000€ were also placed under threat of demolition since the beginning of year, despite the reported decrease in demolitions.

⁴ Another 3% were approved (37 permits out of 1,253 applications) specifically in 2016 in preparation for transfer of Palestinians to relocation sites advanced by the Israeli authorities.

⁵ Source: Bimkom - planners for planning rights.

⁶ If E-1 is developed it will seal Palestinian East Jerusalem off from the West Bank to its east, and create a land bridge from Jerusalem to the Maale Adumim settlement.



For the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the financial losses incurred due to demolitions accounts for an average of 1 per cent of its 2014-2016 budget for humanitarian aid for the West Bank.

Between 2009 (when recording began) and 2017, some 400 EU/EUMS funded structures worth over 1.2 million € have been demolished or seized.

3. TRENDS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

Concern for plans to evacuate Khan al-Ahmar and Susiya

According to a statement by the Israeli defence minister Lieberman on 29 August 2017 the Ministry of Defence is preparing to implement plans to evacuate the Palestinian villages of Susiya in the South Hebron Hills and Khan al-Ahmar near Maale Adumim in the autumn 2017. Khan al Ahmar (Abu Hilw) is one of 18 Bedouin communities inhabited by the Jahalin tribe in the Jerusalem periphery and is situated in an area earmarked for the future expansion of Maale Adumim. The community's mixed elementary school (the 'Tire School') serves 170 pupils. Susiya in the South Hebron Hills (340 inhabitants) has been facing threats of demolition since the late 1980s.

Construction equipment by local Palestinian contractors

In the reporting period several local contractors have had their construction equipment seized while working on humanitarian projects for EU or MS in the occupied West Bank.

Seizure of humanitarian structures and equipment instead of demolitions

While demolitions have declined in 2017 (back to 2015 levels), seizures of humanitarian structures and equipment have picked up, particularly in July/August.

Increase in the risk of displacement in East Jerusalem

From January to August, the Israeli authorities demolished, evicted, or sealed off over 100 structures in East Jerusalem. The communities most heavily affected were Jabal Mukabbir, Beit Hanina, al Isawiya and Silwan which, combined, accounted for 70% of all structures demolished in East Jerusalem. The advancement of four Israeli settlement plans in Sheikh Jarrah would, if approved, lead to the eviction of over 70 additional Palestinian residents, and likely result in restrictions and

tensions that will undermine the living conditions of Palestinian residents of the area. The number of demolitions of homes and other structures is almost as high as in 2016, which saw the highest number of demolitions since 2000.⁷

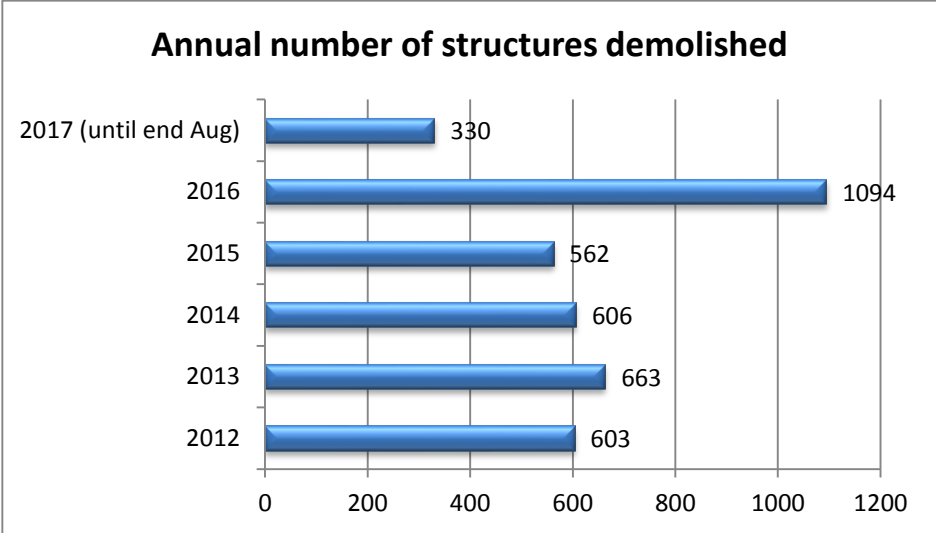
4. EU ACTION DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

During the reporting period the Office of the EU Representative in Jerusalem, together with the EU Delegation to Israel, met and raised matters of demolition with COGAT.

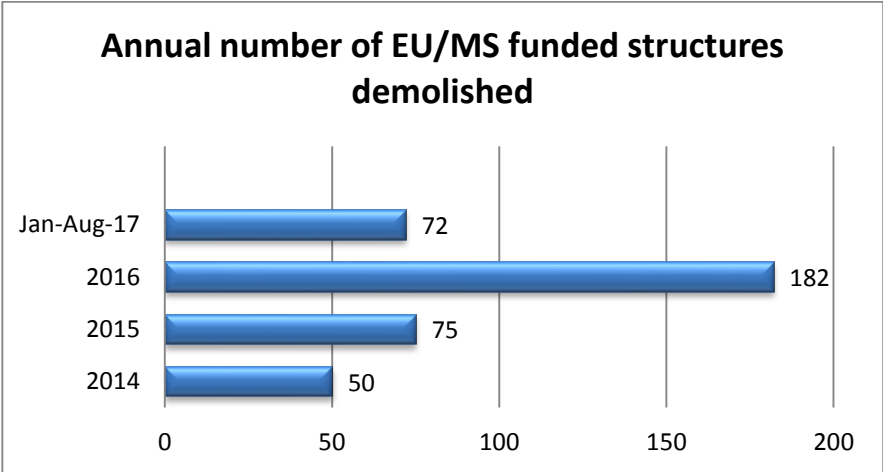
- On 2 March a diplomatic visit was made to Firing Zone 918 in the South Hebron Hills ("Masafer Yatta" area).
- On 24 August a local Statement by EU Heads of Mission in Jerusalem and Ramallah on Israeli demolitions and confiscations of Palestinian structures in Area C was issued.
- On 11 August Local EU statement on the imminent threat of eviction of Shamasneh family in Sheikh Jarrah was issued.

⁷ Source: OCHA Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin, August 2017

ANNEX I: Historical overview: Demolitions in the West bank including East Jerusalem, 2012-2017



ANNEX II: Historical overview: Annual demolitions of EU and EUMS funded structures in the West Bank, 2014-2017



Note: All information disclosed in this report is susceptible to change at any time depending on new available data.