State of Palestine

Office of the Prime Minister

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PM Hamdallah: Israel displaced 150 Palestinians in 72 hours in West Bank.

Ramallah – Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah strongly condemns the ongoing demolition of Palestinian homes by Israeli occupation forces across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. "The demolition of Palestinian homes and structures in the so-called 'Area C' target the most vulnerable communities and deny Palestinians their basic rights, including their right to live in security in their homes and their right to housing. The increase in demolitions that we faced in 2016 appears to be continuing this year as well, regrettably," said Dr. Hamdallah.

In the past three days, Israeli forces displaced approximately 150 Palestinians, half of them children and women, when they demolished at least 60 structures, including homes, in the Bedouin communities of BirAl Maskoob and WadiSneysel, near East Jerusalem, and Khirbet Tana, east of Nablus, in addition to waster and agriculture structures in Qalqilya and Hebron.

Israeli forces targeted Khirbet Tana on Tuesday for the fifth time in the last twelve months."The timing of demolitions was chosen to harm the residents, who were left without shelter during the coldest months of the year," said Dr. Hamdallah.

The Palestinian government is also alarmed by the intention of the Israeli occupation to demolish the newly established school in Khirbet Tanafor the seventh time since 2011. In March 2016, Israeli forces devastated the dreams of 17 Palestinian students by demolishing their school. The community has since rebuilt school with the generous assistance of the European Union.

BirAl Maskoob and Wadi Sneysel are among the 46 Bedouin communities that Israeli occupation authorities are seeking to forcibly transfer in order to implement its "E1" plan, which would extend the illegal settlement of Maaleh Adumim by building thousands of additional housing units in an area adjacent to the settlement.

The international community, including the US administration, has strongly opposed the plan and deemed it a "red line". If implemented, the plan would see settlements extending from East Jerusalem to the border with Jordan, essentially severing the West Bank in half and threatening the viability of a Palestinian state.

Israel's plan to forcibly transfer the 8,000 Bedouins living in these 46 communities would also constitute a grave and flagrant breach under international law, including international humanitarian law.

"These demolitions are an integral part of the systematic and institutionalized colonial regime that sustains Israeli occupation and Works towards making it permanent. It is precisely these illegal acts that compelled the United Nations Security Council to adopt resolution 2334 (2016). We call on the international community to honor its commitment to international law and Palestinian rights and condemn this unlawful and grave action," said the Prime Minister

According to UN OCHA, in 2016 Israel demolished or seized 1,089 Palestinian-owned structures throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 1,593 Palestinians and affecting the livelihoods of another 7,101.

"We call on the international community to honor its responsibilities under international law, including international humanitarian law, the Rome Statute, and other relevant international law instruments. Third states have an obligation to compel Israel to comply with international law and to immediately cease all actions that violate the rights of Palestinians, including the demolition of their homes and any other actions that contribute to the coercive environment that these communities are currently facing," Dr. Hamdallah concluded.