

Demolitions in the West Bank Including East Jerusalem: 2024 Review



Fact Sheet

January 2025

Overview

While global attention is rightfully fixed on the genocidal war against the Palestinian people in Gaza, a silent but destructive campaign against Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains. The Israeli occupation has intensified its control over the region, marked by an unprecedented number of demolitions that have led to widespread displacement of Palestinians.

In 2024, a record-breaking 1,763 structures were demolished across the West Bank including East Jerusalem, displacing 4,253 individuals. This astonishing figure, that shows the unmatched scale of the demolitions, highlights the broader strategy of dispossession targeting Palestinians all over. Beyond the demolitions, thousands more have been forcibly displaced due to escalating settlers' terror, which has also seen an alarming rise in intensity and coordination.

These demolitions have had major impacts on Palestinian life, destroying homes, agricultural lands, and critical infrastructure. Entire communities have been left to struggle without access to basic services, while farmers and workers face devastating economic losses. At the same time, plans for further settlement expansion and land confiscations signal an ongoing effort to entrench colonial domination over Palestinian land and resources.

The year 2024 has shattered previous records for demolitions, reflecting the intensification of Israel's policies of displacement, expansion, and control in the West Bank. This silent war, while less visible than the horrors revealing in Gaza, continues to devastate Palestinian lives which only reveals Israel's plan for the entire region.

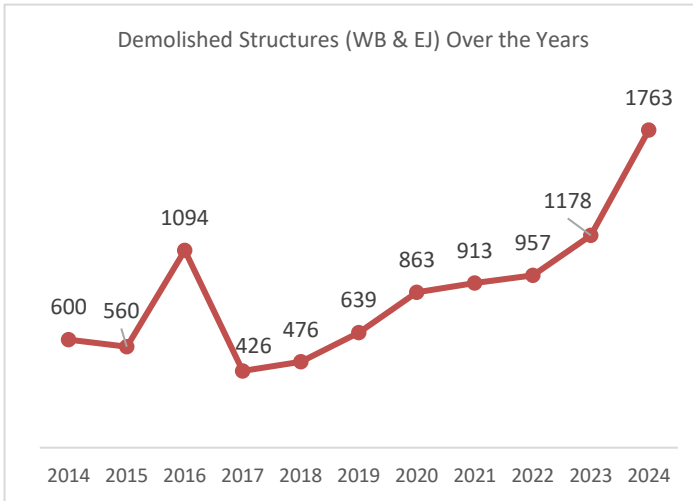
About JLAC

The Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center (JLAC) is a Palestinian non-governmental organization mandated with providing pro-bono legal aid and consultation in the defense of human rights, both in East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank. JLAC has coupled its legal aid with public interest cases, legal reform, community awareness, and advocacy.



High Increase in Demolitions

In the year 2024, 1763 structures were demolished across the West Bank including East Jerusalem, breaking the record for the highest number of demolitions in a single year. This follows the record-breaking year of 2023, which had already seen a significant increase compared to previous years. The unprecedented number of demolitions in 2024 targeted various types of structures, each contributing to the severe disruption of Palestinian life.



The demolition of Palestinian structures in the West Bank, has been a longstanding policy that dates back to the aftermath of the 1967 war. However, the rate of demolitions has significantly risen in recent years. Since October 7, 2023, there has been a marked surge in demolitions throughout the West Bank. This period has been characterized by an ongoing wave of demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, coupled with intensified incursions into Palestinian cities and refugee camps. These activities have resulted in a sharp increase in demolitions as well as widespread destruction of property and infrastructure. Furthermore, demolitions are not confined to Area C but also occur in Areas A and B, often under the justification of security concerns. In the case of refugee camps, this policy appears to be driven by a strategy of collective punishment and exerting pressure on the population. It involves the deliberate destruction of infrastructure and essential services, including water pipelines, electricity networks, and sewage systems, further exacerbating the already dire living conditions of the affected communities.

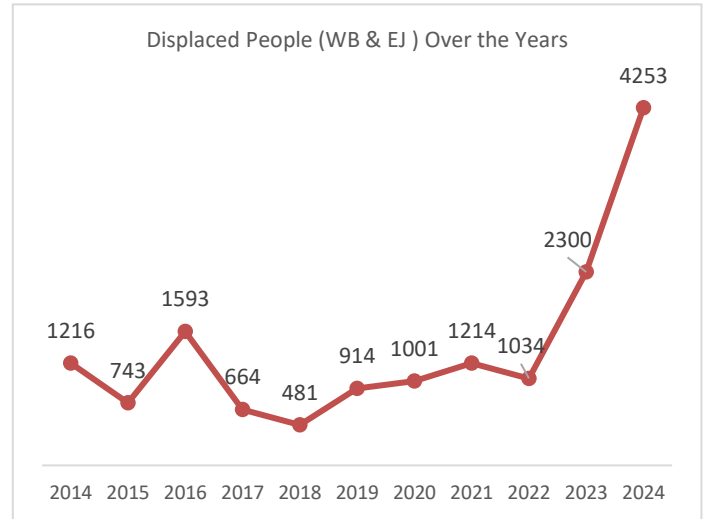
Demographic Impact

The demolitions displaced a total of 4,253 people in the year 2024. Children were significantly affected making up about 41% of those displaced. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and individuals with disabilities, face heightened challenges due to the loss of their places of shelter.

In comparison with previous years, this year presents a massive increase in displacement. This displacement has

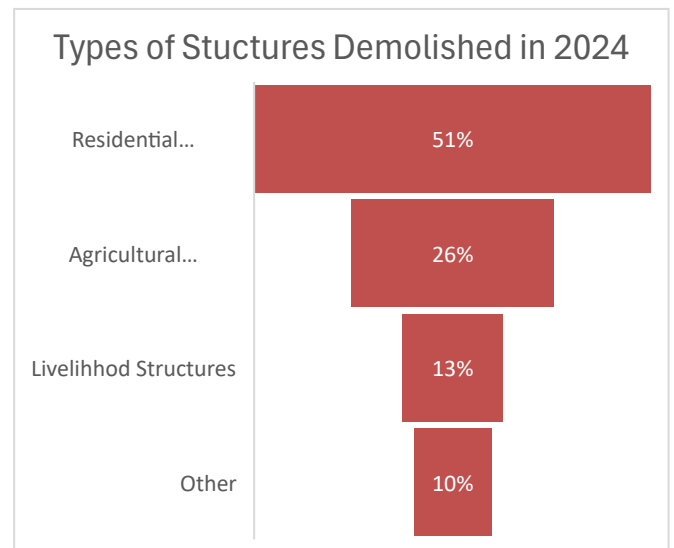
been worsening the already difficult living conditions, increasing dependency on humanitarian aid and support services.

To provide a broader context, the graph below shows the trend of displacement over the years, highlighting the escalating impact on Palestinians.



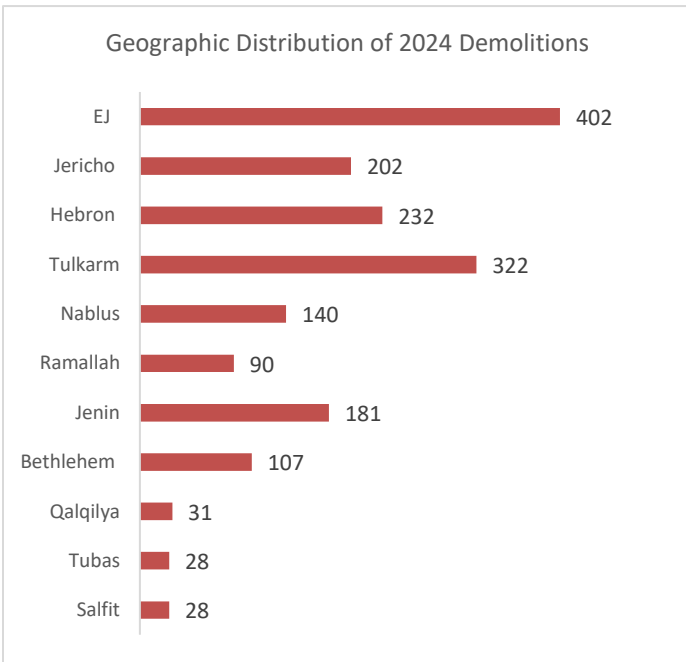
Types of Structures Demolished

Of the 1763 structures demolished in 2024, 51% were residential buildings, resulting in the displacement of many families and causing severe disruption to community life. 26% of the demolitions were agricultural structures, significantly impacting local food production and farmers' livelihoods. Livelihood-related structures constituted 13% of the demolitions, adversely affecting the economic stability of the affected individuals. Critical WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) installations, infrastructure demolitions (including essential utilities such as roads and power lines), and community centers and other essential facilities together accounted for 10% of the demolitions, further obscuring public health, sanitation efforts, and social lives.

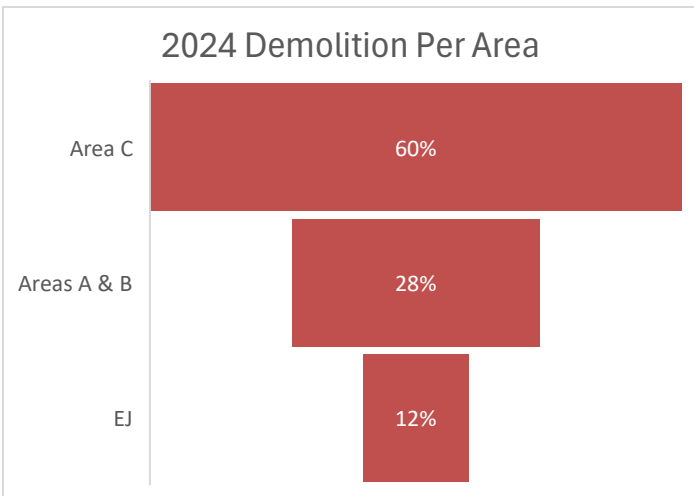


Geographic Distribution of Demolitions

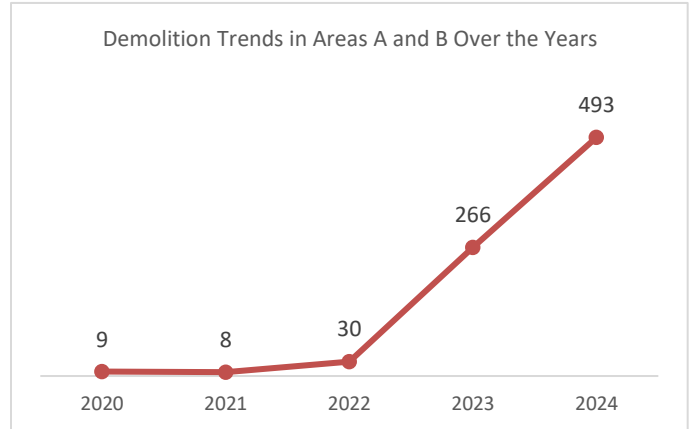
The geographic distribution of demolitions indicates a widespread impact across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. East Jerusalem experienced the highest number, accounting for 23% of the total demolitions. Tulkarm followed with 18%, while Hebron accounted for 13%, and Jericho for 11%. Other affected areas included Jenin with 10%, Nablus with 8%, Bethlehem with 6%, Ramallah with 5%, Qalqilya with 2%, and both Tubas and Salfit with 1.6% each. This widespread distribution highlights the extensive reach of the demolition activities



In addition, it is important to highlight that demolitions are not only happening in Areas C and in East Jerusalem but also in Areas A and B. The rate of demolitions in Areas A and B is further increasing.



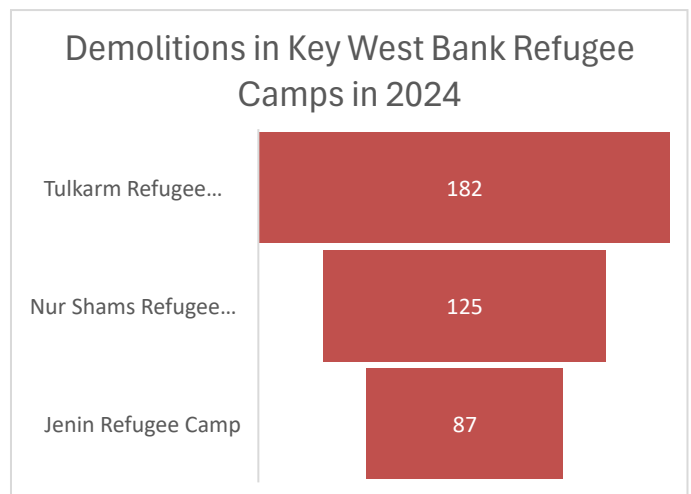
To provide a general context for the increase in demolitions occurring in Areas A and B, below is a graph indicating the trend of demolitions in these areas over the last few years.



Additionally, since October 7, demolitions in Areas A and B have been increasing significantly, often through military incursions into these areas under the pretense of security concerns. This escalation highlights a broader pattern of demolition activities extending beyond Area C and East Jerusalem, impacting Palestinians everywhere.

New Trend of Demolitions: Military Operations Against Refugee Camps

Alongside the increasing trend of demolitions across different areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, a concerning new pattern has emerged: demolitions linked to intensified military operations targeting refugee camps. Since the onset of the genocidal war on Gaza, Israel has escalated its attacks on refugee camps in the occupied West Bank, with a particular focus on locations such as Tulkarm Refugee Camp, Nur Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm, and Jenin refugee camp, among others. These operations have resulted in widespread demolitions and significant disruption to the lives of camp residents.



Legal Context

The primary reasons cited for the demolitions in 2024 include the lack of permits, which accounted for 72% of the cases. Military operations were responsible for 26%, while 1% were punitive demolitions, and 1% were attributed to other reasons. Israeli policies, such as restrictive zoning and planning regulations, continue to severely limit Palestinian construction in these areas, leaving communities vulnerable to widespread displacement and destruction.

It is also worth mentioning that 99% of Palestinians' requests to obtain a building permit in Area C and East Jerusalem are rejected. This extremely high rejection rate is due to a complex and restrictive permitting process that makes it nearly impossible for Palestinians to legally build homes, schools, and infrastructure. As a result, many Palestinians build without permits out of necessity, making their structures vulnerable to demolition. This policy effectively restrains Palestinian development and contributes to overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and poor living conditions in these areas.

Call for Action

The year 2024 has seen an unprecedented escalation in demolitions across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with 1,763 structures destroyed—breaking all previous

records. This sharp rise in demolitions represents a clear indicator of the intensifying policies of displacement and dispossession targeting Palestinians. Entire families have been forcibly uprooted, livelihoods destroyed, and critical infrastructure reduced to rubble. The rate of demolitions shows no sign of abating, and the situation is worsening with each passing month.

This relentless trend highlights the urgent need for international intervention to halt these violations and address their root causes. The global community cannot remain silent in the face of such systematic destruction, which violates fundamental human rights and international law. Immediate action is required to protect Palestinian civilians from further demolitions and displacement, ensure accountability for those responsible for unlawful actions, and challenge the discriminatory policies fueling these violations.

The continued rise in demolitions reflects a complete disregard for international law and a deliberate strategy to deepen the occupation and erase Palestinian presence in the region. The time to act is now, to safeguard the rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and to uphold the principles of international law.

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