



Monthly Report

February 2012

# Israeli Violations in Occupied East Jerusalem

*Prepared by*

Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

*in cooperation with*

Land Research Center

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## Introduction

During the month of February 2012, the Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, in cooperation with the Land Research Center (LRC), recorded violations of Palestinian rights, both at the hands of the Israeli authorities and Israeli settlers.

- **Home demolitions** – **Four** homes were demolished
- **Demolitions and plowings** – There were **three** incidents of destroyed and demolished properties
- **Settlement and land confiscation** – **One** incident of land confiscation
- **Aggression on religious sites** – One incident of graffiti at a Baptist Church, and a large escalation of clashes at Al Aqsa Mosque throughout the month.
- **Attacks against individuals** – One man was hit in the nose with a sound grenade, a family home in Al 'Isawiyya was raided, and another man was beaten and arrested from his home.

# 1. HOME DEMOLITIONS

## Residence in Beit Hanina:

On Thursday, February 9, the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem demolished a Palestinian residence and shed in Wadi al Dam, an area of Beit Hanina. The residence and shed belonged to Izz ad Din Abu Nijma (61) who, along with his 12-member family, is now homeless.



Destroyed home of Abu Nijma family in Beit Hanina (February 2012)

## Residence in As Suwwana:

On February 13 Israeli military troops, accompanied by bulldozers, entered As Suwwana area of East Jerusalem and demolished the 85m<sup>2</sup> home of Ahmad al Baghdadi (34). Ahmad lived alone in the home with his three year old son.



Destroyed Baghdadi family home (February 2012)

## Two Residences in Jaba':

On February 26, Israeli forces demolish the residences of two brothers, Mousa and Ahmad Ka'abna in Jaba'. Israeli authorities claimed that the reason behind the demolition was that the homes were unlicensed and that residency is illegal in the designated area.

According to Mousa, "At around 4:00 pm Israeli troops began wandering around our residences, without talking to us. About seven hours later we heard engines of the Israeli vehicles approaching. They came to demolish the home of my brother, Ahmad. They brought an officer from the Civil Administration and an official from the nearby Adam settlement. They surrounded the house and forbade anyone from approaching. They also threatened my brother with arrest if he resisted." He added, "It does not matter how much pressure they put on us. It doesn't matter if they demolish our residences or arrest us, we will never leave this land."

The Ka'abna family has resided in the area since the 1970s, long before the establishment of Adam settlement, which has begun to rapidly confiscate nearby Palestinian lands.

The two families estimate their losses to be around 50,000 NIS. They are now residing in tents provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). One other residence, along with two sheds were also demolished in the area.

## 2. DEMOLITIONS AND PLOWINGS

### Wadi Hilweh

#### Abbasi Shop:

On February 1, Akram al Abbasi was forced to demolish his workshop in Wadi Hilweh, Silwan. Akram said that he received an irrevocable demolition order from the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem, claiming that the structure was unlicensed. He was told that he could either demolish the shop himself, or the Municipality would do so at his expense.



Demolished shop in Wadi Hilweh, Silwan. (February, 2012)

#### Playground and Cultural Café:

At 6:30 am on Monday, February 13, the Israeli police blocked all entrances into the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood. Bulldozers entered the area and destroyed the 800m<sup>2</sup> playground as well as a nearby cultural café. Approximately 50 policemen, officers of the Israeli Municipality, officers of the Israeli EPA, and some masked men were observed at the demolition.



Demolition of park cultural café in Wadi Hilweh (February, 2012)

### 3. SETTLEMENT AND LAND CONFISCATION

#### Confiscated lands in As Suwwana:

On February 13 the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem confiscated lands in As Suwwana as part of a plan to create a “Talmudic park.”

Bulldozers entered the site and knocked over the wall surrounding the three dunum plot of land, covering it with bags of sand and dirt, rendering it unusable.

The owner, Samir Farouj, witnessed the action, along with a number of other Palestinians. He was told that he should go the police station for clarification, but that the state had the “right” to confiscate land as it deems it appropriate.



Sand and dirt bags used to confiscate land in As Suwwana. (February, 2012)

## 4. AGGRESSION ON RELIGIOUS SITES

### Graffiti in a Baptist Church

On February 20 offensive slogans were spray painted onto the walls of a Baptist Church in Jerusalem, signed “price tag.” Price tag is a marking for a group of radical Jews, responsible for the defiling and attacking of many sacred Muslim and Christian sites across the West Bank.

The graffiti included slogans offending Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, as well as threats such as “We will crucify you” and “Death to Christianity.” They also slashed the tires of three cars in the church parking lot.

Another price tag attack occurred on February 7, when a group spray painted on the walls of the Monastery of the Cross. Over the past months, the same group defiled Maman Allah Cemetery and Ukasha Mosque.

The Latin Patriarch Church labeled it a “terrorist” act and said that the hateful actions attack the heart of Christianity. It also demanded that the perpetrators be found and punished.

Such radical groups have been committing similar hate crimes against Palestinian properties in the area since 1948 and, while Israeli police often promise to bring the perpetrators to justice, they rarely do.

### Numerous Attacks on Al Aqsa Mosque

In recent months, Al Aqsa Mosque has come under intense attack by extremist and racist Jewish groups, often led by far right wing political parties.

On February 12, the Israeli Likud party called for an action in which groups broke into the Mosque in order to ensure their control of the Temple Mount and to prepare for the



construction of the Temple. The call was headed by Moshe Piglin, a member of the Likud party.

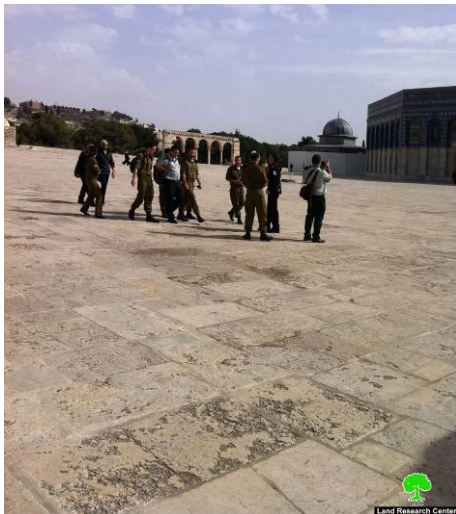
The announcement that was published through various broadcasting agencies and websites said: "Together, and with thousands of participants, and with the supervision of Moshe Piglin, we invite you to climb the Temple Mount to ensure our control and cleanse the site from land thieves. We will fearlessly build the Holy House (Temple) on the ruins of the Mosque."



On February 15, 13 Israeli soldiers, including high ranking officers, broke into the courtyard of Al Aqsa Mosque with a tour guide, and under the protection of Israeli police.

A man who works at the Mosque stated that: "These raids by colonists or soldiers in their uniforms are extremely provocative and done with the intent of showing us who has the power. A few days ago, there were calls by the Likud party and some Women's Clubs to break into the Mosque...I believe that they are testing the Palestinian dedication to the protection of one of the most sacred sites in the world."

On February 19, there were more calls for breaking into the Mosque. In the early morning, Israeli Police blocked the entrance of the Old City and Al Aqsa Mosque. Everyone attempting to enter the Mosque underwent a thorough ID check, and many IDs were kept in the custody of the Israeli authorities for the duration of the holder's stay at the Mosque. At 8:45 am the Israeli Police allowed radical Jews into the courtyard, enraging worshippers at the Mosque, who responded by throwing rocks. Moments later, police officers surrounded the Palestinians, shooting sound grenades and tear gas. Many Palestinians were beaten and 15 were arrested.



On February 21, the Israeli police disallowed any Palestinian man under the age of 50 from entering the Mosque. Later that day, they allowed 22 settlers to break into the Mosque under police protection. Clashes erupted between female worshippers and the Israeli police, who arrested four women.

The following day, settlers in Kiryat Arbaa called for a demonstration in the Old City. They offered free bus rides to people who would break into the Mosque and pray inside. Palestinian shopkeepers were forced to close their shops in order to allow the demonstrators to pass.

On February 23, Israeli police allowed 36 Kiryat Arbaa settlers into the Mosque while closing the gates to Palestinians. Some Palestinians who had spent the night in the Mosque in an attempt to prevent the settlers from entering were arrested by Israeli police.

The following day, clashes erupted between the police and Muslims after Friday prayer. The police shot sound grenades and tear gas at protestors while Palestinians threw rocks. Many were injured.

Following the protest, clashes spread to surrounding neighborhood. The clashes went on until nightfall. 25 year old Tal'at Ramya was shot in the chest and killed at a demonstration at Qalandiya checkpoint.

## 5. ATTACKS AGAINST INDIVIDUALS

### Playing with grenades

On February 12, an Israeli police officer intentionally threw a sound grenade towards Rami Obaid while he was with his wife, and two children (three years and six months old).

Rami stated to an LRC observer, "I was going to my in-laws place when I saw the Police clashing with some young men in Al 'Isawiyya. I did not want my children to inhale teargas so I decided to turn back. I was carrying Rafif and we headed to the car. There was a police car and four officers pointing their rifles at the protesters. When they saw us one of them threw a sound grenade at me. He was five meters away and he could see that I was with my family and was carrying my little girl. The grenade hit me in the nose and went off. The grenade broke my nose it started bleeding badly. I heard my daughter crying. She was terrified. I walked towards the policeman and asked them, 'Can't you see I am holding my daughter?' But they pushed me away. I was taken to Mount Olive Hospital for treatment before being transferred to Hadassa Hospital. I remained in the hospital for three days and I still find it hard to breathe."



Rami's daughter, Rafif said, "The soldiers hit my dad. They threw a bomb on us and he was full of blood and I was really scared."

### Israeli troops raid Al 'Isawi residence in Al 'Isawiyya

On February 12, Israeli troops raided the home of Al 'Isawi family during clashes in the area between Palestinian men and the police. Shereen al 'Isawi, a 33 year old lawyer, described the events. "I went home at around 4:00 pm, during the clashes...When I entered the house my mom, sister-in-law, and her children were there. The children were crying because of the sounds. I looked out of the window and saw three police cars and a policeman pointing his rifle at the protesters. I went out and told him to move away because I did not want the house to be impeded with rocks. He started screaming while walking towards me. He was



asking, "Who do you think you are to tell me to move away? I could go in the house if I wanted to."

Meanwhile, three other policemen, including the commanding officer, ran towards me and asked what was happening, so I told him. He said that he wanted to get into the house because there might be somebody hiding inside. He tried to open the door but my sister-in-law locked it, apparently because she was scared. They brought an iron rod to pull the door open, then discovered that the back door was unlocked. A policeman opened the door and they entered inside.

After entering, one of them hit my head against the wall five times. My mother saw and screamed, and then someone hit her with the iron rod. They kept beating up until my brother, Shadi (31) came in and said, "What is this? What is happening here?" Then they attacked him before arresting him.

The police precinct in Al 'Isawiyya refused to take us in due to the amount of injuries. I heard one of the officers in the precinct saying that he will not be responsible for such an arrest. They they took us to the Police precinct in Saladin Road. A masked Police unit was waiting for us there, Unit 245, as I heard them say on their radio. I could see nine other detainees.

They started interrogating me and accused me of obstructed 'justice.' They released me at 3:30 am the following morning and ordered me to five days of house arrest and penalized me 5,000 NIS.

As for my brother, he was sent to a detention center and was released two days later. When I got home, I was told that my mom had been taken to the hospital because of bruises and cuts. My mother is diabetic and suffers from Osteoporosis."

The brutal attack on Al 'Isawi family was intended to recapture Samer al 'Isawi, Shereen's brother, who was released during the most recent prisoner exchange. Samer spent 10 years out of a 30 year sentence.

It has become increasingly evident that Israeli authorities intend to re-arrest the released prisoners, knowing that they are already unable to travel outside the country.

Many of the family's sons were imprisoned for years and Fadi (16) was shot and killed while demonstrating in a protest against the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre of 1994.

## **House raid and arrest**

On February 15 an Israeli Police unit attacked Yaser Mnayer (46) at his doorstep before following him into the house and arresting him.