

5 June 2025

Mr. Balakrishnan Rajagopal

Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing and the right to non-discrimination in this context

Urgent Appeal to Halt Mass Home Demolitions in Tulkarem and Nur Shams Refugee Camps – Occupied West Bank

Dear Mr. Rajagopal,

The Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) – Palestine's National Human Rights Institution – submits this urgent appeal regarding Israel's declared intent, as the occupying power, to demolish approximately 106 Palestinian homes in Tulkarem and Nur Shams refugee camps in the occupied West Bank.

If carried out, these demolitions would amount to a serious violation of Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which guarantees the right to adequate housing, and breach Articles 33 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibit collective punishment and destruction of private property not justified by absolute military necessity.

This policy of targeted demolitions forms part of a broader strategy to reengineer the demographic and geographic makeup of Palestinian refugee camps, aiming to fragment their social fabric and erase their historical and communal identity. It reflects a continuation of the tactics deployed by Israeli forces in Gaza, now being systematically replicated in the occupied West Bank.

Furthermore, it's part of a long-standing and systematic policy of forced displacement. Since 1967, Israel has demolished thousands of Palestinian homes under pretexts such as security concerns or lack of building permits—practices that contravene international standards prohibiting arbitrary eviction and collective punishment. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), this policy reached its peak in 2024, when Israeli authorities demolished 1,768 Palestinian structures, displacing over 4,265 individuals and affecting more than 165,000 people—the highest annual figures recorded.

The trend has clearly continued into 2025, with 650 structures demolished so far, resulting in the forcible displacement of 871 individuals and impacting an estimated 5,860 people. These figures underscore the persistence of this destructive pattern, deepening the humanitarian crisis and undermining the fundamental rights of Palestinians living under occupation.

These demolitions have devastating impacts on families, particularly women and children, who face immediate displacement, psychological trauma, and the loss of safety, education, and community support systems. The destruction of homes also severely undermines livelihoods and access to essential services, compounding the long-term economic and social marginalization of already vulnerable communities.

In light of these developments, we respectfully urge you to:

1. Engage urgently with Israeli authorities to prevent the execution of demolition orders and ensure displaced residents can safely return to their homes.
2. Issue a public statement condemning these actions as violations of international law, and call on Israel to uphold its obligations as an occupying power.
3. Urge the international community, including the High Contracting Parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to take effective, practical measures to halt forced displacement and collective punishment.

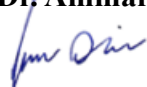
4. Include this situation in your upcoming report to the Human Rights Council and recommend the initiation of an independent international investigation into these grave violations.

Your prompt and public intervention is essential to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe, uphold the right to adequate housing, and protect the dignity of Palestinian civilians living under occupation.

With highest respect and appreciation,

Sincerely,

Dr. Ammar Dwaik, LL.M, Ph.D .



**Director General,
Independent Commission for Human Rights**

