



UN human rights experts call on Israel to halt demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem

GENEVA (26 July 2019) - Two UN human rights experts have condemned Israel's demolition of 10 buildings comprising approximately 70 housing units in Sur Baher, a Palestinian neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

"We are following the developments in this matter very closely," said Leilani Farha, the Special Rapporteur for the right to housing, and Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur for human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

"We are deeply concerned that, following the dismissal by the Israeli High Court on Sunday of a petition by the residents of the designated housing units against the impending demolition order, the buildings have now been demolished.

"The demolition of these apartment buildings aggravates the coercive environment that many Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, face. The international community has critically commented on a number of occasions about the extremely low rates of housing construction permits allowed by the Israeli authorities for Palestinians seeking to build, or add to, homes in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem."

The demolition of these housing units in Sur Baher is part of a larger pattern of home demolitions occurring in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. According to information available to the UN experts, Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 63 East Jerusalem housing units so far in 2019. Over the same period in 2018, 37 East Jerusalem housing units were demolished.

"What is required in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are fair and equitable planning policies for the construction of housing," said the UN experts.

The area in Sur Baher where the housing units were located is technically within the West Bank, but it lies on the Jerusalem side of Israel's separation wall. The apartment buildings were built with the proper construction permits issued by the Palestinian authorities. However, the Israeli military issued an order in 2011 prohibiting construction within 100-300 metres of the wall.

According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, any destruction of private property by an Occupying Power is prohibited except where it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. "As the International Court of Justice found in its 2004 advisory opinion on the construction of the separation wall, the route of the wall, including those parts of the wall which are constructed inside of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is not justifiable on the basis of military exigencies nor by national security," Lynk said.

"The home demolitions in Sur Baher appear to be forced evictions in violation of article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other human rights," the experts said, calling upon the Government of Israel to ensure that it upholds its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Earlier this week, the UN human rights experts raised their concerns directly with the Government of Israel.

ENDS

Mr. Michael Lynk was designated by the UN Human Rights Council in 2016 as the [Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967](#). The mandate was originally established in 1993 by the then UN Commission on Human Rights. Professor Lynk is Associate Professor of Law at Western University in London, Ontario, where he teaches labour law, constitutional law and human rights law. Before becoming an academic, he practiced labour law and refugee law for a decade in Ottawa and Toronto. He also worked for the United Nations on human rights and refugee issues in Jerusalem.

Ms Leilani Farha is the [UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing](#) as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context. Farha is the Executive Director of the NGO Canada without Poverty, based in Ottawa. A lawyer by training, for the past 20 years Ms. Farha has worked both internationally and domestically on the implementation of the right to adequate housing for the most marginalized groups and on the situation of people living in poverty. Her most recent [report to the Human Rights Council](#) focuses on access to justice for the right to housing.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

UN Human Rights, Country Page: [Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel](#)

For more information and **media requests**, please contact Katharine Marshall (+41 (0) 22 917 9695 / kmarshall@ohchr.org).

For **media inquiries** related to other UN independent experts please contact:

Jeremy Laurence, UN Human Rights – Media Unit (+41 22 917 9383 / jjlaurence@ohchr.org)

Follow news related to the UN's independent human rights experts on Twitter [@UN_SPExperts](https://twitter.com/UN_SPExperts).

Concerned about the world we live in? Then **STAND UP for someone's rights today**. #Standup4humanrights and visit the web page at <http://www.standup4humanrights.org>

[Home](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[OHCHR on Social Media](#)

[OHCHR Memorial](#)

[Employment](#)

[Mobile App](#)

[Site Map](#)

© OHCHR 1996-2021

[CONTACT US](#)