

Seven Palestinian Homes Demolished

[Independent Catholic News](#)

Saturday, February 17, 2007



file photo

Israeli soldiers demolished homes in three Palestinian villages near bypass road 317 on 14 February, the Christian Peacemaker Team reports. Starting in Imneizil at around 9am about forty Israeli soldiers with two bulldozers demolished one home, an animal pen and a stone bake-oven. At noon the soldiers moved to Qawawis where they demolished the homes of five families and one bake-oven, then on to Um Al-Kher where they demolished one home and damaged a wall of another home.

At Imneizil several young children were in their home eating when the Israeli military arrived; the soldiers gave the family time to get out, but did not give them time to remove their personal belongings. The animal pen was demolished with a few animals inside; two lambs were injured. The Palestinian family began immediately to build a makeshift pen for the animals as the majority of the sheep were just returning from grazing in the fields.

In the village of Qawawis one of the demolished homes was over sixty-five years old, and sheltered two families.

The Israeli military, in concert with Israeli settlers, has been trying to force the Palestinian residents of the south Hebron hills to leave their homes for years. Due to harassment from the nearby Israeli outposts several of the young families of Qawawis moved to a nearby town; when the Israeli army then forcibly evacuated the remaining families, a court ordered that the families could return to their homes. According to a lawyer representing the families, the Israeli army now claims that this court ruling allows only the last inhabitants of Qawawis to return, not their children who earlier fled the assaults of the Israeli settlers.

"Our children need homes," said one villager. "What do they want us to do?"

The Israeli army said: "Twenty illegal structures were destroyed after demolition orders were issued, and offers were made to the owners to pursue the available options before the planning organizations. The supervisory unit of the civil administration will continue to operate against illegal building activity in the area, and to implement the steps mandated by law against this illegal activity." The Israeli military made no provisions for shelter for the families whose homes they demolished. The families asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide them with tents.

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions said: "A building permit is unavailable there [in the south Hebron hills]." The preceding day three Israeli peace activists and two

internationals, including CPTer Sally Hunsberger, joined approximately fifty Palestinians in working on their land near Imneizil. The Palestinian men, women and children planted 600 olive trees in fields that they had been afraid to walk on for the past four years due to threats of settler violence. During the action, soldiers and settlers watched from a distance, but did not interfere with the tree planting.

Christian Peacemaker Teams is an ecumenical initiative to support violence reduction efforts around the world. To learn more about CPT's peacemaking work, please visit: [the CPT website](#)

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