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Israel To Step Up Demolition Of Palestinian Homes

11/17/2014



Israel said Monday it has sent notices to the families of several Palestinians in the West Bank implicated in attacks against Israelis to vacate their homes ahead of their impending demolitions.

The development indicated that Israel is intensifying its much maligned policy of punitive destructions of homes of suspected attackers.

The assaults the attackers are accused of involved deadly intent against civilians — ramming vehicles into commuters at Jerusalem light rail platforms, for example — rather than just throwing stones or Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers.

The Israeli military said that in recent weeks, an unspecified number of notices warning of impending house demolitions have been issued to Palestinian families in the West Bank, whose relatives had carried out the attacks.

The military said that families have 48 hours to petition against the notices. Should they fail to do so — or should the petitions be rejected — the houses would become subject to immediate demolition.

Also Monday, the Israel Police said they designated several homes in east Jerusalem for destruction or sealing, but were awaiting final government approval before going ahead.

The demolitions are based on instructions from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who earlier this month said the home destruction policy would be implemented in response to a wave of Palestinian attacks against Israelis in Jerusalem, mostly against the background of tensions over a disputed holy site in the city.

The policy was largely suspended in 2005, after security authorities questioned its efficacy, but many Israelis continue to back it.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said police were now prepared to carry out house destructions or sealings in east Jerusalem "as soon as a final government decision is given."

He did not say how many homes would be demolished.

Meanwhile, the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said that four east Jerusalem homes belonging to relatives of Palestinian attackers had recently been visited by police, apparently in preparation for their demolition or sealing.

B'Tselem has denounced the punitive demolitions policy.