

UNITED NATIONS



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**Statement by Mr Maxwell Gaylard, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator  
for the occupied Palestinian territory, calling for an end to home demolitions in the West Bank**

**27 January 2012**

The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, Mr Maxwell Gaylard, today called for an immediate end to the demolition of Palestinian homes by the authorities of the Government of Israel in the occupied West Bank.

During a visit on 26 January to Anata village on the outskirts of Jerusalem, Mr Gaylard saw the ruins of seven Palestinian homes demolished earlier in the week and met with representatives of the displaced families. He was informed that bulldozers and troops had arrived in the middle of the night of 23 January and that 52 people, including 29 children, had been forced from their homes and the homes then completely destroyed.

For the year 2011, some 622 homes and livelihood structures belonging to Palestinian families were similarly destroyed, forcibly displacing almost 1,100 people, over half of them children, and compromising the livelihoods of several thousand more. Mr Gaylard noted that these figures represent a dramatic increase compared with previous years, and that a much greater number, in the tens of thousands, remain under threat of dispossession, demolition and displacement.

Mr Gaylard added: "Israel as the Occupying Power has a fundamental responsibility to protect the Palestinian civilian population under its control and to ensure their dignity and well-being. The wholesale destruction of their homes and livelihoods is not consistent with that responsibility and humanitarian ideals. The current policy and practice of demolitions cause extensive human suffering and should end. Palestinians urgently require ready access to a fair and non-discriminatory planning and zoning system that meets their needs for growth and development."

Mr Gaylard also commended the work undertaken by human rights and humanitarian organizations to support Palestinian families in distress and expressed serious concern about the repeated destruction of facilities supported by them.

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