

ICC Prosecutor Warns Israeli Demolition of Khan al-Ahmar 'Constitutes War Crime'

International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda also said she will "continue to keep a close eye" on Gaza.

By [Telesur](#)

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The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, issued a statement Wednesday reminding Israel that the demolition of Bedouin village Khan al-Ahmar, in the occupied West Bank, would constitute a war crime.

"I have been following with concern the planned eviction of the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar in the West Bank. Evacuation by force now appears imminent, and with it, the prospects for further escalation and violence," Bensouda, who is reviewing Israel's aggressive expansion of illegal Jewish-only settlements in the West Bank, [wrote in the statement](#).

"It bears recalling, as a general matter, that extensive destruction of property without military necessity, and population transfers in an occupied territory constitute war crimes under the Rome Statute," the statement said.

International human rights groups have already warned Israel that the demolition and forcible transfer of a population under occupation is a war crime but that hasn't stopped Israel's high court from upholding the green light on the demolition. The European Parliament has also condemned the planned demolition as a breach of the well established international humanitarian law.

Bensouda's reminder comes days after Israeli occupation forces entered the Bedouin village with bulldozers prompting confrontations with the members of the Jahalin tribe that live in Khan al-Ahmar and international activists that are resisting Israel's attempt to displace the over 30 families that have lived there since the 1950s, when they were expelled from the Naqab (Negev) desert.

NOW IN KHAN AL AHMAR: 3 people arrested after Israeli forces arrived to the village to escort bulldozers in infrastructures preparation for the upcoming demolition of the village. [#Khanalahmar](#)

By: Oren Ziv and Ahmad al-Bazz/Activestills.org pic.twitter.com/XpvVH7cTr0

— Activestills (@activestills) [October 15, 2018](#)

Israel and Palestinian activists have argued the demolition is part of a plan to connect the settlements of Ma'ale Adumim and Kfar Adumim with the occupied city of East Jerusalem,

which Israel has illegally annexed.

According to Israeli authorities, the village was built illegally. However, the United Nations has shown that it is nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain building permits. Between 2010 and 2014, Israel approved only 1.5 percent of all permit requests by Palestinians.

Bensouda also warned she will “continue to keep a close eye” on the developments in Gaza, where Palestinians demanding the end of the occupation and their right as refugees to return home, have sustained weekly protests since March 30.

Israel’s response to the protests have been widely condemned for use of excessive force and what human rights groups have called a “shoot to maim or kill” policy. Since the Great March of Return began in March, Israeli forces have killed at least 205 Palestinians and wounded over 18,000, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry.

Israel is not a member of the ICC and does not recognize its jurisdiction. Despite this, Israelis suspected of committing crimes on Palestinian territories could face charges.

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Featured image: Bedouins await the imminent demolition of their village, which they have vowed to resist. (Source: Activestills.org)

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