


IDF planning to demolish homes of dozens of Palestinian militants in West Bank

Israel has reinstated house demolitions in the West Bank after a decade-long hiatus as part of its latest efforts against Hamas.

By Chaim Levinson | Jul. 4, 2014 | 1:09 AM |  2

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The Israel Defense Forces is considering demolishing dozens of homes in the West Bank, including those of Hamas leaders, arguing that prison time is not an adequate deterrent for crimes. The IDF is conducting staff work in the run-up to a decision.

Israel has reinstated house demolitions in the West Bank after a decade-long hiatus as part of its latest efforts against Hamas. This week the High Court of Justice approved the demolition of the home of Ziad Awad, who has been charged with the murder of an off-duty policeman.

In response to a petition against demolishing Awad's home, Maj. Gen. Nitzan Alon, the head of Central Command, told the court that such operations were necessary because of the increase in terror activity over the past two years.

Meanwhile, in the town of Awarta near Nablus this week, IDF officials have measured the homes of the two men convicted of murdering the Fogel family in March 2011. Five members of the family were stabbed to death in their home in the settlement of Itamar, including the parents and three children aged 11 years, 4 years and 3 months.

An earlier recommendation by the Shin Bet security service to demolish the houses was rejected.

The IDF also intends to demolish the homes of the following: the two suspects in the recent kidnapping and murder of three teens in the West Bank, the two men convicted of kidnapping and murdering soldier Tomer Hazan, the teen convicted of murdering soldier Eden Attias, and the two men who confessed to murdering Col. (res.) Seraiah Ofer. The latter three killings all took place in the second half of last year.

The Hamas leaders who would be punished this way are the ones arrested after the kidnapping of the three teens. The homes of Hamas military leaders who are in Israeli prisons were demolished years ago.

Others whose homes may be demolished are men released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange in 2011; in that case, Israeli officials would have to prove that these men have returned to terror.