

# Israel clears Palestinians from Jerusalem home claimed by settlers

Author:

AFP

ID:

1550428613842457600

Sun, 2019-02-17 17:32

JERUSALEM: Israeli police on Sunday evicted a Palestinian family from their home in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, after the supreme court ruled Jewish claimants were the rightful owners.

An AFP photographer said residents of the neighborhood in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem scuffled with police, who stood guard as about a dozen Israeli settlers took possession of the large building.

A police spokesman said two people were detained.

"They disturbed police activities," he told AFP but could not say if they were subsequently released.

Rania Abu Asab, who lived in the house with her husband, their children and his aunt, stood weeping outside as the settlers raised the Israeli flag on the roof.

"We live there, it's my house, it's my whole life," she said. "They took everything."

She said the family was compelled to leave behind all its furniture and belongings.

Ir Amim, an Israeli watchdog group which monitors settlement activity in Jerusalem, reported on February 3 that the Abu Asab family had been served an eviction notice ordering them to vacate the property by February 12.

It said family members had lived there since the 1960s.

Israeli NGO Peace Now said the home originally belonged to a Jewish family which fled during the 1948 war which accompanied Israel's foundation.

East Jerusalem was occupied during that conflict by Jordan until the 1967 Six-Day War, when it was seized by Israel and subsequently annexed, moves never recognized by the international community.

The Abu Asab family lived until 1948 in a neighborhood it fled before eventually moving to the home in question.

Peace Now said in a statement Sunday that under an Israeli law passed in 1950 Palestinians cannot return to homes they fled in 1948.

A 1970 act, however, decreed that property in east Jerusalem abandoned by Jewish owners could be reclaimed.

"The court granted the settlers the house and the Abu Asab family became refugees for the second time," Peace Now said.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Jerusalem](#)

[Palestinians](#)

[Israeli settlements](#)

---

## [UK teen who joined Daesh gives birth in Syrian refugee camp](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1550423368712076200

Sun, 2019-02-17 16:08

LONDON: A teenager who joined the Daesh group in Syria but now wants to return to Britain on Sunday gave birth in a refugee camp, as European governments grapple with what to do with returning extremists ahead of a US troop pullout.

Shamima Begum, whose fate has stirred controversy ever since she and two friends fled London to join the terror network in 2015 aged just 15, told Sky News she had delivered a boy.

"I just gave birth so I'm really tired," the 19-year-old said as she made a renewed appeal to be allowed back to Britain with her newborn baby.

"I'm afraid he might even die in this camp. I feel a lot of people should have sympathy for me, for everything I've been through," she said.

"I didn't know what I was getting into when I left. I just was hoping that maybe for the sake of me and my child they let me come back," she added. Her case comes as European nations struggle with how to deal with extremists eager to return home following the disintegration of Daesh's "caliphate" in eastern Syria.

US President Donald Trump again demanded on Saturday that they take back hundreds of captured Daesh fighters.

Trump said on Twitter that the United States was asking Britain and other continental allies "to take back over 800 Daesh fighters that we captured in Syria and put them on trial."

The demand came as he prepared – ahead of the pullout of US troops – to declare the group's so-called "caliphate" destroyed, with US-led Arab and Kurdish forces close to capturing its last Syrian territorial holdout.

"The US does not want to watch as these Daesh fighters permeate Europe," Trump added.

"Time for others to step up and do the job that they are so capable of doing. We are pulling back after 100% Caliphate victory!"

Begum, previously gave birth to two other children after marrying in Syria. Both children died.

Leading politicians, including interior minister Sajid Javid, have vowed to prevent her return, pointing to her lack of remorse for joining the terror group.

Begum told Sky News she was aware of Daesh's brutal tactics, including conducting beheadings, but did not regret going to Syria.

"I knew about those things and I was OK with it at first," she said. "They take care of you... you're living under Islamic law.

"I don't regret it because it's changed me as a person, made me stronger, tougher."

The teenager, who said she had had no contact with British officials, added the government should not block her homecoming because she was "just a housewife" while there.

"I never made propaganda, I never encouraged people to come to Syria.

"They don't really have proof that I did anything that is dangerous," she said.

Europe has long been grappling with how to respond to foreign fighters, and their supporters or dependants, caught in Syria.

However the looming US departure has created a deadline for those governments whose citizens joined IS and have now been captured by the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Britain's government appears split on the issue.

Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright, a former attorney general – the country's chief legal adviser – told the BBC on Sunday that it was "obliged, at some stage at least, to take them back."

He noted it was "a matter of international law and domestic law."

However, writing in The Sunday Times – under the headline "if you run away to

join Daesh, I will use all my power to stop you coming back” – Javid insisted the government should strip “dangerous individuals of their British citizenship.”

He said Britain had already exercised this power more than 100 times.

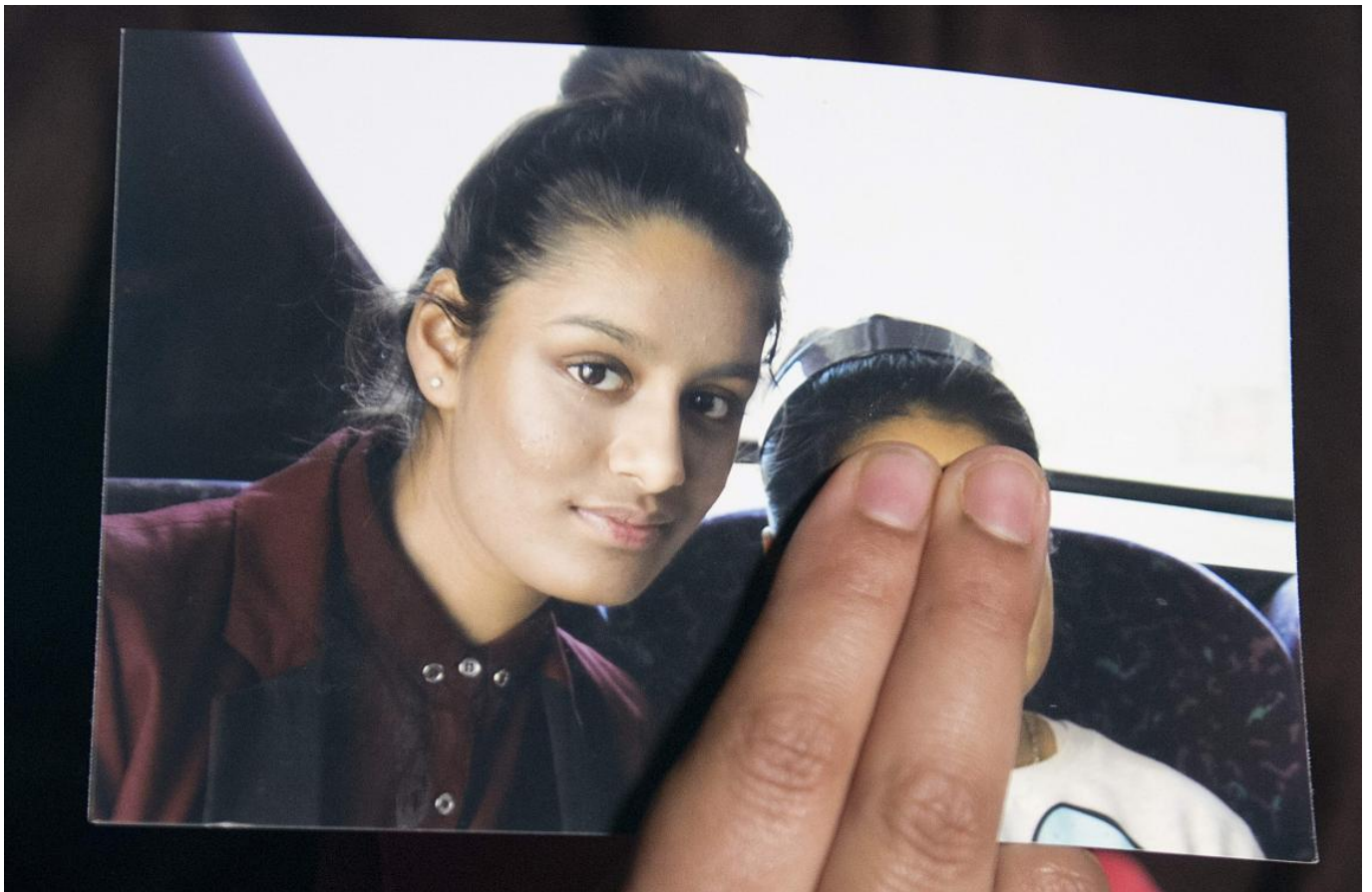
“In considering what actions need to be taken now, I have to think about the safety and security of children living in our country,” Javid wrote.

Other European countries that have chosen to leave the extremists in SDF detention are now being forced to confront the situation.

“All German citizens – including those who are suspected of fighting for the so-called Islamic state – have a fundamental right to travel back into Germany,” a German foreign ministry source said Sunday.

Belgian justice minister Koen Geens told Flemish broadcaster VRT there was the need for a “European solution” to the issue, but appeared irked by Trump’s blunt call.

“It would have been nice for friendly nations to have these kinds of questions raised through the usual diplomatic channels rather than a tweet in the middle of the night,” he said in Dutch.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Shamima Begum](#)

[Daesh](#)

[Syria](#)

[caliphate](#)

Daesh ‘caliphate’ on brink of defeat in Syria as Trump urges Europe to do more  
Syria stuck with Assad for now, says UK minister Jeremy Hunt

---

## Israel to withhold \$138 mln from Palestinians over prisoner payments

Sun, 2019-02-17 19:39

JERUSALEM: Israel said its security cabinet on Sunday decided to withhold \$138 million (122 million euros) in tax transfers to the Palestinian Authority over its payments to prisoners jailed for attacks on Israelis. A statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the withheld cash would be equal to that paid by the PA last year to "terrorists imprisoned in Israel, to their families and to released prisoners."

Israel alleges the payments encourage further violence.

The PA says the payments are a form of welfare to the families who have lost their main breadwinner and denies it is seeking to encourage violence.

Many Palestinians view prisoners and those killed while carrying out attacks as heroes in their conflict with Israel. Palestinian leaders often venerate them as martyrs.

Senior Palestine Liberation Organization official Ahmed Majdalani accused Israel and the United States, which has cut hundreds of millions of dollars in Palestinian aid, of an attempt at blackmail.

US President Donald Trump's White House is expected to release its long-awaited peace plan later this year that the Palestinians believe will be blatantly biased in favor of Israel.

The Palestinians cut off contact with the White House after Trump's 2017 declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

"The occupation government is seeking to destroy the national authority in partnership with the US administration of Donald Trump," Majdalani said in a statement.

The move to withhold the money comes in response to an Israeli law passed last year allowing it to do so.

Israel collects around \$127 million a month in customs duties levied on goods destined for Palestinian markets that transit through Israeli ports, and then transfers the money to the PA.

Netanyahu is running in an election scheduled for April 9, and has been seeking to shore up his security credentials in the eyes of voters ahead of polling day.

Earlier Sunday, Netanyahu said "today I will submit for cabinet approval the (legislation on) deducting of the terrorists' salaries from the Palestinian Authority funds."

"Security officials will brief the cabinet on the scope of the funds. This is an important law which we have advanced, and today we will pass it exactly as I promised."

The \$138 million will likely be deducted incrementally over a 12-month period, according to local media reports.

Sponsors of the July law on Palestinian funds wrote at the time that the PA paid around \$330 million a year to prisoners and their families, or seven percent of its budget.

It was not clear what caused the reduction in the amount.

The Palestinians have already facing a cut of more than \$500 million in annual aid by Trump's administration, mostly to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

The Palestinian Authority also said in January it will refuse all further US government aid for fear of lawsuits over alleged support for terrorism due to a recently passed US law.

Israel has withheld payments in the past, notably in response to the Palestinians' 2011 admission to the UN cultural agency UNESCO as a full member.

The PA, which has limited sovereignty in parts of the occupied West Bank, relies heavily on outside financial aid.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Netanyahu gives up role as Israel's foreign minister  
Israeli election: More "King Bibi" or bye-bye Bibi?

---

## [Libyans, to varying degrees, celebrate 2011 uprising](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1550417906271689000

Sun, 2019-02-17 13:53

BENGAZI: Libyans are celebrating the eighth anniversary of their 2011 uprising that led to the overthrow and killing of longtime ruler Muammar Qaddafi, with the varying intensity of festivities underscoring the split between the country's east and west.

Hundreds of people reveled Sunday in the western cities of Tripoli, Misrata and Zawiya, where bands played national songs and flags lined the streets. But festivities were much more subdued in the country's east, with only a few people gathering at the central courthouse in Benghazi, a city that has billed itself as the birthplace of Libya's uprising.

Libya remains largely a chaotic patchwork of territory run by militias and gangs, with rival administrations in Tripoli and the east.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Libya](#)

[uprising](#)

[Anniversary](#)

---

## [Netanyahu gives up role as Israel's foreign minister](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1550412317961211600

Sun, 2019-02-17 13:48

JERUSALEM:Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday handed over his role as foreign minister to intelligence minister Israel Katz, giving up the portfolio he has held since 2015.

Netanyahu's decision to appoint Katz as acting foreign minister came after an advocacy group, the Movement for Quality Government, went to court to press the prime minister to stop serving as foreign minister as well.

Government officials said Katz, who will remain intelligence minister and

also serves as transport minister, will hold the foreign affairs portfolio through the upcoming parliamentary election on April 9. Katz is a member of Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party, In addition to the premiership, Netanyahu still holds the defense portfolio, which he assumed after his former far-right coalition partner Avigdor Lieberman quit that post in November. Netanyahu is also health minister. The advocacy group that pushed for a new foreign minister had argued that Netanyahu's workload was untenable and further harmed a foreign ministry beset by budget disputes. Netanyahu's defenders have noted his personal rapport with the US and Russian leaders and regular tours abroad. "Together with the prime minister we will continue to lead the State of Israel's foreign policy to new achievements," Katz, 63, said on Twitter.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Benjamin Netanyahu](#)

[foreign affairs](#)