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UN alarmed at Israeli house demolitions in east Jerusalem

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UNITED NATIONS, July 13, 2010 (AFP) - UN envoy Robert Serry expressed concern Tuesday over reports that Israeli security forces demolished Palestinian homes in east Jerusalem and urged all parties to refrain from "provocative actions."

"I am concerned at reports of house demolitions today," Serry said in a statement from Jerusalem which was released here.

He also said that the approval of new units in the occupied West Bank Jewish settlement of Pisgat Zeev, in violation of **Israel's** international commitments "is wrong."

Serry, the UN special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said his office was also closely monitoring the fate of four members of the Palestinian Legislative Council who have been threatened with expulsion from Jerusalem.

"At the current juncture, it is essential for all parties to respect international law, refrain from provocative actions, and take positive steps to build confidence and create an environment conducive to successful negotiations," he added.

Earlier Tuesday, a wrecking crew backed by Israeli security forces demolished a Palestinian home in east Jerusalem because it had been built without a permit, officials and witnesses said.

Police ordered the six members of the Al-Rajabi family to remove all their belongings from the house before an excavator moved in and destroyed the single-story concrete structure, an AFP photographer said.

Another two uninhabited houses that were still under construction in another neighborhood were also destroyed, according to the photographer.

The demolitions took place in the mostly Arab eastern part of the city, which **Israel** occupied in the 1967 Six Day War and annexed to its capital in a move not recognized internationally.

The Palestinians view east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state and the city's status has been one of the most intractable issues at the heart of more than a decade of on-again, off-again peace talks.