

# Forty-nine Facts about Israel's Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip

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*This week marked the 49th anniversary of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. So here are 49 facts about a military regime that has lasted almost half a century.*

1. The West Bank – including East Jerusalem – and the Gaza Strip together constitute the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), which have been under Israeli military occupation since June 1967.
2. Prior to Israeli occupation, the West Bank was controlled by Jordan, and the Gaza Strip by Egypt.
3. Before the State of Israel was established in 1948, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were simply parts of Mandate Palestine; their 'borders' are the result of Israeli expansion and armistice lines.
4. 300,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip became refugees during Israel's conquest in June 1967; the vast majority were unable to return.
5. In 1967, Israeli forces ethnically cleansed and destroyed a number of Palestinian villages in the OPT, [including](#) Imwas, Beit Nuba, and others.
6. By an odd coincidence of history, Israel's military occupation of the OPT began not long after the military regime over Palestinian citizens of Israel had formally ended in December 1966.
7. Therefore, the State of Israel has subjected Palestinians citizens and Palestinian non-citizens to military rule for all but six months of its 68-year existence.
8. One of the first acts of Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem was to demolish the Mughrabi Quarter, expelling 600 residents and destroying 135 homes.
9. In place of the 800-year old Mughrabi Quarter, Israel created the Western Wall Plaza.
10. The first West Bank settlement was established in September 1967, supported by the then Labor-led government.
11. All Israeli settlements in the OPT are illegal under international law, constituting a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.
12. In a [secret memo](#) in 1967, a legal adviser to the Israeli government affirmed the illegality of civilian settlements in the OPT.
13. By 1972, there were some 10,000 Israelis living in illegal settlements in the OPT.
14. In 1974/75, Israel [established](#) Ma'ale Adumim, located in the West Bank to the east of Jerusalem. It is now the largest Israeli settlement in terms of area.
15. There are now 125 government-sanctioned settlements in the OPT, plus another 100 or so unauthorised settler 'outposts'.
16. There are around 400,000 Israelis living in illegal settlements the Occupied West Bank.

17. This excludes residents of colonies established in East Jerusalem - a further 200,000.
18. Israelis have voted in 14 national elections since June 1967. Unlike settlers, Palestinians in the OPT have been unable to vote in any of those 14 elections.
19. According to the UN, there have been 2,598 acts of violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the last ten years.
20. One of the methods adopted by Israeli authorities over the decades to colonise West Bank land has been Ottoman-era land legislation dating back to 1858.
21. By the mid-1980s, Palestinian cultivated land in the West Bank had dropped by 40 percent.
22. In 1991, Israel began requiring a Palestinian seeking to enter Israel from the OPT to obtain an individual permit. 
23. More than [500 physical obstacles](#), including checkpoints and earth mounds, restrict Palestinian freedom of movement in the West Bank.
24. In 2003, Israel began work on the Separation Wall in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Around 85 percent of the total length of the Wall's projected route lies inside the OPT.
25. In 2004, the International Court of Justice in The Hague issued an advisory opinion that the construction of the Wall in the OPT is "contrary to international law".
26. Some 82,000 settlers live outside the Separation Wall; add Ariel, a major settlement-city in the middle of the northern West Bank, and the total is around 100,000 settlers.
27. The Gaza Strip is home to around 1.8 million Palestinians, some 70 percent of whom are United Nations (UN)-registered refugees, expelled from their homes by Israel in 1948.
28. For decades, Israel maintained a permanent armed presence in Gaza, expropriated land, and built colonies for a settler population that rose to more than 8,000.
29. In 2005, Israel removed these settlers, and redeployed its forces to Gaza's perimeter fence.
30. The Gaza Strip is still under Israeli occupation: along with the West Bank and East Jerusalem, it forms part of a single territorial entity (OPT).
31. This was affirmed in UN Security Council Resolution 1860 in 2009, and also affirmed in November 2014 by the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. 
32. In 1967, Israel expanded Jerusalem's municipal boundaries to include newly-occupied territory; this act of annexation has never been recognised by the international community.
33. A third of the annexed territory was expropriated; by 2001, some 47,000 settlement housing units had been built on this expropriated land.
34. The vast majority of Palestinians in Jerusalem are permanent residents, not citizens. In 2014, the residency status of 107 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem was revoked.
35. Palestinians suffer from a [discriminatory](#) water policy maintained by Israeli authorities.
36. Israel enforces a dual legal system in the OPT: civil courts for the 600,000 settlers, and military courts for 4.5 million Palestinians. The latter has a [99.74 percent](#) conviction rate.
37. The Israeli military detains Palestinians from the OPT without charge or trial, for

renewable six-month periods. There are [currently](#) 715 such prisoners, from a total of 7,000 jailed Palestinians. 

Saker Jaabis sits in rubble of his home in Jabel Mukaber in Jerusalem, demolished by Israeli authorities

38. Since 1967, Israeli authorities have demolished [hundreds](#) of Palestinian homes as an act of collective punishment.
39. Many Palestinian structures are demolished by Israeli forces for lacking the right permit; yet more than 95 percent of Palestinian permit applications are [rejected](#).
40. In 2016 to date (June 6), Israeli military authorities have [demolished](#) 625 Palestinian structures.
41. During the First Intifada (1987-93), Israeli forces killed over 1,000 Palestinians, one in five of them children.
42. In the first few days of the Second Intifada, the Israeli army fired 1.3 million bullets.
43. In six military offensives from 2006-2014, Israel [killed](#) 1,097 Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip.
44. Israeli occupation forces killed 137 Palestinians in the West Bank in 2015, and 56 in 2014. Over the same two-year period, Israeli forces also injured 19,950 Palestinians in the West Bank.
45. The Oslo Accords, signed in the mid-1990s, saw the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which governs some aspects of life for Palestinians, in some of the OPT.
46. The Accords divided up the OPT into Areas A, B, and C. The territory of Areas A and B is not contiguous, and consists of 227 separate areas under varying degrees of PA control.
47. Some 60 percent of the West Bank remains under full Israeli military and civil control. However, even in the rest of the West Bank, the Israeli military conducts raids at will.
48. According to [Human Rights Watch](#): "Palestinians face systematic discrimination merely because of their race, ethnicity, and national origin." Amnesty International [agrees](#).
49. In 2012, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination [said](#) Israeli policies in the OPT violate the prohibition of "racial segregation and apartheid."

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