

Data Shows that Palestinians now Own just 8 per cent of Historic Palestine

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New data published by the Lands Research Centre (LRC) shows that Palestinians own only eight per cent of historic Palestine.

The LRC is affiliated to the Arabic Studies Association in Jerusalem. In a press conference held in Ramallah, it announced the publication of its latest Year Book, in which it documents Israeli violations of Palestinian rights concerning lands and houses. The book is published in English and Arabic.

LRC director Jamal Al-Emla described 2012 as “the year of settlements”, a reference to the massive increase in settlement expansion by the occupation authorities. He used photographs, charts and maps to demonstrate that the amount of historic Palestine owned by Palestinians has been in decline since the British Mandate era right up to last year. They now own just 8 per cent of their own country. The decline, claimed Al-Emla, is due to Israel’s ethnic cleansing, expulsion of Palestinians and confiscation of their land followed by its colonisation by Jewish settlers.

“The occupation destroyed 189 houses during 2012,” he pointed out. “About 1,215 Palestinian residents, who used to live in those houses, were made homeless.” The Israeli occupation destroyed 415 commercial and agricultural properties, including wells. They also threatened to destroy 772 houses while 590 other facilities under construction, including houses, have been halted.

“The city which is endangered the most is Nablus,” said the LRC director, “followed by occupied Jerusalem.”

The data also showed that the Israeli occupation has destroyed 64,000 trees on Palestinian property, including 53,122 olive trees, which have been uprooted, burnt or drenched in raw sewage.

Fixed Israeli checkpoints in the occupied Palestinian territories numbered 240 by the end of 2012; the statistics exclude those in the old city of Hebron and land occupied in 1948. Forty-six of the checkpoints were installed in 2012.

According to Al-Emla, 14 settler-only roads were built last year to link illegal settlements across the occupied West Bank. Settler aggression against Palestinians included attacks on religious and holy sites. Out of 110 recorded attacks in 2012, claim the LRC, 86 were against mosques and 24 targeted churches.

At the end of his press conference, Al-Emla called for international complaints to be drawn

up against Israeli aggression with a call to impose sanctions on Israel. He also suggested the launch of an information campaign to raise awareness about Israel's illegal and immoral policies and activity.

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