

Extended Jewish Settlements in Palestine: Israel's Latest Land Grab in the West Bank

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On August 31, Israel's Civil Administration announced confiscation of around 1,000 acres of privately owned Palestinian land.

It lawlessly declared it State Land. It's to establish a Gva'ot settlement. It's located south of Bethlehem. It's in the Southern West Bank.

[Peace Now](#) calls itself "the leading voice of Israeli public pressure for peace." It called Israel's action "unprecedented."

In 1984, Gva'ot was established as a military base. Earlier, Israel's Housing Ministry planned to build 15,000 units. The idea was to establish a city in Gva'ot.

Smaller plans substituted. The new announcement expands Gva'ot. It'll become a new settlement. It may connect to the Green Line.

Peace Now called Sunday's announcement "proof (that) Netanyahu does not (want) a new 'Diplomatic Horizon' but" intends blocking Palestinian self-determination.

He and Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon bear full responsibility for Sunday's declaration. It "cannot pass without their approval," said Peace Now.

By confiscating another 1,000 acres of privately owned Palestinian land, they "prove(d) again that violence delivers Israeli concessions while nonviolence results in settlement expansion(s)."

Peace Now official Hagit Ofran believes "Netanyahu will carry out a lot of expansion(s) because of the pressure he feels from his right wing and the feeling that the (Gaza) war did not end up with many successes."

Confiscated land belongs to five Palestinian villages. They include Jaba, Surif, Wadi Fukin, Husan and Nahalin. They lie between the Etzion settlement bloc and Jerusalem.

At issue is connecting Etzion to Jerusalem and its surrounding area. Last year, Israel sought bids for 1,000 housing units on the site.

Over 500 are being built. Ten families reside on the site. Many more will follow.

Abbas spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh urged Israel to cancel the takeover. "This decision will only inflame the situation after the war in Gaza," he said.

Senior PLO official Hanan Ashrawi called Sunday's announcement a "deliberate intent to wipe out any Palestinian presence on the land and to willfully impose a de facto one-state solution."

Since mid-June, Israel announced nearly 1,500 new settlement units. They're intended for about 6,000 West Bank settlers.

They're generally built on hills. They're located in and around Palestinian towns and villages.

They encircle them. They isolate them. They make a viable Palestinian state impossible.

Official Israeli policy goes all-out to prevent it. It intends confiscating all valued parts of Judea and Samaria.

It wants maximum Jews and minimum Arabs. It ignores international law in the process.

Fourth Geneva's Article 49 prohibits occupying powers from transferring its citizens from its own territory to land it occupies.

Hague Regulations ban occupying powers from making permanent changes in occupied areas they control unless what's done benefits the entire local population.

An exception is made in cases of verifiable military necessity. None exists in this case.

Establishing settlements violate fundamental Palestinian rights. They're enshrined in international human rights law.

Settlements prevent self-determination. They deny equality. They block free movement. They benefit the occupying power at the expense of the local population.

By legal, military and administrative means, Israel prohibits Palestinian construction and development on about 40% of West Bank land.

It includes about 70% of Area C where Israel maintains full control.

Off-limit areas include:

- settlements and regional councils;
- state land;
- closed military zones;
- nature reserves;
- national parks;
- area for Israel's Separation Wall;
- free-firing zones;

- commercial locations;
- no-go areas;
- Jews-only roads;
- checkpoints;
- other barriers; and other exclusively Jewish areas.

Since 1967, Israel established 125 West Bank settlements, 100 outposts, and 12 neighborhoods.

Settler enclaves were built in East Jerusalem areas. They include the Old City's Muslim Quarter, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrach, Mount of Olives, Ras al-Amud, Abu Dis, and Jabal al-Mukabber.

In 2005, 16 Gaza settlements were dismantled as part of Israel's disengagement plan. Residents were shifted to other settlement locations.

Occupied Palestine reflects militarized colonization and discriminatory apartheid. It's worse than what South Africa experienced. Separate and unequal is official Israeli policy.

Civil law governs settlers. Military orders deprive Palestinians of all fundamental rights. They have no control over their daily lives. Their land is systematically stolen.

Since Oslo, settler population tripled from around 200,000 in 1993 to about 600,000 today.

It's growing exponentially. It's on stolen Palestinian land. It doesn't matter. Israel operates unaccountably.

Palestinian rights don't matter. They're denied free expression and movement. Their homes are bulldozed and destroyed. They're uprooted and displaced.

They're forbidden from returning to land once theirs. They're denied redress.

West Bank reconfiguration plans intend to isolate them in ghettoized bantustans. Sovereign viability is impossible.

Two states once were possible. No longer. Israel controls around 60% of the West Bank.

It has much of East Jerusalem. More is added daily. When completed, Israel's Annexation Wall will control over 10% of Palestine.

One state comprised of Israel and Occupied Palestine alone works now. Nothing else is viable.

Conditions for Palestinians are intolerable. Occupation, land theft, disposessions, inequality, a permanent non-Jewish underclass, instability, and conflict reflect daily life.

Peace, equity and justice remain pure fantasy. Permanent militarized occupation is official

Israeli policy.

From 1967 to 1977, around 30 settlements were established. They were mainly in Jordan Valley locations. Population numbered about 5,000.

Under Prime Minister Menachem Begin (1977 - 1983), things changed dramatically. A new pattern emerged.

Heartland/central ridge West Bank settlements were established. Construction tempo increased.

Dozens of new settlements were added. Increasing amounts of Palestinian land were stolen.

Construction today continues unabated. Palestinians are driven from their own land.

What they most value is being systematically confiscated. Self-determination remains a distant dream.

Separately, Netanyahu appeared on three Israeli television networks over the weekend. He defended the indefensible.

He called Operation Protective Edge successful. Palestinians must choose between " Hamas or peace." Toppling Hamas remains an option, he said.

"I never removed the goal of toppling Hamas, and I am not doing that now," he stressed.

"When I look around and see al-Qaida on the (Israeli/Syrian border), ISIS moving toward Jordan and already in Lebanon, with Hezbollah there already, supported by Iran, I defined the goal in the cabinet of delivering a hard blow to Hamas, and we did that."

"I can not rule out the occupation of Gaza," he added. "I don't know if we will get to that."

"I thought the best thing is to crush (Hamas). It might be that they are still there, but they are crushed, isolated and unable to smuggle in arms."

"I think that creates a chance for prolonged quiet, but if not, I won't bear a drizzle of rockets."

Netanyahu left unexplained they're virtually never preemptive. They follow Israeli aggression in self-defense.

It doesn't matter. Palestinians are blamed for Israeli crimes. They repeat multiple times daily.

Western media ignore them. Israel operates extrajudicially with impunity.

During the late stages of Operation Protective Edge alone, Israel conducted dozens of military incursions into Palestinian West Bank and East Jerusalem communities.

Civilian homes were raided pre-dawn. They were ransacked. Families were terrorized.

Dozens of Palestinians were arrested despite having committed no crimes.

In August, nearly 600 West Bank and East Jerusalem Palestinians were arrested. The Palestinian News & Information Agency (WAFA) called what happened “the cruelest arrest operations launched since mid-June.”

Since July 12, Israel kidnapped more than 2,000 Palestinians. They followed the killing of three settlers.

Despite no corroborating evidence, Israel automatically blamed Hamas. Mass West Bank and East Jerusalem arrests followed. So did Operation Protective Edge.

Collective punishment is official Israeli policy. The Hague Regulations, Geneva III, Geneva IV, Additional Protocols I and II as well as other international laws strictly prohibit it.

It doesn't matter. Israeli accountability never follows.

Around 7,000 Palestinians languish in Israel's gulag. It's one of the world's worst. The vast majority are political prisoners.

They include around 250 children and 19 women. Nearly 500 are serving life terms for wanting to live free on their own land in their own country.

Around 500 others are administratively detained without charges or trial. Six former Palestinian ministers are imprisoned. So are 36 legislators for belonging to the wrong political parties.

Healthcare provided Palestinian prisoners is deplorable. Around 1,500 suffer from serious illnesses and diseases.

They include cancer, heart disease, liver ailments and paralysis. Since 1967, 205 Palestinian prisoners died from torture, medical neglect, or cold-blooded murder.

Dozens more more died shortly after release. They did so from illnesses contracted in prison.

It bears repeating what other articles stressed. Israel is a lawless rogue terror state. Decades of Palestinian suffering attest to its brutality.

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