

# Prominent Israeli Settler Rabbi Calls for “Cleansing” of Palestinians

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Israelis burn a Palestinian flag and shout racist slogans, during an anti-Palestinian protest at the Gush Etzion junction in the occupied West Bank, 16 June. ([Oren Ziv / APA images](#))

A well-known Israeli settler rabbi recently called for Israel to “cleanse” the territories it occupies of all Palestinians, [according](#) to the news website [The Times of Israel](#).

During a visit to Israeli settlers on 30 September in the occupied West Bank, [Rabbi Dov Lior](#) said that Israel “must strive to cleanse the entire country” of Palestinians, ostensibly referring to present-day Israel, the occupied [West Bank](#) and the besieged [Gaza Strip](#).

Lior, who is the chief rabbi for Israeli settlers in the West Bank city of [Hebron](#) and in the [Kiryat Arba](#) settlement, was speaking at an event at Givat Oz Vgaon, an “outpost” colony recently established in the Etzion bloc of settlements in the central West Bank.

From the time it occupied the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) in 1967, Israel has recognized 125 Jewish-only [settlements](#) that today harbor a population of an estimated 550,000 Israeli Jews, [according](#) to the human rights group [B’Tselem](#).

Givat Oz Vgaon is one of more than one hundred smaller colonies known as “[outposts](#)” that also dot the map of the territory. Though outposts are considered illegal even under Israeli law, they are often provided with state resources, including funding, and are protected by the Israeli military.

“There was no peace and there will never be peace, not because we do not want [peace], but because there is no one to make peace with,” Lior said, as reported by *The Times of Israel*.

Using even more racist and orientalist language, he added: “This is their character, they are for war, and the traits of a nation do not change.”

He also said the Israeli government ought to force Palestinians to “return” to [Saudi Arabia](#), employing old Israeli tropes that claim Palestinians are not indigenous to historic Palestine.

## History of racism

Palestinians “know how to lead a democratic government just like I know how to deal with camels,” he further commented in his speech.

These latest outbursts are part of Lior's long history of racist and anti-Palestinian incitement.

During Israel's 51-day massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip this summer, Lior called for the complete destruction of the besieged coastal enclave, home to an estimated 1.8 million Palestinians living under suffocating Israeli restrictions.

Israel is "allowed to punish the enemy population with measures it finds suitable, such as blocking supplies or electricity, as well as shelling the entire area according to the army minister's judgment, and not to needlessly endanger soldiers but rather to take crushing deterring steps to exterminate the enemy," Lior said, as [reported](#) by [The Jerusalem Post](#) at the time.

"In the case of Gaza, it would be permitted for the defense minister to even order the destruction of all of Gaza," he continued.

### **Guinea pigs**

Though Israeli politicians subsequently called for an investigation into Lior's incitement, there is thus far no indication that any action has been taken. And despite having been arrested by Israeli authorities in the past, the prominent settler rabbi was not charged with any crimes and has been allowed to continue unabated.

In October 2013, [Ma'an News Agency reported](#) that Lior was one of the leaders of a campaign to ban Jewish women from working night shifts in hospitals alongside Arab coworkers.

Citing a television report by Israel's Channel 10, Ma'an reported that one of the groups involved in the campaign was [Lehava](#), a Zionist group dedicated to preventing romantic relationships between Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

[According to](#) Gershon Gorenberg's book *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, Lior "once wrote that Israel should use captured Arab terrorists as guinea pigs for medical experiments."

Lior was also reportedly the personal rabbi of [Baruch Goldstein](#), an American-Israeli settler who massacred 29 Palestinians and injured more than one hundred when he opened fire on worshippers in a Hebron mosque in 1994.

Lior has said of Goldstein that he is "holier than all the martyrs of the Holocaust," *Ma'an* also noted.

### **"Gentile sperm"**

Back in 2011, Lior told a women's health conference that it is forbidden for Jewish women to accept semen donated by non-Jews in order to artificially inseminate pregnancy. Doing so, he claimed, leads to children being born with the "negative genetic traits that characterize non-Jews," *The Jerusalem Post* [reported](#) at the time.

"Gentile sperm leads to barbaric offspring," he said.

While calling for Israel to completely annex the occupied West Bank in September 2011, Lior [referred](#) to Arabs as "evil camel riders."

The rabbi is a leading member of the Tekumah political faction, a group that merged with the [Habeyit Hayehudi](#) (Jewish Home) party in late 2012.

Habeyit Hayehudi is home to politicians including [Naftali Bennett](#), Israel's current economy minister who also regularly calls for Israel to annex the occupied West Bank. "I've killed lots of Arabs in my life - and there's no problem with that," Bennett [said](#) in a July 2013 interview.

[Ayelet Shaked](#), another prominent Habeyit Hayehudi lawmaker, gained notoriety in July after she [endorsed a genocidal call](#) for Israel kill Palestinian mothers because they give birth to "little snakes."

Lior is just one of the many anti-Palestinian figures who hold prominent public roles in Israeli communities and political institutions. And this is by no means an exhaustive account of his anti-Palestinian incitement.

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