



Erasing Anything Palestinian: A new Amnesty International report

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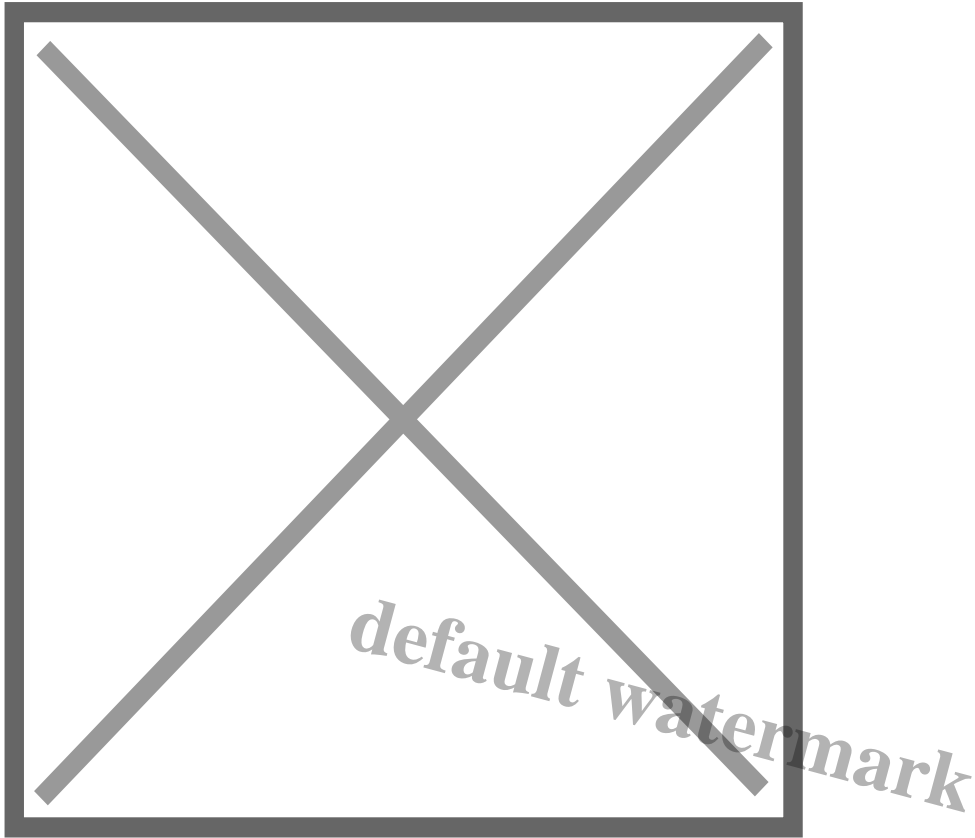
Ethnic cleansing

Amnesty International has published a new investigation. It has accused Israel of carrying out ethnic cleansing against Palestinian Bedouin and herding communities in the occupied West Bank. It claims the occupation's ethnic cleansing campaign in Area C is "state-sanctioned, state-driven, and state-implemented."

Settler violence "the goal is ethnic cleansing"

[The report](#) is titled *Erasing Anything Palestinian: Israel's ethnic cleansing of West Bank Bedouin and herding communities*. It documents how entire communities have been driven from their land. This has been carried out through a combination of settler violence, home demolitions, land seizures and settlement expansion. Restrictions on access to water and grazing areas also play an important role in this displacement.

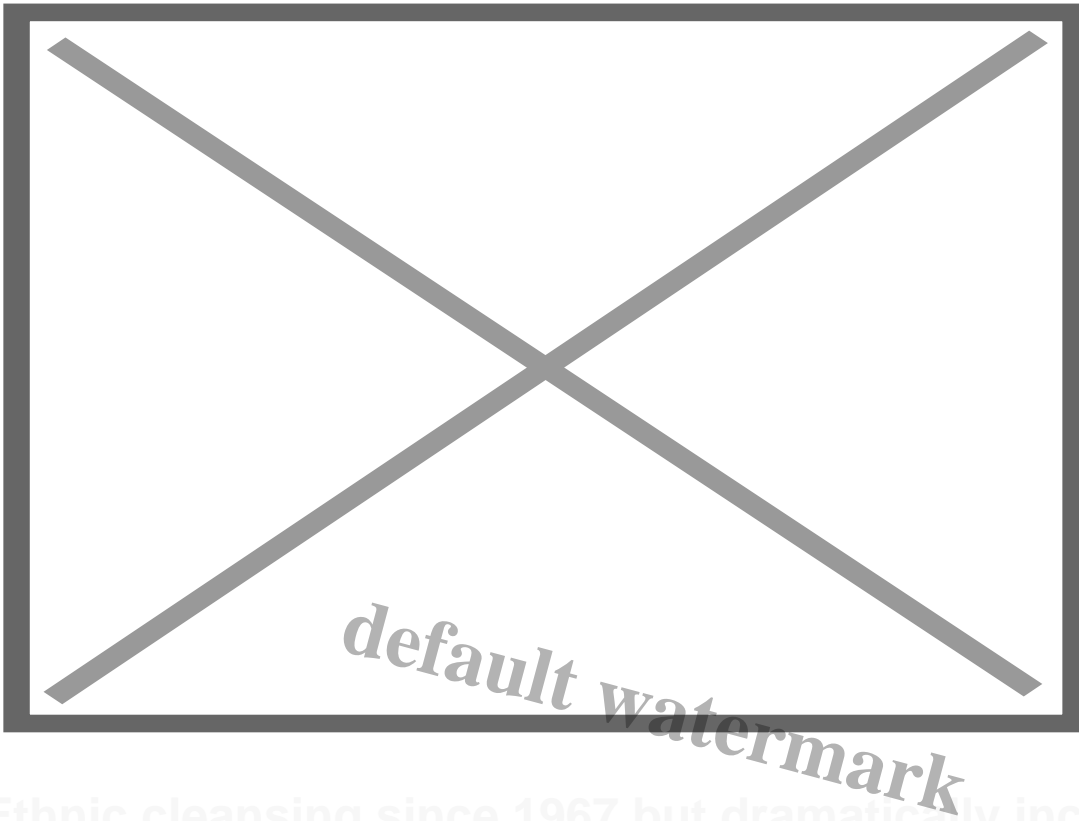
Area C of the occupied West Bank is fully controlled by the Israeli occupation.



Amnesty says the forced displacement of Palestinians in Area C amounts to the war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer, and the crime against humanity of forcible transfer or deportation.

Israeli officials and most of the western media make it seem as though the settler attacks are the actions of a violent fringe operating beyond government control. But Amnesty presents settler violence as a key mechanism for removing Palestinians from strategic areas of the occupied territory.

Palestinian families described repeated raids on their homes and villages, consisting of physical assaults, death threats, theft of livestock and vandalism. Vital infrastructure was also destroyed, and water tanks were smashed. Electricity supplies were cut. Grazing land was fenced off. Many people who fled and later attempted to return found their communities destroyed. Others faced new attacks that forced them out again.



Ethnic cleansing since 1967 but dramatically increased under Netanyahu

The violence and displacement have been ongoing since 1967, but have escalated since December 2022. Netanyahu's Likud party formed a coalition government with the far-right Jewish Power and Religious Zionism parties. This government openly embraced the settler movement's vision – the vision of a "Greater Israel" stretching across the occupied Palestinian territories.

In September 2025, finance minister Bezalel [Smotrich set out plans to annex](#) more than 80 percent of the West Bank. He said the guiding principle should be "maximum land, minimum Arab population."

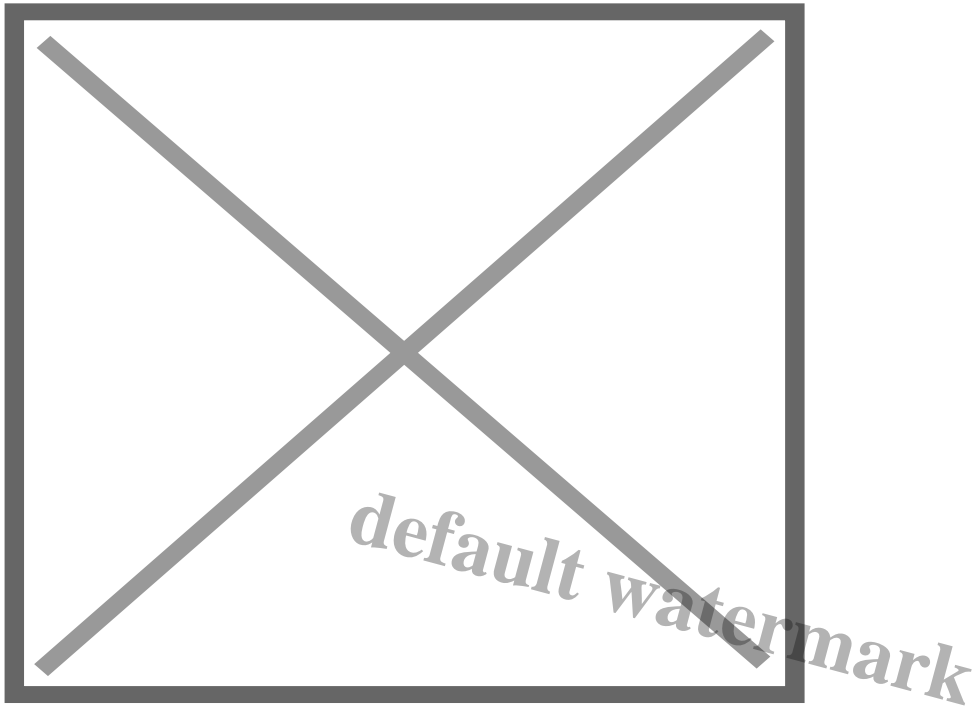
While national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir called for Israeli "sovereignty" across the occupied territories.

Because this is our land, and because we need to tell the whole world: "this is ours forever and ever"! Sovereignty, and also encouraging [Palestinian] voluntary emigration, which we should do also in Judea and Samaria.

These words by politicians have been matched by actions on the ground.

Between 2023 and 2025, Israeli [occupation authorities advanced plans](#) for more than 50,000 settlement housing units. Nearly 28,000 were approved in 2025 alone, the highest annual figure on record. Across the occupied West Bank, new settler outposts have also appeared at a rate never seen before. By April

2026, more than half of all existing outposts had been established during the current government's time in office.

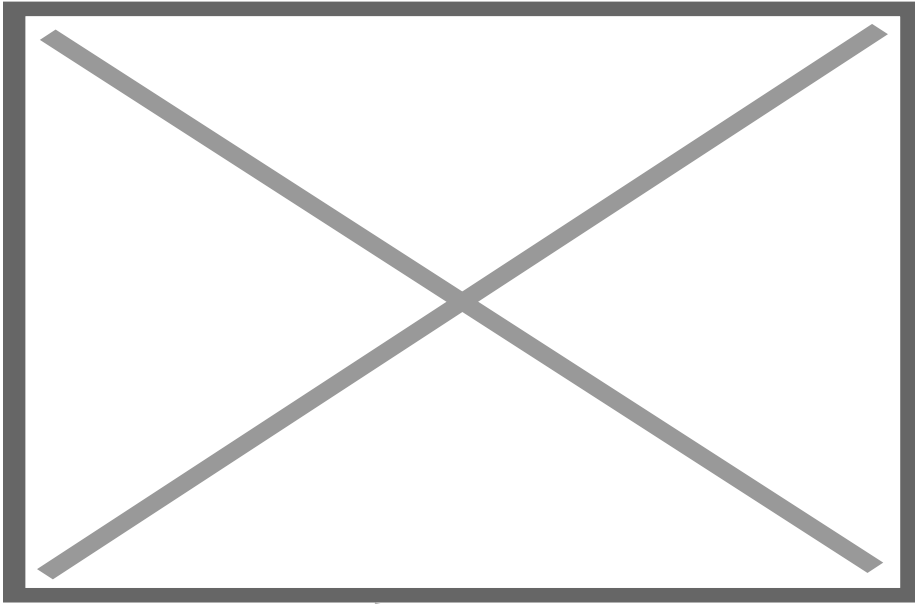


Illegal settlements at record rate while Palestinian development blocked

Along with settlement growth comes the rapid development of settler-only infrastructure, including roads and security systems. This continues to isolate Palestinian communities and restricts their movement.

But while settlement expansion continues at unprecedented speed, Palestinian development has effectively been frozen. No Palestinian housing plans were approved in Area C during 2023 and 2024. And only a handful of building permits were issued.

Thousands of demolition orders have been carried out against Palestinian homes, schools, animal shelters and water systems. Between January 2023 and April 2026, Israeli authorities destroyed more than 3,400 Palestinian homes and structures. Almost 3,000 Palestinians were displaced.



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The report raises serious questions about the role Israeli occupation authorities play in enabling and protecting the violence. Amnesty documents cases of occupation soldiers being present during settler attacks. And also being directly involved in incidents of intimidation or violence against Palestinians. Witnesses described them standing by while settlers assaulted residents, destroyed property and drove shepherds from grazing land. In other cases, Israeli soldiers arrived alongside settlers, coordinating with them during the violence.

Without accountability, violence towards Palestinians increases exponentially

Following 7 October 2023, Israeli occupation authorities dramatically expanded firearm licensing and distributed weapons to illegal settlers. Many settlers began wearing military uniforms. It became difficult for Palestinians to know whether the people entering their communities were occupation soldiers or settlers. This has further increased the risks faced by Palestinian communities.

Ein Samia is a Bedouin community in the central occupied West Bank. Residents faced increased intimidation, harassment and violence before leaving the area in 2023. Ayman Suleiman, a Palestinian man displaced from Ein Samia, described to Amnesty how the situation changed.

For almost a year, I didn't cross the highway [Allon Road]. They [settlers] used to harass me and other shepherds, and we'd try to avoid them, but then the army started showing up and protecting them, shooting in the air.

The report argues that the atmosphere of near total impunity has led to an exponential increase in the violence. Between 2005 and 2025, only three percent of investigations into crimes by these illegal colonists against Palestinians resulted in partial or full convictions. Many Palestinians interviewed said they no longer report attacks because they see little chance of justice. Others told researchers they

were the ones questioned, detained or fined after reporting violence carried out against them.

You cannot separate settler violence from political aspirations

Amnesty argues settler violence cannot be separated from the wider political goal of expanding Israeli control across the West Bank. A deliberate campaign is taking place in Area C to permanently reshape the demographic reality of the occupied West Bank. This is, of course, at the expense of the Palestinians who have lived there for generations. The aim is to remove them from their land, to create space for further settlement expansion.

The legal framework which the Israeli occupation uses to govern the West Bank strengthens this system of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing. Since 1967, Israel has used military orders to control the lives of Palestinians in the territory, although under international law an occupying power can act only as a temporary administrator. Palestinian lives have been reshaped into tightly controlled enclaves, especially in Area C, where the occupation maintains full control.

A system designed to entrench the Israeli occupation's dominance

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Some Bedouin and herding communities in the occupied West Bank have been emptied, the residents forcibly displaced after sustained attacks and demolitions. Others remain under constant threat, surrounded by expanding illegal settlements and outposts which continue to tighten control over surrounding Palestinian land.

Amnesty's report argues that there is a deeply entrenched culture of impunity. Even if courts issue rulings in favour of Palestinian residents, including orders allowing displaced families to return to their villages, enforcement often does not take place. The Israeli occupation's police and military often fail to implement court decisions, leaving families without any meaningful protection or solution.

Amnesty International concludes that the displacement of Palestinians in Area C is part of a structured system of control. This is designed to entrench the Israeli occupation's dominance over Palestinian land while reducing Palestinian presence. For the Bedouin and herding communities of Area C, this means emptied villages, shrinking grazing land, destroyed livelihoods, and families scattered from the places they have lived for generations.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Charlie Jaay](#)

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