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## **Emergency Fact Sheet: Intensifying Ethnic Cleansing in the West Bank**

**10 February 2025**

The West Bank is at a breaking point. Over the past year, Israeli occupation forces (IOF) and settlers have escalated their campaign of forced displacement, targeted violence, and land theft at an unprecedented scale. This is not a new crisis — it is the acceleration of the long-standing Israeli project of settler colonialism and ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Now, with an increasingly emboldened Israeli government and rising far-right rhetoric in the United States, the threat of total annexation of the West Bank looms closer than ever.

### **Unprecedented Expansion of Israeli Settlements**

The Israeli occupation is expanding its colonial infrastructure at record speed, [stealing](#) more land in 2024 than in the previous 20 years combined. As of the end of 2024, the [Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission \(CWRC\)](#) reports over **770,000 settlers** in the West Bank and Jerusalem across **180 settlements** and **256 colonial outposts**. Of these outposts, **138** are classified as agricultural or pastoral, illustrating how the occupation uses agriculture as a tool for land theft. In 2024 alone, Israeli settlers established **51 new colonial outposts**, **36 of which are pastoral**, and the Israeli government approved **10,000 new settlement units**, further encroaching on Palestinian land.

The Israeli Settlements Administration, established in 2023 under Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, now has sole authority over settlements, bypassing the defense minister. This accelerates settlement expansion and marks a shift toward **de facto annexation**, as civil — not military — control now dictates settlement planning, land seizures, and the systematic denial of Palestinian construction permits. As of December 2024, the Settlements Administration's Higher Planning Council holds weekly meetings to approve settlement building and expansion plans. In the two months since its establishment, it has approved hundreds of new settlement units every week, signifying a normalization of ongoing settlement expansion and land theft. This expansion is not just about building more illegal settlements — it is a mechanism of domination, severing Palestinian communities from one another and ensuring that farmers and herders are permanently displaced.

### **Institutionalized Settler Terror**

In **2024 alone**, the CWRC [recorded](#) over **16,600 total assaults** by Israeli occupation forces and settlers on Palestinians and their property across the West Bank. [January 2025](#) alone saw **2,161**



assaults, according to CWRC's statistics. UN OCHA documented **1,420 incidents of Israeli settler violence** causing Palestinian casualties or property damage in 2024 — the highest number since records began in 2006. The West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) reports over **2,274 incidents of settler violence**, including physical assaults, arson, and property destruction. These attacks resulted in the killing of **five Palestinians (including a child)**, the injuring of **360 (including 35 children)**, and the destruction of **over 26,100 Palestinian trees**.

These settler attacks are not random; they are part of a coordinated strategy to drive Palestinians from their land. Armed settlers, often operating in coordination with Israeli soldiers, storm villages, burn homes, poison water sources, and destroy crops. Those who resist face IOF raids, mass arrests, and live fire. Since October 2023, Israeli settlers, backed by the IOF, have escalated these violent attacks, with full ideological and material support from the Israeli government.

### **Forced Displacement**

The **2024 demolition and displacement crisis** reached [record levels](#), with **1,762 Palestinian-owned structures** destroyed and **4,253 Palestinians displaced**, including **1,712 children**, between October 2023 and December 2024. A total of **165,000 people** has been directly affected by these. Entire communities, particularly in **Area C**, having been forcibly depopulated. [Bedouin communities](#) are especially targeted — **over 300 Bedouin families** have been displaced. The WBPC identified **195 communities (58,000 Palestinians) in Area C as being at risk of forced displacement**, with 39,000 of these individuals under imminent threat, due to escalating settler violence, restricted access to land, and the continued demolition of Palestinian homes and infrastructure. WBPC reports that forcible transfer from these 195 communities' places 18% of Area C, or 11% of the West Bank, at risk of Israeli takeover for settlement expansion. Already, approximately 2,000 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced from their lands, which have been confiscated for settlement expansion.

The West Bank is experiencing one of the largest waves of forced displacement since **1948**, with intensified Israeli attacks on **Jenin, Tulkarm**, and other refugee camps and cities forcibly [displacing 40,000 people](#) within a one-month period. Further, nearly **half of all Palestinian child fatalities in the West Bank since 2005** occurred in the past two years, [according to OCHA](#).

### **Severe Movement Restrictions & Economic Strangulation**

Palestinians' movement across the West Bank has been severely restricted by **898 movement obstacles**, including checkpoints, roadblocks, and gates. Since **January 2025**, the occupation has [added](#) at least **18 new checkpoints**. Vital roads and village entrances have been sealed, disrupting



emergency healthcare, education, and livelihoods. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) reports that Israeli forces **routinely delay or outright deny access** to wounded Palestinians and even the bodies of the dead. These movement restrictions exacerbate food insecurity, preventing access to markets, livelihoods, and essential services. The **over 700 km-long apartheid wall** and the Israeli occupation's expanding network of settler-only roads further fragment Palestinian land, forcing Palestinians into isolated enclaves while Israeli settlers move freely.

The Israeli occupation's settler expansion strategy includes **direct attacks on Palestinian agriculture**, aiming to dismantle Palestinian food sovereignty. In 2024, Palestinian farmers [directly lost](#) an estimated **\$8.5 million** due to settler attacks and movement restrictions, with an **additional \$1.5–2 million in indirect losses**.

### **Israeli Codification of Annexation**

The Israeli occupation government is pushing new legislation to formalize the annexation of the West Bank. A [new Israeli bill](#) seeks to officially replace usage of the correct name "West Bank" with "Judea and Samaria," signaling a deeper push toward full annexation. U.S. politicians have introduced [similar legislation](#), demonstrating American complicity in Israeli expansionism. Another [proposed Israeli bill](#) would allow Israeli settlers to legally "own" Palestinian land in the West Bank, further entrenching settler colonial rule.

In January 2025, the Israeli occupation enacted new laws [banning UNRWA operations](#) in the West Bank, further [restricting humanitarian aid](#) and exacerbating the crisis for Palestinian refugees. This ban, already taking effect, severely impacts access to essential services, including healthcare, food distribution, and education for thousands of Palestinian refugees. The removal of UNRWA's presence will deepen the existing humanitarian catastrophe, leaving already vulnerable communities without critical support, while facilitating Israeli plans for further displacement and annexation.

### **Donors & Area C Exclusion**

The exclusion of Area C from donor calls is a de facto acceptance of Israeli annexation. International donors, under pressure from Israeli and Western governments, have begun to exclude projects in Area C, reinforcing Israeli control over the region. This exclusion signals complicity in Israeli ethnic cleansing policies and facilitates the forced displacement of Palestinian communities. Development and humanitarian aid must not be limited by Israeli-imposed restrictions but instead focus on protecting Palestinian presence in all areas under threat of annexation.



### **International Complicity & Escalation of Violence**

This crisis is unfolding with **full U.S. backing**. The **Trump administration** continues to provide **billions in military aid** to the Israeli occupation, funding the weapons and machinery used in these attacks. Meanwhile, **Trump and his allies** are openly calling for **full annexation of the West Bank**, emboldening Israeli ethnic cleansing policies. U.S. lawmakers are working to **criminalize Palestinian solidarity and resistance** while funneling money into Israeli settler organizations.

With Netanyahu's visit to the U.S. and both the Israeli and American governments reaffirming their mutual support for intensified oppression of Palestinians, we emphasize the necessity of international action. We anticipate further escalation of Israeli occupation and settler violence, with targeted destruction of critical infrastructure, intensified access restrictions to agricultural lands, and attacks on key services to disrupt livelihoods. Settlers, backed by the Israeli government, are expected to continue targeting Palestinian food and water sources, roads, and markets, further entrenching control over Palestinian life and economy. As Israeli forces tighten movement restrictions and demolish Palestinian-built infrastructure, the ability of Palestinians to remain on their land and sustain their livelihoods is being systematically eroded.

The [International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) and the [United Nations General Assembly](#) (UNGA) have reaffirmed the **illegality of the Israeli occupation's presence in the West Bank**. In a [landmark decision](#), the ICJ ruled that the Israeli occupation is unlawful and must end immediately. The UNGA has also reinforced this decision, which states that all Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation of international law. These decisions further emphasize the urgent need for international accountability and action to halt the Israeli de facto annexation of Palestinian land.

The **Israeli genocidal war on Gaza** has been paused with a ceasefire, but the Israeli destruction has not stopped. It continues a full-fledged campaign of **ethnic cleansing**. Without immediate international action, more Palestinian communities will disappear.

### **What Must Be Done**

Palestinian **farmers, herders, and rural communities** are on the frontlines of resistance, defending their land against the machinery of colonization. The world must act **now** — before more villages, more families, and more generations are erased.

### **Governments:**



- **Implement Arms and Trade Embargoes:** Governments must comply with their legal obligations to impose arms embargoes and end all military and financial support to the Israeli occupation.
- **Enforce International Legal Rulings:** Governments must uphold the ICJ ruling and UNGA resolution by refusing to recognize Israeli sovereignty and imposing legal sanctions on the Israeli occupation.
- **End Diplomatic Cover for Israeli Crimes:** Governments must halt vetoes and political protections that shield the Israeli occupation from accountability at the United Nations and international legal bodies.

#### **International Institutions:**

- **Divest from Israeli Settler Enterprises:** Multinational corporations, banks, and financial institutions must divest from Israeli companies and cease all business with settler enterprises.
- **Support Legal Action Against Corporate Complicity:** Human rights organizations and legal groups must pursue litigation against corporations profiting from land theft and the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure.
- **Direct Aid to Threatened Communities:** Humanitarian organizations must prioritize direct funding to Palestinian communities in Area C and reject Israeli-imposed restrictions that facilitate annexation.

#### **Civil Society:**

- **Mobilize Public Pressure:** Grassroots organizations must increase public awareness campaigns, protests, and lobbying efforts to hold governments accountable for their complicity.
- **Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS):** Civil society movements must expand BDS efforts targeting companies and institutions complicit in Israeli settler colonialism.
- **Provide Protective Presence:** International activists and solidarity movements must strengthen protective presence initiatives in Palestinian communities facing imminent displacement.

*Sources: United Nations OCHA, Food Security Cluster, Shelter Cluster, West Bank Protection Consortium, Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission, UAWC*