



**State of Palestine  
Negotiations Affairs Department  
Negotiations and Support Unit**

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**The Decisions Made by the Occupying Power, Israel, in February 2026  
Consolidating Permanent Israeli Control over Occupied Palestine**

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**Context**

Since its formation in December 2022, the current 37<sup>th</sup> Government of Israel has publicly announced plans for territorial expansion in the West Bank, including annexation.<sup>1</sup> It has since taken several steps to strengthen control over lands belonging to the State of Palestine, particularly in the West Bank. Notably, the Israeli government has completely reshaped the administration of its military occupation regime governing the West Bank by transferring powers from the Military Central Command to settler-led groups. This shift was enabled by the creation of a second minister of “defense,” Bezalel Smotrich, who oversees the settlement department.<sup>2</sup> It also established the new position of “Deputy Head of the Civil Administration,” shifting the mandate for managing the occupied West Bank into the hands of settler groups.<sup>3</sup>

These measures aim to undermine, weaken, and suffocate the Palestinian National Authority (PNA),<sup>4</sup> deepen Israeli military dominance over the Palestinian people, compromise Palestinian national and human rights, and embolden Israeli settler terror.<sup>5</sup> They create a dangerous and hostile environment that hampers prospects for a peaceful solution, violates the bilateral agreements signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, and jeopardizes the possibility of realizing the internationally endorsed two-State solution. Consequently, the reality for four million

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<sup>1</sup> [Yesh Din](#), “What Israel’s 37th government’s guiding principles and coalition agreements mean for the West Bank”

<sup>2</sup> [Peace Now](#), “Israeli government assigns sole responsibility for West Bank settlement planning process to Minister Smotrich”

<sup>3</sup> [ACRI](#), “The Appointment of a Civilian as Deputy Head of the Civil Administration Constitutes a de facto Annexation of the West Bank”

<sup>4</sup> [BBC](#), “Palestinian Authority in dire straits as Israel’s hold on West Bank deepens”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

Palestinians in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, is defined by apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and persistent violations of human rights and international law.

In 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Israel's annexationist policies violate fundamental principles of international law, constituting breaches of peremptory norms that render the occupation in Palestine unlawful.<sup>6</sup> The Court further concluded that Israel, as the occupying Power, is obligated to immediately withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and provide redress for the violations it has committed. Instead, Israel continues to double down on its illegal activities. The decisions adopted on 8 February and 15 February exemplify this systematic strategy to consolidate permanent Israeli control over the West Bank and to undermine Palestinian rights.

This brief first explains the decisions made by the Israeli security cabinet and government on 8 and 15 February. It then provides an overview of how these actions violate previous Israeli commitments and contravene fundamental principles of international law. Subsequently, the brief presents the Palestinian position on these measures and outlines Palestinian requests for international action in response to these dangerous developments.

## **I. Israeli Security Cabinet Decisions on 8 February 2026**

On 8 February 2026, Israel's security cabinet announced eight decisions. The wording of these decisions is classified; however, the press releases on the outcome of the meetings convey their content.<sup>7</sup> These decisions are currently in the form of instructions, pending official approval by the government as a whole.

While these decisions may seem like minor administrative modifications, they are in fact intended to remove the practical hurdles that have been facing the Israeli settler movement and the State of Israel, enabling the entrenchment of control over large parts of the West Bank, most particularly the Oslo-defined Area "C".<sup>8</sup>

Most notably, some of these decisions assert a superseding authority of the Government of Israel over the entire West Bank, including the parts under full Palestinian jurisdiction as defined by the signed bilateral agreements. In effect, Israel is annexing the West Bank through administrative measures rather than explicit declarations.

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<sup>6</sup> [ICJ Advisory Opinion](#), "Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem," ICJ Case No. 186, ICJ Reports, 19 July 2024.

<sup>7</sup> [Peace Now](#), "The Cabinet Approves a Series of Decisions to Take Control of Land and Strip Powers from the Palestinian Authority"

<sup>8</sup> For a definition of the "Oslo-defined Area C", see the Terminology Guide below.

## **The Israeli decisions of 8 February can be categorized into two groups:**

- A. Decisions that aim to claim new jurisdiction and mandate for the Israeli occupation army;
- B. Decisions that facilitate land grabs, including by facilitating procedures that enable forgery in real estate deeds.

## **II. Encroachment on Palestinian Jurisdiction**

1. **Decision to give authority to enforcement mechanisms of the Israeli military administration in the Oslo-defined Areas “A” and “B”:** According to the Interim Agreement (Oslo II) of 1995, Areas “A” & “B” fall under full Palestinian control, while Israel maintains security responsibility over Area “B”. One of the decisions approved by the Israeli cabinet on 8 February is to provide the Israeli Civil Administration<sup>9</sup> with enforcement authority over buildings, the environment, water, and cultural heritage in areas where Israel has withdrawn. This means the ability to decide on the demolition of buildings, manage water, and control cultural heritage in the heart of the most densely populated Palestinian urban centers.
2. **Decision to strip two Palestinian City Councils of their authority:** Two separate decisions were announced, one concerning the city of Bethlehem and another one concerning the city of Hebron. In both cities, new administrative bodies were announced to have the authority to manage cultural heritage sites and historic areas for the benefit of settlers, thereby stripping city councils of their mandate. In Bethlehem, this concerns one site; Bilal Ibn Rabah Mosque (which Israel calls Rachel’s Tomb), while in Hebron, this will extend to the whole area of the old city, where many historic buildings are located and the Ibrahimi Mosque (the second most holy Muslim site in Palestine) is located.

## **III. Facilitating Land Grabs and Forgeries in the West Bank**

1. **Land purchases by the state:** The Israeli cabinet decided to revive a government mechanism that existed in the 1970s and 1980s, which will operate to purchase land from Palestinians for the benefit of the State of Israel.
2. **The Cancellation of Transaction Permits:** These permits are a requisite for the Israeli Civil Administration to approve real estate sales in Area “C”. The mandate to issue these permits was transferred to the newly created settlement authority, which usually authorizes settlers’ deeds with ease. Recently, however, in an open forgery case, the Israeli official in charge rejected the request for the transaction permit, which led to his removal from the position.<sup>10</sup> This new decision aims to ensure there are no oversight mechanisms for settler companies’ forgeries.

<sup>9</sup> For a definition of the “Civil Administration,” see the Terminology Guide below.

<sup>10</sup> [NBPRS](#), “Smotrich Uses His Power in Civil Administration to cover up fraudulent Land-Sale Deals”

3. **Opening land registries in the occupied Palestinian territory for public review:** Another measure that will ease the possibility of forgery and fraud. This will enable open access to settler groups for the existing land parcels and the names and numbers of the Palestinian owners in any location in the West Bank, thereby enabling the falsification of purchase documents. Lawyers working on land issues in Area “C” handle tens of cases of forgery each year, in which settler groups claim land without proper deeds and evidence. Open access to the registry will make it even easier for settlers to falsify claims to any lands they choose.
4. **Repealing restrictions in the enforceable land law:** The international law of occupation strictly prohibits the Occupying Power from changing the law enforceable in the occupied territory, except for the benefit of the local population.<sup>11</sup> The Jordanian land law, currently in force in the West Bank, prohibits foreigners from purchasing land. Settlers circumvent this law by registering real estate companies with the Israeli Civil Administration, which then accredits these companies as “nationals” by the Israeli occupation authorities, allowing them to purchase land. Repealing this prohibition will enable settlers to acquire real estate in the occupied Palestinian territory without the need to register a company.

#### **IV. The Israeli Government’s Approval of the Security Cabinet Decision on Land Registration on 15 February 2026**

On 11 May 2025, the security cabinet issued a decision to thwart the Palestinian effort to settle land titles in Area “C.” Instead, an alternative Israeli plan was devised to relaunch such registration under the name “Land Settlement in the Judea and Samaria Area.”<sup>12</sup> The decision further instructed that the funds the PNA spent on land registration be deducted from the tax revenues Israel collects on the PNA’s behalf.<sup>13</sup> On 15 February, the Israeli government approved the 15 May 2025 cabinet decision and allocated 244.1 million NIS over the coming years to establish a land registration and settlement mechanism in Area “C” of the West Bank.<sup>14</sup>

The main implication of carrying out land settlement procedures in Area “C” is the large-scale dispossession of Palestinians.<sup>15</sup> The total area of Area “C” is approximately 3.3 million dunams (815,000 acres). Of this, 18.4% was registered as state land prior to 1967, and 24.5% was declared “state land” following the Israeli occupation of the oPt. The

<sup>11</sup> Article 64 of the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#), 12 August 1949.

<sup>12</sup> Israel, Security Cabinet, Cabinet Decision No. B/187.

<sup>13</sup> [Jerusalem Story](#), “Israel Relaunches Land Registration in the West Bank to Strip Palestinians of Property”

<sup>14</sup> [Peace Now](#), “Government Approves West Bank Land Settlement, Allocates NIS 244 Million for a Process Entailing the Dispossession of Thousands of Palestinians”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

remaining 57.1% is currently subject to land settlement and registration procedures, as shown in the map below.

The new procedure would require Palestinian landowners to prove ownership under stringent evidentiary requirements. Where these conditions are not met, the land may be registered in the name of the State of Israel. According to Peace Now, the completion of this process could result in the registration of the vast majority of Area “C” in the name of the State of Israel, potentially affecting up to 83% of the area.<sup>16</sup> Currently, only approximately 17% of the total area is registered for Palestinian landowners, as shown in the map below.

The decision further strengthens Israel’s institutions, thereby expanding the jurisdiction of Israeli civil agencies into the oPt. According to the Israeli government’s decision of 15 February, a “Land Title Settlement Administration” will be established within Israel’s Ministry of Justice to oversee land registration in the West Bank. This step transfers responsibility for land registration in the Area “C”, which currently operates under military command, to a civilian body. Additionally, a dedicated unit within Israel’s Ministry of Housing will be responsible for mapping, measuring, and parceling land to support the new registration process. The Israeli government has set a target to settle 15% of the total area within five years.

It is worth noting that when Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, one of the earliest directives issued by the Military Advocate General (MAG) at the time, Meir Shamgar, was to suspend the settlement of title.<sup>17</sup> The MAG’s decision to suspend the settlement of title was grounded in the understanding that such a process constitutes an act of permanent sovereignty. Consequently, a temporary military occupation regime must refrain from exercising powers reserved for a sovereign authority.<sup>18</sup>

## **V. The Israeli Decisions Violate Previous Bilateral Agreements**

Israel's growing claims over land in the West Bank contradict Israeli domestic law that recognizes the temporality of occupation and limitation of the power of the central command in managing the territory in line with Hague regulations.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, these decisions contravene Israeli obligations in the peace agreements it has previously signed and ratified.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> [Yesh Din](#), Shlomy Zachary, “Renewing Settlement of Title in Area C in the West Bank: A Breach of International Law and Violation of Palestinians’ Rights”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> [Hamoked](#), The Supreme Court (HCJ) ruled that the powers of the military commander "are, from a legal perspective, temporary by nature, as belligerent occupation is temporary by nature (...)", HCJ Case 393/82, *Jam'iat Iskan Al-Ma'almoun Al-Ta'awunia*.

1. **The Interim Agreement (Oslo II), 1995:** While it is true that the issue of settlements and borders was referred to the final status negotiations, the Interim Agreement has recognized the territorial integrity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the administrative divisions of Areas “A”, “B”, and “C” were established to support a phased withdrawal plan from the West Bank within 18 months. Furthermore, the civil affairs of Area “C”, which are unrelated to territory, such as services for Palestinian citizens in the area, were transferred to the PNA.<sup>21</sup>

The Interim Agreement was grounded in Security Council resolutions 224 and 338, which imposed on Israel the full withdrawal from the oPt.<sup>22</sup> As such, nothing in the Interim Agreement can be read as recognizing Israel’s territorial claims in any part of the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Instead, the agreement stipulates that “neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations.”<sup>23</sup> The changes to the legal and administrative framework governing a large part of the West Bank, to the detriment of Palestinian rights, constitute unilateral actions that go against the agreement. Moreover, the confiscation of a large part of the lands in the West Bank for the benefit of the State of Israel violates the territorial integrity of the oPt.

2. **Wye River Memorandum, 1998:** This memorandum, signed by Prime Minister Netanyahu on the Israeli side, came to” facilitate implementation of the Interim Agreement.”<sup>24</sup> The Memorandum also prohibits both sides from taking “any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the Interim Agreement.”<sup>25</sup>
3. **The Road Map, 2003:** The Road Map stipulates that Israel must suspend all settlement activities, including natural growth.<sup>26</sup> This international peace plan was endorsed by both parties and adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in Resolution 1515 (2003).<sup>27</sup>

## VI. International Law Position

### A. General principles of international law

The Israeli measures constitute a violation of some of the most fundamental principles of international law, as was concluded by the ICJ opinion 2024 on the legality of occupation.

<sup>20</sup> Interim agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip ([Oslo II](#)), Article XI, and XXXI, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid (Article XI/ 2/c)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid (Preamble of the Agreement)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid (Article XXXI/7)

<sup>24</sup> [Wye River Memorandum](#), 1998 (Preamble).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid (Article V)

<sup>26</sup> [Road Map](#) as presented to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

<sup>27</sup> [UNSC Resolution 1515](#).

## Most importantly, these measures are in violation of:

**1. The Prohibition of Annexation:** The annexation of territory by an occupying Power is unlawful under international law and constitutes the violation of a *jus cogens* norm. In its 2024 ruling, the ICJ has considered that “the term “annexation,” in the context of the oPt as “the forcible acquisition by the occupying Power of the territory that it occupies, namely its integration into the territory of the occupying Power.”<sup>28</sup> The Court returned to the distinction it made in its 2004 Wall Opinion<sup>29</sup> between “de jure annexation” and “de facto annexation, it found however that:

*“Israel’s policies and practices, including the maintenance and expansion of settlements, the construction of associated infrastructure, including the wall, the exploitation of natural resources, the proclamation of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, the comprehensive application of Israeli domestic law in East Jerusalem and its extensive application in the West Bank, entrench Israel’s control of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, notably of East Jerusalem and of Area C of the West Bank. These policies and practices are designed to remain in place indefinitely and to create irreversible effects on the ground. Consequently, the Court considers that these policies and practices amount to annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.”<sup>30</sup>*

**2. Right to Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, and Self-Determination:** Under international law, the self-determination of people is the basis of sovereignty, since sovereignty results from the exercise of the right of people to organize their domestic life as they see fit.<sup>31</sup> Any violation of the right of people to independence is a form of subjection prohibited by peremptory norms of international law. Respect for the independence of peoples and for the sovereignty of States is a prerequisite for the maintenance of peace and the development of international relations.<sup>32</sup>

In its 2024 ruling, the ICJ declared that the annexation of large parts of the oPt “violates the integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as an essential element of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.”<sup>33</sup> The Court has also found that the occupation cannot result in the transfer of title, regardless of its duration. Therefore, the passage of time does not relieve the occupying Power of its obligations, including the obligation to refrain from exercising acts of sovereignty, nor does it expand the

<sup>28</sup> [ICJ Advisory Opinion](#), “Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem,” ICJ Case No. 186, ICJ Reports, 19 July 2024. (para. 158).

<sup>29</sup> [ICJ Advisory Opinion](#) on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 9 July 2004.

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 28, (para. 173)

<sup>31</sup> [UN Study](#), “The Right to Self-Determination Historical and Current development on the Basis of United Nations Instruments,” prepared by Aurlieu Cristescu, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, (para. 309), 1981.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> See footnote 28, (para. 238)

limited and enumerated powers that international humanitarian law vests in the occupying Power.<sup>34</sup>

**3. Right to Property Over Land and Natural Resources:** Israel's recent decisions, particularly the government's decisions on land settlement in the West Bank, constitute a massive land grab of Palestinian property. Land registration will result in the transfer of ownership of the majority of Area "C" to the State of Israel, leaving Palestinians with no practical ability to realize their ownership rights.

Under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations, requisitions may be made from municipalities and inhabitants, but only to the extent they are truly necessary for the army of occupation. They must not be made to supply the belligerent's general needs.<sup>35</sup> In the Court's view, this means that the occupying Power bears the duty to administer public property for the benefit of the local population or, exceptionally, to meet the needs of the army of occupation. In the present case, however, public property confiscated or requisitioned for the development of Israeli settlements benefits the civilian population of the occupying Power, the settlers, to the detriment of the Palestinian people. The Court therefore concludes that these land policies are not in conformity with Articles 46, 52, and 55 of the Hague Regulations.<sup>36</sup>

## B. International Crimes

**1. Entrenchment of Apartheid:** Under Article 7 of the Rome Statute, apartheid is a crime against humanity, defined as "inhumane acts (..) committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime."<sup>37</sup> In the West Bank, Israel manages public lands only for the benefit of Israeli settlers and allocates almost all of the land to Israelis.<sup>38</sup> In 2024, the ICJ concluded that the "régime of comprehensive restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory constitutes systemic discrimination based on, inter alia, race, religion or ethnic origin."<sup>39</sup> The juridical separation is the result of "the partial extension of Israeli law to the West Bank and East Jerusalem, settlers and Palestinians are subject to distinct legal systems in the Occupied Palestinian Territory."<sup>40</sup> This dual system of segregation led the ICJ to conclude that Israel's legislation and measures constitute a breach of Article 3 of the International

<sup>34</sup> Ibid (para. 106)

<sup>35</sup> Lassa Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise*, 7th ed., ed. H. Lauterpacht, London: Longmans, 1952, page 410.

<sup>36</sup> See footnote 28, (para. 122)

<sup>37</sup> [Rome Statute of the International Court](#), Article 7 para.2(h), 1998

<sup>38</sup> [Peace Now](#), Government Approves West Bank Land Settlement, Allocates NIS 244 Million for a Process Entailing the Dispossession of Thousands of Palestinians, 15 February 2026.

<sup>39</sup> See footnote 28, (para. 223)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid (para. 228)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which prohibits racial segregation and apartheid.<sup>41</sup>

A 2022 report by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the oPt, Michael Lynk, concluded that this system of domination is sustained by the regular practice of enumerated inhumane acts, including arbitrary and extrajudicial killings, torture, the violent deaths of children, the denial of fundamental human rights, a fundamentally flawed military court system and the absence of criminal due process, arbitrary detention, and collective punishment.<sup>42</sup>

The recent Israeli decisions cement segregation by facilitating the expansion of settlements and their associated infrastructure, thereby pushing Palestinians further into fragmented enclaves and entrenching the discriminatory legal structure. These decisions further reinforce legal segregation by facilitating the dispossession of Palestinians.

2. **Expulsion and Forcible Displacement:** Another crime against humanity, as defined by the Rome Statute, is “the forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law.”<sup>43</sup> In the 2024 ICJ ruling, the Court notes that: “Reports by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations bodies document that Israel evicts or displaces hundreds of Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territory every year, commonly as a result of the demolition of their property or as a result of zoning and planning policies and the relocation plans associated with them.”<sup>44</sup> According to UNOCHA, between 2023 and the beginning of 2026, about 5000 people were displaced from the Jordan Valley, which is only a part of Area “C”.<sup>45</sup> Recent Israeli decisions will place many more Palestinians and their communities at risk of displacement.
3. **Settlement Construction:** The Rome Statute defines a war crime as “the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”<sup>46</sup> International humanitarian law (IHL) also prohibits the occupying Power from transferring its population into occupied territory. This prohibition has been confirmed by the ICJ’s annexation wall opinion in 2004 and the ICJ’s occupation opinion in 2024. UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2334

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk](#), UN Human Rights Council, 49th sess., UN Doc. A/HRC/49/87 (21 March 2022).

<sup>43</sup> Rome Statute, Article 8 (para. 2/[d]).

<sup>44</sup> See footnote 28, (para. 143)

<sup>45</sup> [UNOCHA](#), the West Bank Humanitarian Situation Update, 19 February 2026.

<sup>46</sup> Rome Statute, Article 8 (para.2[b]).

“Reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.”<sup>47</sup>

4. **Other International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law Violations:** These measures will necessarily entail worsening humanitarian and human rights violations, including restrictions on freedom of movement, worship, housing, and an array of economic, social, and cultural rights. The Israeli Military Appeal Committee, which serves as a paralegal body for property claims in the West Bank, as well as the Israeli High Court of Justice, have already been criticized for insufficient guarantees of fairness. Further discrimination in people’s rights to remedy and access to a fair hearing is to be expected in cases related to ownership and property rights in the aftermath of the February decisions.

## The Position of the State of Palestine

**The State of Palestine affirms its continued commitment to the bilateral agreements** signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the State of Israel, and **calls for the resumption of the political process**, in the objective of ensuring the full exercise of the people of Palestine of their right to self-determination in an independent, contiguous and viable State of Palestine on the 4 June 1967 borders, in line with international law, that lives in peace and security with its neighbors.

The State of Palestine considers that the acts of **the current Israeli government, led by right-wing extremists, aim to fully extend Israeli law over the territory of occupied Palestine** and to bring to an end the decades-long political process that the international community has heavily invested in.

Accordingly, in line with international law, the State of Palestine reaffirms that there is no legal validity to any claims of sovereignty over any part of occupied Palestine other than for the Palestinian people and their sole and legitimate representative, the PLO, its institutions and bodies, which include the Palestinian National Authority. Consequently, the State of Palestine instructed all its civil servants not to take part in or recognize the decisions of the Israeli cabinet on 8 February, at all costs, and called on all states to take measures beyond condemnations.

The State of Palestine recalls that Israel’s unlawful presence in its territory violates rights and obligations that have an erga omnes effect. As concluded by the ICJ ruling of 2024,<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> [UNSC Resolution 2334](#)

<sup>48</sup> See footnote 28, (paras 273-284)

and confirmed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution ES-10/24<sup>49</sup>, **all states, individually and within multilateral fora, have the responsibility not to recognize the validity of any Israeli measures that aim to alter the character, institutional structure, status, and demographic composition of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.**

**The principle of non-recognition entails that states should:**

1. Distinguish dealings with Israel between its own territory and the oPt;
2. Abstain from treaty relations with Israel in all cases in which it purports to act on behalf of the oPt or a part thereof in matters concerning the oPt or a part of its territory;
3. Abstain from entering into economic or trade dealings with Israel concerning the oPt or parts that may entrench its unlawful presence in the territory;
4. Abstain, in the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic missions in Israel, from any recognition of its illegal presence in the oPt;
5. Take steps to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the oPt.

**Not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the oPt, including by:**

1. Taking steps to prevent trade or investment relations that assist in the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel in the oPt, including with regard to the settlements and their associated regime;
2. Ensuring that any impediment to the exercise of the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination is brought to an end;
3. To take steps to ensure that their nationals, companies, and entities under their jurisdiction, as well as their authorities, do not act in any way that would entail recognition or provide aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the oPt;
4. Ceasing the importation of any products originating in the Israeli settlements;
5. Ceasing the provision or transfer of arms, munitions, and related equipment to Israel, the occupying Power, in all cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they may be used in the oPt;
6. Implement sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against natural and legal persons engaged in the maintenance of Israel's unlawful presence in oPt, including in relation to settler terror attacks;

<sup>49</sup> [UNGA Resolution A/RES/ES-10/24](#), "Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from the illegality of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", 18 September 2024.

**The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention** have the obligation to **ensure Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law**, as embodied in Article 1 of the Convention, **particularly by activating domestic accountability mechanisms** in accordance with Article 146. **States party to the Rome Statute** should support the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor and the International Criminal Court to **ensure accountability for grave international crimes committed in the oPt.**

Finally, **the State of Palestine urges all States to support and assist the Palestinian people in the realization of their right to self-determination by supporting the development efforts undertaken by Palestinian Institutions and by pressuring the government of Israel to release the tax revenues it collects on behalf of the PNA.**

## **Terminology Guide**

**“Judea and Samaria”**: A political–ideological term used by Israel to refer to the West Bank. It was formally institutionalized following research conducted by a governmental committee appointed by Levi Eshkol in 1968. The term draws on biblical geography, projecting a divinely sanctioned and timeless Jewish presence, while obscuring the modern colonial character of Israel’s military occupation and territorial takeover since 1967.

**“State Land”**: Refers to areas in the West Bank illegally declared by the Israeli occupying Power as public land, transferring control to Israeli bodies such as the World Zionist Organization and settlement movements. In 2024, about 24,000 dunums (approximately 5930 Acres) were added to this classification, raising the total to roughly 33% of the West Bank.

**Settlements**: Areas in the West Bank confiscated by Israeli occupation authorities for the use of Israeli civilians. They can take the form of urban residential communities, farms, and industrial or tourist zones. Their presence is illegal under international law, and the transfer of the civilian population of the occupying Power into occupied territory constitutes a war crime. There are mainly two types of settlements: (1) formally registered and licensed settlements by the relevant occupation authorities and established with the State of Israel's planning and consent; (2) Colonial Installations (referred to as “outposts”) established by ideologically motivated settlers without obtaining formal registration or licensing from the relevant occupation authorities.

**Oslo-Defined Areas/ “A, B, C”**: According to article XI of the Interim Agreement of 1995, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are a single territorial unit that should come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in a phased manner, within 18 months from the date of its establishment. A schedule of withdrawal (redeployment) of the Israeli occupation was set, dividing the West Bank into three geographical areas:

- **Areas “A” and “B”** are the heavily populated areas consisting of major cities and surrounding villages. Throughout these areas, all civil powers and responsibilities,

including planning and zoning, were transferred to the PNA during the first phase of withdrawal, while the occupation authorities maintained a “security” presence in Area “B”.

- **Area “C”** is the remaining part of the West Bank, where Israel retained responsibility for “security” and land administration until it withdrew according to an agreed-upon schedule. Despite more than three decades passing, Israel has never implemented the withdrawal phases agreed upon in the Interim Agreement; instead, it has further entrenched the military occupation by usurping certain powers in Area “B” and encroaching on a de facto annexation of Area “C”.

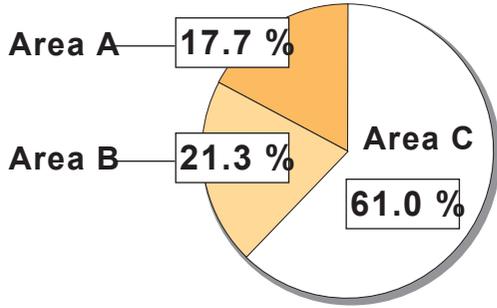
**Annexation:** Refers to Israeli colonial schemes aimed at incorporating parts, or all, of the West Bank territory occupied since 1967 under Israeli state control. International law and the United Nations Charter explicitly prohibit the annexation of land by force. Observers describe current Israeli settlement policies as “creeping annexation,” distinguishing between de jure annexation (formal, not yet completed) and de facto annexation (on-the-ground integration without a formal declaration). In 2023, the transfer of administrative powers from the military echelon to the settler-led Israeli government was widely viewed as a step toward de jure annexation.

**Civil Administration (CA):** It is an Israeli military body operating under the authority of the Israeli occupation army. Established in 1981, it serves as the de facto governing authority in oPt, managing land, planning, permits, population registration, and “civil” affairs—primarily facilitating settlement administration and expansion.

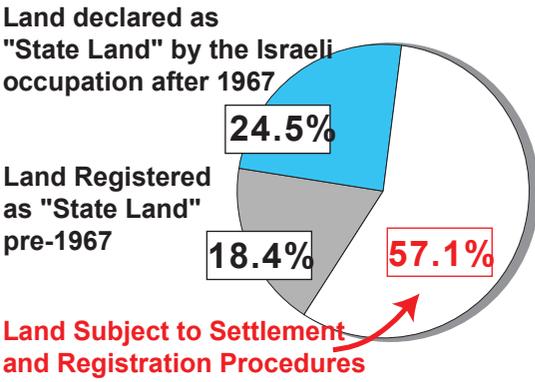
**Deputy Head of the Civil Administration (for Civil Affairs):** Formally presented as a new position within the Civil Administration. Although its title suggests subordination to the CA as a military body, the position does not report to the Head of the Civil Administration and does not operate within the military chain of command. Instead, it reports to the Settlement Administration, a civilian-political body. It serves as a mechanism for transferring core roles and responsibilities from the military occupation regime to a settlement-driven administration, while maintaining the appearance of compliance with the international law of occupation.

# Israeli Settlement and Annexation Patterns in Area C

**Palestinian West Bank Area A, B and C**



**Palestinian Land in Area C by Registration Status**



- 1967 Boundary ("Green Line") (~ 320 km)
- Area A
- Area B
- Area C
- Israeli Settlement Built-up Areas (~ 1.3% - 740,000 settlers)
- Wall route approved by Israel's cabinet as of 30 April 2006 (~ 714 km)
- Wall Completed (~ 67%)
- Israeli Settlers Road

