



STATE OF PALESTINE
PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
NEGOTIATIONS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

TERRORIZING A NATION: ISRAELI SETTLER VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE

A YEAR IN REVIEW (2021)



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INTRODUCTION



Israeli settler violence, amounting to terrorism, is only possible to understand in the context of Israel's apartheid regime. The aim is to grab more Palestinian lands for expanding its colonial settlement project towards displacing Palestinians and moving in more illegal settlers to replace them. The aim is embodied in Israel's Jewish Nation-State Law that enshrines Jewish dominance and supremacy on the entire land of historic Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River (on both sides of the 1967 borders).

For the purpose of consolidating and expanding its colonial settlement enterprise, the occupying power has seized nearly two million dunams¹ in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where there are roughly 720,000 Israeli settlers living today in nearly 300 illegal settlements. Both state-sponsored settlements and colonial installations (outposts) are illegal and violate international law and numerous United Nations resolutions. Israel's settlement enterprise controls 40% of the occupied West Bank² land, where Palestinian cities, towns, and villages, have been carved up into

165 separate geographic areas³, and the ratio of Israeli settlers to the Palestinian population is approximately 23 settlers for every 100 Palestinians⁴.

In this context, Israeli settler violence is an integral part of Israel's colonial enterprise, which is directed at destroying the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, contiguous State of Palestine on the 1967 borders.

This report highlights how settler violence is a form of state policy, not simply a "phenomenon", used by Israel to further oppress the Palestinian people and to serve its colonial enterprise. In the same manner as during the Nakba of 1948, violence and terror are being used to forcibly evict Palestinians from their land for the benefit of Israeli Jews. Besides summarizing attacks in 2021, the report also provides accounts of Palestinians who suffered at the hands of settlers aided by the Israeli occupying forces.



SETTLER VIOLENCE: GOVERNED BY ISRAEL'S LONG-STANDING SETTLEMENT POLICY, NOT RANDOM ACTS

B'Tselem end-of-2021 report⁵ made it clear that the official state apparatus supports and encourages Israeli settler violence, adding that it's a form of Israeli apartheid that seeks to advance the expropriation of Palestinian land in conjunction with official methods of land grabbing supported by the judiciary. The report noted the example of colonial installations (outposts), including in the form of "farms", where Israel not only permits settlers to reside on lands that were violently seized from Palestinians, but also grants them direct and indirect support, including financial assistance, and protection.

In parallel, Palestinians are continually subjected to Israeli policies that are cruelly designed to make it impossible for them to remain on their lands including with settler violence and the denial of their right to build or develop their own communities. Furthermore, when Palestinians assume their right without an Israeli permit, the entire Israeli state apparatus orchestrates a kafkaesque process where all play a part in demolishing and forcibly transferring Palestinians to pave the way for more Israeli settlements and settlers into the occupied Palestinian territory, which falls under the definition of war crimes⁶ in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. While the internationally recognized illegal settlement construction continue unabated without accountability, the international community also continues to only condemn Israel's policy of destroying Palestinian homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods, without taking concrete actions to deter Israel and stop its violations and crimes.

For many Palestinians, the violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers has become a regular part of their daily lives. Through systematic incitement and hate speech⁷ against Palestinians by both government officials and parliament members, the State of Israel not only permits and supports but directly participates through its occupying forces in acts of settler violence against Palestinians. Among a series of examples in 2021, especially during May, an investigation by the Intercept and Local Call⁸ last July revealed that "on a single Day in May, Israeli settlers and army cooperated in attacks that left four Palestinians dead." On May 14, eleven Palestinians were killed as reported by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, including Nidal Safadi, Hussam Asaira, Awad Harb, and Ismail Al-Tubasi, who lost their lives because of deliberate attacks by both the settlers and the occupying forces on the Palestinian villages of Asira Al-Qibliya, Iskaka, Al Reihya, and Urif. On the same day, Mohammed

Amran's family was attacked while at home in Burin village, and fortunately they were able to survive the attack. The Israeli occupation authorities only investigated the killing of Nidal Safadi in Urif village⁹, and later claimed that the incident was aggravated by "riots."

In several videotaped incidents¹⁰ of settler violence, the occupying forces do not confront the settlers, but instead order Palestinians to leave their agricultural land and pastures and declare these areas as closed military zones. To disperse Palestinians, they also often use teargas canisters, stun grenades, rubber-coated metal bullets, and even live bullets.¹¹ The Israeli army sometimes engages in settler violence against Palestinians or stands idle while the attacks occur without interfering. In a report¹² released last May, Yesh Din, another Israeli human rights organization, explained that "law enforcement" in the West Bank is failing to respond effectively to attacks against Palestinian villages, adding that the occupation authorities have repeatedly failed to prevent these incidents before they occur or to find and prosecute the perpetrators afterward. Noting that not all settler violent attacks against Palestinians are documented and not all Palestinians opt to file complaints to the occupation authorities in fear of payback violence, Yesh Din only reviewed 63 incidents that occurred between 2017 and 2020, from which only 60 complaints were filed and only 38 of them were concluded without the filing of one single indictment. The report highlighted that by failing to respond and deter Israeli settler crimes, the occupation authorities continue to expose the Palestinians to "explosive violence." Based on a previous 10-year review published in 2015¹³, the same organization concluded that 85% of all investigations into settler-committed violence were never followed up by the Israeli police, with the odds of conviction for these crimes standing at only 1.9%.



2021

**ONE YEAR OF ISRAELI VIOLATIONS
AGAINST OCCUPIED PALESTINE**

KILLINGS⁽¹⁾

362
(incl. 87 Children
and 60 women)

INJURIES⁽²⁾

+14,000



ARRESTS⁽³⁾

8,000
(at least)

SETTLERS⁽⁴⁾

ATTACKS
945

DEMOLITIONS⁽⁵⁾

+900
Structures demolished
(incl. ~220 homes and ~110
uninhabited residential structures)



**MILITARY
RAIDS⁽⁶⁾**

~4290



**FLYING
CHECKPOINTS⁽⁷⁾**
~3785



ISRAELI VIOLATIONS IN OCCUPIED JERUSALEM⁽⁸⁾

The advancement of **50** Israeli plans to alter the character and identity of occupied Jerusalem, **16** of which are for the expansion of existing settlements on Jerusalem governorate lands.

KILLINGS

16

INJURIES

+3,000
(half of which during May alone)

ARRESTS

+2,850

SETTLERS ATTACKS

~110

DEMOLITIONS

+310
demolitions and
bulldozing operations

+39,000
settlers stormed the courtyards
of Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound

**ISRAEL CONTINUES TO
WITHHOLD THE BODIES OF
18 PALESTINIAN MARTYRS.**



(1) PLO-NAD/ Palestinian Monitoring Group (PMG)
(2) Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH)
(3) Palestinian Prisoners Club
(4) PLO-NAD/ PMG

(5) UNOCHA oPt
(6) PLO-NAD/PMG
(7) PLO-NAD/PMG
(8) Jerusalem Governorate

OVERVIEW: ISRAELI SETTLER VIOLENCE 2016 - 2021¹⁴

The total number of documented Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians between 2016 and 2021 amounted to nearly 3,700 incidents, the highest of which was during 2021.

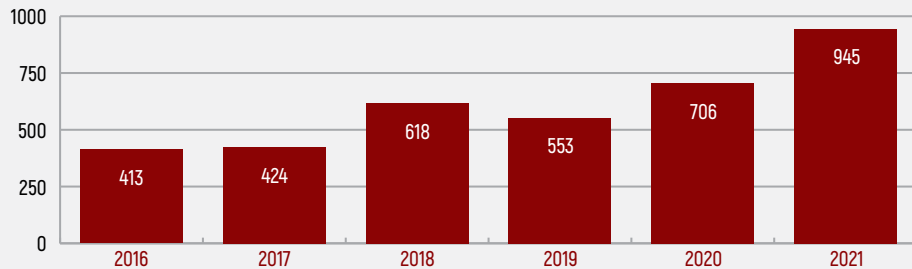


CHART (1)

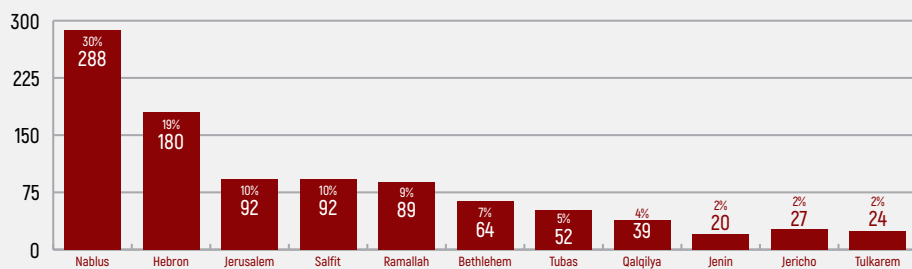


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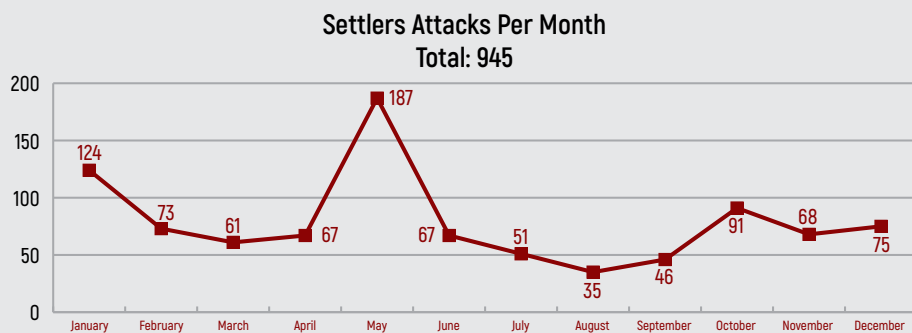
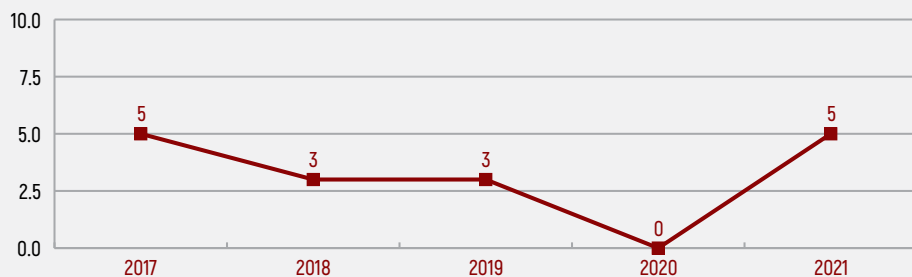


CHART (3)

Between 2017 and 2021, 16 Palestinians were killed and numerous others were injured by Israeli settlers. Further, Israeli occupying forces have killed, injured, or arrested many Palestinians because they defended themselves when they were the ones in danger.



CHART(4)

The following is the list of Palestinians killed at the hands of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during 2017-2021:

1. **SHAIMA' JAABIS**, 9 years old, was run over and killed on 30 January 2017 by a settler driving his car in Jabal Mukaber neighborhood in occupied Jerusalem.
2. **SULEIMAN HAMDAD**, 81, was run over and killed on 8 February 2017 by a settler on road 60 near "Neve Daniel" Settlement, a bypass road near al-Khader town in Bethlehem.
3. **MOATAZ BANI SHAMSA**, 23, a resident of Beita, was shot dead on 18 May 2017 by an Israeli settler driving his car on Hawara main street and firing at Palestinians marching in support of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike (a photojournalist was also injured in the attack). The settler also tried to run over other Palestinians. To evacuate him from the area, the occupying forces fired rubber-coated metal bullet, tear gas canisters, and stun grenades at the Palestinians.
4. **MOHAMMAD SHARAF**, 17, was shot and killed by a settler in the Ras Al-Amoud neighborhood in occupied Jerusalem on 21 July 2017.
5. **ASEEL ABU OUN**, 8, a resident of Jaba' village in Jenin governorate, was killed on the morning of 26 August 2017 when a settler ran her over with his car on the main road in Furush Beit Dajan village.
6. **RAMI ASAD**, 38, was run over and killed on 4 January 2018 when a settler in a speedy bus ran over him on road 60, a bypass road near al-Khader town in Bethlehem.
7. **HANI AL-ADARBE**, 23, succumbed to his wounds on 11 May 2018 after a settler ran him over on bypass road 35 near Halhul town in Hebron governorate.
8. **AISHA AL-RABI**, 47, from Bidya village, was hit with a stone in the head and killed on 12 October 2018 after settlers smashed her car's windshield in the vicinity of Za'tara checkpoint.
9. **HAMDY AL-NAASAN**, 38, was killed on 26 January 2019, when a group of armed settlers stormed Al-Mughayir village and fired at its residents. Twenty-two other Palestinians were injured.
10. **MOHAMMAD ABD AL-FATTAH**, 23, a resident of Khirbet Qais in Salfit governorate, was shot and killed on 3 April 2019, when a settler on Hawara main street shot him and another Palestinian civilian, Khaled Rawajbeh.
11. **TARIQ THABANIEH**, 7 years old, a resident of Tarqumia, was run over and killed on the evening of 15 July 2019 by a settler on the main road near "Adora" settlement.
12. **KHALID NOFAL**, 34, a resident of Ras Karkar village, was run over and killed on 5 February 2021 by a settler in the area of Jabal al-Raysan, on which the colonial installation of "Sde Ephraim" was established.
13. **AZZAM AMER**, a resident of the village of Kafr Qallil, was run over and killed by a settler on 10 February 2021 near the junction of Haris village.
14. **BILAL BAWATNA**, 52, from Al-Bireh city in Ramallah governorate, was run over and killed, and two others were injured, on 12 February 2021, by a settler on the main road between the junction of Ain Al-Bayda and Bardala villages. All three Palestinians were taking part in an environmental path in support of Kardala village and all Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley.
15. **SHAFIQA ABU AQIL**, 73, was run over and killed by a settler on 7 April 2021 near the western entrance to the town of As-Samou' in the Hebron governorate.
16. **GHADEER MASALMA**, 63, was run over and killed by a settler on 24 December 2021 near the entrance of Sinjil village.

Between 2017 and 2020, seven more Palestinians were murdered by the Israeli occupying forces during protests against settler attacks and Israel's colonial settlement project. In 2021 alone, eight Palestinians were killed because of such illegal activities in Beit Dajan, Sobeih Mountain in Beita Village, and the area south of Qusra Village:

ATEF HANAYSHA (45), ZAKARIYA HAMAYEL (28), MOHAMMAD HAMAYEL (15), AHMAD BANI SHAMSA (16), MOHAMMAD HASSAN (20), IMAD DWEIKAT (37), MOHAMMAD KHABEESA (28), JAMIL ABU AYYASH (31).



PALESTINIANS SPEAK UP: THE IMPACT OF ISRAELI SETTLER ATTACKS IN 2021



Throughout 2021, Israeli settlers conducted violent terror attacks against the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank, including by taking over Palestinian land for executing illegal settlement activities (such as installing caravans), threatening and beating Palestinians, cutting and burning trees and agricultural fields, stealing crops, vandalizing vehicles and other properties (such as spraying racist slogans), storming Palestinian villages, archaeological sites and farming fields, forcing Palestinians out of their properties, ploughing land, and pumping wastewater from settlements on to Palestinian lands. On top of this, settlers have also continued to physically assault

and run over Palestinians (even their livestock), which resulted in many killings and injuries.

All the Palestinian governorates in the occupied West Bank were attacked, but the highest number of documented attacks in 2021 were recorded in Nablus, Hebron, and Jerusalem respectively. The following section highlights testimonies from these governorates, in addition to one testimony from Bethlehem, which provides an in-depth look at the impact of settler violence on Palestinian lives and how it continues to threaten their security, livelihoods, and wellbeing.

(1) NABLUS, QARYUT VILLAGE, WAEL BAHJAT, 62, MECHANIC

"During the early hours of 17 December 2021, my wife woke me up around 3:00 am and told me that someone was knocking on our door. There was a loud bang and the glass door fell to the ground. A settler disguised as a soldier was beating someone. At first, I thought it could be my son, who works late hours. I shouted, "Who is that?" The answer was: open the door; we are the soldiers. Immediately after opening the door, they sprayed me with gas, and I lost consciousness. I later woke up in the hospital with severe bruises. The settlers also attacked my wife with gas, and she fled into one of the rooms and closed the door, calling for help from our family and neighbors. Everything in the house was destroyed, including the windows, the doors, the beds, the kitchen, the furniture and more. In addition,

they destroyed my two tractors, my car, and my brothers' motorbikes. My losses are estimated to be more than 150,000 NIS (~\$47,000) after the house became uninhabitable. The settlers were ruthless and destructive. I was in a hospital for five days, and I am still suffering from broken ribs, so I can't work. This was the most painful event in our lives; it left us feeling insecure for the rest of our lives. All Palestinians are targeted by settlers that the Israeli army protect. We were visited twice by Israeli police and went twice to the police center for investigation, yet they did nothing. They did not catch the criminals because the occupiers protect their criminals. Nevertheless, we will not surrender. This is our land, we will maintain our steadfastness."

(2) NABLUS, BURQA VILLAGE, GHASSAN DAGHLAS, 50, A PALESTINIAN OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF THE SETTLEMENT FILE IN THE NORTHERN WEST BANK

"Burqa has a population of approximately 4,700 people. Upon the establishment of the "Homesh" settlement in 1978, we began to suffer settler violence. The settlement of 1,800 dunums (~445 acres) was established on land confiscated from Burqa village, and it was evacuated in 2005 as part of Israel's disengagement plan. Since 2007, settlers have been attempting to return to the settlement, and therefore violence against Burqa residents and their properties has been escalating rapidly. There are currently about 40 settlers living in the evacuated settlement. A variety of attacks have been carried out by settlers since 2007, attacking farmers while herding their cattle, destroying cars, damaging homes with stones, and opening fire on villagers. This year witnessed the most ferocious attacks.

One example took place on 16 December at about 10:30 am when approximately 1,500 settlers stormed the village, attacking 25 homes, breaking their windows, tearing down their gardens, burning barracks, setting fire to cars, and attempting to burn houses to the ground. Two days later, on 18 December, some 11,000 settlers rallied at Burqa's entrance and attacked the village again, physically assaulting residents, breaking the windows of some homes, and toppling tombstones. Our concern is to prevent more incidents like what happened with the Dawabsheh family.¹⁵ Residents are terrified and concerned, living in perpetual anxiety and fear. They say: why to bother filing a complaint at the Israeli police station when we are sure that occupiers can never give justice to the people they occupy."

(3) NABLUS, HUWWARA VILLAGE, NASER ODEH, 53, FARMER

"I have been a farmer for the last 30 years since the locals appointed me to look after the land in the Allahf area north of Huwwara. The settlement of "Yitzhar" is located 1 km away from the site. Its settlers have been brutally attacking its (Palestinian) owners whenever they perform agricultural work or harvest their olive trees. At least 500 dunums (~125 acres) are under full Israeli control, whose original Palestinian owners can only access after applying for prior coordination. These 500 dunums previously yielded

more than 150 tankers of olive oil annually, but due to the continual attacks by settlers who uproot or cut the olive trees or steal the crops, production has now been reduced by half. Each time farmers go to their lands to harvest olives; they are attacked by settlers who force them out. My responsibility is to make periodic visits to Allahf to brief the owners on settler attacks and harvest the olive trees. Settlers frequently assault me with stones or metal pipes when I'm there. They simply want to erase our presence

there. This year, for example, hundreds of olive trees were left unharvested. Since the landowners are no longer capable of farming their land to keep the trees productive

and healthy, the land has become deserted, and the olive trees have dried up. The sight of the land and trees dying and being left behind is sad and painful."

(4) NABLUS, SEBASTIA VILLAGE, MAJD SHEHADEH, 71, FARMER

On 12 October 2021: Settlers from the nearby "Shavei Shomron" settlement bulldozed Shehadah's land and cut down the olive trees.

"All 80 dunums [*20 acres] of my land are located inside the illegal settlement of "Shavei Shomron", so I must make prior coordination to access my land. I have been facing constant settlers' attacks since 2002; bulldozing land, cutting olive trees, apricot and grapes, and stealing olive crops. I visited my land on the morning of 12 October to discover that settlers bulldozed about 8 dunums to open

a road, uprooting 85 olive trees in the process. The land is my sole source of income as a farmer. As a result of the settlers' continuous attacks, olive oil production has sharply decreased; I am losing 60 tanks of olive oil every year, each weighing 16kg. My agricultural land has also been intentionally flooded with wastewater and sewage by the settlers, which has left 21 dunums uncultivated since 2010. As I watch my trees cut down and land bulldozed, I feel helpless. It's my only source of income, my trees, the ones I love like my children."

(5) NABLUS, MADAMA VILLAGE, WEAM AL-QUT, 31, MOTHER AND HOUSEWIFE

Israeli settlers attacked the village and threw stones at Palestinian homes, injuring 10-years-old child Hala, Weam's daughter.

"I was alone in the house with my five children. The eldest is Hala, who was studying for an exam in the garden, while two of her younger sisters were playing. Suddenly, one of my daughters came running to me while holding her leg; she looked pale and horrified: "Mum, they hit me with stones! "My first reaction was to think that the children in the neighborhood had attacked my daughters, so I ran and opened the door to find my daughter Hala bleeding on the floor. Once I realized someone was fleeing, I immediately carried my unconscious daughter into the house and shut the door. Then, dozens of masked settlers started throwing stones at all sides of the house until they broke all the

windows. I hugged my children as they were desperately screaming and crying. It took me a moment to remember that one of my children was in a separate room, which was full of shattered glass. Hala later explained that before she lost consciousness, she felt someone was trying to grab her in an attempt to kidnap her, but I luckily appeared on time. My family was severely affected psychologically by this incident. My children had nightmares for a long time, woke up crying at night, suffered involuntary urination, and were afraid to go outside to play. We have not been directly attacked by settlers before; settlers often raid our village and attack the villagers and their properties. It is worthless to file a complaint since we are sure the matter will be closed, as it happened with hundreds of Palestinians who experienced similar incidents."

(6) NABLUS, SBEIH MOUNTAIN/ BEITA VILLAGE, DR. MUSA ABDEL MU'TI, 72, LANDOWNER

The current confiscation threat dates from 2017, but Israeli settlers have attempted to occupy Sbeih Mountain since the 1980's. According to Youssef Asida, the head of the Beita Municipality Steering Committee, Israeli settlers began building caravans atop the mountain on 3 May 2021. The plan is to take over the entire mountain to connect the

Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley with the settlement of "Ariel" built on lands belonging to Nablus governorate. The mountain is approximately 500 dunums in size (~123.5 acres) and is part of the villages of Beita, Qabalan, and Yetma. In response to the threat of settlers/settlements, Palestinian villagers organized popular resistance, and during 2021

alone, nine Palestinians were killed¹⁶ and hundreds injured in Beita village and on Sbeih Mountain.¹⁷

"I own 30 dunums of land that extends from the top of Sbeih mountain down. With my father in 1960, I planted 200 olive seedlings on our land. As a result of the Israeli occupation, only 50 fruit bearing trees have survived. My crop has dropped by 70% even though the olive oil from this area is one of the finest in Palestine. The settlers recently seized the top of the mountain, and I cannot be certain how many dunums I lost since they forbade us from accessing the area. Israeli settlers have repeatedly tried to seize the mountain but have failed. I remember in the 1980s, the occupying soldiers set up temporary checkpoints from time to time

preventing access to our lands. In addition to removing the rocks from the mountaintop and throwing them down, the soldiers also hurled stun grenades at residents who were resisting the colonization of the mountain, causing an ever-growing number of trees to be burned and harmed. I am saddened to see my olive trees destroyed by time. The land is part of our soul, like our children. We cannot take care of the trees because the Israeli military and settlers bar us from accessing our land, so we have to watch them being destroyed, dried, or burned. While I did not personally attend court, I am aware that human rights organizations appealed to the occupation court, which I do not trust, to force the settlers to leave."

(7) HEBRON, YATTA VILLAGE, JAMIL AL-AMOUR, 64, FARMER

Al-Amour owns 110 dunum of land in Khallet Al Dabe' (7km from Yatta). "The first attack on my land occurred at the end of October 2021. I was contacted by my neighbours one morning to inform me that tents had been set up on my land by settlers from the illegal settlement of "Mitzpe Yair." My family and I rushed there to get rid of them, and we were shocked to find that the door of the storage room was broken and the agricultural equipment had been stolen and some had been destroyed. We were physically attacked by the settlers who threw stones with slingshots as well as opened fire, breaking my ribs and injuring my grandson and nephew with rubber coated steel bullets; they destroyed two of our cars as well. When they first attacked; they were eight settlers, then they reached 40! It took us until 11:00 pm to force them out of the land. The second attack

occurred on 10 November, when settlers came to my land to herd their cattle and uprooted more than 20 old olive trees. On 8 December, the settlers returned to the land to herd their cattle and destroyed figs, eucalyptus, and other types of forest trees. They are fully protected by Israeli police whenever they attack my land. We were surprised at the Israeli police station when we went to file a complaint to see the settlers complaining about us, and the police listened attentively to them. They always protect the settlers and turn a blind eye to their crimes. Now I live in constant fear and anxiety that settlers might invade my land at any moment and destroy all of our agricultural work. I plan to plant 250 olive seedlings soon, but how will they be protected from settlers' attacks?"

(8) HEBRON, KHIRBET AL-SIMIA, LOCATED NORTHWEST OF AS-SAMU VILLAGE, FADEL ABU AQEEL, 55, PROFESSOR AT HEBRON UNIVERSITY

On 7 April, an Israeli female settler ran over Fadel's sister, Shafiq, 72 years old, and killed her.

"On 7 April 2021, about 8:00 am, an Israeli settler woman ran over my sister on road number 60 and killed her. A neighbor who happened to be driving behind the settler called to tell us that our sister had been in an accident. We are still in shock and grief and cannot comprehend the fact that our sister died on the spot after being struck by the settler's car. Every day, my sister, who lived alone, walked almost 1km to visit us on the eastern side of the village from her

house in the old western part. Khirbet Al-Simia has been divided by the settlers' road number 60 into two parts: the western portion, where building is completely prohibited, and the eastern portion, where people built new houses to meet the demands of our population growth. This is not the first time we have been attacked by settlers, we own 40 acres of land adjacent to road number 60, 18 acres of which were confiscated in 2000 to build the road. Often, illegal settlers from the settlements of "Otniel" and "Shama" attack us when we are working on our land or grazing our herds. To seize our land, they want to forcefully expel us.

We always feel threatened and insecure. There have been a number of complaints, but none have been successful.

When my sister was killed, the villagers stopped the car of the settler, called the police, who came and did nothing.”

(9) JERUSALEM, AL-ISSAWIYAH VILLAGE, MOHAMMAD ABUL HUMMUS, 17, CONSTRUCTION WORKER

On 28 February, Israeli settlers attacked Mohammad in the “French Hill” settlement

“As I was passing the area around 5 am to pick up some equipment for work, I heard a young man screaming in Arabic for help. As I rushed to see what was happening, at least 30 settlers started brutally beating me all over my body. I was attacked with two big alcohol bottles and one broke on my head while the other broke in my face, I remember that the glass broke into tiny pieces and my blood began running down my body, I was heavily bleeding.

After all that, I couldn’t believe I was still alive. It was a miracle I was able to crawl and flee despite my injuries, it was a nightmare. I had more than 13 stitches on my head, eye, and finger as a result of this vicious attack. I do not fear settlers and we will remain on our land and defend it, but what saddens me is that my eye is distorted with three pieces of glass inside. Fortunately, I was not blinded by this. I have filed a complaint to the Israeli police, but the case was closed without an indictment. Nonetheless, I will not give up my right I will file a lawsuit.”

(10) BETHLEHEM, HUSSAN VILLAGE, MOHAMMAD HAMAMREH, 52, BLACKSMITH AND FARMER

In January, settlers from the settlement of “Beitar Illit” pumped sewage into the village’s lands in Wadi Kdeis.

“My land was filled with sewage water running like a river on that day, and I was shocked to hear that I could not plough it (even to date) as it was and is still wet. This is not the first time settlers have pumped their sewage into our lands, it also happened last year, resulting in a sharp decline in my crops. I own 20 dunums planted with olive trees, grapes, and vegetables in the illegal Israeli settlement of “Beitar Illit”, which I can access only in the morning except on Saturdays by going through the settlement’s gate. As of early 2020, settlers have continuously destroyed my crops and attacked my land. During harvest season, I am shocked to see the crops destroyed. Being placed under such stress, both emotionally and physically, is psychologically

devastating. I put in a lot of effort and invest a great deal of money to plant my crops, I felt like I had lost a son when they destroyed my olive trees last season. There are times when I experience depression and despair, but I will not give up working on my land until the final breath. It costs me twice as much to grow crops than to buy from the market, I am not making any profit, on the contrary, I am losing money just to keep the land from being confiscated by settlers. I have filed three complaints at the Palestinian District Coordination Office and also a complaint at the Israeli police station, but this does not deter the settlers from their aggressive behavior. The Israeli police make you feel that they care about your situation, then call you to inform you that the file has been closed and there is no indictment.”



INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY= ACCOUNTABILITY = ACTIONS

Despite all the evidence of settler violence and terror against the Palestinian people, their land, and their lives, Naftali Bennett, the current Israeli Prime Minister, not only described settler violence as an "insignificant phenomenon", but also accused the Palestinians of perpetuating violence, stating that: "The settlers in [the West Bank] have been suffering from violence and terrorism, every day, for decades," Bennett said." He vowed to "strengthen and support them, in words and actions." This abhorrent statement, among others by extremists in the current Israeli government, came in the context of a statement by the Israeli Internal Security Minister¹⁸, Omer Bar-Lev, who told Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland, that Israel is taking steps to "deal with attacks by Jews on Palestinians." Regardless of any statements made by Israeli officials regarding settler attacks, the Israeli occupation authorities continue to protect the actions of such groups and render virtually no accountability.

Many countries, including the US, EU Member States, and UN officials, have expressed their "concern" over the significant increase in settler violence and have requested Israeli action, but without making it clear that these are acts of terror must be taken seriously, and that international action is urgent to protect the Palestinian people. It is not enough to show concern alone. It's also apt to note that several countries permit organizations affiliated with Israel's colonial settlements, such as the Jewish National Fund and the Israel

Land Fund, to raise funds on their soil. On top of that, an array of international corporations continue to collaborate with Israel's colonial settlement enterprise, including those from Spain, Germany, France, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. All the while, Israeli settlers, their products, and services continue to also benefit from Israel's international agreements.

A series of Palestinian¹⁹, Israeli, and international reports, mainly by Human Rights Watch²⁰, Amnesty International²¹ which released an extensive legal analysis and research on 1 February 2022, concluded that Israel is committing the crime of apartheid against the Palestinian people. As an apartheid state, Amnesty's report explains that Israel is subjecting Palestinians wherever they are, in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip), and Palestine refugees in exile and refugee camps to a system of oppression and dominion.

Going forward, it's the responsibility of the International Criminal Court to investigate Israel's crime of apartheid in occupied Palestine, as well as the international community, including the United Nations, to not only respond to this report, but also to take concrete steps towards ending this crime and Israel's 55-year colonial occupation.

Silence is compliance



ENDNOTES

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