

Israel's Illegal Settlements

A crime under international law:

Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, it is a crime for any occupying power to transfer citizens of theirs into occupied territory, and to fail to protect civilians and their lands.

Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights since 1967 has been condemned as unlawful by the UN.

In 2004, the International Court of Justice concluded that Israel's settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem breached international law.

In 2008, Israel promised to halt settlement expansion—but instead accelerated it.

By the end of 2013, there were more than 350,000 Israeli settlers in the Palestinian West Bank, and around 200,000 in Palestinian East Jerusalem. During the first eight months of 2016, Israeli authorities pushed forward plans for a further 2,623 housing units for settlers. At the same time, the number of Palestinian houses demolished has risen to record levels.

The Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority warns that the new settlements form part of an Israeli plan to cut the Palestinian West Bank in two and annex the 60% of the whole area—called 'Area C' by Israel.



Aftermath of a house demolition in the occupied Palestinian West Bank next to an illegal settlement



Bulldozer next to a construction site in the Israeli settlement of Har Homa in East Jerusalem. Construction of Har Homa started in 1996 and another 100 houses have just been approved.



Palestinian farmer near the Israeli settlement of Efrat, near Bethlehem

Throughout the 60% of the West Bank classified as Area C, Palestinian homes are routinely demolished because they lack a building permit. But only 1.5% of Palestinian applications for a permit are approved. 684 Palestinian homes were demolished in the first seven months of 2016, alone.

Israeli settlers enjoy tax reductions, cheap housing, full planning powers, and generous access to water. Palestinians meantime are forced into ever smaller overcrowded enclaves and deprived of access to sufficient and clean drinking water. Violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians is commonplace and goes unpunished.

Israeli settlements are making a viable Palestinian state impossible.

The UK government and the EU officially support a two-state solution for peace in Israel and Palestine. Both have had to admit that ongoing Israeli settlements make this impossible.



Bulldozer destroying Palestinian land near Bethlehem to make way for a new military tower or base

The Palestinian town of Beit Fajar is heavily dependent on quarrying and stone works. Since 1994, not a single Palestinian quarry has been permitted by Israeli authorities in the 60% of the West Bank classed as 'Area C'. Beit Fajar's businesses suffer fines and confiscations—while 11 new quarries by Israeli and international companies have been approved in Area C.

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WHAT CAN YOU DO

- 1) **Write to your MP.** Urge your MP to call on the Foreign Secretary to put pressure on Israel to save two Bedouin villages under immediate threat of demolition. See palestinecampaign.org/fate-two-palestinian-villages/
- 2) **Boycott Israeli goods:** Support the Palestinian civil society call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel, which is a peaceful means of trying to force the Israeli government to comply with international law, and of raising public awareness.
- 3) **Get active:** Email edinburghaction4palestine@gmail.com to find out how you can get involved.