



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
6 March 2025

Original: English

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-eighth session

24 February–4 April 2025

Agenda items 2 and 7

### Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

### Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

## Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

### Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\*

#### *Summary*

The present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/32, provides an update on the implementation of the provisions of the resolution during the period from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

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\* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 55/32, provides an update on the implementation of the resolution's provisions from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024. It is based on direct monitoring and information-gathering conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and on information provided by government sources, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>1</sup> The report should be read in conjunction with the related reports of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.<sup>2</sup>

2. The report contains an update on the unlawful advancement of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its impact on the human rights of the Palestinian people. The High Commissioner highlights that the transfer of powers that were previously under the authority of the military commander in the occupied West Bank (within what is called the Civil Administration) to civilian officials of the Government of Israel is expediting the ongoing transfer by Israel of parts of its own civilian population to the occupied territory and accelerating the concomitant forcible transfer of the Palestinian population, in grave breach of international law. The report also contains an update on the unlawful Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

## II. Legal framework

3. International human rights law and international humanitarian law apply concurrently in the Occupied Palestinian Territory of Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan.<sup>3</sup> This includes obligations under international customary law<sup>4</sup> and the obligations contained in the international human rights treaties to which Israel is a party.<sup>5</sup> It also includes obligations contained in international humanitarian law treaties to which Israel is a party, including the Regulations respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (the Fourth Geneva Convention).

4. In its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, the International Court of Justice found that the policies and practices of Israel, including the maintenance and expansion of settlements, amounted to the annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,<sup>6</sup> thereby violating the integrity of that territory as an essential element of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.<sup>7</sup> The Court determined that the presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was unlawful and stated that Israel "is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible".<sup>8</sup> In this regard, the Court stated that Israel was "under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, information in the present report is drawn from OHCHR monitoring conducted in accordance with OHCHR methodological standards.

<sup>2</sup> Including [A/79/347](#) and [A/HRC/55/72](#).

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the legal framework, see [A/HRC/34/38](#) and [A/HRC/34/39](#).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, International Committee of the Red Cross, Customary IHL database. Available at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl>.

<sup>5</sup> See OHCHR, United Nations Treaty Body database. Available at [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx).

<sup>6</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, para. 173.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 233 and 238.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 285 (3) and (4). The General Assembly, in its resolution ES-10/24, subsequently specified the time frame to do so as "no later than 12 months from the adoption of the present resolution" (para. 2).

Territory”,<sup>9</sup> and that it must “make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”.<sup>10</sup>

5. The Court considered that the transfer by Israel of settlers to the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and its maintenance of their presence, was contrary to article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the Court considered that the policies and practices of Israel were contrary to the prohibition of forcible transfer under article 49.<sup>12</sup> It also considered that the violence by settlers against Palestinians, the failure by Israel to prevent or punish it effectively and its excessive use of force against Palestinians “contribute to the creation and maintenance of a coercive environment against the Palestinians”.<sup>13</sup> Pursuant to article 8 (2) (b) (viii) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the transfer by the occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory, amounts to a war crime.

6. The Court found that a “régime of comprehensive restrictions” imposed by Israel on Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory “constitutes systemic discrimination” on the basis of race, religion or ethnic origin, in violation of articles 2 (1) and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 2 (2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>14</sup> It observed that “Israel’s legislation and measures impose and serve to maintain a near-complete separation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem between the settler and Palestinian communities”, which it considered as a breach of article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,<sup>15</sup> pursuant to which States parties undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of racial segregation and apartheid in territories under their jurisdiction.

7. In August 2024, the ad hoc conciliation commission of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted the “segregation between Palestinians and Israelis as part of policies and practices imposed by Israel through two separate legal systems, road separation and movement restrictions, among other means”.<sup>16</sup> The commission went on to find that “those acts may amount to a situation of apartheid if no action is taken by Israel to effectively address the issues raised”.<sup>17</sup>

### III. Update on settlement activity and its impact on human rights

#### A. Legal and policy initiatives of the Government of Israel

8. During the reporting period, the transfer of government powers over the Occupied Palestinian Territory from the Israeli military to the Government of Israel has further enabled and facilitated the ongoing advancement of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the steady integration of the occupied West Bank into the State of Israel. This transfer of powers, in line with the Government’s openly stated policy of the “application of sovereignty” over the West Bank,<sup>18</sup> together with other Israeli policies and practices, amount to annexation, as

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para. 285 (5).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., para. 285 (6).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., para. 119.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., para. 147.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., para. 154.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., para. 223.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., para. 229.

<sup>16</sup> CERD/C/113/3/Add.2, para. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/mk/government/Documents/CA37-RZ.pdf>, para. 118 (in Hebrew).

stated by the International Court of Justice,<sup>19</sup> and are in violation of the obligation of Israel to respect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.<sup>20</sup>

9. The transfer of administrative and legal powers in the occupied West Bank to the civilian Government of Israel continued under the Additional Minister within the Ministry of Defence.<sup>21</sup> The Additional Minister and his appointees, including within the Settlement Administration, now exercise control over the advancement of settlements, including with regard to the planning and approval of settlement expansion, infrastructure development, the “regularization” of outposts,<sup>22</sup> and land designations to enable settlement expansion.<sup>23</sup> The Additional Minister exercises authority over all land-related matters, including enforcement of discriminatory planning and building laws that prevent Palestinian construction, land seizures, and the declaration and allocation of “State lands” in Area C of the West Bank.<sup>24</sup> These profound changes to the governance of the West Bank are already having a marked impact on expanding Israeli settlements and expediting the forcible transfer of Palestinians from their land.

10. The transfer of powers also facilitates the Additional Minister’s ability to pursue “equal citizenship reform” in the West Bank, aimed at improving government services for Israeli settlers in settlements and outposts. Such developments further institutionalize long-standing patterns of systematic discrimination, segregation,<sup>25</sup> oppression, domination, violence and other inhumane acts against the Palestinian people,<sup>26</sup> as well as control of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>27</sup>

11. Acts of annexation also extended into Area B of the West Bank. In line with an Israeli Cabinet decision in June, on 18 July the military commander empowered the Civil Administration to prohibit construction and to demolish any structures that had been built after 1998 in Area B, in lands defined in the Oslo Accords as the “agreed-upon reserve” and previously placed under the authority of the Palestinian Authorities.<sup>28</sup> The reserves encompass approximately 167,000 dunams of land (approximately 41,300 acres), situated to the south-east of Bethlehem, and constitute around 3 per cent of the West Bank.

12. On 31 October, the Government of Israel approved its Economic Plan for 2025, which includes elements designed to strengthen its hold on the West Bank and promote annexation.<sup>29</sup> One part of the plan is to build two Israeli power plants and to allocate 2,000 dunams to solar photovoltaic projects in the West Bank in order to supply electricity to Israel.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 170–173.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 230–243.

<sup>21</sup> [A/79/347](#), paras. 4–14.

<sup>22</sup> See <https://img.haarets.co.il/bs/00000188-cd9d-da0c-a78a-ffff60e20000/97/17/5a428b70481593aed5e440c29562/memshala.pdf> (in Hebrew).

<sup>23</sup> See <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/the-quiet-overhaul-changing-the-nature-of-israeli-control-in-the-west-bank-analysis-of-israels-37th-governments-annexation-policy-and-its-ramifications/>.

<sup>24</sup> See [https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Annexation-Under-the-Radar\\_-The-establishment-of-the-Settlements-Administration-under-Minister-Smotrich-Peace-Now-July-2023.pdf](https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Annexation-Under-the-Radar_-The-establishment-of-the-Settlements-Administration-under-Minister-Smotrich-Peace-Now-July-2023.pdf), p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> [CERD/C/113/3](#), paras. 44 and 48; and [CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19](#), paras. 21–23.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-israels-settlement-expansion-alarming-and-flies-face-international-law>; and [A/HRC/55/72](#), para. 33.

<sup>27</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 158–160, 173 and 261.

<sup>28</sup> See [מגשר - התשפ"ד-2024-j-2198-צו בדבר הגבלת בנייה שמורה הסכמי-יהודה ושומרון-מס-7-תקון התשפ"ד-2024-j-2198-צו בדבר יישום הסכם הביניים-יהודה ושומרון-מס-7-תקון](#); <https://peacenow.org.il/authorities-in-area-b> (in Hebrew). See also <https://x.com/YehudaShaul/status/1825487100361183360> (video of the Additional Minister, Bezalel Smotrich, commending the developments).

<sup>29</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/en/the-annexation-moves-hidden-in-the-arrangements-law>.

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/dec2282-2024>, sects. 4 and 6 (in Hebrew); see also <https://peacenow.org.il/en/power-plants-in-settlements>.

## B. Settlement consolidation and expansion

13. During the reporting period, there was significant consolidation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law because they amount to the transfer by Israel of its population into an occupied territory.<sup>31</sup> The maintenance and expansion of Israeli settlements also advances the integration of Palestinian territory into Israel, forming part of the policies and practices that amount to annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in violation of the prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force.<sup>32</sup> Israeli settlements also fragment the remaining areas of the West Bank and disconnect the West Bank from Jerusalem, further inhibiting the fulfilment of Palestinians' right to self-determination within a contiguous State.<sup>33</sup> Israel is thereby under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>34</sup>

14. According to the Israeli NGO Peace Now, by the end of the reporting period there were 503,732 Israeli settlers in the West Bank<sup>35</sup> and 233,600 in East Jerusalem,<sup>36</sup> bringing the total to 737,332 Israeli settlers. Peace Now reported a total of 147 Israeli settlements in the West Bank and 224 outposts.<sup>37</sup> Israel has established three new settlements – Machane Gadi, Kedem Arava and Givat Chanan – as “neighbourhoods” of existing settlements and five new settlements – Evyatar, Givat Assaf, Sde Efraim, Adorayim and Nahal Heletz – by regularizing outposts.<sup>38</sup> The creation of the Nahal Heletz settlement on Palestinian land in Battir, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization world heritage site,<sup>39</sup> is aimed at further disconnecting Bethlehem from Jerusalem.<sup>40</sup>

15. Approximately 10,360 housing units within existing Israeli settlements in Area C of the West Bank were advanced or approved.<sup>41</sup> In East Jerusalem, monitoring by NGOs revealed that 20,138 housing units were advanced at the municipal and district levels as part of 36 plans for new settlements, settlement expansions or urban renewal of existing settlements.<sup>42</sup> This included six plans, totalling 7,730 housing units, for four new or expanded settlements: Givat Hamatos, Givat Shaked, Lower Aqueduct and Um Lisun. The Jerusalem District Planning Committee alone advanced or approved 7,180 housing units.<sup>43</sup>

16. Funds allocated from the Israeli budget for settlements were estimated at more than 737 million new Israeli shekels (approximately \$200 million) in 2024,<sup>44</sup> including for building roads between settlements, financial support for outposts, and providing security and other services to settlements and outposts. Such legal and administrative measures to furnish socioeconomic incentives, security, infrastructure and social services to citizens of

<sup>31</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 49.

<sup>32</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 173, 175 and 254.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 147, 164, 167, 172, 238 and 239.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 285 (5).

<sup>35</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/population>.

<sup>36</sup> Figures on East Jerusalem provided by Peace Now, on file; last updated in 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Information from Peace Now, on file.

<sup>38</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/War-and-Annexation-Peace-Now-Report-October-2024.pdf>, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-israels-settlement-expansion-alarms-and-flies-face-international-law>.

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.timesofisrael.com/land-allocation-approved-for-first-new-west-bank-settlement-to-be-built-since-2017/>.

<sup>41</sup> Monitoring by the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, on file.

<sup>42</sup> Information from Ir Amim and Bimkom, on file.

<sup>43</sup> Monitoring by the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, on file.

<sup>44</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/en/billions-for-settlements-in-the-2024-budget>.

Israel residing in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, amount to the transfer by Israel of its population into the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>45</sup>

17. Regarding the Gaza Strip, which is part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory that constitutes a single territorial unit,<sup>46</sup> numerous events were held calling for the Israeli resettlement of Gaza. This included two conferences and marches in which thousands of Israelis, including several ministers and Knesset members, participated.<sup>47</sup> In one event, held by the Likud Party on October 2024, the hosts – the Nachala Israeli settlement group – reportedly stated: “The event is not just a theoretical conference, but a practical exercise and preparation for renewed settlement in Gaza ... the return to settlement in Gaza is no longer just an idea but a process that is already in advanced stages, with government and public support.”<sup>48</sup> On 29 February 2024, following a call to resettle Gaza, dozens of settlers and right-wing activists, including members of the “Hilltop Youth”, reportedly stormed Erez crossing at the northern tip of Gaza, where some managed to cross several hundred metres into the Strip and build a symbolic “outpost”, without the army or the police intervening.<sup>49</sup>

### C. Outposts

18. The failure on the part of Israel to prevent the establishment of outposts and enforce national laws on the illegality of outposts, together with the retroactive “regularization” of existing outposts,<sup>50</sup> remains central to the unlawful transfer of parts of its civilian population to the occupied West Bank,<sup>51</sup> and the annexation of territory.<sup>52</sup> During the reporting period, outposts have played a key role in displacing Palestinian communities and preventing access to agricultural and grazing land. Outposts are established close to Palestinian communities, contributing to a coercive environment in what appears to be the ultimate aim of forcing Palestinians into smaller and smaller enclaves in Areas A and B of the West Bank.

19. During the reporting period, 49 outposts were established, an unprecedented number compared with a yearly average of 8 outposts over the past decade. The total number of outposts in the West Bank now stands at 224.<sup>53</sup> In April, the Minister of Finance issued a directive to recognize 68 outposts as “sites undergoing regularization”, instructing government ministries on the provision of infrastructure such as water, electricity, sewage and communication services.<sup>54</sup> The new status, aimed at bypassing the regularization process, allows for the allocation of funding to these outposts and their continued expansion, with the construction of new buildings that are not to be subject to enforcement measures for illegal

<sup>45</sup> A/67/375, para. 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 78, 93 and 94.

<sup>47</sup> See <https://www.972mag.com/gaza-israeli-resettlement-event-sukkot/>; and <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1848358921146110355> (in Hebrew); <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-28/ty-article/ministers-from-netanyahus-party-join-thousands-of-israelis-at-resettle-gaza-conference/0000018d-512f-dfdc-a5ad-db7f35e10000>; and <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-29/ty-article-magazine/.premium/the-people-of-israel-will-settle-gaza-netanyahu-ministers-urge-palestinians-expulsion/0000018d-5495-d1b6-aded-5fdd570c0000>.

<sup>48</sup> Noa Shpigel, “Netanyahu’s Likud Party issues invitation to event titled ‘Preparing to settle Gaza’”, *Haaretz*, 16 October 2024.

<sup>49</sup> See <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-settlers-gaza-outpost-erez-crossing/>.

<sup>50</sup> A/79/347, para. 26; A/HRC/55/72, paras. 14 and 15; A/77/493, paras. 7 and 8; and A/HRC/49/85, paras. 40–49.

<sup>51</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, para. 116.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 162 and 173.

<sup>53</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/population>.

<sup>54</sup> Based on section 2c of the Israeli Security and Political Cabinet decision authorizing 10 illegal outposts, dated 12 February 2023, available at <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Cabinet-Legalization-of-outposts-230223.pdf> (in Hebrew); see also [https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Hafiha\\_24/Hafiha\\_ENG.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Hafiha_24/Hafiha_ENG.pdf), p. 33.



construction.<sup>55</sup> In addition, dozens of unauthorized roads have been paved by settlers and the army around settlements and outposts, helping to connect them while blocking Palestinians' movement and enabling further seizure of their land.<sup>56</sup> Enforcement by Israel of laws against the illegal construction of outposts is now virtually non-existent,<sup>57</sup> with the Settlement Administration blocking any such action.<sup>58</sup> Instead, the Government of Israel now prepares plans for Israeli settlements and enables the issuance of building permits and infrastructure connections, while employing measures to limit Palestinians' ability to legalize their structures and strictly enforcing planning and zoning laws against them.<sup>59</sup> These policies on outposts are further intensifying the discrimination and segregation faced by Palestinians in the West Bank.<sup>60</sup>

## D. Appropriation of land

20. Israel continued the illegal appropriation of land for Israeli settlements in the occupied territory through declarations of "State land", as well as the establishment of military zones, nature reserves and cultural and archaeological sites.<sup>61</sup> This illegal appropriation remained one of the key tools for dispossession and the forcible transfer of Palestinians from their land, while enabling the transfer of the Israeli civilian population to those lands.<sup>62</sup>

21. During the reporting period, a record-breaking 24,193 dunams of land in the West Bank were declared as "State land" by Israel.<sup>63</sup> The Jordan Valley was particularly targeted, including through the declaration, on 25 June 2024, of 12,700 dunams and the declaration, on 20 March, of 8,000 dunams – the largest such land seizures in over 30 years. On 29 February, 2,640 dunams were declared as "State land" in areas between the Ma'ale Adumim and Keidar settlements and in the southern part of the so-called "E1" settlement project.<sup>64</sup> On 1 April, 170 dunams were declared as "State land" near the Herodium archaeological site, east of Bethlehem city.<sup>65</sup> A total of 1.4 million dunams of land in the West Bank have now been declared by Israel as "State land"; 99.76 per cent of that land has been unlawfully allocated to Israelis.<sup>66</sup>

22. Since the attacks of 7 October 2023, Israeli security forces have also seized increasing areas of Palestinian land through military orders, which cite "security concerns" to create "buffer areas" around settlements and roads. For instance, in a case monitored by OHCHR,

<sup>55</sup> See N12 - יישובים בלתי מוסדרים ביהודה ושומרון - 68 הממשלה החלה בהכשרת (www.mako.co.il); and [https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Hafiha\\_24/Hafiha\\_ENG.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Hafiha_24/Hafiha_ENG.pdf), p. 33.

<sup>56</sup> See [https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Hafiha\\_24/Hafiha\\_ENG.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/Hafiha_24/Hafiha_ENG.pdf), pp. 40 and 41.

<sup>57</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/A-Good-year-for-settlements-A-Bad-Year-for-Israel-Settlement-Watch-Peace-Now-Report-2023-February-2024-1.pdf>, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> A classified document obtained by *The New York Times* described a meeting in March 2024, when Major General Yehuda Fox, the head of the Central Command of Israel, responsible for the West Bank, gave an account of the efforts of Bezalel Smotrich to undermine law enforcement in the occupied territory. See

<https://static01.nyt.com/newsgraphics/documenttools/422cb38b4ea08eb5/8ced2fae-full.pdf> (in Hebrew) and [https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.sU0.6APP.Y2aRG81mTZMf](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/magazine/israel-west-bank-settler-violence-impunity.html?unlocked_article_code=1.sU0.6APP.Y2aRG81mTZMf).

<sup>59</sup> A/HRC/52/76, para. 28.

<sup>60</sup> See <https://bimkom.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/Outpost-legalization-process-connection-to-infrastructure-public-buildings.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> A/HRC/52/76, paras. 16–24; and *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 120–123.

<sup>62</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 120, 122, 143, 147, 166, 169 and 214.

<sup>63</sup> Information from Peace Now, on file. See also A/HRC/52/76, para. 8.

<sup>64</sup> A/79/347, para. 24.

<sup>65</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/en/170-dunams-declared-as-state-land-around-the-herodium-archaeological-site>.

<sup>66</sup> See <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Peace-Now-Settlements-Map-2024.pdf>.





process is under way in other key areas, including Wadi Hilweh-Silwan, the Armenian Quarter and along the American Road. The Government of Israel has officially announced the start of the process in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Beit Hanina, where residents fear large-scale seizures of their land. The process has also been integral to the advancement, during the reporting period, of new Israeli settlements being pursued, for example, in Givat Shaked, Um Lysoon and in the Givat Hamatos D plan.<sup>72</sup>

27. The discriminatory legal regime is manifested in evictions from, and demolitions of, Palestinian homes and structures. According to OHCHR monitoring, several cases highlighted the collaboration between different parts of the Israeli State and settler organizations in carrying out court decisions. During the reporting period, 214 Palestinian properties and structures were demolished in East Jerusalem, matching the number in the previous reporting period.<sup>73</sup> Of those 214 structures, 132 were demolished by their owners to avoid paying fines and charges imposed by the Israeli authorities – a 22 per cent increase on the previous reporting period – epitomizing the coercive environment in which Palestinians live under military occupation. In East Jerusalem, 217 Palestinian households have had eviction cases filed against them in the Israeli courts, the majority by settler organizations, placing at least 968 people, including 424 children, at risk of forced displacement.<sup>74</sup>

28. On 24 July, the Knesset approved the transfer of the National Unit for Enforcing Planning and Construction Laws to the direct authority of the Ministry of National Security.<sup>75</sup> The Unit is one of the bodies that carries out demolitions in East Jerusalem. The then Minister of National Security had made a point of targeting for demolition any Palestinian construction that did not have building permits.

29. According to OHCHR monitoring, Palestinians in the Batan al-Hawa and Al-Bustan neighbourhoods in Silwan, East Jerusalem, were particularly targeted with evictions and demolitions by the Israeli State, in close cooperation with private Israeli settler organizations.

30. From 2019 to 6 October 2023, Israeli authorities demolished 108 Palestinian properties, including 51 inhabited homes, in Silwan on the pretext of a lack of building permits.<sup>76</sup> Notably, from 7 October 2023 to 31 October 2024 alone, 29 Palestinian properties in Silwan were demolished, including 18 inhabited homes. During the reporting period, two evictions were carried out in Silwan, resulting in the displacement of households totalling 18 persons, including 7 adults (4 women, 3 men) and 11 children (6 girls, 5 boys).<sup>77</sup>

31. In the Batan al-Hawa neighbourhood, over 87 Palestinian families, totalling approximately 600–680 persons, face legal proceedings initiated by settlers, under discriminatory Israeli laws, to evict them from their homes.<sup>78</sup> During the reporting period, the Israeli courts evicted 14 households from the neighbourhood.<sup>79</sup> In one instance on 15 August, monitored by OHCHR, Israeli security forces forcibly evicted the Shehadeh family from their home in Batan al-Hawa, following a decision of the Supreme Court to evict the family and hand their home to the Benvenisti Trust.<sup>80</sup> The Trust operates under the Ateret Cohanim settler organization, which has reportedly been working since 2001 to gain control of the Batan al-Hawa neighbourhood.<sup>81</sup>

32. In the Al-Bustan neighbourhood, OHCHR monitored the case, on 14 February, of the Israeli authorities' demolition of the home of a vocal advocate for Palestinian housing rights,

<sup>72</sup> Information from Ir Amim and Bimkom, on file.

<sup>73</sup> Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/news/pressreleases/pages/press25072024.aspx> (in Hebrew).

<sup>76</sup> Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-israel-must-immediately-end-practices-forced-eviction-threaten-displace-more-eighty-palestinian-families-their-homes-batn-al-hawa-silwan-east-jerusalem-enar>.

<sup>79</sup> Information from Ir Amim and Bimkom, on file.

<sup>80</sup> See <https://mailchi.mp/ir-amim/israeli-courts-have-ruled-to-evict-over-35-palestinians-from-their-homes-in-silwan-and-sheikh-jarrah>.

<sup>81</sup> See <https://www.ir-amim.org.il/sites/default/files/Broken%20Trust-Settlement%20in%20Batan%20al-Hawa-Silwan.pdf>.

Fakhri Abu Diab. The demolition was carried out on the pretext that his home did not have an Israeli building permit. He and 11 of his family members, including 5 children, were displaced.<sup>82</sup> On 27 August, the Israeli authorities demolished the house of the Odeh family, displacing 10 Palestinians, including 2 children.<sup>83</sup> According to OHCHR monitoring, at least six Palestinian homes in the neighbourhood were demolished during the reporting period. More than 100 homes are under imminent threat of demolition, placing the approximately 1,550 Palestinians of the Al-Bustan community at risk of displacement and forcible transfer, owing to discriminatory planning and zoning laws and Israeli plans to create a park called the “King’s Garden”, which would connect to nearby Israeli settlements and settler-operated tourist attractions in Silwan.<sup>84</sup>

## **F. The impact of settler violence and movement restrictions on Palestinians’ economic, social and cultural rights**

33. The denial by Israel of access by Palestinians to their agricultural lands for the harvest forms part of the coercive environment that induces their departure,<sup>85</sup> and which may amount to forcible transfer.<sup>86</sup> The unlawful expropriation and exploitation by Israel of these lands and their natural resources and the displacement of the Palestinian population also form part of Israeli policies and practices that amount to annexation of large parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory<sup>87</sup> and the violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.<sup>88</sup>

34. The annual olive harvest season, which runs from mid-October to the end of November, is central to the enjoyment of Palestinians’ economic, social and cultural rights, including access to livelihoods. During the reporting period, serious violations of these rights were perpetrated by Israel through undue movement restrictions,<sup>89</sup> including through the arbitrary declaration of closed military zones, arbitrary land and road closures by settlers, and violence by Israeli security forces and Israeli settlers against Palestinian harvesters. Since the attacks of 7 October 2023, access restrictions have involved a refusal by the Israeli authorities to coordinate access to lands owned by Palestinians near settlements, leaving vast swathes of land unharvested. In addition, new restrictions on access to olive groves have been arbitrarily imposed through the use of violence. By the end of the reporting period, there were 793 movement obstacles that were permanently or intermittently controlling, restricting and monitoring Palestinians’ movement in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem and the H2 area of Hebron, which OHCHR monitoring highlighted had had a devastating human rights impact.<sup>90</sup> The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has documented these obstacles, which included 89 constantly staffed checkpoints; 149 partial checkpoints, including 46 with gates, staffed on an ad hoc basis; and unstaffed physical barriers, including

<sup>82</sup> A/79/347, para. 42.

<sup>83</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-calls-israel-and-member-states-particularly-those-influence-stop-attacks-israeli-security-forces-settler-violence-and-forcible-transfer-palestinians-occupied-west>.

<sup>84</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-calls-israeli-authorities-halt-imminent-home-demolitions-and-forced-displacement-palestinians-al-bustan-occupied-east-jerusalem-enar> and <https://www.ir-amim.org.il/en/node/2627>.

<sup>85</sup> See *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, para. 143.

<sup>86</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-calls-israel-ensure-access-palestinians-their-lands-and-protection-settler-violence-during-upcoming-olive-harvest>.

<sup>87</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 168, 169 and 173.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 240, 241 and 243.

<sup>89</sup> Civil society reported that approximately half of the Palestinian farmers in the West Bank could not access their land for harvesting following the restrictions imposed after 7 October 2023; see <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/state-of-the-occupation-year-57-joint-situation-report-june-2024/>, p. 27.

<sup>90</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-occupied-palestinian-territory-calls-israel-immediately-lift-discriminatory-movement-restrictions-and-ensure-palestinians-access-basic-services-h2-area-hebron>.

158 earth mounds, 196 road gates (122 of which were usually closed), 104 roadblocks and 97 linear closures, such as road barriers, earthen walls and trenches, each blocking one or more roads.

35. Violence and a climate of revenge have prevailed across the West Bank since 7 October 2023, with many Palestinians not even attempting to access and harvest their land.<sup>91</sup> This is captured by the numbers. According to OHCHR monitoring, 612 Palestinians (475 men, 11 women, 121 boys, 5 girls) were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during the reporting period; of those, 601 were killed by Israeli security forces, 4 by settlers and 7 by either settlers or Israeli security forces.<sup>92</sup> In addition, 24 Israelis (18 men, 4 women and 2 boys) were killed in alleged assaults by Palestinians or armed clashes in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>93</sup> Between October and December 2023, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented more than 90 olive harvest-related incidents, whereby Israeli settlers attacked Palestinians, damaged their trees, stole crops and harvesting tools, and otherwise harassed and intimidated them. In 2023, an estimated 22,000 Palestinian-owned saplings and trees (mostly olive) were vandalized and, on at least 38 occasions, Palestinian farmers or other eyewitnesses reported that Israeli security forces accompanied Israeli settlers, or the settlers were wearing military uniforms, while expelling Palestinians from their land.<sup>94</sup> In 2023 and 2024, settler violence peaked in October – the harvest month – with 232 and 181 documented settler incidents, respectively, resulting in casualties or property damage, further highlighting how economic, social and cultural rights were the target of violence against Palestinians.

36. In the 2023 olive harvest, which began in early October, more than 96,000 dunams of olive-cultivated land across the West Bank remained unharvested due to movement restrictions and violence. According to the Palestinian Farmers' Union, approximately 50 per cent of Palestinian farmers were unable to harvest their olive trees.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, Palestinian farmers suffered an estimated total loss of more than 1,200 metric tons of olive oil in the 2023 season, resulting in a direct financial loss of \$10 million and effectively destroying local Palestinian economies.<sup>96</sup> The impact was particularly acute in the northern Governorates of Tulkarm, Qalqilyah and Nablus.<sup>97</sup>

37. The reality of life for Palestinians is one of violence and access restrictions, carried out jointly by the Israeli State and settlers. According to OHCHR monitoring, in one case, a Palestinian man from Sinjil village, north of Ramallah, told OHCHR that, since 7 October, a security guard from a nearby settlement had blocked all roads leading to the villagers' farmland, preventing him from accessing 54 dunams of land, which he shares with his extended family. In November 2023, he and two of his cousins attempted to cross the roadblocks to access his land during the olive harvest. They encountered three settlers on a quad bike; one of those settlers, armed with a rifle, threatened to shoot them. Israeli security forces arrived soon after, arrested the Palestinian man and one of his cousins, a minor, and took them to a nearby military base. According to the man, an Israeli security forces' interrogator told them that their land was now within a "closed military zone". When they asked to see the military order, the commander reportedly admitted that there was none, but

<sup>91</sup> See [https://soundcloud.com/unradio/west-bank-constant-fear-amid-soaring-israeli-settler-violence?utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/unradio/west-bank-constant-fear-amid-soaring-israeli-settler-violence?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing).

<sup>92</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/occupied-palestinian-territory-turk-condemns-over-500-west-bank-killings>; and <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-statement-israeli-security-forces-killing-14-palestinians-occupied-west-bank-7-august-2024>.

<sup>93</sup> This included 15 members of the Israeli security forces. Of the 24 Israelis killed, at least 23 were allegedly killed by Palestinians and 1 by either Palestinians or Israeli security forces.

<sup>94</sup> Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file. See also <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/olive-harvest-2023-hindered-access-afflicts-palestinian-farmers-west-bank>.

<sup>95</sup> See [https://www.btselem.org/settler\\_violence/20240214\\_israel\\_used\\_gaza\\_war\\_to\\_impose\\_extreme\\_restrictions\\_on\\_the\\_annual\\_west\\_bank\\_olive\\_harvest](https://www.btselem.org/settler_violence/20240214_israel_used_gaza_war_to_impose_extreme_restrictions_on_the_annual_west_bank_olive_harvest).

<sup>96</sup> See <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-statement-olive-harvest-westbank-25sep24/>.

<sup>97</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/olive-harvest-2023-hindered-access-afflicts-palestinian-farmers-west-bank>.

he warned them that, if they entered the land, their lives would be at risk because of settler attacks. They were then released without charge. During the 2024 olive harvest, the man managed to get to his land, on 31 October, only to discover that 95 per cent of his trees had been harvested by settlers.

38. According to OHCHR monitoring, there were similar incidents in Area B. In Qusra, south-east of Nablus, during the October 2023 harvest period, restrictions on access to land imposed by the Israeli security forces were accompanied by violence by settlers from the nearby outpost of Esh Kodesh, preventing Palestinians from harvesting olive, fig, apple and pear trees and grazing their sheep and cattle.

39. Regarding the olive harvest season that began in October 2024, Israeli settler attacks on harvesters, together with access and movement restrictions, again intensified.<sup>98</sup> In October, there were 162 Israeli settler attacks on olive harvesters, 119 of which resulted in casualties or property damage,<sup>99</sup> with many attacks being carried out in the presence of Israeli security forces. OHCHR documented the killing, on 17 October 2024, of a 59-year-old Palestinian woman harvesting olives with her family and other members of the community in Faquq'a, Jenin. According to information gathered by OHCHR, the harvesters were not posing any threat when Israeli security forces fired multiple shots at them without prior warning.<sup>100</sup> Attacks have also included the uprooting and vandalization of more than 1,100 saplings or trees as well as other property damage.<sup>101</sup> Olive groves close to settlements remained particularly vulnerable to attack.

## G. Settler violence

40. The systematic failure of Israel to prevent or punish attacks by settlers against the life or bodily integrity of Palestinians, as well as its excessive use of force against Palestinians, not only violates their rights to life and to be protected against all threats or acts of violence but also continues to be fundamental to the creation and maintenance by Israel of a coercive environment of violence, discrimination and oppression that induces forcible transfer, enabling annexation and the denial of Palestinians' right to self-determination.<sup>102</sup>

41. During the reporting period, the line between settler and State violence blurred to a vanishing point, further enabling an increase in violence and impunity. Reflecting this trend, Palestinian victims of violence increasingly referred to "settler-soldiers" when recounting incidents to OHCHR.<sup>103</sup> These incidents involved people known to them as settlers, who, after 7 October 2023, began to appear in full or partial military uniform, carrying what appeared to be army-issued weapons. According to OHCHR monitoring, increasingly, settlers who engage in violence against Palestinians appear in military uniform with military gear (including rifles, bulletproof vests, helmets), partial military uniform with military gear, or civilian clothes with military gear.<sup>104</sup>

42. The "settler-soldier" phenomenon was supported by steps taken by the Israeli State to further militarize the settler movement. During the reporting period, Israel strengthened the role of "settlement defence squads" stationed at settlements and outposts. While these squads, composed of civilians led by security coordinators and under the general supervision of the

<sup>98</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-calls-israel-ensure-access-palestinians-their-lands-and-protection-settler-violence-during-upcoming-olive-harvest>.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ohchr-press-release-18oct24/>.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>102</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 144, 145, 154, 169, 172 and 239.

<sup>103</sup> See <https://www.msf.org/restrictions-and-violence-block-palestinians-west-bank-medical-care>, pp. 15 and 16.

<sup>104</sup> See <https://www.facebook.com/reel/402644352526097> (in Arabic).

army, existed prior to 7 October,<sup>105</sup> their activities beyond settlement boundaries have increased significantly since then. This has included their increased deployment to checkpoints at the entrances of Palestinian villages and the performance of “policing” activities outside of settlement boundaries, such as searching Palestinian vehicles and checking Palestinians’ identification. In addition to operating under State-mandated powers, these squads receive weapons and equipment from the State and through private donations.<sup>106</sup> In October 2024, it was widely reported that, for the first time, the Shomron Regional Council had purchased sniper rifles for the squads, after having received significant donations from across the world.<sup>107</sup>

43. Since 7 October 2023, settlers have also been enlisted and deployed in large numbers for reserve duty in the Israeli security forces – particularly in their areas of residence – increasing the impact and scope of settler violence.<sup>108</sup> Enlistees, who include members of the extremist “Hilltop Youth” group,<sup>109</sup> have not been properly vetted, nor have they received necessary training; many have a history of violence against Palestinian farmers and communities, including criminal records.

44. As part of the enlistment of reserves, thousands of settlers have been recruited into “regional defence battalions” across the West Bank; since 7 October, the size of the battalion forces has increased fivefold.<sup>110</sup> These battalions serve to protect Israeli settlements and outposts and station themselves in settlements, alongside neighbouring Palestinian villages, and at the increasingly numerous checkpoints. Members of these battalions wear military uniform and are armed with military-grade weapons, including M16 assault rifles.<sup>111</sup>

45. The increasing militarization and violence of the Israeli settler movement is clear from the quantitative data. During the reporting period, approximately 1,400 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians were recorded that resulted in casualties or property damage;<sup>112</sup> of these incidents, 126 caused death or injury, 131 caused both casualties and property damage, and 1,141 resulted in property damage only. In addition, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented more than 800 settler-related incidents that involved harassment, intimidation, trespassing or property takeover but did not result in casualties or property damage.

46. In 2023, settler violence had already reached unprecedented levels in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem: 1,290 incidents were recorded that resulted in casualties or property damage, representing a 51 per cent increase from 853 in 2022 and more than a twofold increase from 532 in 2021. By 31 October 2024, the monthly average number of incidents of settler violence had reached 118, compared with a monthly average of 108 incidents in 2023.

47. During the reporting period, OHCHR monitoring confirmed that Israeli settler violence had killed 11 Palestinians – 9 men and 2 boys. Of that number, four (three men and one boy) were killed by Israeli settlers, with three, including the boy, being killed in the context of settler attacks against Palestinians and one in an alleged attack by a Palestinian man against Israeli settlers. It could not be determined whether the seven other fatalities were caused by Israeli security forces or settlers, highlighting again the vanishing point between settler and State violence. In addition, 500 Palestinians (388 men, 51 women and 61 children,

<sup>105</sup> See [http://files.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/Yesh%20Din\\_The%20Lawless%20Zone\\_Web\\_EN%20\(1\).pdf](http://files.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/Yesh%20Din_The%20Lawless%20Zone_Web_EN%20(1).pdf).

<sup>106</sup> See <https://arifuld.org/kitat-konenut-efrat-equipment-campaign/>; and <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=714451334043531&set=pcb.714451360710195> (in Hebrew).

<sup>107</sup> See <https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/israel-news/2328128/in-a-first-in-israel-sniper-rifles-are-provided-to-civilian-security-teams-in-the-shomron.html>.

<sup>108</sup> See <https://www.haqel.org.il/newsletters/haqel-newsletter-2023.pdf>.

<sup>109</sup> See [https://acleddata.com/acleddatanew/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Civilians-or-Soldiers\\_-Settler-Violence-in-the-West-Bank.pdf](https://acleddata.com/acleddatanew/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Civilians-or-Soldiers_-Settler-Violence-in-the-West-Bank.pdf).

<sup>110</sup> See Hagar Shezaf, “Israel’s army drafted and armed thousands of settlers. Accounts of their violence are piling up”, *Haaretz*, 17 January 2024.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.



all boys) were injured in attacks by Israeli settlers,<sup>113</sup> with 364 injured by settlers, 127 by Israeli security forces present, and 9 undetermined (injured either by Israeli security forces or settlers).

48. Incidents of settler violence again included large-scale mob attacks.<sup>114</sup> In the cases monitored by OHCHR, collaboration between settlers and the Israeli State was again clear.<sup>115</sup> In April 2024, there was a spike in settler mob attacks after a 14-year-old Israeli boy, Binyamin Ahimeir, from the Malachei Hashalom outpost, north-east of Ramallah, went missing on 12 April and was found dead the next day.<sup>116</sup> Between 12 and 16 April, Israeli settlers launched attacks on at least 15 Palestinian villages in the West Bank, including in Al Mughayyir, Duma (Area B), Deir Dibwan, Beitin and Aqraba. Four Palestinians were shot and killed in these attacks by settlers or Israeli security forces, including a 17-year-old boy, Omar Ahmad Abed Al-Ghany Hamed, who was shot in the head in Beitin, near Ramallah. The other killings occurred in Al Mughayyir (Ramallah) and Aqraba (Nablus). A further 43 Palestinians were injured in multiple villages in Ramallah and Nablus Governorates.<sup>117</sup> During the attacks, settlers set fire to Palestinian homes, trees and vehicles. In the attacks on Deir Dibwan, video footage shows Israeli soldiers standing by as Israeli settlers vandalized Palestinian property.<sup>118</sup> As a result of these attacks, 122 Palestinians were forcibly displaced.

49. Settler violence continues to worsen the coercive environment that induces the displacement<sup>119</sup> of thousands of Palestinian herders and farmers from their land,<sup>120</sup> which, in many cases, may amount to forcible transfer.<sup>121</sup> During the reporting period, OHCHR has documented an escalation in violent settler attacks against herding communities, seemingly aimed at forcing them from their lands and expanding Israeli settlement.<sup>122</sup> These include attacks on the Bedouin community of Al-Mu'arrajat, as well as the communities of Um al-Jamal in the northern Jordan Valley and of Khirbet Zanuta in the South Hebron Hills.<sup>123</sup> Approximately 680 Palestinians have been forcibly displaced, including more than 310 children, mainly from Bedouin and other herding communities in Area C, due to settler violence and access restrictions, bringing the total number of Palestinians displaced since 7 October 2023 to almost 1,700.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> A/HRC/55/72, para. 21.

<sup>115</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-calls-israel-and-member-states-particularly-those-influence-stop-attacks-israeli-security-forces-settler-violence-and-forcible-transfer-palestinians-occupied-west>.

<sup>116</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/statement-un-human-rights-office-opt-rapidly-escalating-violence-occupied-west-bank>; and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2024/04/turk-urges-all-states-act-over-crises-gaza-west-bank>.

<sup>117</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>118</sup> See [https://x.com/Yesh\\_Din/status/1779501559379849229](https://x.com/Yesh_Din/status/1779501559379849229); see also <https://x.com/ytirawi/status/1779069951648600393>; and <https://x.com/MustafaBarghou1/status/1831967560235151635>.

<sup>119</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion. I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 154 and 169.

<sup>120</sup> See OHCHR-monitored case study on displacement of herding communities (A/79/347, paras. 55–71).

<sup>121</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/03/occupied-palestinian-territory-reporting-settlements-and-occupied>; [https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/pau24\\_protection\\_analysis\\_update\\_march\\_2024\\_opt\\_wb.pdf](https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/pau24_protection_analysis_update_march_2024_opt_wb.pdf); and <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-israeli-security-forces-have-killed-36-palestinians-including-eight-children-10-days-during-operation-northern-west-bank-while-settler-violence-intensifies>.

<sup>122</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-statement-new-wave-settler-attacks-displacing-palestinian-herding-communities-and-consolidating-settlements-and-outposts-occupied-west-bank>.

<sup>123</sup> See <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-urges-israel-stop-forcible-transfer-palestinian-herding-communities-and-ongoing-annexation-parts-west-bank>. See also A/77/493, para. 65, for information on the impact of forced displacement on women and girls.

<sup>124</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file. See also [https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/West%20Bank\\_info-graphic\\_October\\_2024.pdf](https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/West%20Bank_info-graphic_October_2024.pdf).



50. The displacement of farming communities is a growing trend. In one case monitored by OHCHR, the Taybeh community in Tarqumia, Hebron, which is sandwiched between the nearby Israeli settlements of Telem and Adorah, were subjected to seven incidents of settler violence, backed by the Israeli security forces, between 27 October and 30 November 2023. Consequently, on 8 and 12 November, three Palestinian families totalling 18 persons, including 10 children, were forcibly displaced from their land. According to community sources, 54 families comprising 270 persons, half of them children, were forcibly displaced from Taybeh between October 2023 and February 2024.<sup>125</sup> Following the displacement, settlers burned 60 per cent of the total area of cultivated land in the Taybeh community and destroyed 21 residential and 186 agricultural structures, including solar panels and generators, as reported by the village council.<sup>126</sup> According to OHCHR monitoring, this type of wanton destruction is becoming standard practice in preventing Palestinians from returning to their land.

## H. Accountability for settler violence

51. The increasingly blurred line between State and settler violence is leaving Palestinians bereft of any legal recourse and of any hope of obtaining justice and accountability. Exacerbating the already prevalent impunity documented by OHCHR,<sup>127</sup> the Minister of National Security reportedly instituted a policy of police non-enforcement of the law in relation to violent settlers.<sup>128</sup>

52. During the reporting period, the NGO Yesh Din looked at 174 incidents of settler violence, finding that, in 51 incidents (28.7 per cent of the total), an investigation was opened after Palestinians filed a complaint. Of those investigations, 25 were closed without filing an indictment and 25 incidents were still under investigation. Only one investigation (1.96 per cent of all investigations) had led to the filing of an indictment – that case is ongoing.<sup>129</sup>

53. Of the 109 incidents for which Palestinian victims of settler attacks decided not to file a complaint, 70 reported to Yesh Din that their main reason for not doing so was their lack of faith in the Israeli authorities to apprehend the perpetrators. Moreover, 25 reported fear of retaliation from the Israeli authorities or the Israeli settlers, including fear of further violence or loss of their work permits.

## I. Forced evictions and demolitions

54. The forcible transfer of the Palestinian population in occupied territory continued not only through physical force, including settler violence, but also through an overarching institutional and legal regime of discrimination and oppression that leaves Palestinians no choice but to leave.<sup>130</sup> This includes a regime of forced evictions and house demolitions that, under the Settlement Administration, was enforced with increased vigour against Palestinian construction during the reporting period.<sup>131</sup> A policy of non-enforcement was reportedly put in place vis-à-vis illegal Israeli construction.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>126</sup> OHCHR monitoring, on file.

<sup>127</sup> See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153251>; and <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-calls-israel-and-member-states-particularly-those-influence-stop-attacks-israeli-security-forces-settler-violence-and-forcible-transfer-palestinians-occupied-west>.

<sup>128</sup> See [https://www.mako.co.il/tv-ilana\\_dayan/2023/Article-fcb9b89df8dfb81026.htm?sCh=37c90360e1d55810&pId=25483675](https://www.mako.co.il/tv-ilana_dayan/2023/Article-fcb9b89df8dfb81026.htm?sCh=37c90360e1d55810&pId=25483675) (in Hebrew).

<sup>129</sup> Information from Yesh Din, on file.

<sup>130</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, paras. 145 and 147.

<sup>131</sup> See <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/state-of-the-occupation-year-57-joint-situation-report-june-2024/>, p. 28.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. See also Bergman and Mazzetti, “The unpunished: how extremists took over Israel”.

55. During the reporting period, 1,779 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished in the West Bank, including 534 in Area A, 46 in Area B and 985 in Area C.<sup>133</sup> The majority of these structures (1,193) were demolished, confiscated or sealed by the Israeli authorities, citing a lack of building permits, which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain. A total of 536 structures were demolished during Israeli security forces operations and 51 on punitive and other grounds. Such practices may amount to collective punishment, which is expressly prohibited by international humanitarian law.<sup>134</sup> As a result of these demolitions, 4,527 Palestinians (1,343 men, 1,297 women, 950 boys and 937 girls) were forcibly displaced.<sup>135</sup> The monthly average number of Palestinians forcibly displaced by demolitions rose from 128 in the previous reporting period to 377, an increase of 194 per cent.

56. Demolished, confiscated or sealed structures included 781 inhabited residential buildings, 82 donor-funded structures provided as humanitarian aid and 128 water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. One primary school near Ad Deirat in Area C was demolished;<sup>136</sup> another school located inside the Aqsa compound in Jerusalem's Old City was sealed off.

#### IV. Settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan

57. Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied Syrian Golan proceeded with the support of the Government of Israel, in violation of the obligations of Israel under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This expansion included an increase in the number of Israeli settlements and the Israeli settler population, together with the development of commercial projects such as a wind farm initiative. These efforts are consistent with the Israeli plan to double the settler population by 2027,<sup>137</sup> with a view to reaching 500,000 by 2048. In parallel, Israeli authorities continued to restrict the Syrian population's ability to build or expand in the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular in Majdal Shams,<sup>138</sup> which lies close to the demarcation line separating the occupied Syrian Golan from the rest of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

58. The wind farm project, also near Majdal Shams, continued to be developed on 6,000 dunams of agricultural land belonging to Syrians from nearby villages who rely on it for their livelihoods. The project threatens the ability of farmers to cultivate the land and risks limiting the Syrian population's access to land and water, restricting village expansion and forcing residents into densely populated areas. It thus affects various human rights, including the rights to adequate food, health, work, housing and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Furthermore, the unlawful exploitation of the land and its natural resources risks further displacing the Syrian population and facilitating the annexation of the occupied territory.<sup>139</sup>

59. Amid the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbullah, 13 civilians were killed in the occupied Syrian Golan, including 12 children (4 girls and 8 boys) who were killed when a rocket hit a football field in Majdal Shams, on 27 July 2024.<sup>140</sup>

#### V. Conclusions

**60. The establishment and continuing expansion of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan amount to the transfer by Israel**

<sup>133</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>134</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 33.

<sup>135</sup> Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, on file.

<sup>136</sup> See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-248-west-bank>.

<sup>137</sup> A/79/347, para. 72.

<sup>138</sup> A/HRC/52/77, para. 30.

<sup>139</sup> A/79/347, para. 73.

<sup>140</sup> See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/11/asg-brands-kehris-urges-israel-end-unlawful-presence-opt-golan-report-general-assembly>.

of its own civilian population into the territories that it occupies, which is strictly prohibited under international law.<sup>141</sup>

61. The ongoing transfer of power over the Occupied Palestinian Territory to the civilian Government of Israel is facilitating the further consolidation and expansion of Israeli settlements and the forcible transfer of the Palestinian population. Increasingly indistinguishable State-settler violence and wide-ranging and discriminatory movement restrictions, which devastated Palestinian livelihoods during the reporting period, are both causes and manifestations of the Israeli settlement advancement that continued to change the demographic composition of the occupied territory and to annex territory. This has had dire consequences for the human rights of the Palestinian people, including the denial of their right to self-determination, through an institutionalized regime of systematic discrimination, violence and oppression by Israel. This regime violates a wide range of other human rights, including those set out in article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.<sup>142</sup>

62. In its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the regime associated with them, were established and are being maintained in violation of international law, which civil society and international institutions, including the United Nations, have monitored and reported on for decades. Israeli settlement growth nevertheless continues at an ever-increasing rate, constituting ongoing internationally wrongful acts by Israel<sup>143</sup> and representing a profound failure of the international community of States and its rules-based order, including in relation to the prohibitions on annexation and discrimination and to the fulfilment of Palestinians' right to self-determination.

## VI. Recommendations

63. On the basis of findings presented in the present and previous reports, and in view of the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 19 July 2024 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/24, concerning the advisory opinion, the High Commissioner recommends that the Israeli authorities:

- (a) Immediately and completely cease and reverse the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and all other related activity, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 497 (1981) and 2334 (2016);
- (b) Evacuate all Israeli settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (c) Bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution ES-10/24; and, in the meantime, uphold all obligations under international law, including the law of occupation and international human rights law;
- (d) Rescind all policies and practices that contribute to a coercive environment that induces the forcible transfer of Palestinians;
- (e) Cease the appropriation of land in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and return it to its previous inhabitants;
- (f) Cease all forced evictions, house demolitions and the reallocation of land to Israeli settlements;

<sup>141</sup> A/HRC/55/72, para. 50.

<sup>142</sup> *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, para. 229.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 267, 269 and 272.

(g) Cease and rescind the policy of exploiting the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and diverting them to the population of Israel, including settlers;

(h) Prevent and punish attacks by settlers against the life or bodily integrity of Palestinians and against their property;

(i) Cease all discriminatory practices that violate international human rights law, including breaches of article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

(j) Uphold the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including by ceasing internationally wrongful acts and making reparations for such acts.

64. With respect to third States, the High Commissioner recalls the conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 that States are under an obligation not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., para. 285 (7).