

Maximum Territory, Minimum Population

The annexation of the West Bank through
settlement, violence and the fragmentation
of Palestinian space

במקום
ימקום
BIMKOM

תכנון וזכויות אדם
תכנון וחقوق الإنسان
Planning and Human Rights

HAMOKED
CENTER FOR
THE DEFENCE OF
THE INDIVIDUAL
המוקד להגנת הפרט
מרכז الدفاع عن الفرد

ישי דיין
YESH DIN

August 2026

Maximum Territory, Minimum Population

**The annexation of the West Bank through
settlement, violence and the fragmentation
of Palestinian space**

Translation: Maya Johnston

**Cover: A resident of Sinjil near a fence built on town land,
October 2025 (Photo, Avishay Mohar, ActiveStills)**



**Funded by
the European Union**

This publication was funded by the European Union.
Its contents are the sole responsibility of Yesh Din, Bimkom and HaMoked
and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



August 2026

Yesh Din – Volunteers for Human Rights, Bimkom – Planning and Human Rights, and HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual are Israeli human rights NGOs primarily funded by foreign governmental entities. Lists of donors are available on our websites and on the Israeli Associations Register's website. We are proud to be funded by entities who believe, as we do, that the occupation is not an internal Israeli matter and support the advancement of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Introduction	4
Family: al-'Odeh and Kabaha	7
“Seeing your land like this, it hurts. I wish I had never gone in at all.”	10
“Emergency” restrictions turned permanent reality	12
Community: a-Rumannah	14
Siege	15
Routine violence	17
Expansion of the transfer mechanism	20
Town: Sinjil	22
Isolation and land takeover	23
“First the settlers arrive, and five minutes later, the army comes and protects them.”	26
Constriction of Palestinian living spaces	33
Area: Northern West Bank	34
“Army and settlement go together”	35
Homesh	37
“All the agricultural land is threatened; it will be impossible to access, cultivate or sow.”	40
“A million in Samaria?”	42
Conclusion	45

Introduction

In September 2025, Israel's Minister of Finance, who also serves as Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense, Bezalel Smotrich held a press conference together with settlement leaders, where he unveiled a plan to annex 82% of the West Bank. Minister Smotrich declared: "Enemies must be fought, not allowed a comfortable life. Therefore, the overriding principle for applying sovereignty is: maximum land with minimum population."¹ Smotrich presented a map entitled Sovereignty Plan, expressing a vision to push three million Palestinians in the West Bank into six isolated ghettos, while the rest of the territory is reserved for Israelis. The map erases the Palestinian governorates of Bethlehem, Salfit and Qalqiliya, home to more than 450,000 people.²

The Sovereignty Plan proposed by this senior Israeli minister directly follows the trajectory of his Decisive Plan, released in 2017. That policy paper envisioned the annexation of the West Bank coupled with stripping away the national rights of Palestinian residents and presenting them with three options: forgo their national aspirations and live under Israeli rule; emigrate to one of the Arab countries with Israeli assistance; or "be dealt with by the security forces with a strong hand."³



The Sovereignty Plan map presented by Minister Smotrich, September 3, 2025 (Screenshot from [Minister Smotrich's Facebook page](#))

- 1 Zeev Gur Aryeh, "Maximum Territory, Minimum Population: The Judea and Samaria Sovereignty Map", *JDN*, September 3, 2025 (Hebrew); Foundation for Middle East Peace, "[Settlement & Annexation Report: September 12, 2025](#)", September 12, 2025; Ben Sokol, "[Smotrich proposes annexing 82% of West Bank in bid to prevent Palestinian state](#)", *The Times of Israel*, September 3, 2025.
- 2 IPCC, "[Palestine Demographic Profile – Reality and Future scenarios](#)", October 2024.
- 3 Bezalel Smotrich, "[Israel's Decisive Plan](#)", *Hashiloach*, Issue 6, September 2017.

Maximum Territory, Minimum Population demonstrates how Smotrich's structured doctrine, key parts of which have been adopted as official government policy,⁴ has been applied by Israel on the ground for years, and with greater momentum since the war in Gaza began in October 2023. The report presents the diverse practices Israel uses to drive Palestinians out of ever-expanding parts of the West Bank, from **single families to communities, towns and entire geographic expanses**. Using four case studies that focus on different levels of Palestinians' social and geographic circles of belonging in the West Bank, the report demonstrates that Israel's annexation policy is applied at different scales and in different areas in the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT).

The report begins with the stories of two Palestinian farming families whose land Israel trapped between the separation fence and the Green Line, the area known in Israel as the Seam Zone. Since October 2023, Israel has all but barred these families' access to their land, effectively turning it ownerless. The second section turns the lens onto a Palestinian community living in Area A near Jericho and shows how settlers and soldiers collaborate to extend the transfer apparatus to this area as well. It then presents the case of the town of Sinjil in the Ramallah district, which Israel has encircled with a fence, checkpoints and violent outposts, thereby significantly reducing the space used by its thousands of residents. The final part of the report focuses on Palestinian space in the northern West Bank, where Israeli control efforts are now focused, as Palestinian residents helplessly watch their bleak future take shape.

The report's analysis reveals how Israel utilizes an integrated mechanism of military forces and settlers, backed by the government and shielded by law enforcement authorities, to annex the West Bank. The belligerent, brutal means Israel employs to achieve its ambitions in the West Bank are many, varied and interconnected. This report focuses on three of them:

The **establishment of outposts** deep inside Palestinian areas, aimed at invading and taking over Palestinian land, funded by the government and legitimized and encouraged by elected officials;

Severe violence by soldiers and settlers against Palestinians designed to stop them from accessing their land and pushing them off it, while law enforcement authorities do nothing;

A **draconian movement and access regime** imposed by the military, composed of checkpoints, fences and orders that restrict Palestinian movement only, undermine Palestinians' livelihoods and limit their ability to travel from place to place.

4 Yesh Din, ACRI, Ofek and Breaking the Silence, [The Silent Overhaul: Changing the nature of Israeli control in the West Bank](#), July 2024; Yesh Din, ACRI, Ofek and Breaking the Silence, [Policy paper: What Israel's 37th government's guiding principles and coalition agreements mean for the West Bank](#), January 2023.

Israel is effectively annexing the West Bank through a structured, coordinated policy that integrates settlement, violence and the fragmentation of Palestinian space. The state of emergency, introduced as temporary, has become a permanent reality used by the State of Israel, through soldiers and settlers, to displace Palestinian communities, push the population into isolated enclaves, and erase the territorial contiguity of Palestinian space in the West Bank, amid mass abuse of Palestinians' human rights.

In this way, the reality Israel has dictated in the OPT in recent years, and especially since October 2023, is steadily realizing the twisted vision of emptying the West Bank of millions of Palestinians and annexing it to Israel.

Family: al-'Odeh and Kabaha

Zaher al-'Odeh is a 41-year-old farmer from the village of Deir al-Ghusun (دير الغصون) in Tulkarm District. He owns three agricultural plots totaling approximately 46 dunams and located in what Israel calls the Seam Zone, a part of the West Bank trapped between the separation fence and the Green Line. Al-'Odeh mostly grows olive trees on these plots.

When the separation fence was constructed 20 years ago, it cut off al-'Odeh's home from his land, and he has been forced to request permits from the Israeli military to access his private land under the permit regime – a military bureaucratic system that requires Palestinians to obtain individual approval in order to enter the Seam Zone even when seeking to enter their private land.⁵ Only Palestinians are required to obtain such permits.

For years, the military issued al-'Odeh Seam Zone Farmer entry permits. These permits were granted to landowners and a limited number of agricultural workers, usually family members. The permits were meant to give farmers regular – daily or weekly – access to their land so they could cultivate it and carry out essential agricultural work. In practice, Palestinian farmers' access to their land depended on the specific checkpoint named by the military in the permit they received. Some checkpoints allowed daily entry, while others opened only for short periods during the relevant agricultural season. Of the 79 permanent checkpoints in the separation fence, the checkpoint assigned to al-'Odeh was one of only ten that allowed daily access.



Restrictions on entry into West Bank areas known as the Seam Zone during the olive harvest season, October 2022 (Photo: Anne Paq, ActiveStills)

5 The Seam Zone covers 9.4% of the area of the West Bank. See: HaMoked, [Creeping Dispossession: Israeli Restrictions on Palestinian Farming Beyond the Barrier](#), October 2021; HaMoked, [The Permit: Human Rights Violations in West Bank Areas Known as the "Seam Zone"](#), March 2013.

When the war in Gaza broke out in October 2023, the military fully blocked access to most Palestinian agricultural land locked between the separation fence and the Green Line (the Seam Zone). As a result, during the olive harvest, in the fall of 2023, Zaher al-'Odeh did not receive a permit to access his land and was unable to harvest his olive trees.

In May 2024, al-'Odeh and eight other farmers filed a petition with the Israeli High Court of Justice, with assistance from HaMoked. The farmers demanded the military revoke, or at the very least, pull back the sweeping restrictions on Palestinian farmers' access to their land in the Seam Zone to a reasonable degree. The petition argued that the military had undertaken to allow farmers access to their land following an individual examination, even when security tensions are high. Despite this, since the beginning of the war in Gaza, the military had imposed a sweeping ban on Palestinian farmers' access to their land on the basis of general security considerations rather than any acts attributed to any of them.⁶

In September 2025, the military released an updated version of its procedures for entry into the Seam Zone, incorporating these draconian restrictions into its official regulations. The new procedure fundamentally altered the principle determining eligibility for entry permits – from a right based on ownership and ties to the land, to one contingent on agricultural need, as defined by the military. In practical terms, since approximately 95% of farmers in the Seam Zone grow olive trees, which the military deems a crop requiring only seasonal care, the procedure prevents them from accessing their land for most of the year, limiting access to only a few days each year.⁷

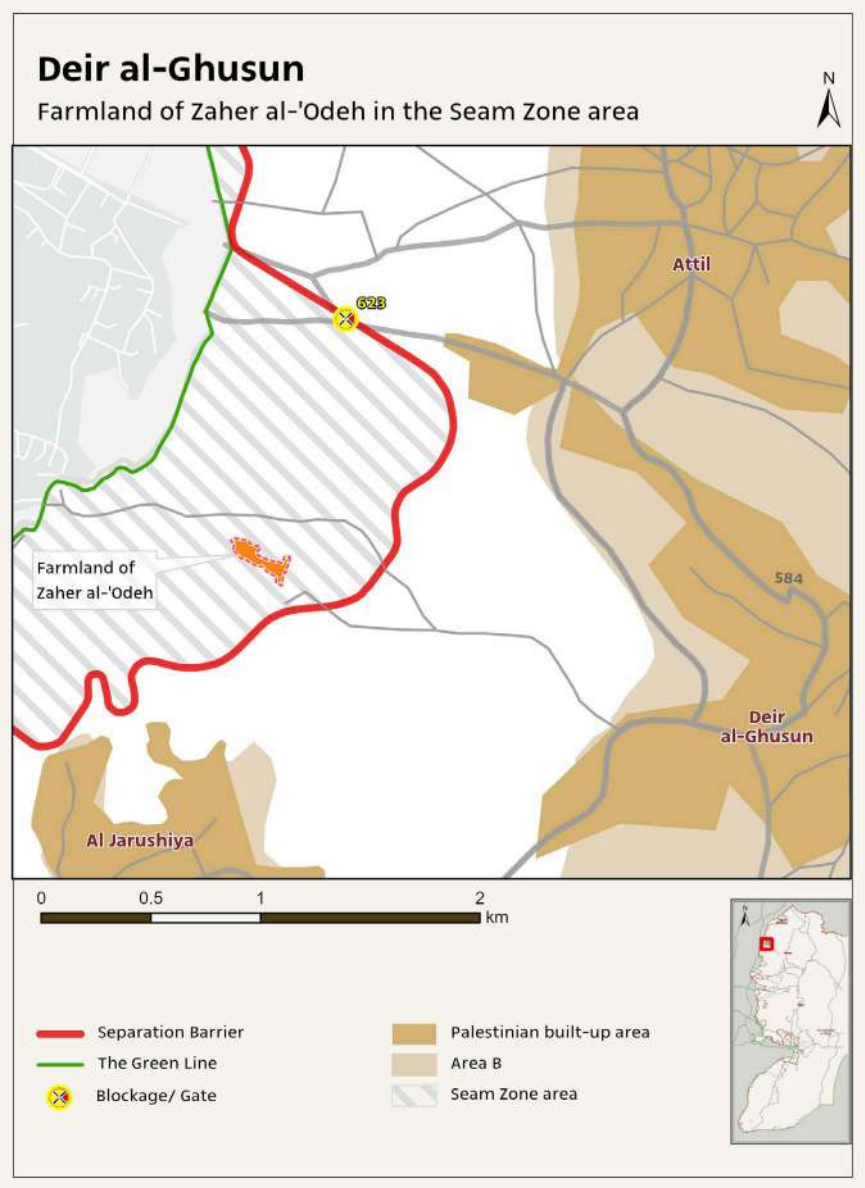
During the olive harvests of 2024 and 2025, the military issued al-'Odeh permits valid for only seven to ten days. Even within this short period, on some days covered by the permit, the checkpoints did not open, and on others, al-'Odeh could not access and work his land due to weather conditions. Being denied regular access to his land, al-'Odeh was unable to do essential agricultural work such as pruning and plowing, impacting soil health and reducing productivity. Moreover, the forced and prolonged absence from the land left it vulnerable to trespassing by Israelis, who used it as an illegal dump site. In addition, when al-'Odeh did access his land during the 2024 olive harvest season, he discovered that his olive trees had already been harvested and the yield stolen.

According to al-'Odeh, although the plots are not his main source of income, he and his family have deep, personal, and kinship ties to the land that have endured for many years. The olive harvest was a central part of their daily life and family tradition. The family used to go to the land together, work it and produce olives and olive oil for home

6 HCJ 4285/24, [al-'Odeh et al. v. Military Commander of the West Bank Area](#) (Hebrew).

7 HaMoked, "[From emergency measures to permanent policy: The military formalizes draconian war-time limitations on 'Seam Zone' farmers](#)", January 6, 2026.

consumption. Al-'Odeh related that in recent years, having to buy olive oil rather than using his own produce has become alien and painful to him, a symbol of his forced estrangement from his land.⁸



8 Al-'Odeh to HaMoked, May 2026.

In January 2026, the High Court of Justice rejected the petition and approved the military procedure. The Supreme Court justices held that the violation of the farmers' rights was proportionate in relation to the military commander's duty to maintain public order and safety in the occupied territory. However, the judgment still failed to cite any concrete security developments that would justify keeping the restrictions in place.⁹ HaMoked filed a motion for a further hearing in the case. The court rejected it, ruling that the judgment did not constitute a significant departure from the court's jurisprudence on the Seam Zone, and therefore there was no reason to intervene.

Today, nearly three years after the sweeping restrictions on the Seam Zone were tightened in the war's wake, Palestinian farmland in the area remains almost entirely closed off to al-'Odeh and the approximately 20,000 other farmers who share his predicament. Most Palestinian landowners are allowed to access their land for only a negligible number of days each year, and more than 100,000 dunams in the West Bank, which the military defines as the Seam Zone, are left abandoned, vulnerable to Israeli takeover.

“Seeing your land like this, it hurts. I wish I had never gone in at all.”

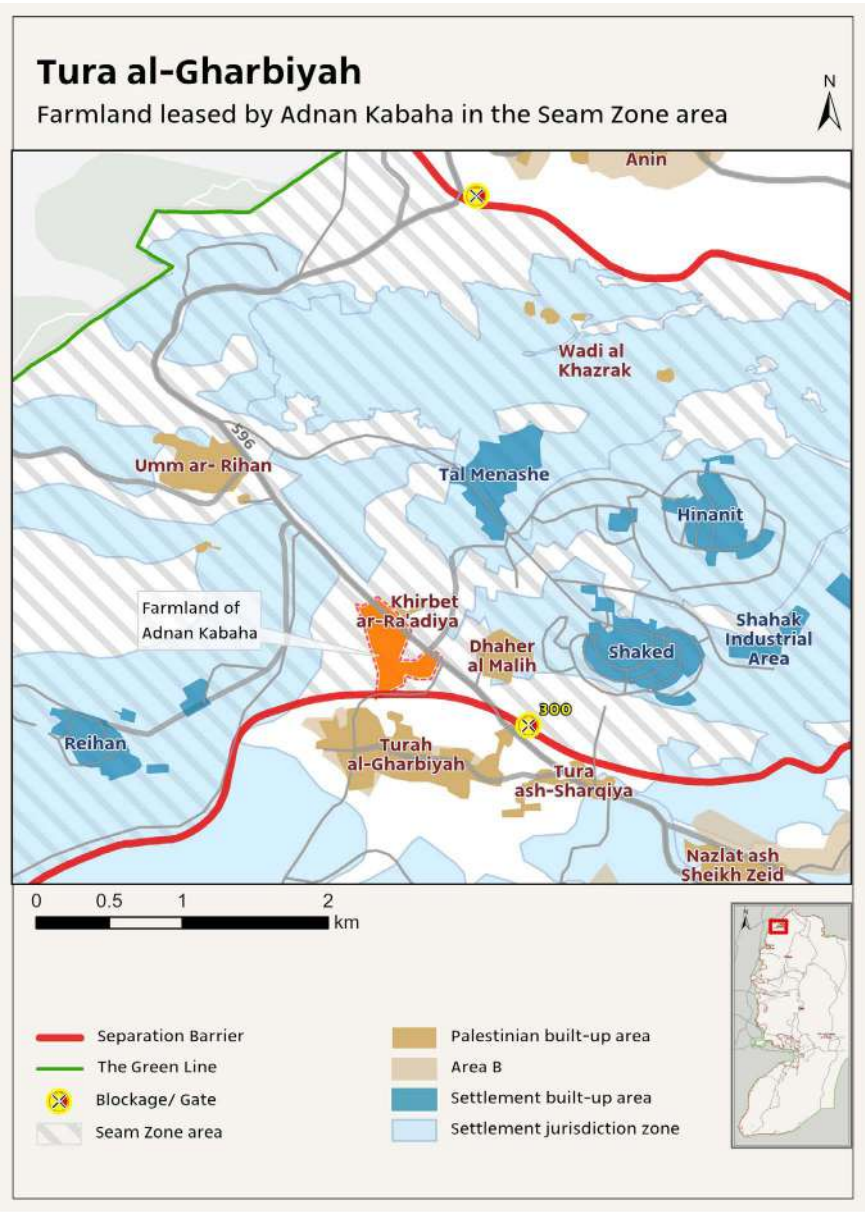
'Adnan Kabaha lives in the village of Turah al-Gharbiyah (طوره الغربيه) in Jenin District. Kabaha is married and has seven children. For several decades, he has leased agricultural land attached to the town of Ya'bad, but beyond the separation fence. Under the permit regime Israel imposed on West Bank land locked inside the Seam Zone, the military issued Kabaha permits that gave him relatively regular access to this land, where he grew olives and tobacco.

Like many farmers in the Seam Zone, Kabaha has been largely denied access to his land since the war broke out in October 2023. During the olive harvests of 2023 and 2024, he was unable to access his land at all. In 2025, the military allowed Kabaha to access his land via Turah Checkpoint (300) on only two days: November 2 and 3. The Israeli authorities gave the Palestinian DCO same-day notice regarding the opening of the checkpoint. Due to the last-minute notice, some farmers did not have enough time to make the necessary arrangements to access their land, leaving them, in practice, with only one day to harvest.

Kabaha managed to access his land only on November 3, 2025, without his wife and children, who had previously helped him with the farm work. Upon arrival at the plot, he discovered that because no agricultural work had been carried out there for a long time, the land had dried out and was covered in thorns and weeds. Kabaha said: “My heart broke; everything looked like a jungle. One day is not enough to fix all this.” Kabaha

9 HCJ 4285/24, [al-'Odeh et al. v. Military Commander of the West Bank Area](#), judgment, January 18, 2026 (Hebrew).

added that the sight caused him great distress and even expressed regret that he had gone to his land: “Seeing your land like this, it hurts. I wish I had never gone in at all.”¹⁰



10 Kabaha to HaMoked, November 2025.

Kabaha said that for years, the tobacco he grew was a central source of income for him. Part of the olive yield was also sold, and in less bountiful years, it was used for household consumption. Since the military blocked access to the land, Kabaha has lost his main source of income; the restrictions have severely harmed him and changed his life: “For years I worked the land and made a decent living from it, and now I sit at home idle and without work, dependent on my children for my living.” Kabaha added that given Israel’s ongoing restrictions, and with no real prospect of a change in the situation, he is gradually losing hope of ever being able to work the land again as he had done for years. He said he was even considering giving the land over to someone who lives beyond the fence, despite the deep pain involved. “It pains me to see the land lying uncultivated,” he concluded mournfully.¹¹

Even now, almost three years after the war broke out, the military prevents Kabaha from regularly accessing and working the land, and he does not know when, how often, or even if he will be allowed to access the plot again.

“Emergency” restrictions turned permanent reality

When the separation fence was built in 2003, Israel promised the harm caused to Palestinian farmers whose land was trapped between it and the Green Line would be kept to a minimum, claiming the fence was a security measure rather than a political border, and therefore would not infringe their rights or their connection to their land. In practice, ever since the separation fence was built, the military has imposed increasingly severe restrictions on entry into the Seam Zone, as part of an ongoing process of creeping dispossession and annexation.¹²

Moreover, the blanket ban the military imposed on farmers’ entry into the Seam Zone after October 2023, which, two years on, has been formalized in official procedures and upheld by the High Court of Justice, constitutes a historic shift in the status of Palestinian farmers in the Seam Zone. The military’s new procedures effectively eliminate recognition of the farmers’ right to their land based on ownership and ties to it, replacing it with a temporary, fluid eligibility contingent on “agricultural needs” determined at the military’s discretion.

The restrictions imposed by the military during the war have led to severe infringements of the farmers’ basic rights to freedom of movement, property, and freedom of occupation. The stringent entry restrictions violate the farmers’ right to access their own land freely, making entry dependent on arbitrary and unpredictable military decisions. The prolonged absence of Palestinian farmers from their land in West Bank areas known as the Seam Zone has resulted in damage to crops, takeover of land by Israelis, and its

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See *supra* note 5.

conversion into grazing fields and dumping sites. Economically, the restrictions have caused substantial financial losses, as Palestinian landowners are unable to work their land or derive a livelihood from it as they once did.

The emergency that was presented as temporary has turned into permanent restrictions that deny thousands of Palestinian farmers access to their land and effectively sever their connection to their property. Beyond the personal harm, these restrictions alter the status quo on the ground: they produce forced Palestinian absence from tens of thousands of dunams of agricultural land in the West Bank, opening the door to takeover by the state or by Israeli citizens. Even without a formal declaration of Seam Zone land as state land, Israel has, through these new restrictions, expanded its control over these lands and further reduced the living space available to the local Palestinian population.

Community: a-Rumannah

The community of a-Rumannah (تجمع حلق الرمانة) belongs to the village of a-Duyuk al-Foqa (الديوك الفوقا) and is located about three kilometers northeast of the city of Jericho, in an area designated under the Oslo Accords as Area A. The community's homes lie several hundred meters from the mother village, separated from it by a steep cliff. An unpaved road about two kilometers long, part of which runs through an area defined as Area C, is the community's only access route to the main road and to the mother village, 'Ein a-Duyuk al-Foqa.

a-Rummanah is a community of about 25 Palestinian families, some of which have lived in this location for more than a decade, while others joined in recent years, including families displaced from other areas in the West Bank due to harassment by Israeli authorities and settlers. Community members earn a living mainly from sheep herding and work in Jericho or in nearby Israeli settlements. The homes in the community are not connected to basic infrastructure and services, and residents are entirely dependent on their mother village and on nearby Palestinian communities for livelihoods, water and food supplies, and health and education services.

a-Rummanah is one of scores of Palestinian shepherding communities scattered throughout the West Bank, some of which have been displaced several times since 1948. These shepherding communities maintain a distinct way of life based on sheep and goat herding, which requires access to pastureland. This dependence makes them particularly vulnerable, given Israel's policy aimed at taking over West Bank land and pushing Palestinian communities out. For years, Palestinian shepherding communities have suffered from the state's refusal to officially recognize their villages, institutional oppression and state efforts to drive them away. In recent years, they have also been exposed to growing violence by settlers and soldiers, including denial of access to vital resources and systematic harm to their ability to maintain their way of life. These violent actions, which are backed by the Israeli authorities, constitute a deliberate mechanism for the forcible transfer of Palestinian communities from their homes and their land.¹³

The Israeli settlement of Mevo'ot Yericho is located about two kilometers north of a-Rumannah. Established without government approval in 1999, it was retroactively authorized in 2019, and in 2021, settlers built a shepherding outpost named Mevo'ot Yericho Farm (also known as Sha'ar HaMelekh Farm) near the settlement. In 2024, Israelis set up two more shepherding outposts in the area: Armonot Farm, about

13 Yesh Din and Physicians for Human Rights–Israel, [Displaced Communities, Forgotten People: Israel's Forcible Transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank](#), March 2025; Yesh Din, [Plundered Pastures: Israeli settler shepherding outposts in the West Bank and their infringement on Palestinians' human rights](#), December 2021. On the deliberate blurring of the line between soldiers and settlers, see: Yesh Din, [Settlers in Uniform: Violence Against Palestinian by Israelis in Military Uniforms](#), December 2025.

three kilometers south of the community, and Mevo'ot Yericho East Farm (New Sha'ar HaMelekh Farm), about three kilometers north of it.¹⁴ Since the outposts were established, residents of a-Rumannah have become targets for settlers and soldiers who jointly enter the community's homes and use violence against its residents. The pattern of abuse suffered by the a-Rumannah community points to the expansion of the displacement and expulsion mechanism, which until now has operated mainly against remote communities in Area C, and is now also directed at Palestinian communities in Areas A and B.

Siege

In July 2025, settlers placed two concrete blocks and a metal gate on the only access road leading to the a-Rumannah community's residential area. Community members received no prior notice that the roadblock would be installed, and no military order or any legal justification for the closure was presented to them. After the roadblock was installed, they asked the Palestinian DCO to have it removed. The request was forwarded to the Israeli authorities, which replied that they were unaware of the closure and confirmed it was illegal, but took no action to remove it.



The roadblock on the only access road to the community's homes, September 2025 (Photo courtesy of the community)

¹⁴ The State of Israel distinguishes between "settlements," which it defines as legal, and "outposts," which it considers illegal even under its own laws. However, according to international law, all Israeli communities in the OPT, both settlements and outposts, are illegal (Fourth Geneva Convention, Art. 49).

In practice, control of the access road was handed to a security guard from the Mevo'ot Yericho settlement, who had the key to the gate. In September 2025, he started locking it at will, arbitrarily and without any prior notice. Sometimes the roadblock was closed at night; at other times, it remained locked for an entire day or longer, and on several occasions, it was kept locked for several consecutive days. For example, during the Jewish New Year, the settlement security guard put the community under complete closure for three consecutive days.

When the roadblock is locked, the community's 100 residents are cut off from their surroundings. They cannot leave or return by car to buy food or essential supplies, emergency vehicles cannot reach the community's homes, and residents are cut off from their water supply, which is delivered by a tanker on this road. The community's children are forced to walk a long, mountainous route because the school shuttle cannot pass the locked gate.

On September 29, 2025, the community's residents, through Yesh Din, contacted the military demanding removal of the unlawful roadblock.¹⁵ Outrageously, the request triggered a wave of harassment against the community's residents by the Mevo'ot Yericho settlement's security guard and other settlers from the area.

Although the community is located more than a kilometer away from the settlement's jurisdiction, in early October the security guard arrived at the community's homes, together with two settlers in military uniforms, detained residents who were there and berated them for approaching the Israeli authorities. Later that month, the settler continued to lock the gate whenever he pleased.

For example, on October 11, 2025, the gate remained locked all day. One resident called the security guard to ask why the access road was blocked and was told that the gate had not been opened since the settler had slept in. The gate remained locked the next day too, and the community's children could not take the shuttle to school.

Following repeated communications from Yesh Din, on October 26, 2025, the military authorities said that the "operational need" for the roadblock was "still under review," but clarified that it would remain open for the time being. Still, the roadblock, which, as noted, had been illegally installed by Israeli civilians, was not removed. Instead, the military decided it would remain open other than when closure is required "for specific security reasons."¹⁶ In practice, the military retroactively approved the roadblock settlers had installed unlawfully and backed their actions. In addition, the military's notice failed to clarify what circumstances would warrant closing the roadblock and putting the

15 Yesh Din to the GOC Central Command, Head of the Civil Administration and Legal Advisor for the West Bank, September 29, 2025.

16 Legal Advisor for the West Bank to Yesh Din, October 26, 2025.

community under siege, who had the authority to order its closure, or whether the key would remain in the hands of the same settlement security guard.

This created an absurd situation in which the only access road to a Palestinian community was unlawfully blocked by Israeli settlers who have no authority to do so, while a security guard from the nearby settlement effectively has control over the community's freedom of movement. Members of the a-Rumannah community were left in a state of uncertainty regarding their ability to leave their homes regularly and safely, forced to live under the constant threat that settlers would once again lock the gate arbitrarily and completely disrupt their lives.

Routine violence

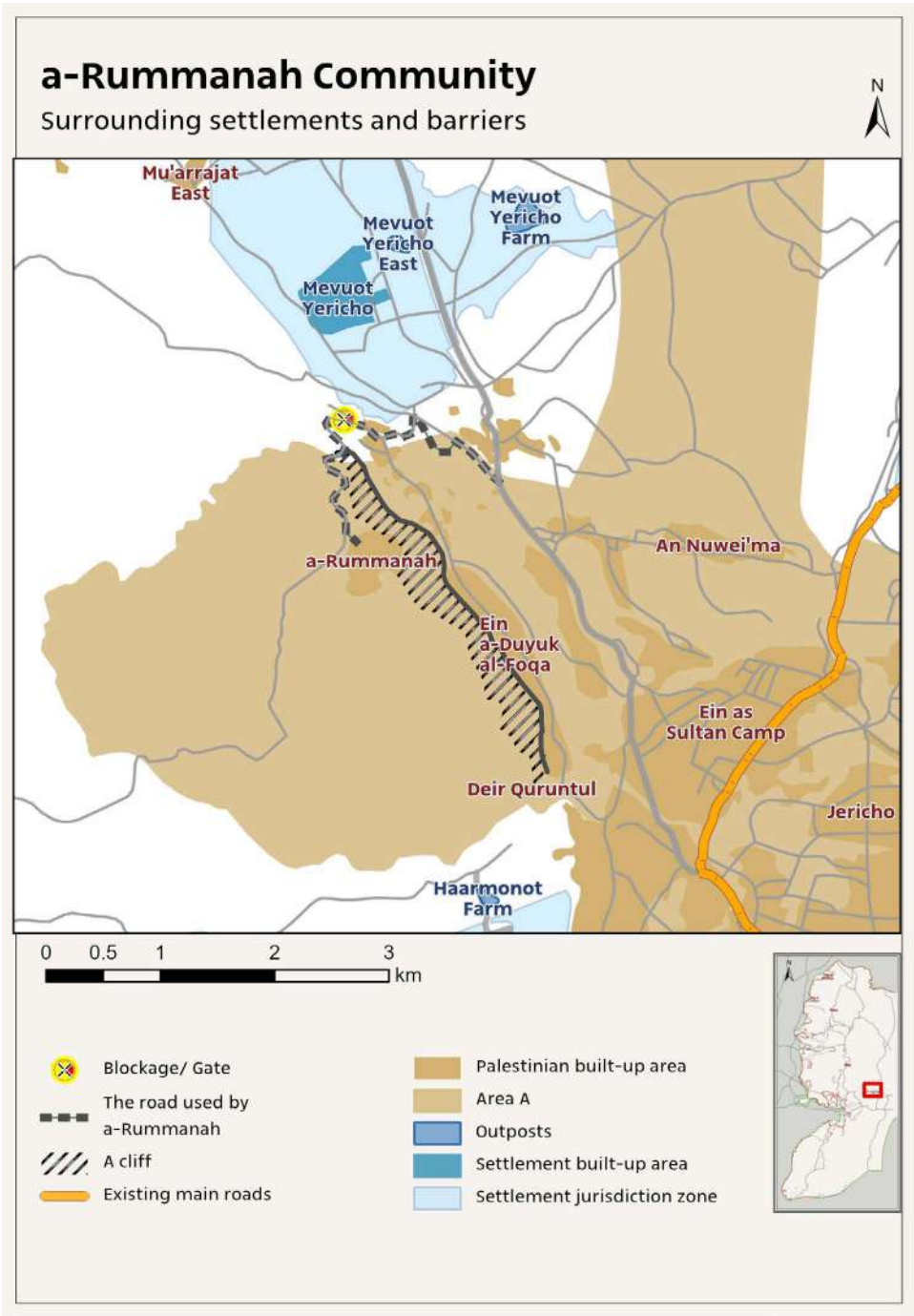
Ever since settlers established shepherding outposts in the area, and especially after residents of the a-Rumannah community complained to the authorities about the road closure imposed by the settlement's security guard, community members have been subjected to an ordeal of abuse, daily threats, and systematic harm by settlers and soldiers.

For example, on the night of September 17, 2025, soldiers and settlers raided several of the community's homes, claiming they were looking for the person who had cut a water pipe leading to one of the nearby shepherding outposts. In one of the homes the group raided, the soldiers and settlers interrogated J. They beat him, blindfolded him, tied his hands and took him to a military checkpoint near the Mevo'ot Yericho settlement, where he was held for many hours. J. related that he was kept until around 10:00 A.M. the next morning, when he was released and had to walk home. When he returned, he discovered that the Israeli intruders had taken cash, gold jewelry, a cell phone and identity cards from his home. J. filed a complaint with the military over the violence and looting by the soldiers, and an investigation launched by the Military Police Criminal Investigations Division (MPCID) is still ongoing.¹⁷

On October 29, 2025, soldiers, accompanied by masked settlers, raided several of the community's homes. The group of settlers and soldiers searched the houses, assaulted residents, vandalized property and stole goats and various items. Residents told Yesh Din that they have been afraid to sleep in their homes since the attack. "The soldiers held my father by the hands," S. described, "and one settler hit him on the head." The settlers stole 220 goats, a water pump, flashlights and personal documents. S. filed a complaint with the police, but the case was closed on the grounds that no suspects had been identified.¹⁸

17 J. to Yesh Din, October 2025.

18 S. to Yesh Din, November 2025.



A., whose home was also invaded by soldiers and settlers that night, testified that one of the soldiers threatened to shoot him if he did not “tell the truth.” After the soldiers beat him and broke furniture, three masked settlers entered the house and severely beat him, including with a fire extinguisher. One of them threatened: “Next week I will come back for you, and you must leave this place.” A. was evacuated to a hospital in Jericho, where he was diagnosed with a broken jaw. He later discovered that cash had been stolen from his home and that the assailants had poured sugar into his car’s engine. He filed a complaint with the Israel Police but was informed it would not open a criminal investigation because the MPCID was investigating the incident. The military has not provided Yesh Din with any information on the status of the complaint as of yet.¹⁹

On November 7, 2025, at around 10:00 P.M., masked settlers broke into F.’s home, claiming they were a military force. They broke the front door and beat F. and his 14-year-old son. “There were seven masked men. They came up to me, hit me and kicked me,” F. recounted. “The girls who were in the room started screaming. Some of them tried to force their way into the girls’ room but failed to break down the door, so they came back to me and kept beating me.” They stayed for about 20 minutes and then left on ATVs. F. related that his family has been experiencing psychological distress ever since the attack. When he attempted to file a complaint at the Binyamin police station, he was kept waiting for six hours, only to be turned away and told to go to the Jordan Valley police station. F. gave up and decided to forgo the complaint.²⁰

The next day, R., a resident of a-Rumannah, spotted his flock of 109 goats, with about six settlers a few hundred meters from his home. Four were masked and apparently minors, and two were adults. R. told one of the adults that the goats were his. The settler replied: “Call the police.” R. described: “At that moment, one of the teens hit me on the back of the head. I lost consciousness and fell. I woke up in the hospital in Jericho.” The goat theft took a heavy toll on the family’s livelihood, forcing them to find work in a nearby settlement. A complaint filed with the police was closed, citing insufficient evidence to establish criminal culpability.²¹

On the night of November 23, 2025, at around 2:00 A.M., armed, masked settlers broke into A.’s home. They assaulted his wife and grandchildren, destroyed items in the house, stole documents, and, after failing to steal the family car, pushed it into a wadi. Before leaving, the settlers told A.’s wife: “If we come back here and you’re still here, we will kill the children before your eyes.” About three weeks later, the settlers returned, assaulted A.’s wife and broke her left arm. She was evacuated to the hospital and remained there for a week. The family filed a complaint with the police.²²

19 A. to Yesh Din, November 2025.

20 F. to Yesh Din, November 2025.

21 R. to Yesh Din, November 2025.

22 A. to Yesh Din, January 2026.

In the early hours of November 30, 2025, masked settlers, some of them armed, assaulted four foreign protective presence activists who were staying in one of the community's homes. They beat the activists, injured them, stole passports, phones and personal effects, and vandalized other items before leaving.²³

On the night of December 14, 2025, a group of masked settlers again raided the community's homes. The settlers broke into F.'s home, which had been attacked previously, smashed items and forced open the bedroom door where he and his wife had barricaded themselves. "Eight settlers entered the room," F. described the moments of the assault, "five of them beat me with clubs, and three beat my wife. They hit me all over my body, on my head, chest and arms." F. was hospitalized in the ICU for five days with a skull fracture and a broken nose. His wife was hospitalized for two days with a broken arm. The settlers stole items from the home and caused extensive damage. While F. was hospitalized, his brother filed a complaint on his behalf over the assault, but the police closed the investigation file. When F. and his wife tried to give their own account of the incident, the police refused to accept their complaint, and it was filed only after Yesh Din intervened.²⁴

Yesh Din also repeatedly contacted the military, demanding it station troops to protect the community, which is subject to repeated attacks. The requests were denied on the grounds that "the manner in which the military commander exercises the powers and duties vested in him is a matter subject to his broad security discretion."²⁵

Expansion of the transfer mechanism

The unlawful roadblock placed by the settlers and their arbitrary control of it are intended to restrict Palestinians' movement in the area and disrupt their daily lives. Every coming and going is fraught with tension for community residents, who live in a perpetual state of uncertainty.

The establishment of shepherding outposts encircling the community has produced settler control over the entire space surrounding a-Rumannah. These outposts dominate the area through sheep and cattle grazing and serve as launching pads for violence and incursions into the homes of the community, which lies in Area A. Together, these elements form an organized mechanism designed to terrorize members of the a-Rumannah community, disrupt their daily lives, undermine sources of income and force them to leave their homes.

23 Liza Rozovsky and Matan Golan, "[Canada, Italy Condemn Israeli Settler Violence After Foreign Activists Wounded Near Jericho](#)", **Haaretz English edition**, December 1, 2025.

24 F. to Yesh Din, January 2026.

25 LA-JS to Yesh Din, May 16, 2026.

The attacks described above reveal a clear pattern of full cooperation between settlers, who perpetrate violence and initiate the raids, assaults and thefts, and the military, which accompanies these attacks, backs them and cooperates with them.

Instead of protecting members of the Palestinian community, as the Israeli authorities are legally obligated to do, they effectively enable the ongoing harm inflicted on them. The military has not removed the closure, refuses to provide protective forces to prevent the attacks, and soldiers raid community homes together with settlers. At the same time, the police make no effort to find the offenders, investigate their actions or prevent them from repeating them. Community residents are left with no protection, living in constant fear, as their livelihoods are severely harmed and their daily lives upended. As a result, some of those who were assaulted no longer sleep in their homes.

The pattern of shrinking living space impacting the a-Rumannah community and potentially leading to its full displacement is familiar from other parts of the West Bank. However, while previously observed primarily in areas classified as Area C, the a-Rummanah case study signals that these displacement tactics are being replicated and expanded into Area A as well, as settler violence grows more entrenched and Palestinians feel increasingly powerless and abandoned even in areas where they had so far been relatively more protected.

While officially, the State of Israel distances itself from these acts of violence and occasionally condemns them, in practice, they receive institutional support and actual cooperation from the authorities as the harm inflicted on Palestinian communities serves a policy that the state seeks to advance: emptying entire geographical expanses of Palestinian presence, isolating communities, and forcing Palestinians out of their dwelling places and into crowded, isolated enclaves. In this sense, the systematic harm to the a-Rumannah community illustrates the expansion of a mechanism that seeks to fragment Palestinian civilian space in the West Bank, remove its inhabitants, and impose a reality of isolated cantons under Israeli control.

Town: Sinjil

Sinjil (سنجل) is a Palestinian town in Ramallah District, central West Bank, with a population of approximately 6,000. The town's economy is based primarily on agriculture and employment in the public and private sectors. Most of Sinjil's built-up area was designated as Area B under the Oslo Accords, meaning under Palestinian civilian control and Israeli security control. Much of the farmland owned by its residents, however, was designated Area C, under full Israeli control.²⁶

In 1983, Israel established the settlement of Ma'ale Levona, partly on land belonging to Sinjil that was seized on the pretext of military needs. In the late 1990s, settlers established the unauthorized outposts of Giv'at Haro'eh and Giv'at Harel, also built in part on land owned by residents of Sinjil.²⁷ Although the outposts were established illegally and without an official government decision, they benefited from state support over the years. In 2023, Israel retroactively approved both outposts, turning them into a single independent settlement, and in 2025, they were once again split and turned into two settlements officially recognized by the government. In June 2026, the military declared 465 dunams in the area as state land in order to expand the settlement of Giv'at Haro'eh. Meanwhile, the government is promoting a plan to build more than 900 housing units there.²⁸

Since 2020, settlers have established more illegal outposts around Sinjil: to the north, the Nahal Shilo Farm, Hoshen and the Shiv'at Haro'im (Seven Shepherds). South of the town, settlers took over lands belonging to residents of the village of Silwad and built additional outposts on them, including the Meguri Family Farm (Tzur Levavi Farm).²⁹ These outposts dominate vast areas through grazing and settler violence, and serve as tools for the forcible removal of Palestinians from their land and the expansion of Israeli control over the entire area.³⁰

26 See: Yesh Din, [Over the Border: The institutionalized Israelization of Area C and the violation of Palestinians' human rights](#), October 2022.

27 Peace Now, ["Secret Document Reveals Settlements were Built on a Lie"](#), July 2016; Yossi Gurvitz, ["Sinjil and Giv'at Haro'eh: The story of a legal failure"](#), Yesh Din, August 19, 2013 (Hebrew); Yesh Din, ["Israeli DCO officer: 'The settlers are angry, you can only work here for two hours and then go work somewhere else. I don't want any trouble!'"](#), **In First Person**, April 19, 2009.

28 Decision No. B/6 of the Ministerial Committee for National Security (Security Cabinet), February 12, 2023, Section 1(c); Itamar Eichner, ["Cabinet approves: 19 new communities to be established and regulated in West Bank"](#), **Ynet Global**, December 12, 2025; Hezki Baruch, ["Massive parcel of land rezoned for Binyamin Region homesteads"](#), **7 Israel National News**, June 24, 2026. On settlements and outposts, see supra note 14.

29 See: Yesh Din, ["HCJ petition to remove a violent shepherding outpost built deep inside Silwad farmland"](#), December 1, 2025.

30 See: Yesh Din and Physicians for Human Rights–Israel, [Displaced Communities, Forgotten People: Israel's Forcible Transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank](#), March 2025.

The pressure on Sinjil's residents has intensified in recent years owing to two reinforcing Israeli modes of action: The military has imposed severe restrictions on residents' freedom of movement and access and used direct violence against them, while Israeli civilian presence around the town has expanded, with farmland forcibly taken over and severe violence directed at residents. Together, these tactics drive a strategy aimed at pushing the town's residents off their land and reducing their living space. Sinjil is, therefore, a case study of a broader process unfolding across the West Bank, whereby various tactics are employed against Palestinian communities in a bid to corral them into the smallest residential areas possible, while the surrounding open spaces and agricultural lands are taken over.

Isolation and land takeover

Since October 2023, Israel has significantly intensified its control policies and movement and access restrictions in the West Bank, measures that have severely impacted residents of Sinjil.³¹ The military placed metal gates at the town's two main entrances, and access to Sinjil from the West Bank's major thoroughfare, Route 60, has been reduced to the northern entrance only, where the checkpoint is opened intermittently, allowing the military full control over access to the town. The military has also blocked roads in Sinjil's agricultural area with dirt mounds, denying farmers free, direct access to their lands, their source of livelihood.



Sinjil's main entrances, August 2025 (Photo: Anne Paq, ActiveStills)

31 As of February 2025, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) documented 849 movement obstacles across the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), including about 200 new obstacles installed since October 2023, which impair Palestinians' freedom of movement in the West Bank: OCHA, "[West Bank, Movement and Access update](#)", May 27, 2025.



Sinjil's main entrances, August 2025 (Photo: Omer Vardi, ActiveStills)

In 2024, the military commander issued orders for the expropriation of 45 dunams of Sinjil land for the construction of a fence ostensibly intended to prevent stone-throwing at Route 60. In practice, security is being invoked to restrict Sinjil residents' access to their land and further isolate the town from its surroundings. The Sinjil municipality filed an objection to the construction of the fence with the Civil Administration, but it was rejected.

The fence, which is about four meters high and 1.5 kilometers long, restricts access to village homes and farmland owned by local residents that remain on its far side. As part of the construction work, the military demolished one vacant residential building, uprooted more than 200 trees, including 135 olive trees, some of them ancient, and leveled agricultural fields.³² It has also issued a seizure order for land extending the fence northward, indicating Israel is planning to extend it north of the town.

32 OCHA, "[Humanitarian Situation Update #244, West Bank](#)", December 5, 2024.



The fence in Sinjil, August 2025 (Photo: Anne Paq, ActiveStills)

The outposts established north of Sinjil have created Israeli territorial contiguity connecting the settlements of Shilo, Eli and Ma'ale Levona, while isolating Sinjil from the Palestinian area to its north and east. At the same time, settlers have taken over extensive areas south of the town as well. The shepherding outposts have made it both dangerous and nearly impossible for Sinjil farmers to access their lands, and settlers drive those who attempt it away at gunpoint and with violence. Meanwhile, Israeli settlers deliberately damage Palestinian agricultural land, including by grazing livestock in the plots, impeding Sinjil farmers' ability to cultivate their land and earn a living from it. Iyad Ghafari, a resident of Sinjil, said: "The settlers haven't just taken over the land, but they're doing infrastructure work, planting and cultivating land belonging to Sinjil's people."³³

The Israeli authorities join the efforts to take over the town's agricultural land by deploying soldiers who prevent Sinjil's farmers from cultivating their plots. During the 2023 olive harvest, the military denied access to the town's olive groves altogether. In 2024, access was heavily restricted, and even on the few days access to a reduced area was allowed during the harvest season, settlers and soldiers attacked harvesters and forced them out.³⁴ During the 2025 olive harvest, soldiers and settlers prevented Sinjil residents from accessing agricultural land north of the town, and they were driven off even on the one day the military ostensibly allowed farmers to access their land with prior coordination.

³³ Ghafari to Yesh Din, February 2026.

³⁴ Yesh Din, "[Summary of the 2024 Olive Harvest Season](#)", December 15, 2024.

To add insult to injury, during that same season, settlers were filmed harvesting the trees of Sinjil's residents themselves and stealing the fruit.³⁵ Nearly completely prevented from harvesting olives for three seasons, Sinjil residents suffered significant financial hardship, with many families losing a key source of income.

The tactics used by settlers and Israeli authorities severely restrict Sinjil residents' access to their land and their ability to earn a livelihood from it. They cut the town off from nearby Palestinian communities and gravely infringe on residents' fundamental rights. Even when the military presents these closures and restrictions as security measures or steps intended "to prevent friction," in practice, they always restrict Palestinians exclusively, while Israeli settlers living in the same area enjoy full freedom of movement and are given a free hand to continue their unlawful acts without any effective intervention by law enforcement authorities.³⁶

"First the settlers arrive, and five minutes later, the army comes and protects them."

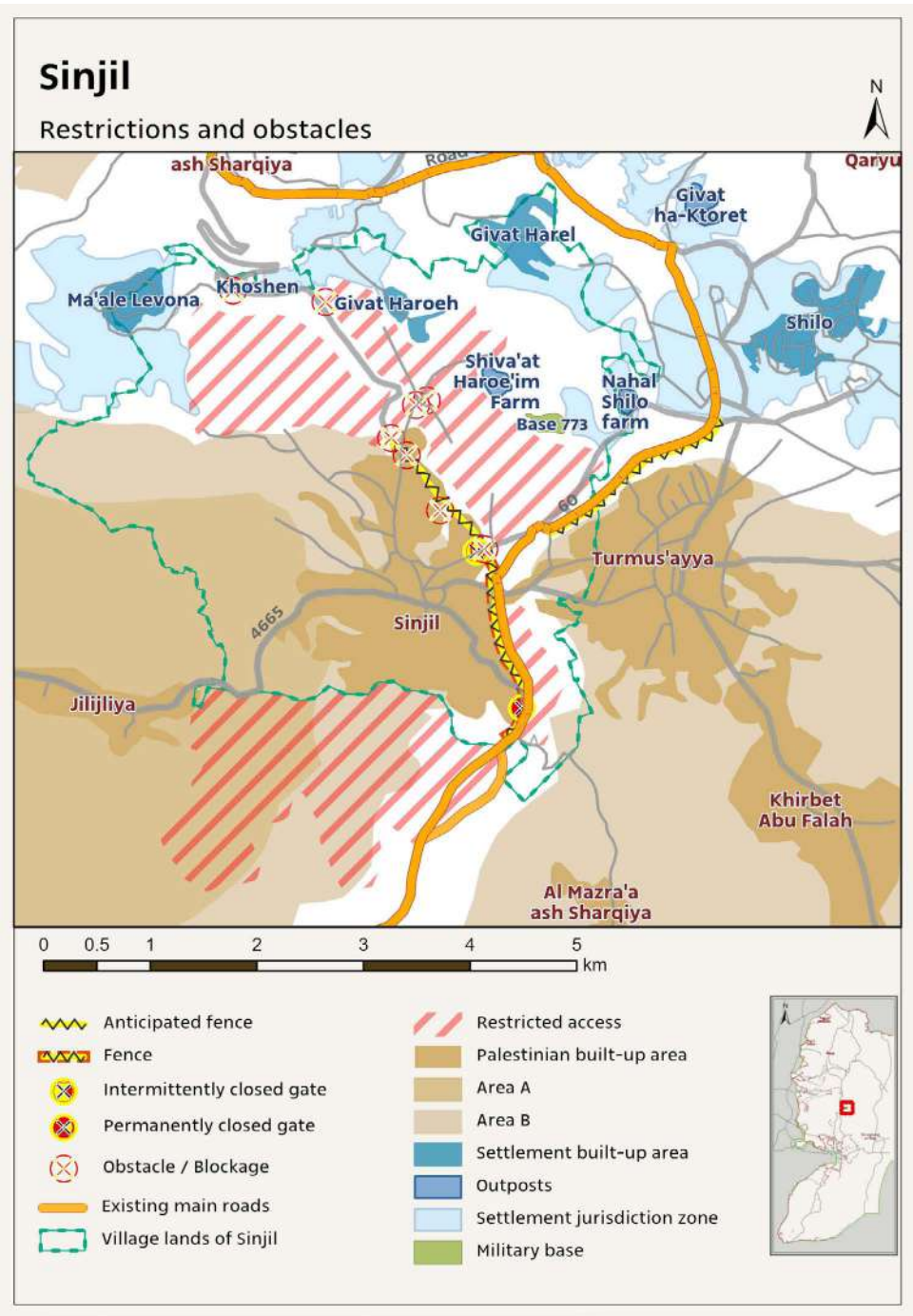
Since the farm outposts north and south of Sinjil were established, a slew of violent incidents targeting town residents have been reported, including physical assaults, stone and Molotov cocktail throwing at homes and vehicles, arson, damage to structures and orchards, livestock property and crop theft, vandalism of trees and agricultural equipment, and incursions into town land.³⁷ Many of these attacks took place with direct support from military forces stationed in the area, including at a military base that also overlooks the town's land to the north.

M., a 56-year-old farmer from Sinjil who was assaulted in October 2024 by two settlers and a soldier while attempting to work his land, told Yesh Din: "I'd been working for about half an hour when a civilian pickup truck arrived from the direction of the farm, with two settlers and a uniformed soldier inside. [...] One of the settlers kicked me in the stomach and threatened to kill me, while the soldier guarded him with his weapon cocked. I was scared and wanted to leave, but the settlers punctured all four of the tractor's tires." M. was left injured in the field until town residents evacuated him. He said: "The outpost's

35 B'Tselem, "[Sinjil, Ramallah District: Palestinian farmers who arrived at their land discovered settlers had already picked their olives; then soldiers and settlers drove them out and were documented harvesting the olive trees themselves](#)", October 31, 2025.

36 In the advisory opinion it delivered in July 2024, the International Court of Justice held that these restrictions form part of a policy of systematic discrimination that violates fundamental rights including freedom of movement, livelihood, health, education and an adequate standard of living, and that they cannot be justified by security claims: International Court of Justice, "[Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem](#)", July 19, 2024.

37 For example, in the first six months of 2026 alone, Yesh Din collected at least 46 reports of settler violence against Sinjil residents (figures based on reports from various sources that have been crossreferenced).



violent presence has destroyed our livelihood, our sense of safety and our traditional way of life.” M. filed a complaint with the Palestinian DCO and explained that he has no interest in contacting the Israeli authorities, saying that “the army, the settlers and the police are all part of the same policy and the same attitude towards us.”³⁸

The home of N., a 58-year-old farmer from Sinjil, is located near the main intersection on the northern road, which also leads to the settlements. N. described the abuse his family suffers: “The settlers drive past us day and night. Time and again, they get out of their cars, enter the yard and run riot.” He said that fear of the settlers is so severe that the family has had to cover all their windows with iron mesh for protection.

“We’re afraid to go out into the yard,” N. said, adding that “the nightmare is terrible, but I have nowhere to go.” Despite the danger, during the 2024 olive harvest, N. decided to go out with his wife to harvest olives about 350 meters from their home. “We have no choice,” he explained, “we’ve reached the point of not having enough to eat.” When the two arrived at their plot, they found it in poor condition: “The settlers’ cows had grazed on the trees’ leaves and fruit. Fifty trees had been cut down.”

Shortly after they arrived at the plot, a pickup truck carrying six armed settlers came to the site. According to N., one of the settlers told him that the plot was now Israeli. He described the attack on him and his wife: “The settler grabbed me by the neck, pulled out a knife, brought it close to my neck and said: ‘This is how I will murder you.’ Then three settlers came, threw me to the ground and kicked me all over my body. Two settlers assaulted my wife. I shouted, and the settlers backed away a bit. We left all our equipment and ran away.” N. added that “there is no point in filing complaints with bodies that are themselves part of the occupation,” and described his situation today: “We’ve been left destitute. I have no livelihood, no security in this isolated home, and no hope.”³⁹

On January 19, 2025, dozens of settlers attacked the eastern neighborhood of Sinjil. The assailants poured flammable material into two homes, threw stones, smashed windows and set four vehicles on fire.⁴⁰ S., 38, was sitting at home with her family when she suddenly heard a window shatter and noticed a strong smell of smoke. She said: “We realized that flammable material had been thrown at the house. We went outside and discovered a fire on the porch. We all joined in to put out the fire.” She added that shortly afterward, the assailants returned with more flammable material. “I screamed with all my might,” she recounted, “which drove them off into the neighborhood, where they continued their rampage.”

38 M. to Yesh Din, November 2024.

39 N. to Yesh Din, November 2024.

40 Footage from the incident on [Yesh Din's Facebook page](#), January 22, 2025.

S. said that “since that night, we have all been in shock. We’re afraid to close our eyes in case the rioters come back,” adding that “there is no personal safety, not even inside the house. If we had the means, we wouldn’t stay in such a dangerous place.”⁴¹

Another local resident who was attacked that night told Yesh Din: “The damage is extensive, thousands of shekels, but the psychological damage is many times worse. We’re afraid to leave the house after dark.”⁴² Residents said that the police never came to the scene, and soldiers from the nearby base did not come to protect them.

Another resident, who fell victim to a settler attack in November 2025, in which the tires of his cars were slashed and their windows were shattered, described a similar sense of terror and lack of safety: “The main damage is the trauma suffered by the children, aged six and seven, who have begun to fear the dark and are afraid to walk to school alone or go outside to play. My wife is in shock, and we’re considering maybe moving to Ramallah. Our sense of safety is gone.”⁴³

On April 21, 2025, Israelis established an outpost on the hill of Jabal a-Tal, in Area B, south of Sinjil, as part of Israel’s expansion south of the town, centered on the Meguri family farm. About 20 Sinjil residents sought to protest the takeover of their land and tried to reach the outpost site. However, as they approached, the settlers who had built the outpost attacked them with stones, pushed them back and forced them to retreat. Shortly afterward, dozens more settlers arrived, joined those already there and together launched a largescale attack on the town.

The assailants set fire to vehicles and an agricultural structure, destroyed farming equipment and burned tents belonging to families who settled in the area after being forcibly displaced from Wadi a-Siq in October 2023. Military forces present at the scene backed the attack by firing tear gas and using violence against Palestinian residents. Wael Ghafari, a 48-year-old resident of Sinjil, suffered a fatal heart attack after he was assaulted by settlers and soldiers, his home was set on fire, and he inhaled tear gas and smoke.⁴⁴

41 S. to Yesh Din, January 2025.

42 F. to Yesh Din, January 2025.

43 N. to Yesh Din, November 2025.

44 Oren Ziv, “[The pogrom in Sinjil: Efforts to expel Palestinians are expanding into Area B](#)”, **Local Call**, April 24, 2025 (Hebrew); B’Tselem, “[Sinjil, Ramallah District: Dozens of settlers attacked the village, setting fire to vehicles and homes and injuring residents](#)”, April 21, 2025.



The aftermath of the settler attack on Sinjil's land, April 2025 (Photo: Faiz Abu Rmeleh, ActiveStills).

The outpost was later dismantled by the Civil Administration, but reestablished in different locations. According to local residents, the same group of Israelis has since taken over Palestinian agricultural structures south of Sinjil and the village of Jiljilya, entrenched itself there, and continues to terrorize local residents.

On July 10, 2025, settlers killed Muhammad a-Shalabi, 23, and Saif a-Din Muslat, 21, a Palestinian American, who was visiting his family in the area.⁴⁵ This was the deadliest attack to date in the ongoing campaign of violence settlers have waged against residents of Sinjil and its surroundings. That day, settlers assaulted Palestinian residents who attempted to access their lands south of the town, near the outpost built on town land. The Israelis, some of whom were armed, fired at residents, assaulted them with rods and stones and vandalized a Palestinian ambulance.

An eyewitness at the scene recounted: "When some people tried to flee eastward, more settlers blocked their way. Most of them were masked and arrived in a gray Isuzu pickup truck. I saw a settler in civilian clothes firing a rifle at the people fleeing." Israeli

45 Hagar Shezaf, ["It Was Planned": Eyewitness Recounts Killing of Two Palestinians in Israeli Settler Attack in West Bank"](#), **Haaretz English edition**, July 13, 2025; Oren Ziv, ["The incident in Sinjil: The army blocked access for three hours, and Saif lay dying"](#), **Local Call**, July 13, 2025 (Hebrew).

armed forces who arrived on the scene fired tear gas at the residents under attack and prevented Palestinian ambulances and rescue workers from reaching the wounded and providing aid that might have saved their lives. “[Only] at 21:30 did we reach the missing person’s body, which had signs of severe violence and a bullet hole from a rifle shot that entered through the back and exited through the abdomen.”⁴⁶ According to an investigative report, the pickup truck used by some of the assailants belongs to Yehoyariv Meguri, a settler who lives with his family on a farm built on privately owned Palestinian land. The same investigative report found that although the truck’s owner was detained by police that day, he was released and his vehicle was returned to him a few weeks later.⁴⁷

These acts of violence are designed to instill fear in the hearts of Sinjil’s residents, make their lives miserable, deprive them of their livelihoods, and, thereby, push them to leave their lands and even their homes. The violent assaults and prolonged threats to their lives have, in fact, forced several families to leave their homes. As of June 2026, at least 15 homes in the northern part of Sinjil have been abandoned due to settler violence and harassment.

Settler violence against Sinjil residents is directly backed by the Israeli authorities. Soldiers and police officers not only fail to stop attackers in real time, but actively assist them. “The problem is that the army is always on the settlers’ side,” ‘Ayad Ghafari explained: “First the settlers arrive, and five minutes later, the army comes and protects them.”⁴⁸

The Israel Police does not properly investigate offenses committed by Israelis against Palestinians. Yesh Din’s data on enforcement rates across the West Bank indicate a systematic, ongoing failure, meaning that settler violence against Palestinians is effectively met with almost total impunity. The overwhelming majority (93.6%) of investigation files monitored by Yesh Din and opened between 2005 and 2025 for ideologically motivated offenses by Israelis against Palestinians in the West Bank ended without an indictment, and only 3% led to full or partial convictions.⁴⁹

In addition to violence by Israeli civilians, Sinjil residents are also subjected to severe violence by Israeli armed forces, which has already claimed the lives of three local teenagers over the past year. In June 2025, soldiers lying in ambush near the town’s northern road shot and killed Yusef Fuqaha, a 16-year-old boy. While the army claimed the teen had attempted to throw stones at the road, a witness whose security camera

46 M. to Yesh Din, July 2025.

47 Daniel Dolev, [“‘If You Come Back - We’ll Kill You’: Settler Violence Crosses Over Into Palestinian-Controlled Parts of the West Bank”](#), **Shomrim English edition**, January 7, 2026.

48 Ghafari to Yesh Din, February 2026.

49 Yesh Din, [Data Sheet: Law Enforcement on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank \(Settler violence\), 2005–2025](#), December 2025.

overlooks the area said the boy was not holding any stones. After the shooting, soldiers raided the witness's house and deleted the security camera footage. They also confiscated the boy's body.⁵⁰

In March 2026, Israeli forces shot and killed Salim Fuqaha, 16, and wounded a 15-year-old boy. According to testimonies from the scene, security forces prevented Palestinian medical teams from reaching the area and providing lifesaving treatment for some two and a half hours. The army confiscated Fuqaha's body.⁵¹

In May 2026, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy was fatally shot, and four others were wounded during a raid by settlers and soldiers on Sinjil and on the nearby village of Jiljilya, located in Area A. The settlers broke into the homes of displaced families from Wadi a-Siq who had moved to Area A after being forced out of their homes in Area C in October 2023, assaulted residents including women, children, older persons and a man with disabilities, and stole flocks of sheep and other property belonging to Palestinian residents, all under the protection of soldiers.⁵²



Settlers escorted by military forces in the town of Sinjil, May 13, 2026 (Photo courtesy of Sinjil residents)

50 B'Tselem, [Fatalities: All data](#).

51 DCI-Palestine, "Israeli forces fatally shoot 16-year-old Palestinian boy near Ramallah, confiscate his body", March 17, 2026.

52 Matan Golan, Rawand Sulieman and Jack Khoury, "[Palestinian 16-year-old Killed in Israeli Settler Attack on Village, West Bank Medics Say](#)", **Haaretz English edition**, May 13, 2026.

Constriction of Palestinian living spaces

Residents of Sinjil have suffered severe oppression at the hands of Israel's military regime for years, but since October 2023, their rights have been further choked under the weight of two coordinated Israeli arms. At one end, the military employs severe, sometimes lethal violence against the town's residents. It also imposes draconian measures infringing on their freedom of movement in the form of checkpoints and the new fence that isolate the town from its surroundings and cut residents off from their farmland, severely damaging the livelihoods of many. At the other, settlers operating out of the outposts and settlements surrounding the town exploit the protection the military gives them and the restrictions it imposes on Sinjil's residents, to violently seize Palestinian land and establish new outposts on it, terrorizing and launching daily attacks on the residents who struggle to continue living and working on their land.

This violent collaboration between the military and the settlers has a clear purpose: reducing Palestinian living space by pushing residents off their land and concentrating them inside closed areas. In this sense, Sinjil serves as a case study of a broader process unfolding across the West Bank, in which a range of measures are deployed against Palestinian communities with the aim of forcing them off their land. These measures include direct violence, movement and access restrictions, land takeovers, and systematic violations of human rights. Tactics that have so far been directed primarily against relatively small and isolated communities in Area C are now being used against large, well-established Palestinian localities in areas defined as Area B. They serve Israel's agenda of further entrenching its control over the West Bank and annexing it without its residents.

Sinjil is not an isolated case but rather evidence of the expansion of a familiar modus operandi, and Israel's policy toward the town marks a dangerous escalation in the fragmentation of Palestinian space into separate, isolated enclaves.

Area: Northern West Bank

In the 1980s, Israel established four isolated settlements in the northern West Bank – Homesh, Sa-Nur, Gannim and Kadim. It removed these settlements in 2005, along with most military bases in the area, as part of the Disengagement Plan. The government declared that removing the Israeli settlements in the northern West Bank was intended to reduce friction with the Palestinian population and allow Palestinian territorial contiguity in the area, in a way that “will facilitate normal life and Palestinian economic and commercial activity.”⁵³

Though Israel never fully enforced the ban placed on access by Israelis to the vacated settlement areas under the Disengagement Law (see below, Homesh) and prevented Palestinians from developing the area, for two decades the Palestinian space between Nablus and Jenin remained largely free of Israeli settlers.

The area, which spans more than 500,000 dunams and is bisected by the West Bank’s major north-south traffic artery, Route 60, has had limited military presence since 2005, and the hundreds of thousands of people living in dozens of Palestinian communities were able to lead relatively normal lives. Still under a regime of military oppression, the area’s Palestinian residents were subjected to raids on their homes, arbitrary arrests and surprise checkpoints, but compared to other parts of the West Bank, where there is a heavy presence of settlers and soldiers, this area saw active industry, commerce, agriculture, education and culture.

Yet Israel and its settlement movement never gave up their ambition to re-settle the northern West Bank. On March 21, 2023, three months after the current government was formed, the Knesset repealed the Disengagement Law as it relates to the northern West Bank.⁵⁴ In May 2025, the Security Cabinet retroactively approved the illegal outpost set up in Homesh and decided to re-establish the settlement of Sa-Nur.⁵⁵ Six months later, the government retroactively approved another group of outposts and decided to re-establish the settlements of Gannim and Kadim.⁵⁶

Since early 2023, the Israeli government and military have been working to expand the presence of Israelis in the northern West Bank, first by sending more troops and then by establishing settlements and outposts. The rapid growth of settlements in the

53 Government of Israel, [Resolution No. 1996](#), June 6, 2004.

54 Implementation of Disengagement Plan Law (Amendment No. 7) 5783-2023 (Hebrew).

55 Hagar Shezaf, “[Israeli Cabinet Approves Construction of 22 New Settlements, Some Deep in West Bank](#)”, **Haaretz English edition**, May 28, 2025.

56 Jonathan Lis, “[Israel Legalizes 19 West Bank Settler Outposts, Reversing Disengagement Policy](#)”, **Haaretz English edition**, December 21, 2025.

northern West Bank, along with increased military presence, will likely lead to violence by soldiers and settlers and grave violations of the human rights of Palestinians living in the area. As in other parts of the OPT, in the northern West Bank too, Israel's policy seeks to constrict Palestinians' living space, take over their land, and push them into small, isolated enclaves.

“Army and settlement go together”

The removal of Israeli settlements from the northern West Bank in 2005 was, as noted, intended to “facilitate normal life” for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in this area. The 2023 decision to reverse Disengagement and renew settlement produced an inverse image: Even before the first Israelis moved into the area, the military launched preliminary operations against the Palestinian civilian population.

In July 2023, citing counterterrorism operations, the Israeli military launched a combined air and ground raid on Jenin Refugee Camp, killing many civilians and causing massive destruction and damage to homes and property.⁵⁷ Some 18 months later, in January 2025, as part of the operation dubbed Iron Wall, a cruel spin-off of the Swords of Iron war, Israel's name for its assault on Gaza, Israeli land and air forces attacked the refugee camps of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur a-Shams over several weeks, decimating them, killing dozens of civilians, and forcing 30,000–40,000 people out of their homes in the largest displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967.⁵⁸ An analysis of aerial photographs of the camps after the Israeli assault shows that the level of destruction to the urban fabric, public infrastructure and homes in the camp is so severe that it is doubtful people will be able to return to live there at all in the foreseeable future.⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch has determined that the military's actions in the refugee camps constituted war crimes and crimes against humanity.⁶⁰

In January 2026, as the official re-settlement of Homesh and Sa-Nur began gaining momentum, the military admitted that the operations it carried out in the refugee camps, resulting in the forcible transfer of tens of thousands of Palestinians, were meant to help

57 Deiaa Haj Yahia, [“Residents returned to Jenin Refugee Camp, and found bullets in every alley and holes in the walls”](#), **Haaretz**, July 7, 2023 (Hebrew). That same week and in the same paper, Amira Hass predicted that the attack on the refugee camps was designed to spur renewed settlement in the northern West Bank (Amira Hass, [“Israel's Sci-fi Assault on Jenin Paves the Way for New Settlements”](#), **Haaretz English edition**, July 5, 2023).

58 Bar Peleg and Hagar Shezaf, [“Israel Says 40,000 Palestinians ‘Evacuated’ West Bank Refugee Camps, Vows to Stay for a Year”](#), **Haaretz English edition**, February 23, 2025; Agencies and TOI Staff, [“West Bank terror crackdown sees largest displacement of Palestinians since 1967”](#), **Times of Israel**, February 19, 2025.

59 Bimkom, [Architecture of destruction and control: Massive demolitions in refugee camps in the West Bank](#), July 2025 (Hebrew).

60 HRW, [“All My Dreams Have Been Erased”: Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank](#), November 2025.

“safely re-settle” the northern West Bank and were, in fact, a preliminary move that “helped create conditions that made settlement activity in the area more feasible from a security standpoint.”⁶¹ In June 2026, the press reported that the military was building a permanent base in Area A, near Jenin Refugee Camp. Sources told Haaretz that the base is intended, in part, to “protect Israeli settlers who are returning to live in the Jenin area.”⁶²

During a visit to the area designated for the settlement of Sa-Nur in late December 2025, Minister of Finance and Minister in the Ministry of Defense Bezalel Smotrich said:⁶³

As part of the return of settlement and of the Jewish people here to northern Samaria, we always know that army and settlement go together. That is why we, first of all, funded the transfer of the Menashe Regional Brigade headquarters, which was here until the expulsion and was uprooted to Ein Shemer. We are now bringing it back here, along with two additional battalion headquarters, and we have allocated a budget of ILS 800 million (roughly USD 265.7 million) for this over the next three years.

That same week, a large military force was deployed in the area designated for the settlement of Sa-Nur, in a move described in Israel as intended “to stabilize the area ahead of the settlers’ arrival.”⁶⁴ The military presence in the area designated for the settlement was immediately felt in nearby Palestinian communities. Jaba’ Mayor Muhammad Badad told Yesh Din.⁶⁵

When there were no settlers here, the military very rarely entered Jaba’. Since late December 2025, soldiers have been entering almost every day. A month before they started work in Sa-Nur, the military entered the town for three or four nights in a row and arrested about 200 people, myself included. They took us for “conversations” with the Shin Bet in a fortress located inside the settlement land and then let us go. Since then, soldiers have entered 70% of the homes in town.

61 Yoav Zitun, “[West Bank settlements doubled during war as IDF expands forces, builds outposts](#)”, **Ynet Global**, January 4, 2026. See also: Idan Landau, “From transfer to settlement: A year of Iron Wall”, **Don’t Die Stupid Blog**, January 21, 2026 (Hebrew).

62 Chen Maanit and Yarden Michaeli, “[IDF Builds First Permanent Military Post in Palestinian-controlled West Bank Since 1990s](#)”, **Haaretz English edition**, June 11, 2026.

63 Quote translated by Yesh Din, see: Yotam Desheh, “[For the first time since the Disengagement: A military base is being built in Sa-Nur](#)”, **Israel Hayom**, December 28, 2025 (Hebrew). See also: Matan Golan, “[IDF Prepares for Rebuilding of West Bank Settlements Dismantled in 2005](#)”, **Haaretz English edition**, January 5, 2026.

64 Elisha Ben Kimon, “[Israel moves to restore another settlement evacuated in 2005 disengagement](#)”, **Ynet Global**, December 22, 2025.

65 Mayor of Jaba’ to Yesh Din, February 2026.

These home invasions and arrests did not target individuals suspected of unlawful acts. They were a violent show of force by the military, coupled with scare tactics in the shape of Shin Bet “conversations,” meant to set the stage for the settlers’ arrival in the area. Moreover, the massive military action in the northern West Bank since the Disengagement Law was repealed indicates that military preparations for the settlers’ return have been underway for several years, with lethal, destructive outcomes for local Palestinian residents.

According to international law, the occupying military must ensure public order and safety in the occupied territory, protect the local population and safeguard their rights. The military commander may exercise his powers only for the benefit of the occupied territory or in service of security, applying only relevant considerations – the benefit of the protected persons on the one hand, and security interests on the other.⁶⁶ The lethal actions carried out by the military and explicitly intended to promote Israeli settlements in the northern West Bank blatantly contradict the powers of the Israeli military and severely violate the human rights of the indigenous Palestinians.

Homesh

For 48 years, Israel has prevented residents of the Palestinian village of Burqah from freely accessing their private land on which the settlement of Homesh was built. The land was taken from its Palestinian owners in 1978 by virtue of a seizure order for “security” needs, and two years later the settlement was built on it. For 25 years, several dozen Israeli families lived on this Palestinian land until, in 2005, as part of the Disengagement Plan, Israel removed the settlement.

Although the Disengagement Law prohibited Israelis from accessing the areas from which settlements were removed in the northern West Bank, the former site of Homesh, located mostly on land owned by residents of Burqah, had a near-constant Israeli presence over the years. Several dozen Israelis lived there in an unauthorized outpost, with many others joining for mass events and political rallies. Israeli presence at the site was backed by a public campaign and supported by members of Knesset and ministers, amounting to a mass breach of law.⁶⁷

The illegal outpost established in the former seat of the settlement served over the years as a hub for violent organizing directed against Palestinian farmers and residents of

66 **Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land.** The Hague, 18 October 1907, [Article 43](#); HCJ 393/82, [Jam'iat Iskan aAl-Ma'almun Al-Ta'awuniya Al-Mahduda Al-Mas'u'liya v. Commander of the Military Forces in the West Bank et al.](#), judgment, December 28, 1983.

67 Yesh Din, [A World Turned Upside Down: The residents of Burqah's struggle to return to their land where the evacuated settlement of Homesh once stood](#), September 2020.

nearby villages: Burqah, Silat a-Dhahr, al-Fandaqumiyah and Bizzariya. The systematic violence deployed by the settlers was designed to sow fear and terror among Palestinian residents and prevent farmers from cultivating their land, thereby reducing Palestinian presence in the geographic expanse and enabling the reestablishment of settlements in it. Palestinian landowners waged a prolonged legal battle, with Yesh Din's assistance, to return to their stolen land, but after more than a decade of legal proceedings, the violent Jewish presence in the illegal outpost in Homesh was sanctioned by Israel's Supreme Court as well.⁶⁸

In May 2023, two months after the Disengagement Law was repealed, the Homesh outpost was relocated from privately owned Palestinian land to an adjacent plot designated as state land. Although, as in previous cases, the relocation was carried out without the legally required approvals, the political and military leaderships once again fell into step behind the settlers' unlawful actions, enabling the outpost to thrive and expand.⁶⁹

In December 2025, the military commander signed an order designating Homesh as an Israeli settlement. The order revealed that the renewed settlement would be built on several "islands" of land classified as state land, located in a "sea" of privately owned Palestinian land.⁷⁰ Experience shows that although the formal jurisdiction of the settlement does not extend to the privately owned Palestinian land, the landowners will continue to be denied access to their property, as they have been for years, and the land would ultimately be taken over by settlers and swallowed up into the settlement.⁷¹

68 Yesh Din, "[Landowners from Burqah petitioned the High Court of Justice to allow them to access their land where the settlement of Homesh was located](#)", April 18, 2019.

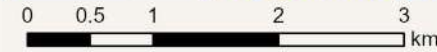
69 Yaniv Kubovich and Ben Samuels, "[IDF Frustrated With Israeli Government Over Contradicting Orders in Illegal Homesh Outpost](#)", **Haaretz English edition**, May 29, 2023.

70 Elisha Ben Kimon, "[Military order doubles evacuated West Bank settlement, leaves Palestinians in enclaves](#)", **Ynet Global**, December 30, 2025.

71 See, for example: Yesh Din, "[HCJ petition to revoke the order expanding the jurisdiction of the settlement of Geva Binyamin](#)", April 16, 2026.

Sa-Nur and Homesh

Jurisdictional areas and roads for settlements



- Sa-Nur bypass road
- Sa-Nur seizure fence
- Outposts
- Settlement built-up area
- Settlement jurisdiction zone

- Existing main roads
- Palestinian built-up area
- Area A
- Area B
- Private Palestinian lands in Area C



“All the agricultural land is threatened; it will be impossible to access, cultivate or sow.”

The settlement of Sa-Nur was established on 65 dunams of land Israel had designated as state land. At its peak, a few dozen Israeli settlers lived there. The settlement site vacated by Israel during Disengagement is surrounded by thousands of dunams of privately owned Palestinian land belonging to residents of the villages of Jaba', al-Fandaqumiyah and Silat a-Dhahr. This land is used for residential, business and agricultural purposes. Despite its relatively small size, the expedited reestablishment of the settlement of Sa-Nur is expected to have a dramatic impact on Palestinian space around it, and it may serve as a test case for other settlements slated to be built in this area.

In August 2025, three months after the cabinet decided to reestablish the settlement, the Samaria Local Planning and Building Committee gave its approval to deposit a city-building plan for the settlement of Sa-Nur, which includes 126 housing units intended to house three times the number of settlers living in the settlement before its removal.⁷² In November 2025, the military commander signed an order defining Sa-Nur's jurisdiction boundaries, and a month later, the Ministry of Interior reactivated the settlement's locality code, which was frozen after the Disengagement. These steps turned Sa-Nur into an official settlement, enabling the state to allocate funding and prepare construction plans.⁷³

On December 14, 2025, the military issued a seizure order for privately owned Palestinian land to construct a six-kilometer-long bypass road linking the Homesh junction to Sa-Nur. The Ministry of Finance, headed by Minister Smotrich, has allocated approximately ILS 20 million (~ 6.64 million USD) to fund the project. The seizure order covers cultivated agricultural land spanning approximately 500 dunams, that is, more than seven times the size of the settlement itself. The road, which appears to be intended for use by Israeli settlers only, in contravention of international law, will deny Palestinian landowners access to thousands more dunams of agricultural land. In March 2026, the military issued another seizure order for land in the area designated for the settlement, apparently for the construction of a fence or security road; the order encloses approximately 150 more dunams of privately owned Palestinian land, effectively increasing the settlement's area.⁷⁴

In March 2026, caravans were placed in Sa-Nur to house Israeli settlers, and a month later, the first 16 Israeli families settled there in a ceremony attended by ministers

72 Srugim website, “[Approval granted for construction of the community evacuated in the Disengagement Plan](#)”, August 22, 2025 (Hebrew).

73 Elia Aviv, “[Historic step: These are the 13 communities in Judea and Samaria whose status has been regulated](#),” **C14**, November 10, 2025 (Hebrew); Dvir Amar, “[Interior Ministry: Eight communities in Judea and Samaria have been officially recognized](#),” **Arutz 7**, December 8, 2025 (Hebrew).

74 Order regarding Seizure of Land No. 175/25/T (Judea and Samaria), 5786–2025 (Hebrew); Order regarding Seizure of Land No. 46/26/T (Judea and Samaria), 5786–2026 (Hebrew).

and members of Knesset.⁷⁵ Ten days later, the Supreme Planning Council of the Civil Administration granted final approval for the plan to build 126 permanent homes in the settlement of Sa-Nur. As in many past cases, in Sa-Nur too, the settlers arrived first, and their presence was regularized later. And so, less than a year after the cabinet decision to resettle Sa-Nur, the settlers' initiative, combined with state backing, government resources and the might of the military, led to the rapid establishment of the settlement in the heart of Palestinian territory.



Jaba' Mayor Muhammad Badad observing the construction of the bypass road, February 2026 (Photo: Yesh Din)

As work on the bypass road began, two months before the first settlers moved to Sa-Nur, Jaba' Mayor Muhammad Badad already understood the implications of the new Israeli settlement in the area.⁷⁶

75 Yanki Farber, "Homesh, Sa-Nur and Sebastia will be connected to the grid even before construction begins", **Kol Rega**, January 11, 2026 (Hebrew); Haim Golditsch, "[Caravans placed in the settlement of Sa-Nur, evacuated in the Disengagement](#)", **Kan**, March 17, 2026 (Hebrew); Matan Golan, "[Israeli Ministers Hail Resettlement of 16 Families in West Bank Area Cleared in 2005 Withdrawal](#)", **Haaretz English edition**, April 20, 2026.

76 Mayor of Jaba' to Yesh Din, February 2026.

All the agricultural land is threatened; it will be impossible to access, cultivate or sow. The businesses along the road are also in danger. We await our fate. We are here; we are not leaving; there is danger, but we are staying. We have nowhere else to go; this is our home. For now, there is no settler violence yet, but we see what is happening in other places all over the West Bank. There is great fear; we have lost hope of living in peace and quiet because the settlers will come back here. The children were able to move about freely in our area, but now they no longer can. Business owners on the main road are worried about their shops; they are afraid it will be like in Huwarah. We know we are going to suffer.

Badad was correct. On March 29, 2026, the first illegal outpost was established on Jaba' land. In April 2026, the Civil Administration handed owners of Palestinian businesses located on Route 60 near Sa-Nur demolition and eviction orders; and in May 2026, settlers from Sa-Nur forced Palestinians to exhume a body from a grave and move it elsewhere, claiming the grave had been dug too close to the settlement.⁷⁷

“A million in Samaria?”

In August 2023, five months after the repeal of the Disengagement Law, Yossi Dagan, Head of the Samaria Regional Council, presented a plan to increase the number of settlers in the northern West Bank to one million by the year 2050. The plan includes building new cities, industrial zones, a railway line and an airport. Unsurprisingly, the plan does not so much as mention the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who live in this area, and the map attached to the plan conspicuously omits the Green Line, which separates Israel from the OPT.⁷⁸

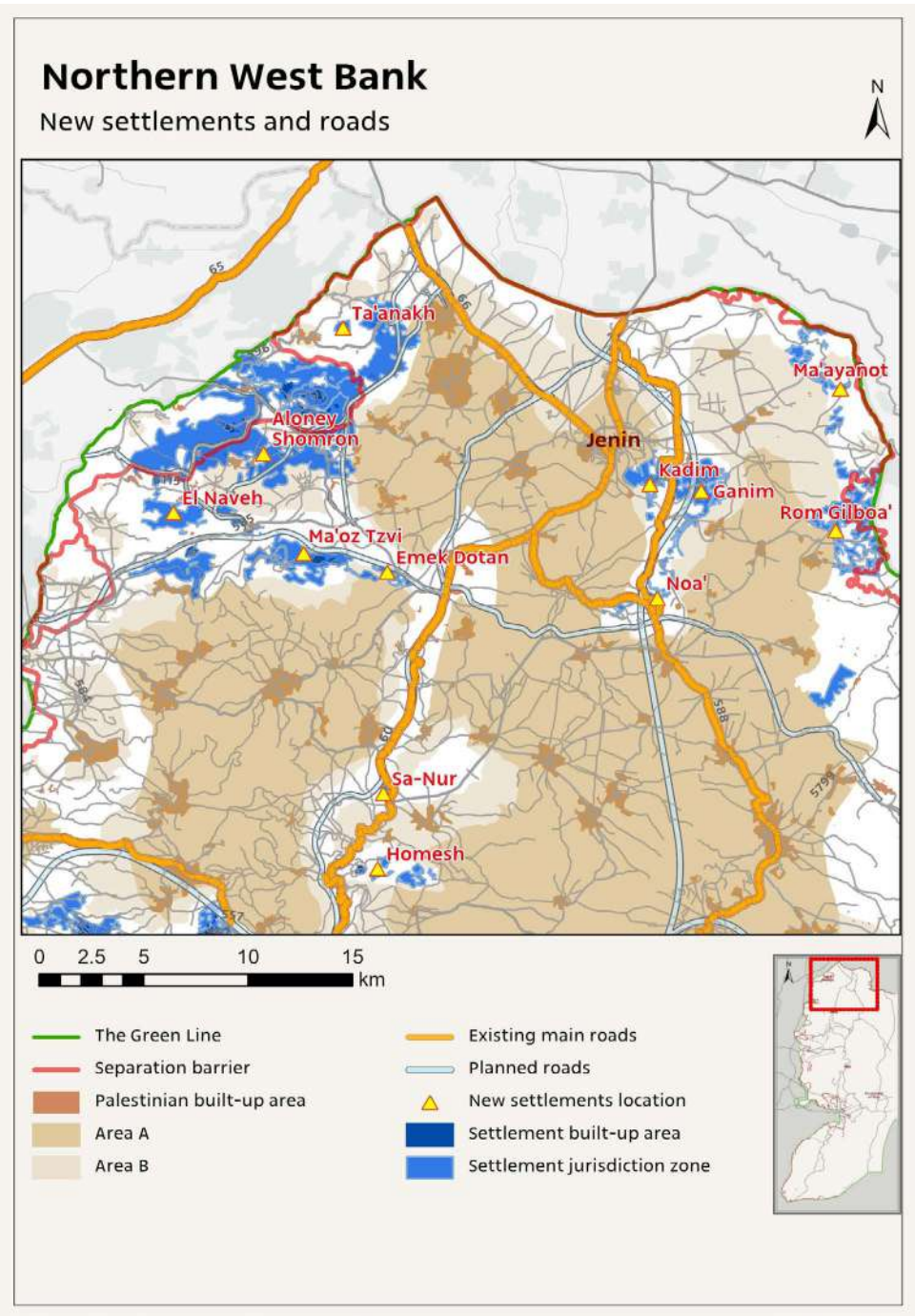
In March 2026, the cabinet approved the establishment of 34 new settlements in the West Bank, nine of them within the jurisdiction of the Samaria Regional Council. In May 2026, military orders establishing municipal jurisdictions for these settlements were issued.⁷⁹ Some of the settlements are slated to be built in areas that have never had an Israeli presence of any kind. The settlement of Gannim is expected to be the first to be populated, as early as the summer of 2026.⁸⁰

77 Lior Ben Ari, [“Settlers force Palestinians to exhume body from West Bank grave”](#), **Ynet Global**, May 9, 2026.

78 Samaria Regional Council website, [“Plan for one million residents in Samaria by the year 2050”](#) (Hebrew); Elisha Ben Kimon, [“Settlers present plan to increase West Bank population to 1 million by 2050”](#), **Ynet Global**, August 23, 2023.

79 Birkom, [Israel's Use of “Jurisdictional Areas”: An accelerating annexation mechanism in the West Bank](#), June 2026.

80 Inon Shalom Yattach, [“Israeli cabinet quietly authorizes 34 new settlements in swift move”](#), **i24NEWS**, April 9, 2026; Matan Golan, Yaniv Kubovich and Jonathan Lis, [“Newly Approved West Bank Settlements to Be Built on Private Palestinian Land. Map Shows”](#), **Haaretz English edition**, April 14, 2026; Elisha Ben Kimon, [“Israel plans return to evacuated West Bank settlement this summer”](#), **Ynet Global**, April 23, 2026.



The proven method used in the past, combining formal actions by state authorities with on-the-ground operations by settlers, is expected to be used to implement the “A million in Samaria”: proactive, often unlawful, settler actions to seize land, usually involving violence against Palestinians; military assistance to settlers; restrictions imposed on Palestinian freedom of movement in the area; state support in the form of infrastructure and resources; and retroactive authorization of outposts.

The establishment of new settlements in the northern West Bank, both those already approved and those still in planning, is part of a belligerent project of dispossession, oppression and expansion of Israeli control at the expense of the local Palestinian population. Severe, disproportionate harm to Palestinians' basic rights to property, livelihoods, freedom of movement, safety and life is inevitable. As in other parts of the West Bank, the presence of settlers, even in numbers far below the declared target, will intensify the structural oppression produced by the military regime and lead to state violence carried out by soldiers and settlers, as well as the seizure of Palestinian land. In addition to the land grab, Israeli settlement efforts will claim Palestinian lives, forcibly displace communities and further reduce Palestinian living space.



Credit: Samaria Regional Council⁸¹

81 As circulated on social media and in the press.

Conclusion

Israel is annexing the West Bank through settlement, violence and the fragmentation of Palestinian space, pushing the Palestinian population into small, isolated enclaves. Even if the vision Minister Smotrich laid out in his Sovereignty Plan is not fully realized, it is nonetheless a roadmap for Israel's policy in the West Bank: forcibly transferring Palestinian communities, constricting the spaces where Palestinians can move and live, taking over open spaces and erasing Palestinian territorial contiguity in the West Bank. Collectively, these measures serve the aim of annexing as much West Bank territory to Israel as possible, with as few indigenous Palestinian residents as possible.

The report **Maximum Territory, Minimum Population** exposes the expansion of the apparatus of repression and dispossession Israel employs against Palestinians in the territories under its control. This policy, key principles of which have been incorporated into the Israeli government's guiding principles, systematically deploys cruel and racist practices. Previously used mainly against isolated communities in Area C, it is now directed at the entire Palestinian population in the West Bank.

The report presents the various tools Israel deploys through its military and settlers and demonstrates their dire impact on multiple social and geographic circles of belonging: family, community, town and larger geographic expanse. The featured case studies represent different areas and levels in which Israel exerts the coercive forces of spatial takeover, movement and access regimes and violence to achieve its goals.

The first section focuses on the Seam Zone, where access restrictions initially imposed as an emergency response have become a permanent reality. Sanctioned by Israel's High Court of Justice, these restrictions force Palestinian absence from more than 100,000 dunams of agricultural land in the West Bank, leaving it open for takeover by the state or Israeli citizens and severely violating the basic rights of Palestinian farmers to freedom of movement, property and occupation.

The report then turns the spotlight on the community of a-Rummanah near Jericho, whose residents' freedom of movement is at the mercy of the security guard of a nearby settlement, leaving them in constant uncertainty regarding their ability to leave their homes safely. Moreover, community residents live under constant threat even inside their homes, which are located in Area A, as soldiers and settlers regularly invade them. These acts of violence and harassment signal the expansion of the transfer and annexation apparatus from Area C to the rest of the West Bank.

The Sinjil case study illustrates the pressure put on the town by Israel's apparatus of repression designed to drive residents off their land and concentrate them in small, enclosed areas. Direct violence, movement and access restrictions, land takeovers and

systematic human rights violations are just some of the means used by the military and settlers in an ongoing process that aims to constrict Palestinian living space and create isolated Palestinian enclaves.

Finally, the report looks at Palestinian space in the northern West Bank, where the military operates with lethal violence to prepare the ground for the establishment of new settlements. The rapid expansion of the settlement project in this area, which enjoys massive support from the Israeli government, has already begun changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the region. It is expected to bring more restrictions on their freedom of movement and take over more of their land. In addition, based on Israel's modus operandi in other parts of the OPT, it is reasonable to assume that renewed settlement in the northern West Bank will cost Palestinian lives, lead to the forcible transfer of communities and significantly reduce Palestinian living space.

These case studies indicate a structured Israeli policy consisting of several components: full cooperation between **settlers**, who initiate the establishment of outposts and violence against Palestinians, and the **military**, which oppresses the Palestinian population on a daily basis, launches devastating attacks to pave the way for new settlements and backs settler attacks with force; lack of effective law enforcement against settlers and soldiers by **law enforcement agencies**; and institutional support in the form of funding, infrastructure, retroactive approval and legitimacy from **members of government and elected officials**. All these elements work in concert to take as much West Bank land as possible, while leaving as few Palestinians living on it as possible.

This systematic apparatus seeks to realize Israeli annexation of the West Bank according to the principle of **maximum territory, minimum population**: in other words, expanding Israeli control in the West Bank while fragmenting Palestinian civilian space, emptying entire areas of Palestinian presence, isolating communities and pushing the remaining population into crowded, isolated enclaves. The forced absence of landowners from areas "cleansed" of Palestinians will lead to Israeli takeover of these hundreds of thousands of dunams and immeasurably exacerbate the harm inflicted on the Palestinian public in the West Bank and the human rights abuses they suffer.

Yesh Din, Bimkom and HaMoked urge the international community not to stand idly by in the face of Israel's crimes in the West Bank but to take resolute, effective action, in line with international law. Israel's unlawful annexation of the West Bank is the source of grave violations of Palestinians' human rights and must be halted. Israel must fulfill its legal obligation to protect Palestinians living under occupation; guarantee their fundamental rights, with an emphasis on the rights to freedom of movement, property and livelihood; remove outposts and settlements; and hold settlers and soldiers accountable for attacks on Palestinians and their property.