



GLOBAL EYE INTELLIGENCE



THE UNDECLARED WAR ON WEST BANK

WEST ASIA TRACKER



SUMMARY

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) carried out a large-scale demolition operation in Anata, east of occupied Jerusalem. Over 20 buildings, including a wedding hall and sheep pens, were destroyed as IDF soldiers and bulldozers invaded the town, closing off access to nearby neighborhoods.



DEMOLITION AND LAND SEIZURE STATISTICS

- **West Bank Demolitions:** According to the Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee, in the first half of 2024, the IDF demolished 318 structures and issued demolition orders for an additional 359 structures across the West Bank.

- **Jerusalem:** In the first six months of 2024, there were 153 demolitions in Jerusalem, affecting neighborhoods such as Jabal Al-Mukabber, Issawiya, Shu'fat, Beit Hanina, and Sur Baher. Many of these demolitions are self-executed by residents due to exorbitant fines and threats. In 2023, a total of 268 demolitions occurred in Jerusalem, with more than half happening after October 7th. The threat remains high, with 20,000 homes in Jerusalem facing potential demolition.



ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK

Since the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, Israeli actions in the territory have been a major source of conflict and international debate. Here's an overview of the key aspects of Israeli actions in the West Bank since then:

1. Occupation and Administration : Following the 1967 war, Israel established military control over the West Bank, which has been under Israeli occupation ever since. The West Bank, along with Gaza (also captured in 1967), has been administered by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and various Israeli governmental bodies. The international community generally considers the West Bank to be occupied territory under international law.

2. Settlement Expansion Israeli Settlements: One of the most contentious aspects of Israeli policy in the West Bank has been the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements. Since 1967, successive Israeli governments have encouraged the building of settlements in the West Bank, which are considered illegal under international law by most countries and organizations. These settlements are established on land that Palestinians view as part of their future state.

Impact: Settlement expansion has significantly altered the demographic and geographic landscape of the West Bank. It has led to the fragmentation of Palestinian territories and has been a major obstacle to peace negotiations. Settlements often lead to displacement of Palestinian communities and have been associated with frequent clashes and tensions between settlers and Palestinians.

3. Security Measures and Checkpoints **Security Barriers:** In response to security concerns, particularly during the Second Intifada (2000-2005), Israel constructed a barrier (often referred to as the "apartheid wall" by critics) that separates the West Bank from Israel. While Israel argues that the barrier is a necessary security measure to prevent terrorist attacks, Palestinians and human rights organizations view it as an illegal land grab and a tool for restricting movement and access.

Checkpoints: The Israeli military has established numerous checkpoints throughout the West Bank. These checkpoints control the movement of Palestinians and goods, and have been criticized for causing significant disruptions to daily life, economic activity, and access to services such as healthcare and education.

4. Land Expropriation and Demolitions **Land Expropriation:** Israeli authorities have expropriated land for various purposes, including the construction of settlements, military bases, and infrastructure projects. This often involves confiscating land from Palestinian owners, leading to disputes and legal battles.

Demolitions: The Israeli government has demolished homes and structures belonging to Palestinians for various reasons, including the lack of building permits (which are often difficult for Palestinians to obtain) and punitive demolitions as a response to attacks against Israelis. These actions have been widely criticized by human rights organizations as collective punishment.





5. Peace Process and Negotiations : Oslo Accords: In the 1990s, the Oslo Accords marked a significant attempt to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The agreements led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and set the framework for negotiations toward a two-state solution. Despite the accords, many of the key issues, including borders, settlements, and the status of Jerusalem, remain unresolved. Various rounds of negotiations have been held since the Oslo Accords, but they have repeatedly stalled or failed to achieve a lasting resolution. Issues such as the expansion of settlements, security concerns, and mutual distrust continue to impede progress.

6. International Reactions : The international community is deeply divided on the Israeli actions in the West Bank. While some countries support Israel's right to security and its actions as legitimate, many others condemn the settlement expansion and occupation, calling for Israel to adhere to international law and support the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

7. UN Resolutions: The United Nations has passed numerous resolutions addressing Israeli policies in the West Bank, including calls for the cessation of settlement activities and respect for Palestinian rights. However, enforcement of these resolutions has been inconsistent, and diplomatic efforts have often been hampered by political complexities.



HISTORY OF ILLEGAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS SINCE 1967

Since the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, Israeli settlement activity became a central issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The international community widely regarded these settlements as illegal under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibited an occupying power from transferring its own civilian population into the occupied territory.

- **1967-1970s:** In the immediate aftermath of the 1967 war, Israel began establishing settlements in the newly occupied territories. The initial settlements were small and often primarily military in nature, serving as outposts for security purposes.
- **1980s-1990s:** The pace of settlement expansion accelerated. The Israeli government encouraged the establishment of settlements as a strategic and ideological measure, including the construction of infrastructure like roads and bypasses to link settlements. This period also saw the growth of large settlements, often subsidized by the Israeli government.
- **2000s:** The expansion of settlements continued despite international condemnation and the construction of the Israeli West Bank barrier (often referred to as the "apartheid wall" by critics). Settlements expanded into areas that became increasingly difficult to connect and served as a significant obstacle to the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state.

- **2010s:** Settlement activity reached a peak. The international community, including the United Nations, increasingly criticized Israel's settlement policies, calling for a halt to expansion. Despite this, settlement growth persisted, including in East Jerusalem, leading to intensified clashes and political tensions.
- **2020s:** Settlement activity remained a contentious issue. Israel continued to expand existing settlements and establish new outposts, often accompanied by the demolition of Palestinian homes and the seizure of land. The international community continued to debate and condemn these actions, yet settlement expansion persisted.



ABOUT THE WALL AND SETTLEMENT RESISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee is an organization dedicated to documenting and resisting the impacts of Israeli settlement expansion and land confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territories. This committee played a crucial role in monitoring and reporting on the ongoing demolition of Palestinian structures and land seizures. Their work involved providing detailed accounts of these activities, advocating for affected communities, and raising international awareness about the violations of Palestinian rights. Their reports were vital in understanding the broader implications of these policies on Palestinian life and land.

SHEIKH JARRAH CASE

The Sheikh Jarrah case refers to a complex and highly contentious legal and political situation involving property disputes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. This case has drawn significant international attention and is emblematic of the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Background

Sheikh Jarrah is a predominantly Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem, an area that was captured by Israel during the Six-Day War in 1967 and later annexed. The annexation is not internationally recognized, and the status of East Jerusalem remains one of the most contentious issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



The core of the Sheikh Jarrah case involves disputes over property ownership. In the 1950s, Jordan, which controlled East Jerusalem at the time, provided land in Sheikh Jarrah to Palestinian refugees who had been displaced from their homes in what is now Israel. However, after the Six-Day War, Israeli authorities began to assert claims to the land, arguing that the property originally belonged to Jewish owners before 1948.



THE DISPUTE

Legal Claims: Jewish organizations, particularly the settler group Nahalat Shimon, claim that the land in Sheikh Jarrah was owned by Jewish families before the establishment of the State of Israel. They argue that under Israeli law, they have the right to reclaim property that was lost during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

Eviction Orders: In recent years, Israeli courts have issued eviction orders for several Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, allowing Jewish settlers to move into these properties. The evictions are based on legal claims and court rulings, but they have been widely criticized by Palestinians and international observers as part of a broader strategy to alter the demographic balance of East Jerusalem.

International Reaction: The case has drawn significant international attention and criticism. Many view the evictions as a violation of international law and a hindrance to the peace process. The United Nations and various human rights organizations have condemned the actions, calling for a halt to the evictions and a resolution to the property disputes that respects the rights of the Palestinian residents.





IMPLICATIONS

The Sheikh Jarrah case is more than just a property dispute; it is a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, highlighting the deep-seated tensions over land, national identity, and historical grievances. It has also been a catalyst for protests and clashes in Jerusalem and has influenced international diplomatic efforts regarding the conflict.



CONCLUSION

The recent escalation in demolition and land seizure activities underscored the systematic efforts to displace Palestinian communities and expand Israeli settlements. The Wall and Settlement Resistance Committee's reports highlighted the scale and impact of these actions, shedding light on the challenges faced by Palestinians amid ongoing pressures from the occupation authorities. The international community's response and intervention remained critical in addressing these human rights violations and supporting affected communities in their struggle for justice and stability.



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