**Security Council**

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**The question of illegal settlements in Palestine.**

1. ***Introduction:***

The occupied state of palestine also known as the holy land is a state located in the middle east specifically in the southern levant region of west asia. The Illegal State of Israel has been illegitimately occupying Palestinian land since 1967, including the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Since that time, the illegal Israeli government has created a two-tiered legal and political structure that gives illegal Jewish settlers extensive legal protections while imposing military authority and control on Palestinians without providing them with any fundamental rights or safeguards under international law. Along with extrajudicial executions, torture, denial of fundamental human rights, arbitrary imprisonment, and collective punishment, the illegal occupation’s government also often engages in cruel crimes.

Last year in June 2022, the Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on the illegal state of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem, established by the UN Human Rights Council, determined that the occupation's continuation and discrimination against Palestinians are the main causes of recurrent instability and protraction of conflict in the region.

Illegal settlers frequently assault Palestinians physically, shoot them with live ammunition, set farms and cattle on fire, steal from them, vandalize their property and build illegal settlements on their stolen lands for settlers to live in while palestinian families suffer . The occupation’s security forces also frequently attack Palestinians, especially in occupied territory, which frequently escalates into lethal violence, such as the routine aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip. Over 150 Palestinians, including 26 children, were killed by the occupation’s security forces in 2022, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This was the deadliest year for Palestinians living in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 2005.

1. ***Some of the Involved Countries and Organizations:***

1. **Palestine :**

Palestine is the land where these illegal settlements are being built and run by the illegal occupation. The Human Rights Council claims that they have heard the presentation of a report by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in march of this year stating that there are currently 700,000 settlers living illegally in the occupied west bank.

Illegal Israeli settlers increased from 520,000 to almost 700,000 between 2012 and 2022 in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. With a combined population of more than 229,000, these settlers resided unlawfully in 279 illegal Israeli settlements spread throughout the occupied West Bank, including 14 in the occupied East Jerusalem. These settlements included at least 147 outposts, all of which were illegal even under the Illegal Israeli domestic law.

1. **Syrian Arab Republic :**

The Syrian Golan is currently occupied and under the rule of the illegal occupation. Over 20,000 settlers live in illegal settlements in the Syrian Golan; also known as the Golan Heights. The Syrian Arab republic and the occupation have fought against each other in three major wars: first the 1948 Arab Israeli war also known as the Nakba, then the 1967 Six-day war and then the 1973 October war.

1. **The International Criminal Court :**

In order to pursue prosecutions against the occupation's settlement programme and its military operations, the Palestinian leadership pushed in late 2014 to join the International Criminal Court in The Hague, over the occupation's strong objections.

The court quickly launched a preliminary investigation, and in 2021 it said that it was starting a *full open investigation* into claims of war crimes committed by the occupation and by Palestinian terrorist organizations in areas the occupation had captured in 1967.

There has been little movement.Hussein al-Sheikh, a top official in the Palestinian Authority located in the West Bank, pleaded with the international court to expedite the proceedings after the Eli incident sparked a wave of retaliations by radical Jewish settlers who rampaged through Palestinian towns setting fire to property.

1. **United States of America :**

The u.s embassy in jerusalem released a press release in march of 2023 stating the following: “We are deeply troubled by the Israeli government’s order that allows its citizens to establish a permanent presence in the Homesh outpost in the northern West Bank, which according to Israeli law was illegally built on private Palestinian land. This order is inconsistent with both former Prime Minister Sharon’s written commitment to the Bush Administration in 2004 and the current Israeli government’s commitments to the Biden Administration. Advancing Israeli settlements in the West Bank is an obstacle to the achievement of a two-state solution.We are also concerned by today’s provocative visit to the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem and the accompanying inflammatory rhetoric. This holy space should not be used for political purposes, and we call on all parties to respect its sanctity. More broadly, we reaffirm the longstanding U.S. position in support of the historic status quo at Jerusalem’s holy sites and underline Jordan’s special role as custodian of Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.”

<https://il.usembassy.gov/settlements-in-the-west-bank/>

This press release clearly shows that the United states of america is promoting towards a two-state solution as it has historically attempted to pursue a diplomatic resolution that would balance the opposing parties' claims even though the united states is a strong supporter of the occupation as it is looking for its own benefit.

As succeeding administrations pursued a wide range of interconnected objectives, such as securing crucial energy resources, warding off Soviet and Iranian influence, ensuring the survival and security of Israel and Arab allies, combating terrorism, advancing democracy, and reducing refugee flows, the Middle East has long been of central importance to the United States. In order to achieve these strategic goals while balancing its support for the occupation and its quest for greater regional stability, the United States has attempted to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue, which has been a significant driver of regional dynamics. The American Jewish community and Christian Evangelicals, who are both ardent supporters of the occupation, have both made the disagreement a top priority.

For more than 50 years, the US has played a significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Soon after World War II, it got engaged, joining the UK in a 1946 investigation that suggested relocating 100,000 Holocaust survivors to Palestine, which would be neither a Jewish nor an Arab state. In 1948, the United States was the first nation to recognise Israel as a sovereign state.

Along with Britain, France, Russia, and the United Nations, the United States made an effort to mediate the larger Arab-Israeli dispute following the 1967 Six-Day War. But it was the 1973 war, in which Israel first found it difficult to repel invading Egyptian and Syrian forces, that forced the United States to assume the initiative in subsequent diplomacy. Despite Israel's military victory, the Arab countries severely damaged the occupation’s psyche.

1. ***Focused overvue of the issue:***

Estimates indicate that about 700,000 settlers are living in 164 settlements and 116 outposts in the occupied West Bank in 2023.

In the 1967 Middle East conflict, the occupation defeated Jordan and took East Jerusalem and the West Bank, allowing settlers to settle there shortly after.

The Fourth Geneva Convention has been broken by Illegal Israeli settlements on the West Bank, according to the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Security Council, and International Court of Justice. The treaty, which was ratified by 192 countries after World War II, states that an occupying force "shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

Such transfers are categorized as war crimes by the law that was established by the International Criminal Court in 1998.

Since 1967, more than 130 settlements have been constructed with Illegal Israeli official approval. In addition, during the 1990s, more than 100 colony outposts have been built without permission from the government. The Illegal Israeli government is seeking to retrospectively approve several if not all of them.

Every illegal Israeli administration over the past few decades has allowed some settlement building to continue. In the West Bank, more than 2.6 million Palestinians coexist with more than 400,000 illegal settlers. Using the term co-exist would not be accurate, as settlers make it their daily mission to end the existence of these palestinians.

The right-wing illegal government of the occupation has been pushing for the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, and this year's efforts to do so have increased. This has led to worldwide condemnation of a practice that most nations claim is illegal under international law.

Palestinians claim that the settlements take up the land they believe to be theirs for a future state and frequently prevent them from accessing farmland. Additionally, they establish a two-tiered legal structure in the area, with one set of laws protecting settler citizens and another for Palestinians living under military occupation.

On june 20th 2023, antonio guterres has urged Israel to immediately "cease all settlement activities" in the occupied Palestinian territories, claiming that the occupation's intentions to do so will only fuel "tensions and violence" and be a significant barrier to achieving a permanent peace. “The Secretary-General reiterates that settlements are a flagrant violation of international law,” Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for the secretary general, said in a statement later. 

“The expansion of these illegal settlements is a significant driver of tensions and violence and deepens humanitarian needs,” Haq said.

“It further entrenches Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory, encroaches on Palestinian land and natural resources, hampers the free movement of the Palestinian population, and undermines the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and sovereignty,” the UN chief said, according to Haq.

1. ***The Security Council :***

According to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is in charge of maintaining global peace and security. The Council has discussed the Middle East conflict and the Palestinian issue frequently since 1948. The Council has requested or mandated cease-fires when combat has broken out. Additionally, it sent out military monitors and stationed UN peacekeeping troops in the area. By passing resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Council established the fundamental guidelines for a negotiated peaceful settlement, sometimes referred to as the "land for peace" formula.

The Council has repeatedly expressed its concern for the situation there, declared void the Israeli government's efforts to alter Jerusalem's status, demanded an end to Israeli settlement activity that it determined lacked legal standing, reaffirmed the Fourth Geneva Convention's applicability, and called for the repatriation of Palestinians who had been deported. In order to achieve an early final solution between the Israeli and Palestinian parties, the Council has consistently advocated for the urgent restart of discussions within the ongoing Middle East peace process.

In its resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the UN Security Council acknowledged the goal of two States—Israel and Palestine—coexisting peacefully within internationally recognised boundaries. It also backed the Road Map proposed by the Quartet (the US, EU, Russia, and three other countries). The Council has sporadic open debates on the subject and gets regular briefings. President Mahmoud Abbas presented Palestine's bid for UN membership in 2011, which is presently before the Council. The Council requested that Israel promptly and totally stop all settlement operations in resolution 2334 (2016).

In the link below you will found all resolutions adopted by the security council regrading the question of palestine and illegal settlements:

<https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/security-council/>

1. ***Important Events and Chronology***

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| ***Year***  | ***Event***  |
| 1947 | Resolution 181 of the UN General Assembly advocates for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab governments, and it also recognises Jerusalem as a separate political entity. |
| 1948: | The occupation formally proclaims its independence and accepts UNGA Resolution 181. Armed opposition from neighboring Arab nations is repelled by it. The right of return for Palestinians is established by UNGA Resolution 194. |
| 1967 | The occupation initiates preemptive strikes in response to an Arab state mobilization, capturing the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. The "land for peace" philosophy, which will serve as the cornerstone of upcoming Arab-Israeli discussions, is enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 242. |
| 1973 | The United states government orchestrates a cease-fire during the Third Arab-Israeli War, begins the U.S.-led peace process, and supports the occupation against a coalition of Arab governments seeking to reclaim lost land. |
| 1978–1979 | President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and prime minister Menachem Begin of the occupation are guests of American President Jimmy Carter at Camp David, where they present a plan for Middle Eastern peace that includes Palestinian autonomy. An agreement is eventually signed between Egypt and the illegal occupation. |
| 1987–1993 | The first intifada led to widespread violence, resulting in the deaths of several hundred illegal settlers and nearly two thousand Palestinians. |
| 1988 | Yasser Arafat, the head of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, endorses UNSC Resolution 242 as the starting point for negotiations between the occupation and the Palestinians. |
| 1991 | The Madrid Conference, co hosted by the United States and the Soviet Union, opens negotiations between the occupation and Palestinians for the first time. |
| 1994 | The occupation and Jordan sign a peace treaty brokered by the United States. |
| 1995 | The Oslo II Accords establish Palestinian self-government in Gaza and 40 percent of the West Bank. |
| 2000: | The discussions at the Camp David summit, which was called by U.S. President Bill Clinton to discuss borders, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem, between occupation’s Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Arafat finished without a resolution. Clinton reveals the guidelines for a Palestinian state that is autonomous and coexists peacefully with the occupation. |
| 2005: | The occupation withdrew from Gaza, including from all settlements there. President Bush sends a letter to the occupation’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon recognizing the reality of settlement blocs in the West Bank. |
| 2008–2009 | After Hamas launches rocket attacks on Israeli civilians from Gaza, the occupation goes to war with the Palestinian militant group there. The weeks-long conflict kills over one thousand Palestinians and thirteen settlers.  |
| 2017: | U.S. President Donald J. Trump announces his decision to relocate the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing the city as the occupation’s capital. |
| 2021 | Evictions of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and clashes at al-Aqsa Mosque spark conflict between the occupation and Hamas that kills over two hundred people in Gaza and at least ten in Israel. The Joe Biden administration helps mediate a truce and restores some U.S. aid and diplomatic contact with the Palestinians. |
| 2022 | The occupation launches a counterterrorism operation in the West Bank in response to a slew of attacks by Palestinians against Jewish settlers. The operation and concurrent resurgence in Palestinian militancy contribute to the deadliest year for both sides since the second intifada. |
| 2023  | The occupation’s defense ministry committee approved more than 5,000 new settlement housing units in the occupied West Bank.  |

1. ***Some questions to answer while researching :***
2. What is my country’s stance on the topic?
3. What has my country done in the past in order to solve this issue?
4. What has the security council done in the past to solve this issue?
5. What are the previously implemented solutions that have failed?
6. How has the international community engaged in solving the issue ?
7. Is your country open to signing peace treaties?
8. ***Useful links***
9. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/world/middleeast/israel-west-bank-settlements-expansion.html#:~:text=How%20many%20settlements%20are%20there,Israeli%20government%20permission%20since%201967>.
10. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/human-rights-council-hears-that-700000-israeli-settlers-are-living-illegally-in-the-occupied-west-bank-meeting-summary-excerpts/#:~:text=These%20settlers%20lived%20illegally%20in,even%20under%20Israeli%20domestic%20law>.
11. <https://remix.aljazeera.com/aje/PalestineRemix/settlement.html>
12. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15424.doc.htm>
13. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205221/>
14. <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/2022-report-israeli_en?s=206>
15. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/26/israel-approves-plans-for-thousands-of-illegal-settlement-homes>
16. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/20/un-chief-tells-israel-to-halt-illegal-settlements-in-palestine>
17. <https://www.palestineportal.org/learn-teach/key-issues/the-settlements-and-settlers-violence/>
18. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-23/debates/4CD25F23-98DA-4B1D-8970-DB3C012FD6A5/OccupiedPalestinianTerritoriesIllegalSettlements>
19. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/18/mapping-israeli-occupation-gaza-palestine>
20. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230325-israel-announces-plans-for-hundreds-of-new-settlement-units/>