

# Violence Will Not End in Israel Until the Occupation Ends

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*On January 27, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a gunman shot ultra-Orthodox Jewish worshippers as they came out of the Ateret Avraham synagogue in the [Neve Yaakov](#) Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem.*

The gunman was 21-year-old Khairi Alkam a resident of East Jerusalem. He was later shot dead by Israeli police. The dead were five men, aged 20 to 60, and two women, aged 60 and 70. Three others were wounded.

The Neve Yaakov Jewish settlement's population is about 23,300. The Jews there have citizenship, civil rights, and human rights. They can travel and return home at any time. Their children can study abroad and return home to Israel for jobs. This settlement, like countless others in the Occupied Territories, is illegal under international law. A synagogue is out of place in East Jerusalem, as West Jerusalem is where the Jews live. East Jerusalem is for the Palestinians.

The Palestinians living in East Jerusalem have no citizenship, they cannot leave, they cannot go abroad for education and return, and their residency permit can be revoked at any time. They are prevented from building a new home or making necessary repairs to their existing home or business. They have no civil rights, or human rights. Many of their homes and business have been demolished or confiscated for decades.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the top two goals of his new administration are to establish more settlements in the Occupied Territories and to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia.

[Netanyahu](#) announced new measures to strengthen Jewish settlements, preparations to demolish the attacker's family home, plans to get more guns into the hands of the Israeli citizens and [taking away social security and health benefits from the family of any Palestinian attacker](#).

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, a far-right extremist, who has been called a terrorist in the past, has called for an increase in settlements. He called for demolishing dozens of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem, granting more gun licenses to Jews, and applying the death penalty to Palestinians convicted of killing Israelis.

Three extra battalions have been deployed in the Occupied West Bank to strengthen defenses on the numerous Jewish settlements there.

Tensions have escalated since Israel ramped up raids in the West Bank last spring, with nearly 190 Palestinians killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 2022, making it the deadliest year in those Occupied Territories since 2004. About 30 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of 2023.

Over 30 people were killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis last year, according to Israeli figures.

Three Palestinians were hospitalized after being shot by a Jewish settler near Nablus in the north of the West Bank, in a separate incident on Friday.

## Why is a synagogue in East Jerusalem?

Neve Yaakov is a religious Jewish settlement that Israel considers to be a neighborhood of its capital. Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians seek East Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, as the capital of their future state. In a long-standing custom, recognized by the international community, the East section of Jerusalem is for Palestinians, and the West section is for the Jews. However, over recent years, the Israeli government has allowed Jewish zealots to confiscate homes and businesses and encroach illegally into East Jerusalem. The Palestinians are suffering from ethnic cleansing on a massive scale condoned by the Jewish government.

## Why are settlers in East Jerusalem?

According to [B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories](#), two parallel regimes are operating in Israel. In the West is a democracy, and in the East is a military occupation.

“The entire area that Israel controls is ruled by a single apartheid regime, governing the lives of all people living in it and operating according to one organizing principle: establishing and perpetuating the control of one group of people – Jews – over another – Palestinians – through laws, practices and state violence.”

B'Tselem advocates for a future where the Israeli occupation and apartheid will end.

In June, plans to build nearly 500 homes in a new Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem were announced. Critics say this further undermines any hope for a two-state solution. Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war and has built illegal settlements across both territories that are now home to some 700,000 Jewish settlers.

## Are the settlements legal?

The international community considers the establishment of Jewish settlements in the

Israeli-Occupied Territories illegal.

They [violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and they are in breach of international declarations](#). The United Nations Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Court of Justice, and the High Contracting Parties to the Convention have all affirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies to the Israeli-Occupied Territories.

Numerous UN resolutions and prevailing international opinion hold that Israeli settlements in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights are a violation of international law, including UN Security Council resolutions in 1979, 1980, and 2016. UN Security Council Resolution 446 refers to the Fourth Geneva Convention as the applicable international legal instrument and calls upon Israel to desist from transferring its population into the territories or changing its demographic makeup.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, which passed 14-0 with the United States abstaining, declared that Israel's settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, "has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law", and demanded that Israel "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities".

## The legal status of Jerusalem

The 1967 war resulted in the occupation by Israel of East Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories. Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1980; however, this is [not recognized by the international community](#), a community that rejects the acquisition of territory by war and considers any changes on the ground illegal and invalid.

[36 structures belonging to Palestinians were demolished](#) throughout December 2022 in East Jerusalem and adjacent areas lying within the al-Quds District of the Palestinian Authority, on orders from the Jewish government. Parts of another structure were demolished on January 4, 2023. 26 non-residential buildings were demolished by the authorities and an agricultural terrace and three fences surrounding plots of land were also demolished.

## Saturday shooting in East Jerusalem

A [13-year-old Palestinian boy shot and wounded two Israelis](#) on Saturday in the neighborhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem, less than 24 hours after the deadly attack outside the synagogue. The wounded were taken to hospital and the boy was arrested after he was injured. [Security footage](#) showed the victims to be observant Jews by their religious dress.

Both Palestinian attackers behind the shootings on Friday and Saturday came from East Jerusalem.

Silwan is home to more than 60,000 Palestinians and is located strategically to the south of Al-Aqsa Mosque. The area has been the target of Israeli settler expansion for years, with hundreds of Palestinian families facing the threat of expulsion, either through lawsuits by powerful settler groups or administrative eviction orders by the Israeli-run Jerusalem municipality.

## Netanyahu will do everything to stay out of prison

Former Prime Minister, Yair Lapid, said [Netanyahu would do everything to avoid going to prison](#). Taking on allies who are ultra-right extremists is what he was forced to do to form a government after the November election. Everyone agrees that this is the most far-right and religious government in Israel's history. Netanyahu has been facing charges of fraud, bribery, and breach of trust since 2020. His hands are tied: he must bow down to the radical demands and threats issued by his extremist partners. Should he stand up to them and refuse, they have the power to withdraw their support of him, and his government will fall, and he will go to prison.

Ben-Gvir became Israel's security minister after a far-right bloc of parties led by Netanyahu won elections in November. The leader of the far-right Otzma Yehudit political party has a history of racist and inflammatory remarks against Palestinians and Arabs, praising previous attacks on Palestinians as "heroic." He has advocated for the deportation of all Palestinians.

## What happened in Jenin and Gaza?

Thursday's attack on Jenin, the deadliest single incursion in the West Bank since 2002, followed a particularly bloody month that saw at least 30 Palestinians killed by Israelis in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli commandos killed nine Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp.

Gaza fired rockets at Israel on Thursday night in response to the Jenin attack. Israel then targeted Gaza with airstrikes. Gaza has been blockaded by Israel since 2007.

The Palestinian Authority said on Thursday night that it was canceling security cooperation with Israel in response to the raid on Jenin, prompting US officials to urge them to reverse the decision.

Friday, Scuffles between Israeli forces and Palestinian mourners erupted after the funeral for a 22-year-old Palestinian north of Jerusalem in the Occupied West Bank.

## Is resistance legal?

International law recognizes the legitimate right of a people to fight for its freedom, and for ["liberation from colonial control, apartheid, and foreign occupation by all the means at its disposal, including armed struggle"](#), as confirmed, for example, by a resolution of the UN General Assembly in 1990.

[The use of force to achieve liberation is legitimate](#). How force is used is governed by the laws of war, the main purpose of which is to protect uninvolved civilians on both sides.

The fighters in Jenin were not terrorists; they were in an act of armed resistance against an occupying power, on occupied land, and they were not targeting civilians.

## UN calls Israel an Apartheid state

In March 2022, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory, [Michael Lynk, issued a report in which he identified Israel as an Apartheid state](#).

"There is today in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 a deeply

discriminatory dual legal and political system, that privileges the 700,000 Israeli Jewish settlers living in the 300 illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank,” said Lynk.

Israel, he said, conforms to the definition as a “political regime which so intentionally and prioritizes fundamental political, legal and social rights to one group over another, within the same geographic unit based on one’s racial-national-ethnic identity”.

## The US defends Israel and allows them impunity

The US strongly condemned the attack in East Jerusalem, and was “shocked and saddened by the loss of life.”

President Joe Biden spoke with Netanyahu to offer US support to the government and people of Israel, calling the shootings “an attack against the civilized world.” “The President stressed the iron-clad US commitment to Israel’s security,” according to a Biden spokesperson.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has arrived in Egypt and will visit Israel and the West Bank.

Blinken’s trip was planned before the recent violence. The Biden administration and the US State Department have no peace plans for Palestinians. Blinken will support Netanyahu and his extremist allies, but will not offer any lasting solution to either side. The US and other Western countries have pressed Israel to rein in settlements, but without any success.

The Palestinian leadership in the West Bank upheld its decision to halt security coordination with Israel to protest the deadly raid in Jenin. After a meeting headed by President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah, the Palestinian Authority called on the international community and the US administration to demand Israel stop its raids and operations in the West Bank.

Blinken should make a stop at the offices of [B’Tselem](#). They could give him a road map.

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