

Israel's violence engulfs occupied West Bank

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Israel has intensified its assault on the occupied West Bank. According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 1,111 Palestinians, at least 243 of them children, have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, at least 65 of them since the beginning of 2026.

Violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property has surged to record levels. OCHA documented more than 1,800 attacks in 2025 that resulted in casualties or property damage across about 280 communities in the West Bank—an average of five incidents a day, the highest daily rate since records began in 2006. Attacks are up more than 50 percent in the first six months of this year.

The latest clash was provoked by armed settlers on Friday night, in which two Israelis and four Palestinians were killed. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) arrested dozens of people around the village of Tell near the West Bank city of Nablus. Troops carried out mass raids in Jenin, Ramallah, Tulkarem and the southern West Bank, setting up checkpoints and closing gates across the West Bank. The IDF said it was bolstering its forces in the West Bank by five companies and cancelling weekend leave for troops.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu backed the settlers, pledging he would take “powerful action” in response, including demolishing the home of the family of one of the Palestinians involved and accelerating the approval of construction of more Israeli settlements in the area. In so doing, he acknowledged that settler violence, far from being the work of a “few bad apples” is nothing short of a state-backed policy in pursuit of ethnic cleansing.

Last week, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced plans for \$400 million in funding for the construction of dozens of new illegal settlements in the West Bank, as Netanyahu's far-right coalition government rushes to expand its control of land in the West Bank and drive out Palestinians before elections scheduled for October.

This comes amid an unprecedented surge in Israeli

settlement activity. According to the Palestinian Forum for Israeli Studies (MADAR), the number of new settlement outposts—illegal even under Israeli law—has soared in recent years. The number has jumped from around eight a year between 2012 and 2022 to 32 in 2023, then 62 in 2024, reaching 86 in 2025.

Armed settlers, protected by the Israeli military, continued their pogroms over the weekend, rampaging through more than a dozen villages across the northern West Bank. Hundreds of Israelis hurled stones, set fire to homes, two mosques and several vehicles, wounded more than a dozen Palestinians. They sprayed graffiti claiming “revenge” over the killing of an Israeli, and setting up another four illegal outposts.

Israel's economic and social devastation of the West Bank

Settler attacks have driven Palestinians off their land, collapsing agriculture. According to a recent survey, poverty levels rose from 12 percent before October 2023 to 28 percent by the end of 2025. Unemployment rate has topped 30 percent, after Israel banned 120,000 Palestinians with work permits from entering Israel after the 7 October attacks. At the weekend, IDF chief in the West Bank Major General Avi Bluth ordered a ban on the 30,000 Palestinian workers with work permits from entering Israeli settlements.

According to a new World Vision report, West Bank families are facing an alarming hunger and poverty crisis, with 74 percent of families now living below the minimum standard of living, up from 21 percent just one year ago; 70 percent of children are frequently skipping meals due to rising food insecurity; 9 percent of children have dropped out of school, largely because their families can no longer afford it or need them to work. There is a staggering 950 percent increase since 2022 in the number of families reporting that a member had gone a full day without eating.

The Palestinian Authority (PA), led by the imperialist stooge Mahmoud Abbas, is on the point of collapse. Starting in 2019, Israel began incrementally withholding

tax revenues collected on its behalf from the PA, an amount that has now reached \$4.8 billion, claiming that the monies are being used to support terrorism. Under Finance Minister Smotrich, this is a deliberate attempt to bankrupt the PA. The PA cannot fully pay salaries for roughly 170,000 public sector employees, whose pay has already been cut by 20 to 50 percent, and tens of thousands of pensioners, who have been plunged into debt. Education and healthcare systems are only partially functioning, while the 1,000 checkpoints, barriers and gates across the West Bank, have strangled daily life.

The PA's budget deficit for 2026 is forecast to reach \$4 billion. By late 2025, PA's total debt had reached about \$15.4 billion—owed to banks, pension funds, suppliers and contractors, including \$2.7 billion owed to its public sector employees. The situation has become even more critical after two Israeli banks, Hapoalim and Discount, announced they were halting banking services with Palestinian banks within the next few weeks as a result of Smotrich's decision not to sign indemnity waivers allowing Israeli banks to handle transactions from Palestinian banks to the outside world. This was part of his efforts to force the PA's collapse, expand Israel's control over the West Bank and "encourage the emigration" of the territory's Palestinians.

Israel's multi-front wars and the US Israel axis

All this has been done with financial, military and political backing from Washington, for whom Israel serves as the well-paid custodian of US interests in the resource-rich Middle East.

Just months after taking office, Netanyahu launched a genocidal war on Gaza aimed at eliminating Palestinian presence through mass starvation and coerced "voluntary" migration. Armed and financed by the US and other imperialist powers, more than 73,000 people have been killed in aerial and ground attacks, and at least 170,000 injured. An untold number of people have died of starvation, infections, disease and lack of medical treatment.

The US and Israel launched a 12-day war of aggression against Iran in June 2025, despite on-going negotiations, and again in February this year.

Israel has used Hezbollah's symbolic rocket fire in opposition to the war against Iran as the trigger for a pre-planned, all-out war on Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, where Hezbollah had spent more than a decade helping Russia and Iran prop up Bashar al-Assad's regime against the Islamist forces, financed by the Gulf petrostates, Turkey and the CIA seeking to topple the

regime.

Israel expanded its operations after Ahmad al-Shara'a and his Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) seized power in Syria, moving troops into and beyond the UN-monitored buffer zone in Syria, establishing bases up to the Syrian-Jordanian border and carrying out more than 1,000 attacks across Syria.

It repeatedly struck the Houthis, Iranian allies who control much of Yemen, including the capital, Sanaa, and Yemen's three Red Sea ports under Houthi control, Hodeidah, As-Salif and Ras Isa – 70 per cent of all imports and 80 percent of all humanitarian aid going into Yemen pass through these ports, according to the United Nations.

Netanyahu is set to meet US President Donald Trump in the White House on Tuesday, his seventh meeting in Trump's second term, far outpacing any other world leader and underscoring the Zionist state's continued usefulness to US imperialism. It comes amid renewed escalation of US aggression against Iran following Washington's abandonment earlier this month of a ceasefire reached as part of a Memorandum of Understanding.

The meeting, coinciding with Netanyahu's visit to the US for the funeral of Senator Lindsey Graham—one of Israel's staunchest supporters in Washington—signals their continued coordination on the broader regional war against Iran and its allies. Israeli media report that the IDF have prepared for a significant escalation.

The only progressive way out of this permanent state of war is for the working class, both Israeli and Palestinian, to unify across national lines against their common enemy, the Zionist bourgeoisie and its imperialist backers.



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