

Israel launches invasion of West Bank amid preparations for renewed onslaught against Iran

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The Israeli government sealed off the occupied West Bank on Friday, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he was preparing a military operation there of a kind “not carried out since” Israel’s conquest of the territory in 1967.

The Israeli government, in alliance with the Trump administration, is extending the Gaza genocide to the West Bank in step with the preparations for a renewed offensive against Iran. Both are part of one continuous operation to create a “new Middle East,” launched in October 2023 under Democratic President Joe Biden and continued under US President Donald Trump. The total subjugation and ethnic cleansing of Palestine is a corollary of the war plans of the Trump and Netanyahu governments.

Netanyahu ordered the lockdown four days before Israel’s national election on October 27, 11 days before the US midterm elections on November 3 and four days after US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth met him in Israel. The *New York Times* wrote Wednesday that US officials said Hegseth and Netanyahu discussed new strikes on Iran, to be launched after the US elections.

Just as the October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas were seized upon by Netanyahu as the pretext to occupy Gaza and displace and exterminate its inhabitants, the Netanyahu government has seized on an attack on Israeli soldiers as its pretext for the offensive to annex the West Bank.

Two soldiers, Staff Sgt. Ron Yonatan Roytman, 23, and Sgt. Yuval Shai Svilem, 20, were killed at a checkpoint outside Hebron, in the southern West Bank, on Friday morning. The Israeli army claimed that two Palestinians from Hebron opened fire on the checkpoint and that troops shot both men dead after a gunfight of

about 20 minutes.

Netanyahu pledged to destroy the neighborhood the alleged gunmen came from. “First of all, we will act to destroy this place, to change it completely,” he said at the checkpoint, the *Times of Israel* reported Friday. The army would “implement the successful and aggressive model we used in the refugee camps” and go “house to house,” Netanyahu said.

The government was “considering a very extensive IDF [Israeli army] operation in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank], such as has not been carried out since” the 1967 war, Netanyahu said Friday.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Friday: “Every clan neighborhood in Hebron from which the terrorists emerged today will be evacuated of its residents.” Katz added: “Just like in Gaza ...”

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich wrote Friday: “There is no alternative to a comprehensive military campaign in Judea and Samaria to dismantle the Palestinian Authority, collect the weapons, and eliminate the terrorists, exactly as we did in Gaza ...” The Palestinian Authority administers the Palestinian towns of the West Bank, and there is no evidence linking it to the gunmen.

By Friday evening the army was demolishing Palestinian buildings near Hebron, the *Times of Israel* reported that day, after Smotrich said he had ordered the immediate destruction of “a large swath of illegal Arab structures.” The army said that evening that it had “launched offensive counter-terrorism operations in the Hebron area.”

In the first 14 days of October the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs counted “at least 160” attacks by settlers tied to the

olive harvest, UN News reported Wednesday. On Monday the agency said Israeli troops and settlers had killed five Palestinians in the West Bank and injured more than 240 in two weeks.

Settlers also staged provocative attacks on foreigners. On October 16 about 80 masked settlers carrying clubs charged a group of Palestinian olive pickers near the village of Abu Falah and beat Heidi Levine, a photojournalist working for the *Washington Post*, Al Jazeera reported October 20. On October 17 masked settlers attacked French, Belgian and Polish diplomats in the town of Taybeh and threw a French mayor, Bernard Baudoux, 78, to the ground, Al Jazeera reported the next day.

On Friday Netanyahu called West Bank settlers “heroic” and “an example to the people of Israel and to the State of Israel,” NBC News reported that day.

The *New York Times* reported Wednesday that the US and Israeli militaries “have developed specific plans for renewed strikes against Iran after the American midterm elections.” The *Times* wrote that the American buildup would be complete by early November.

Trump told a reporter at Joint Base Andrews, outside Washington, on Wednesday night: “We are not negotiating with” Iran. “Something one way or another will happen, fairly soon,” he said. “Most people seem to think it’s after the election.”

Netanyahu has made regime change in Iran a centerpiece of his election campaign. “We are committed to completing the elimination of the Iranian regime,” he said Tuesday, Al Jazeera reported that day.

Israeli troops killed four Palestinians in Gaza on Thursday. By Tuesday the Gaza Health Ministry had counted at least 1,500 people killed since the announcement of the “ceasefire” in October 2025 and more than 74,450 since October 2023.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries issued no statement on the lockdown or the *Times* report. The Democrats’ charge against Trump is that he is insufficiently aggressive against Russia and, through Russia, against Iran. On October 17, the day after Trump waived nearly all the Russia sanctions in the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, Schumer said: “Trump is aiding and abetting a dictator who has helped Iran target US troops in the Middle East.” The Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, which 58 House Democrats backed on September 16,

also extends US sanctions on Iran for five more years.

Democratic senators spent months attacking the administration for failing to win the war. Democratic Senator Gary Peters of Michigan told Hegseth at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on July 21: “You don’t have a strategy. You don’t have a long-term plan to actually win this war.” Peters told Hegseth: “Win the war.”

Democratic Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona said on ABC’s *This Week* on September 27: “We can’t leave the Strait in the hands of the Iranians.” Democratic Senator Ruben Gallego of Arizona, attacking Hegseth’s creation of a religious affairs office at the Pentagon, told CNN on September 30 that any new Pentagon office should be devoted to “figuring out how to win this war in Iran.”



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