



[U.N. Human Rights Experts Condemn Israel's Annexation Plans](#)

A large group of 47 independent U.N. human rights experts have condemned the Israeli government's plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, calling it a "vision of a 21st century apartheid." In a joint statement, they urged other countries to express their opposition as well and warned that the move would be a serious violation of the United Nations Charter and the Geneva Conventions. The signatories also criticized the current U.S. administration for its encouragement, stating that: "On many occasions over the past 75 years, the United States has played an important role in the advancement of global human rights. On this occasion, it should be ardently opposing the imminent breach of a fundamental principle of international law, rather than actively abetting its violation." The human rights experts are just the latest in a long list of critics, both at the domestic and international level, to speak out against the plans.

In their statement, the group added that the Israeli government's occupation of the West Bank was already a source of serious human rights violations against the Palestinian people and that these would only intensify after annexation of Jewish settlements there. There are hundreds of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and most of the global community considers these illegal under international law. The U.N. experts highlighted many of the ways in which Palestinians' rights have been violated by Israel including through land confiscation, home demolitions, settler violence, excessive use of force, restrictions on media and freedom of expression, and a two-tier system of disparate rights based on ethnicity and nationality. They also recalled that Israel has previously annexed occupied land, in East Jerusalem in 1980 and the Syrian Golan Heights in 1981, and that on both occasions the U.N. Security Council condemned the actions but took "no meaningful countermeasures" however this time must be different.

Embattled Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has set July 1st as the date to begin advancing the annexation plans and has previously stated that he wants to "apply Israeli sovereignty" to the parts of the occupied West Bank which contain Jewish settlements. The controversial move would be in accordance with U.S. President Trump's widely-criticized Mideast Peace Plan, which was released earlier this year and emphatically rejected by the Palestinians. The annexation plans include parts of the Jordan Valley as well, where Israel has also constructed illegal settlements. In addition to the international community's outrage at the proposal, the Israeli government would have normally faced opposition from the United States in the past too, however, there has been a clear shift in policy under the current Trump administration.

Palestinian diplomat Saeb Erekat expressed hope that world leaders would heed the experts' words and hold the Israeli government accountable should it in fact move forward with the annexation plans next month: "We welcome the statement as a reminder for the international community of its responsibilities, of the gravity of the situation and of the urgency to implement accountability measures to end the illegal colonial-settlement enterprise, including annexation, to save the prospects of peace and to support a rules-based world order."