



[A B'Tselem Report Finds That Israel Has Been Using Settler Violence as a Tool to Seize Palestinian Land in the Illegally-Occupied West Bank](#)

Human rights group B'Tselem has issued a report detailing the ways in which Israel uses settler violence as a major strategic tool to seize Palestinian land in the illegally-occupied West Bank. The investigation delved into the settlers' takeover of more than 10 square miles of farm and pasture land during the past five years, and shed light on a consistent pattern of behavior whereby they engaged in violence against Palestinians. B'Tselem found that Israeli authorities did not prevent the attacks, and on the contrary, even aided and abetted them in many instances. The settlers who provocatively instigate violence face no repercussions or accountability for their inflammatory actions, as the Israeli state whitewashes the few cases that it is called upon to address. Ultimately, B'Tselem rightly pointed out that the settler violence is in fact state-sponsored, since the behavior occurs with the permission and assistance of Israeli authorities who legitimize it as a means to try and carry out their unlawful land grabs from Palestinians.

In their report, B'Tselem also documented evidence to challenge the Israeli government's claim that settler violence against Palestinians is a rare occurrence that security forces are doing their best to stop. The preceding months have seen a significant increase in violence committed by Jewish settlers in the illegally-occupied West Bank. Social justice activists have highlighted multiple occasions when Israeli security forces failed to come to the aid of local residents being harassed by incendiary settlers. Both Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups have also tried to draw attention to the matter, expressing that the Israeli state and its enforcement agencies are repeatedly falling short of ensuring the safety of Palestinian citizens and families in vulnerable areas.

For decades, Israeli authorities have been building illegal settlements throughout Palestinian territory in the West Bank, in clear violation of international law. Despite the universally accepted legal standards regarding the unlawfulness of the behavior, Israel has tried to validate the settlements via its domestic policy. They have attempted to do this by, as B'Tselem detailed in its report, making efforts to legitimize illegal land seizures from Palestinians – even using settler violence as an informal method. These actions have advocates and human rights groups speaking out strongly against the Israeli government's enabling of this, particularly as it tries to do so covertly behind the scenes. The reprehensible Israeli settler violence has included beatings, the issuing of threats, the torching of fields, stealing or destroying critically-needed crops, and damaging homes and cars. These acts have been carried out to try and force local Palestinians to leave their generational lands so that they can be taken over by illegal Israeli settlers, and security forces have fostered an environment which allows the culprits to engage in this type of violent behavior.

The settler violence has received inadequate pushback from Israeli authorities, and as such, it is human rights groups like B'Tselem that have tried to maintain focus on the harmful actions – which are a major impediment to peace and social justice. Regrettably, through legitimizing the brutal and horrific violence, the Israeli state itself has not only done nothing to counteract it, they have gone as far as enabling and paving the way for the deplorable human rights violations.