



[Troubling Signs Stemming from Invitation of Extremist Israeli Settler Leaders to Upcoming Trump Inauguration](#)

A delegation of extremist Israeli settler leaders has accepted an invitation to attend the upcoming inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump, as he formally takes office for a second term in the White House this coming Monday, January 20th. In addition to attending the inauguration as guests, the group will also hold meetings with new U.S. administration officials. For many fair-minded observers, the move is an alarming indicator regarding the type of biased policy towards illegal Israeli settlements that can be expected with the new Trump administration. Not only are Israeli settlements in occupied territory long recognized by global entities and most countries as illegal under international law, the continued expansion of them in conjunction with an evident rise in settler violence has evoked concern about a further emboldening of these extremist forces. The individuals invited to attend the Trump inauguration consist of those who oversee illegal Israeli settlement activity in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli settler violence has already been on the rise, and analysts fear that President-elect Trump's return to office could pave the way for the further emboldening of these groups. Human rights organizations have highlighted this disturbing spike, which has seen the launching of an unprecedented level of violent state-sponsored raids on Palestinian villages. This past year in 2024, these entities documented at least 1,400 incidents of settler violence – the highest number ever chronicled since recordkeeping began. The violence has included arson attacks, physical assaults, raids, and the destruction of property. While much of the world's attention has been understandably diverted to the egregious war crimes and human rights violations taking place in Gaza since October of 2023, at the same time, settler violence and unlawful land seizures in the occupied West Bank have increased dramatically. Video evidence and other accounts also show how Israeli forces often either fail to intervene during settler attacks or even join in and participate in the acts of violence. This has led human rights groups to label the behavior as state-enabled and systematic.

One of the reasons behind why many strongly anticipate pro-Israel measures and actions under the incoming second Trump administration is due to the fact that this was very much the case previously. During his first term in the White House, Trump initiated several policies that exhibited a blatant partiality in favor of Israel. He formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moved the United States' Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Under Trump, the United States also became the first country in the world to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the long-disputed Golan Heights, despite the rest of the international community continuing to view it as unlawfully occupied Syrian territory. Additionally, the Trump administration cut off all American funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) – the agency that provides vital humanitarian assistance and services to millions of Palestinian refugees.

The inauguration invitation extended to settler leaders is far from the only worrying sign that points to skewed U.S. policy on Israel under a second Trump administration. The cabinet picks and officials appointed for pertinent administration positions tied to foreign policy towards Israel do as well. Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, who has been tapped as the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, is an outspoken supporter of illegal Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank. Thus, his insertion in the role is likely to further encourage the Israeli government to forcibly take land and build more unlawful settlements. As extremist Israeli settler leaders seem to

be hopeful of, there is also trepidation that Huckabee could allow and recognize illegal annexation of areas in the West Bank. Other notable Trump foreign policy-related appointees have also demonstrated clear biases in favor of Israel, including U.S. Secretary of State nominee Marco Rubio, who not long ago sent a letter to the outgoing administration of President Biden criticizing the decision to sanction Israeli settlers linked to the uptick in violence against Palestinians. As such, this appears to be indicative of the type of inequitable pro-Israel policies that can be expected yet again under a second Trump administration.