



## Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

### U.S. State Department's New Visa Restriction Policy Towards Violent Settlers in the West Bank

On Tuesday, December 5, the U.S. State Department announced a new visa restriction policy aimed at Israeli citizens believed to have committed acts of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. Immediate family members of such persons also may be subject to these restrictions. In a [press release](#) published by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, he announced that “The United States has consistently opposed actions that undermine stability in the West Bank, including attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, and Palestinian attacks against Israelis. We have underscored to the Israeli government the need to do more to hold accountable extremist settlers who have committed violent attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank. As President Biden has repeatedly said, those attacks are unacceptable [...] We also continue to engage with the Israeli leadership to make clear that Israel must take additional measures to protect Palestinian civilians from extremist attacks.”

## European Governments Follow Suit

Alexander De Croo, the Prime Minister of Belgium, [announced yesterday](#), Dec 6, that “Violence against civilians will have consequences. Extremist settlers in the West Bank will be banned from entering Belgium. We will work with the U.S. on sanctions targeting individuals involved in actions that undermine peace, security, and stability in the West Bank.” In addition, The European Union is expected to consider imposing sanctions on Israeli settlers responsible for violence in the West Bank, the EU’s diplomatic service says in a [paper prepared for EU foreign ministers](#).

## Ideologically Motivated Crime as Policy

Since 2005, Yesh Din has documented and monitored thousands of cases of violence by Israeli civilians against Palestinians in the West Bank. An analysis of Yesh Din data proves that the Israeli law enforcement system fails in fulfilling its duty to protect Palestinians from Israeli violence. The failings of Israel’s law enforcement system can be observed in every aspect of its response to ideologically motivated crime by Israelis against Palestinians in the West Bank: ineffective prevention, failed police investigations, low indictment rate, and lenient sentences for convicted offenders. This long-standing systemic failure indicates that the Government of Israel normalizes and supports ideologically motivated violence perpetrated by Israelis against Palestinians in the West Bank as a matter of policy, and benefits from its effects.

Lack of law enforcement and accountability has resulted in a culture of impunity for Israelis in the West Bank, which rewards settlers with land and resources rather than being held accountable for violent crimes.

## International Responsibility

For years, the Israeli authorities have enabled this grave situation to continue, necessitating the international community to take responsibility and implement measures of accountability. This alone will not end settler violence, but it is a bold statement by the US and European governments, which has set a critical precedent for accountability by the international community.

***It has by now become clear to certain actors in the international community that Israel has been implementing a decades-long policy that enables violent settlers to keep committing crimes against Palestinians with impunity. Yesh Din encourages further acknowledgment and practical steps to bring an end to ideologically-motivated crime against Palestinians.***

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