



Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

Escalating Violence and Annexation: Recent Developments in the West Bank

In the days following the deadly shooting incident that left six people dead (four Palestinians and two Israelis) near the village of Tell (Tal) southwest of Nablus, Israeli authorities have imposed sweeping closures and movement restrictions across the Nablus governorate and large parts of the West Bank. Yesh Din's field staff are reporting that in some areas, these measures have caused basic food items to run out, such as bread. The closure is severely restricting residents' access to basic needs, healthcare services and emergency medical care. According to the [Physicians for Human Rights Israel](#) (PHRI), on 26 July, the army's access restrictions around Nablus city forced two women to give birth inside ambulances after being unable to reach a hospital. A third woman delivered her baby at a clinic in a nearby village after medical teams were unable to evacuate her to a hospital. In addition,

on 27 July, one woman [reportedly](#) lost her fetus as the ambulance she was riding was denied access by the military through Awarta checkpoint, south of Nablus city.

The military has also uprooted olive trees on private Palestinian land, and has launched large-scale raids in multiple locations. The military has [reportedly](#) ordered the further mass-uprooting of Palestinian-owned agricultural plants and olive trees, as well as the seizure of land in the northern West Bank. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [announced](#) punitive measures, including the demolition of the home of a Palestinian alleged to have been involved in the attack, alongside renewed commitments to accelerate settlement construction. These measures are part of a long-standing pattern in which agricultural livelihoods, particularly olive groves, are targeted as a means of undermining Palestinian presence on the land.

Soon after the incident, settlers have carried out pogroms and attacks across the West Bank and in particular against several Palestinian villages in the Nablus area, including assaults on residents, the vandalism of Palestinian private property and mosques, and agricultural property. Israeli MK's and ministers called for revenge, encouraging the attacks.

We call the international community to act now. Immediate pressure must be placed on GOI to stop further attacks, prevent pogroms and further killings, and ensure the protection of Palestinians and their property, in accordance with Israel's obligations under international law.

We call on the international community to pressure the GOI to lift the closures and access restrictions that are preventing

Palestinians from accessing their basic needs, especially medical care.



The aftermath of tree uprooting belonging to Tell, Madama and Burin villages..

Date: 25.7

Credit: Yesh Din

Another Step Towards Cementing Annexation

On the 22nd of July 2026 the government of Israel took another significant step **towards civilian governance of the West Bank and**

cementing annexation. A decision approved by the Civil Service Commission, in coordination with the Ministry of Defense, attempts to solidify the Settlement Administration within the Ministry of Defense and extend the term of Hillel Roth the civilian Deputy Head of the Civil Administration from four to six years. The measures are intended to remain in force beyond the current government's term and following future elections.

The latest decision further seeks to further transform what was initially established as a temporary administrative arrangement into a permanent institutional framework; resulting in the continued acceleration of settlement expansion, Palestinian dispossession and mass violation of Palestinian rights.

The Settlement Administration was established in 2023 under Finance Minister and Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense, Bezalel Smotrich, as part of the coalition agreements between the Religious Zionism and Likud parties. This agreement transferred extensive civilian authorities over the occupied West Bank to Minister Smotrich and has been a main contributing factor to **settlement expansion, settler violence and the dispossession of Palestinians**. Since its establishment, it has assumed responsibility for a broad range of civilian matters, including planning, settlement development, land management, infrastructure and other administrative powers that were traditionally exercised within the military chain of command.

According to statements issued by individuals close to Minister Smotrich, the purpose of the current decision is to ensure that the institutional changes implemented during the current government's

tenure cannot easily be reversed by a future government - regardless of political change.

The extension of the Deputy Head of the Civil Administration's term from four to six years is similarly intended to provide continuity to the civilian management of West Bank affairs beyond the life of the current government. The Deputy Head of the Civil Administration, Hillel Roth, occupies a central position within the governance structure created under Smotrich's authority, exercising extensive influence over civilian affairs in the West Bank.

As Yesh Din previously documented in [The Silent Overhaul](#), the current government has systematically transferred key civilian powers from the military commander and the Civil Administration to civilian officials operating under Minister Smotrich. The report argues that these structural changes represent a shift from temporary military administration toward permanent civilian governance, fundamentally transforming the legal framework governing Israel's control over the West Bank and laying the legal and institutional groundwork for the de jure and de facto annexation.

On September 2024, Yesh Din and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) challenged this transfer of authority before the Israeli High Court of Justice. The [petition](#) sought the annulment of the military order establishing the position of the civilian Deputy Head of the Civil Administration and transferring to that office extensive powers previously vested in the military commander and the Head of the Civil Administration. The petition argued that these measures fundamentally alter the legal regime governing the occupied West Bank by replacing military administration with an Israeli-governed civilian system-thereby amounting to de facto annexation under international law. Although the

state introduced limited amendments to the operating procedures during the proceedings, Yesh Din maintained that these changes did not reverse the broader transfer of authority from the military to civilian political institutions. The current decision to permanently embed the Settlement Administration within the Ministry of Defense and extend the tenure of the civilian Deputy Head of the Civil Administration reinforces the very institutional transformation that Yesh Din warned would become increasingly difficult to reverse.

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For any enquiries, please contact Jack Munayer: jackm@yesh-din.org

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