



## Yesh Din

Volunteers for Human Rights

### Not even a War with Iran Could Stop Settler Violence

For the past two weeks, under the cover of war and with public attention diverted elsewhere, settlers across the West Bank continued to assault, harass, and harm Palestinian residents with the protection of Israeli law enforcement authorities. Since the beginning of the war, Yesh Din field researchers have documented incidents of violence and damage to Palestinian property across the West Bank in Huwarah, Burin, al-Mu'arrajat, and the South Hebron Hills area - sometimes as missile sirens were sounding.

**Sunday, June 15** – Settlers set fire to agricultural land and trees and vandalized property in the villages of Huwarah and Burin. Soldiers and settlers blocked Palestinian firetrucks from reaching the land and extinguishing the fires.

**Monday, June 16** – Armed settlers stopped Palestinian vehicles and assaulted their passengers on the road to al-Mu'arrajat east of Ramallah.

**Tuesday, June 17** – Settlers threw stones at homes in Susiya. A group of settlers approached the homes on an ATV; one settler violently

assaulted a resident, injuring him in the head. The attackers then fled the scene on the ATV.

**Tuesday, June 17** – Settlers attacked homes in Jabal Jalis, near Hebron. They threw stones, shot at water tanks, and broke the security camera. Soldiers present at the scene confiscated the camera and arrested five residents.

**Wednesday, June 18** – Settlers smashed the windows of a Susiya resident's home while he was away, causing property damage.

**Thursday, June 19** – Settlers arrived at the home of a Susiya resident, broke into the house, and stole furniture.

**Thursday, June 19** – A 48-year-old man from Surif was shot and killed during a Settler attack on the village north of Hebron. The Settlers, accompanied by soldiers, set fire to the lands belonging to the village and threw stones at residents of Surif. Shots were fired at the residents, killing one man and injuring his brother, who was shot in the abdomen.

**Saturday, June 21** – Armed settlers attacked residents near Khirbet Susiya during the night, beating them and threatening them at gunpoint. Several residents were injured, and six were transferred to Yatta Hospital for treatment. The settlers also punctured the tires of three vehicles, smashed windshields, damaged fodder supplies and water tanks, and broke trees.

**Tuesday, June 24** – Settlers set fire to a resident's home in Susiya

**Wednesday, June 25** - Over 100 settlers attacked the village of Kfar Malek while Israeli soldiers were present at the scene. The settlers [set several homes on fire](#), and according to residents, shot live ammunition. Israeli soldiers opened fire, killing three Palestinians and seriously injuring several others.

**Wednesday, June 25** – Settlers threw stones at residents and homes and set fire to farmland in Asirah al-Qibliyah.

**Wednesday, June 25** - Masked settlers [set Palestinians' homes and vehicles on fire](#) near the Taybah junction. In this footage from a security camera, the perpetrators can be heard speaking Hebrew to each other.

**Thursday, June 26** – Settlers threw stones at homes and set fields on fire in Turmusaya.

**Thursday, June 26** – Settlers set a vehicle on fire, threw stones at homes, and spray-painted hate graffiti in Khirbet Abu Falah.

**Friday, June 27** – A settler vehicle blocked the road to a Palestinian ambulance while driving recklessly on route 60.

**Saturday, June 28** – Armed settlers attacked Palestinians and expelled them from their land in Shuqba.

**Saturday, June 28** – Settlers and soldiers harassed landowners in Sinjil.

**Saturday, June 28** – Settlers attacked a family in al-Mughayir.

Enabled by the Israeli government, law enforcement, and backed by the military, settler violence in the West Bank becomes deadlier from day to day. This violence, carried out with the approval of the state, serves a clear purpose: the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from the West Bank.

## Two New Dangerous Bills Introduced in the Knesset This Week

### Bill forwarding Israeli annexation over the West Bank

This bill, officially titled 'The Application of the Sovereignty of the State of Israel to Judea and Samaria Law', is being introduced by MK Limor Son Har-Melech and others. According to the bill, it seeks to formally apply Israeli "sovereignty" to the West Bank, fully integrating the West Bank into the territory of the State of Israel. It proposes to apply Israeli

civil law, jurisdiction, and administration to all Israeli citizens and residents in the area, effectively overriding the current status of the West Bank as an occupied territory under international law. In addition, it instructs the Israeli government to adjust all legal, bureaucratic, and enforcement systems accordingly.

### **Implications**

- This constitutes a unilateral annexation of occupied territory, violating international law
- Maintaining the dual system whereby Palestinians remain under military law while Israeli settlers are governed by civil law, which is a key characteristic of the crime of apartheid

### **Bill to Grant Immunity to Security Forces During Operational Events**

This bill, officially titled 'Amendment to the Immunity of Security Forces Law – Operational Events', is being proposed by MK Zvika Fogel. It proposes sweeping immunity for members of Israel's security forces (military, police, ISA, and other state agents) from criminal or civil liability for actions taken during operational activities, including in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. According to the bill, legal proceedings against Israeli security forces personnel would only be permitted if it can be proven that the individual acted with intent to harm outside the scope of their duties.

The bill quotes: "it appears that the human shield - IDF soldiers and their commanders, Israel Police officers, and other security forces - remain exposed to criminal charges and legal proceedings in which they are treated like common criminals, without recognition of the fact

that they are members of the security forces who risk their lives daily to protect the citizens of the State of Israel, endangering themselves and their comrades."

### **Implications**

- This law would effectively prohibit Palestinian victims or their representatives from bringing civil lawsuits against Israeli security personnel in Israeli courts. It would shield soldiers and police from accountability for alleged war crimes or human rights abuses, including killings, torture, and severe injuries. The bill amounts to a license for the shedding of Palestinian blood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- This Breaches Israel's obligations to investigate and prosecute violations of IHL and IHRL, which, in the context of a large-scale operation, is a war crime in and of itself.

Even without such legislation, Israeli security forces already enjoy near-total immunity from investigation and prosecution. Codifying sweeping immunity into law would amount to legalizing deliberate and widespread harm to innocent civilians. This legislation would necessitate international legal action against Israel, which would no longer be able to claim the existence of functional domestic enforcement mechanisms.

**Read the proposed bills (Hebrew) on pages 160-161 & 163-167**

Existing data shows that the State of Israel has no intention of conducting fair investigations or prosecuting soldiers who break the law. Despite the high number of complaints about soldiers harming

Palestinians, only a minority of them result in investigations, and only a tiny fraction lead to indictments. In the rare cases where soldiers are convicted of offenses against Palestinians, military courts impose lenient sentences. According to data provided by the military to Yesh Din in response to a FOIA request regarding the military law enforcement system's handling of offenses committed by soldiers against Palestinians in the West Bank between 2018 and 2022:

- The chance that a complaint about an Israeli soldier harming a Palestinian in the West Bank will lead to an indictment is just **1.5%**.
- Only **30%** of complaints concerning incidents in which soldiers were suspected of offenses led to the opening of an investigation.
- Of those investigations, only **5%** led to indictments.
- In the rare cases where soldiers are prosecuted for harming Palestinians, they receive lenient sentences.
- The chance that an Israeli soldier will be prosecuted for killing Palestinians in the West Bank is just **0.4%**.

Contrary to its own investigative policies, the army does not investigate all cases in which Palestinian civilians are killed. In recent years, the military has adopted an expansive interpretation of the term “genuine combat nature”, a term that has never been precisely defined. This ambiguity has contributed to legitimizing killings of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers and is frequently used by the military prosecutor to avoid opening criminal investigations, even in cases of shootings that resulted in death.

Yesh Din's experience representing Palestinian victims shows that many complaints about incidents that clearly occurred in the context of law enforcement, such as “riot control” or “disturbances at checkpoints,”

as the army refers to them, are closed without investigation, even when they resulted in the deaths of innocent people.

[Read the full data sheet](#)

### **The Military Law Enforcement System's Actions Currently in Gaza**

The Israeli military has not provided updated data on how many investigations have been opened and their outcomes concerning incidents during the current war in Gaza. According to figures from August 2024 (the most recent update from the Military Advocate General), the Military Advocate General ordered the opening of **74** investigations in cases where there was a suspicion of criminal offense. Of these:

- **44** investigations concern the deaths of detainees in military custody (in line with policy, an investigation is automatically opened in every case where a detainee dies)
- **8** investigations involve suspected mistreatment of detainees
- **3** investigations involve suspected unjustified destruction of civilian infrastructure
- **13** investigations involve suspected looting or theft of weapons
- **6** investigations involve suspected use of unlawful force

Yesh Din's monitoring of the military law enforcement system's performance following past operations in Gaza - including Operation Protective Edge, the suppression of the Great March of Return demonstrations, and Operation Guardian of the Walls - leads to the conclusion that Israel's legal system has demonstrated a lack of will to conduct proper investigations into suspected war crimes, especially not into command-level decisions like rules of engagement policies. As a

general rule, the Israeli law enforcement system rarely opens investigations against low-ranking soldiers and entirely avoids investigating decision-makers at higher command levels. **Hundreds of incidents raising suspicions of international law violations, two military operations, and one crackdown on mass protests resulted in only three indictments.**

[Read the full report](#)

*If passed, these two bills, which are essentially aimed at turning the reality on the ground into the official law, will further endanger the already limited access to justice for Palestinians. Specifically, the bill regarding security forces acts as the codification of impunity. Yesh Din urges the international community to pressure the Israeli government to respect International law and human rights, which strongly prohibit annexation and require holding soldiers accountable for violating the rights of an occupied population.*

**Join Our WhatsApp Group for Diplomatic Updates**

We invite you to join our WhatsApp group for diplomatic updates, in which we send periodic updates on important developments in the West Bank easily and conveniently. It is a 'silent' group, meaning only the administrators can post messages, and there are no conversations or debates. You are welcome to join and share the link with colleagues.

[Join Yesh Din's new WhatsApp group](#)

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