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Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution [S-30/1](#).

* [A/80/150](#).

** The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.



Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel

Summary

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel hereby submits its fourth report to the General Assembly. In the report, the Commission examines land and housing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel and presents a summary of the Commission's findings on the crime of genocide.

I. Introduction, methodology and legal framework

1. In the present report, the Commission focuses on land and housing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel. It is the Commission's fourth mandated report focusing on acts committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel on and since 7 October 2023 and should be read in conjunction with its previous mandated reports and conference room papers.¹ In its report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-sixth session, the Commission noted its concern that the Palestinian militants' attacks of 7 October 2023 in southern Israel and Israeli military operations in Gaza presented a watershed moment that could change the direction of the conflict, solidifying and expanding the occupation. Accordingly, the present report is focused on developments that have deepened the occupation in all areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as on developments inside Israel relating to Palestinian land and housing. The report also provides relevant historical background, integral to understanding current trends and violations.

2. The report includes a summary of the Commission's conference room paper on the crime of genocide and State responsibility for genocide, which is being published in September 2025 as part of the sixtieth session of the Human Rights Council. The Commission considered that the topic of genocide holds immense legal and factual complexity, requiring a dedicated expanded report.

3. The Commission sent one request for information to the Government of Israel, and multiple requests for access, and one request for information to the State of Palestine. No responses were received.

4. The Commission has applied the same methodology and standard of proof previously adopted for its investigations, including the "reasonable grounds" standard in making factual determinations and legal findings.

5. The Commission relied on the legal framework adopted throughout its work and reflected in its terms of reference.² The Commission notes that the right to self-determination is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and is part of customary international law. The International Court of Justice affirmed the Palestinian people's right to self-determination in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004 on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which it reaffirmed in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Commission is guided by the 2024 opinion on, inter alia, the effects of the policies and practices of Israel on the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination.

6. A full list of sources used for the present report is on file with the Commission.

II. Background

7. The 1947–1948 conflict marked the Nakba, a "catastrophe" for Palestinians in all areas of life, including loss of access to their land and housing. Some 700,000–800,000 Palestinians were forced to leave their homes during the conflict, losing approximately 16,324 square kilometres of land, valued at the time at 100 million

¹ A/HRC/56/26; A/HRC/56/CRP.3; A/HRC/56/CRP.4; A/79/232; and A/HRC/58/CRP.6.

² See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/TORs-UN-Independent_ICI_Occupied_Palestinian_Territories.pdf; and A/79/232, paras. 4 and 5.

Palestine pounds. Only 150,000–160,000 Palestinians remained in the territory of the newly established State of Israel. They were viewed as a security risk and were forced to concentrate principally in two large geographical areas, the Negev and Galilee, subject to restrictive military rule until 1966. Palestinians with Israeli citizenship continued to be viewed as security risks even after military rule ended. In a policy document on “minorities in Israel”, the Deputy Prime Minister of Israel explicitly noted in 1970 that the “Arab minority in Israel constitutes a security risk”.³

8. Only a small percentage of the land was registered and documented in official British and Ottoman records in 1948. As the conflict ended, the new State of Israel ostensibly held a territory of 20.6 million dunums, of which only 20–25 per cent was registered, mostly in the north and centre of the country. Only 13.5 per cent (2.8 million dunums) of that land was privately owned by the State, organizations and individuals.

9. In the 1950s and 1960s, Israeli Governments introduced a series of laws to take control of large amounts of land, much of which belonged to Palestinians who had been forcibly displaced in 1948. These laws enabled the State to declare certain areas as security zones, confiscate property from those considered “absent” and retroactively legalize earlier land seizures. Over time, most land in Israel came under State ownership, either through a process of land registration or through outright confiscation, with strict limits on the transfer or sale of land. Palestinians with Israeli citizenship were left with only a small share of this land, facing major obstacles in proving ownership titles and increasingly vulnerable to confiscation by the State.

10. In the 1967 “Six Day War”, Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Israel established and sustained hundreds of civilian settlements in the occupied territory. Israeli settlements were also established in the occupied Syrian Golan, which remain to date, and in the Sinai Peninsula, which were evacuated in 1982.

11. By 2019 there were 260 settlements in the West Bank, including 11 neighbourhood settlements in East Jerusalem. The construction of housing units and public infrastructure in the West Bank has been subject to the authority of the Israeli Civil Administration planning committees, with very few approvals granted for Palestinian construction as opposed to Jewish construction because of entrenched discrimination. In July 2023, according to the Ministry of Defence of Israel, over a five-year period, 10,000 settlement housing units were approved each year on average, compared with a few hundred approvals granted to Palestinians, with approximately 95 per cent of Palestinian applications being refused.

12. From 1970 to 1973, Israel established four settlements in the Gaza Strip. By 1997, it had established 19 settlements on 23,000 dunums of land, housing some 5,000 settlers, all of which were removed in 2005, when Israel unilaterally disengaged from Gaza. Israel has continued to de facto occupy the territory by virtue of the control it exercises over, inter alia, the airspace, water and territorial borders of Gaza, as well as civilian infrastructure, including water and electricity, and key governmental functions.

³ See <https://www.akevot.org.il/article/israeli-arabs-security-problem/?full#popup/c5dec03db6ecc0cbecd9de474ddb9a95>.

III. Factual findings⁴

A. Expansion of borders and boundaries in the Gaza Strip⁵

13. Since October 2023, Israeli forces have systematically destroyed civilian objects across Gaza and repeatedly forcibly transferred the population. Israeli forces have also intentionally altered the geography of Gaza through the creation of military corridors, the expansion of the existing border buffer zone and the establishment of “security zones”, resulting in the fragmentation of Gaza. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at July 2025, Israeli forces were operationally present or had issued displacement orders in 87.8 per cent of the territory.⁶

14. Israeli officials have repeatedly advocated long-term military occupation in the Gaza Strip, while some have explicitly called for the establishment of civilian settlements and annexation (see paras. 23–26). In May 2025, the Israeli Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, reportedly unanimously approved a plan for the expansion of the country’s military operation to include the capture and occupation of more territory.⁷ Additional Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Zeev Elkin, publicly confirmed that the Cabinet’s decision includes the seizure of territory, by stating that “when we capture territory, it does not mean we will leave it”.⁸ On 8 August 2025 the Israeli Cabinet approved a plan to take over Gaza city.⁹ Previously, in January 2024, Mr. Netanyahu said, “I will not compromise on full Israeli security control over all the territory west of Jordan – and this is contrary to a Palestinian State.”¹⁰

Development of military infrastructure in Gaza and expansion of the buffer zone

15. Israeli security forces have created five corridors which have effectively partitioned Gaza. As at 20 July 2025, Israel had acknowledged the existence of four of these corridors: Philadelphi, Morag, Netzarim and Magen-Oz. The Commission has verified the creation of one additional corridor crossing Jabalia. As at 20 July 2025, the five corridors, combined with an expanded border buffer zone and newly designated “security zones”, cover 278 square kilometres or approximately 75 per cent of the Strip. In these areas, Palestinian habitation and civilian access are forbidden.

16. Israel justified the construction of these corridors as strategic measures aimed at destroying Palestinian armed groups’ infrastructure, including tunnels, preventing weapons smuggling, constituting a buffer to secure Israeli territory and providing a basis for raids in northern and central Gaza. The Prime Minister repeatedly underlined the strategic importance of the Philadelphi and Netzarim corridors, rejecting international pressure for the full withdrawal of Israeli troops therefrom.

⁴ All information contained in factual findings is based on confidential information on file documented by the Commission from victims, witnesses and other reliable sources, unless specifically annotated.

⁵ The Commission investigated and reported on broader destruction of housing and civilian infrastructure in [A/HRC/56/26](#) and [A/HRC/56/CRP.4](#).

⁶ See <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/gaza-ocha-warns-mass-displacement-order-yet-another-blow-to-fragile-lifelines/>.

⁷ See <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-05-05/ty-article/.premium/00000196-9e6e-d9bf-a1b6-ffee751e0000>; https://x.com/kann_news/status/1919274169495134226; and <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/hkubhgiggl>.

⁸ See <https://omny.fm/shows/kan-news/ff99149c-52c6-4a72-ac46-b2d4005df934>.

⁹ See <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/spoke-cabinet080825>.

¹⁰ See <https://x.com/netanyahu/status/1748764135716749568?s=19>; and <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/spoke-message210124>.

17. Israeli forces constructed military bases in the corridors and repurposed civilian infrastructure, including educational facilities, hospitals and residential buildings. In the Netzarim corridor, they also established critical infrastructure supporting the bases, including water pipelines and telecommunications systems, indicating the transformation of the area into a military and administrative zone for long-term control.

18. In addition to the creation of corridors, the buffer zone between Israel and the Gaza Strip has been consistently expanded by Israeli forces, by demolishing civilian structures and infrastructure and displacing the population. While in October 2023 it extended approximately 300 metres inside the Strip,¹¹ by the end of December 2023, satellite imagery indicated that this perimeter stretched up to 1 kilometre inside Gaza in certain areas. In June 2024, Israeli forces expanded the buffer zone again by up to 3 kilometres in certain areas (with the entire Gaza Strip being only 6–12 kilometres wide). The zone was expanded again after March 2025, engulfing the Philadelphi corridor in the south and reaching 138 square kilometres, constituting 37 per cent of the Gaza Strip. By June 2025, the buffer zone reached 181 square kilometres, constituting half of the Gaza Strip, absorbing several urban areas including Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia in the north and the entire Rafah Governorate in the south of Gaza. Israeli army chiefs stated in May 2025 that the expansion of the Israeli-controlled area to some 75 per cent of the Gaza Strip was a key objective of the “Gideon’s Chariots” operation, as well as moving the population into three small zones.¹² On 27 July, Israeli security forces published maps indicating that military corridors and the buffer zone were incorporated into one large area designated as a “dangerous combat zone” covering approximately 75 per cent of the Gaza Strip.¹³

Destruction of civilian infrastructure and objects indispensable to the population’s survival

19. Israeli forces extensively and systematically demolished civilian infrastructure in the corridors and the buffer zone. In the Netzarim corridor, demolitions affected 95 per cent of the structures, including entire neighbourhoods such as Juhr al-Dik, Al-Mughraqa and Al-Zahra. According to an assessment by the United Nations Satellite Centre, by December 2024 Israeli forces had expanded the Philadelphi corridor from approximately 1.5 square kilometres to some 19 square kilometres (or 5 per cent of the Gaza Strip); with 99 per cent of structures affected within the enclave. Demolitions continued after military operations ceased and the area was under complete Israeli control. Despite regular attacks by Palestinian armed groups on Israeli forces in the corridors and their vicinity, the Commission could not find reasonable military justification for the consistent and extensive expansion of the two corridors.

20. According to the United Nations Satellite Centre, the period from October 2023 to February 2024 shows a rapid increase in damaged and destroyed buildings within

¹¹ See https://unispal.un.org/pdfs/HU11_1205.pdf; <https://features.gisha.org/%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%92%D7%91%D7%95%D7%9C/>; https://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/LegalDocuments/buffer_zone/8.3.2015_foi_to_idf_answer_2.pdf; and https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/inside/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Perimeter_English-2.pdf.

¹² See <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2025-07-30/ty-article/.premium/idf-tells-ministers-conquest-of-gaza-will-risk-hostages-lives-after-far-right-demands/00000198-5c47-d843-af99-de5f761f0000>.

¹³ See <https://www.idf.il/ar/%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A/%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A/swordsofiron-181123-118/>; and <https://x.com/AvichayAdraee/status/1945364123220365694/video/2>.

the buffer zone, from 15 per cent in October 2023 to 90 per cent in February 2024, with 3,033 buildings destroyed and 593 damaged, out of a total of 4,042. Agricultural land damage also increased from 5.36 per cent damaged in October 2023 to 33.13 per cent in February 2024, amounting to approximately 120 square kilometres of some of the most fertile land in Gaza and crucial for local food production. Some 238,000 residents were forcibly displaced from the buffer zone.

21. Wells, sewage pumping stations and wastewater treatment plants were also razed, as well as the Sufa (Al-Fukhari) landfill. Educational institutions, mosques and cemeteries in the zone were also destroyed.¹⁴

22. According to several reports, Israeli forces fired at individuals who were close to the unmarked buffer zone, leading to the deaths of civilians. Reportedly, a similar policy of “shoot to kill” was also implemented by Israeli forces in the Netzarim corridor.¹⁵

Forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza and plans to re-establish settlements

23. Several reports highlighted widespread destruction across the Gaza Strip, with many areas left uninhabitable.¹⁶ Statements made by Israeli soldiers from the Nahal Brigade in August 2025 indicated that destruction in some areas was carried out intentionally to prevent the return of the population.¹⁷ Amid these reports, Israeli officials have continuously proposed plans for the expulsion of the Palestinian population from Gaza and the re-establishment of Israeli settlements. Some statements also explicitly or implicitly indicate support for annexation of the territory. In December 2024, the Minister of Heritage, Amichay Eliyahu, advocated the full conquest and occupation of Gaza and the re-establishment of Israeli settlements, declaring that Gaza belongs to the Jewish people.¹⁸ In February 2025, the Members of Knesset Limor Sonn-Har-Melech and Almog Cohen stated that Gaza belongs to the Jewish people, advocating “occupation, expulsion and settlements” in order to exact vengeance and to ensure the security of Israel.¹⁹ In July 2025, the Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, stated that, with the destruction of Hamas and the encouragement of Palestinian migration, Israel has a unique opportunity to capture Gaza.²⁰ On 22 July 2025, the Minister of Finance, Bezalel Smotrich, said during a conference organized by the Knesset Caucus for the Renewal of Settlement in Gaza that Israel will capture Gaza and transform it into an indispensable part of the State of Israel.²¹

24. Such statements have also been promoted by settler organizations. Nachala, a settler organization, publicly adopted a goal of “occupation, expulsion and settlements”,²² announcing as early as November 2023 that it was promoting settlements in Gaza, and identified hundreds of families and individuals wishing to

¹⁴ See A/HRC/59/26.

¹⁵ See https://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/inside/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Perimeter_English-2.pdf; and <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-12-18/ty-article-magazine/premium/idf-soldiers-expose-arbitrary-killings-and-rampant-lawlessness-in-gazas-netzarim-corridor/00000193-da7f-de86-a9f3-fefff2e50000?lts=1743450396527>.

¹⁶ See <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/magazine/2025-07-16/ty-article-magazine/premium/00000198-0d2e-daa7-a9bc-8d6f67750000>.

¹⁷ See https://x.com/kann_news/status/1946292123545874448?s=46.

¹⁸ See <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/655569/>; and https://x.com/Eliyahu_a/status/1869700778455437680?s=19.

¹⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1393912675109763>; and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKIPTxDespk>.

²⁰ See <https://www.kan.org.il/content/kan-news/politic/927637/>.

²¹ See <https://www.youtube.com/live/JqZ4cO4ivps>.

²² See https://x.com/T_Nachala/status/1945223068533583883.

live in planned settlements. Senior Israeli officials, including Mr. Ben-Gvir, attended events organized by Nachala and publicly supported the organization's agenda.

25. A "voluntary migration" of the Gaza population to other States has been publicly proposed by Israeli officials; supported by the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, in February 2025 and directly endorsed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Netanyahu. On 22 July 2025, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, Gila Gamliel, reiterated her support for "voluntary migration" and published a strategy document drafted in October 2023 by the Ministry of Intelligence, recommending the migration of the Gaza population to external countries.²³ The promotion of "voluntary migration" of the Gaza population has been explicitly linked by Israeli officials to settlement plans, including by Mr. Smotrich, Mr. Eliyahu and the Members of Knesset Limor Sonn-Har-Melech and Almog Cohen, among others.

26. On 7 July 2025, the Minister of Defence, Israel Katz, indicated that he had instructed Israeli security forces to prepare a plan to establish a "humanitarian city" in the south of Gaza where initially 600,000 Palestinians and later the entire population of Gaza would be moved, according to media reports. Reportedly, those who enter the "city" would not be allowed to leave. The announcement triggered considerable criticism among human rights experts, including Israeli international legal experts, who called the proposal a "concentration camp" and highlighted its clear unlawfulness under Israeli and international law.

B. Israeli actions impacting land and housing in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem

27. In recent years, the Government of Israel has instituted comprehensive legislative and institutional changes transferring much of the administration of civilian affairs in the West Bank from Israeli military to civilian institutions and government officials. These changes include the transfer on 23 February 2023 of civilian powers of the Civil Administration from the Ministry of Defence to the Settlement Administration, headed by a prominent settler and subordinate to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Smotrich, and the 18 June 2023 amendment to Government Decision No. 150, transferring the authority for approving planning for new construction from the Ministry of Defence to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Smotrich. These changes gave representatives of the settler movement greater control over decision-making in relation to land and housing in the West Bank, expediting outpost and settlement construction and annexation in the West Bank.

28. Israeli authorities continue to confiscate land through the declaration of State land, significantly contributing to the fragmentation of the West Bank. Some 24,258 dunums were declared State land in 2024, the largest declaration of State land in any single year since 1998. On 11 May 2025, the Israeli Security Cabinet decided to initiate a land registration process in Area C of the West Bank for the first time since the Israeli occupation began. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Smotrich, stated that the Government's broader policies on settlements, including the land registration process, were aimed at taking responsibility for the territory as a permanent sovereign towards an aim of de jure annexation, emphasizing that the process would provide more land for settlement development and prevent the Palestinian Authority from taking over.²⁴

²³ See <https://x.com/GilaGamliel/status/1947629456127869012> (OPTEJI-C-00004079); and https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IpRQxGEY0cF5ORL6rh-LCqE5_PWPys8d/view?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLZdGRleHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHmIMSnzPx2GTEnNPPKV-81qpjk-TiNgIRuujDoB1JO3aTXL_w1SZ_W0cyGt_aem_bOySWWUGM8-09I6cL0X3Q (Hebrew only).

²⁴ See <https://www.facebook.com/makorrishon/videos/1385148569464900/>.

Construction of settlements and outposts and expansion to Area B

29. The number of new outposts in the West Bank has been increasing at an unprecedented rate since 7 October 2023, with at least 59 outposts reportedly established in 2024. By comparison, in each year from 1996 to 2023, on average, some seven or eight outposts were established. Most of the recently established outposts have been farm or herding outposts. The current Government of Israel has reportedly approved the establishment of 49 settlements in the West Bank, including the creation of 22 new settlements. On 5 May 2025, Mr. Smotrich stated that there were 86 farm outposts in the West Bank, covering half a million dunums.²⁵

30. Settlers from farm outposts and Israeli government officials have explicitly stated that they are working to create a strategic configuration which completely encircles Palestinian communities and forces Palestinians to leave. This constitutes ethnic cleansing for large swathes of the West Bank. The latest community forced to leave was the Bedouin villagers of Mughayyir al-Deir, who fled in May 2025, completing the removal of Palestinian communities from an area of 381,000 dunums, which now houses 37 farm outposts. From 2022 to 2024, settlers from farm outposts forcibly displaced more than 60 Palestinian communities and herder locations.

31. In 2024, Israel extended its settlement activity to Area B of the West Bank, an area under the civilian control of the Palestinian Authority, with at least eight outposts reportedly established. Five are in the area known as the “agreed-upon reserve”, located east and south of Bethlehem, and two are located near Ramallah. The “agreed-upon reserve” covers approximately 167,000 dunums of land in Area B. Pursuant to the Wye River Memorandum, agreed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 1998, the Palestinian Authority has authority over planning and building enforcement in this area but not over approval of construction.²⁶ Settlers reportedly attacked Palestinian communities near the eight newly established outposts.

32. While expanding settlements, Israel also increased demolition of Palestinian houses, with a total of 1,768 structures demolished in 2024.²⁷ This marked the largest number of demolitions owing to the lack of permits since 2009.

East Jerusalem

33. Palestinians in East Jerusalem have been subjected to substantial limitations on their ability to plan and develop their neighbourhoods, leading to severe overcrowding. Since October 2023, Israeli authorities have increased settlement planning and construction and demolition of properties built without a permit, utilizing the 2017 “Kaminitz Law”, which imposed high fines and potential criminal liability for illegal building.²⁸ The number of demolitions in East Jerusalem in 2023–2024 was the highest since the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs began recording them in 2009.²⁹

34. The development of new settlement plans and plans to expand existing settlements has also risen at an unprecedented rate. Several of these plans have taken advantage of the settlement of land title process, initiated in 2018, and effectively

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/the-wye-river-memorandum>.

²⁷ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/demolition>.

²⁸ The 2017 “Kaminitz Law” was an amendment to the 1965 Planning and Building Law, aimed at increasing the “enforcement and penalization of planning and building offences” by imposing high fines and potential criminal liability for illegal unapproved building. See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/legislation/laws/pages/lawbill.aspx?t=lawreshumot&lawitemid=2006777>; https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Report_Spatial_Segregation_to_UN_SR_Dec21.pdf, pp. 15 and 16; https://www.acri.org.il/post/___343; and <https://www.ir-amim.org.il/en/node/2479>.

²⁹ See <https://demolition.ochaopt.org/Index.aspx>.

used on several occasions by Israeli authorities to appropriate Palestinian land in East Jerusalem and allocate it to the Jewish National Fund, settler organizations or the State, propelling the construction of settlements. As at July 2025, the process was completed for 2,175 dunums and a further 5,734 dunums are pending completion.³⁰ United Nations Satellite Centre satellite imagery analysis of 44 locations in East Jerusalem affected by the settlement of land title process reveals the construction of structures, roads and other infrastructure for the benefit of settlers in at least 22 locations, including Givat Hamatos, Nofey Rachel and Gilo, from 2018 to 2025. The process is also riddled with procedural deficiencies, to the detriment of the Palestinian population. For example, a 20 dunum area in Umm Tuba neighbourhood had undergone a settlement of land title process resulting in its subsequent registration to the Jewish National Fund in May 2023,³¹ without the knowledge of the residents themselves.³² In June 2025, 22 families received eviction orders.

35. The Commission has already expressed its concern about the E1 area construction plans in eastern Jerusalem, intended to reinforce the settlements in the Ma'ale Adumim area and split the West Bank into two geographical entities.³³ In May 2025, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Smotrich, stated that construction in the E1 area “will de facto kill the Palestinian State”.³⁴

Funding for settlements

36. The Government of Israel and government-controlled entities fund settlements, including by direct funding from the Ministry for Settlements and National Missions, headed by the Minister, Orit Strock, and through the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization, which is subordinated to the Ministry. In 2024, the Ministry transferred 20 million new shekels (approximately \$6 million) to settlements.³⁵ International funding is also provided for settlements, often through donations that are tax deductible in Western countries.

37. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Smotrich, has been a key driving force behind Israeli government policies to increase and enlarge settlements. He has spearheaded the creation of statutory bodies and processes dedicated to providing services to settlers, while directing the transfer of billions of shekels to support settler communities through infrastructure projects that sustain settlements and encourage the movement of Israeli citizens and businesses into them. He has also publicly advocated the forced displacement of Palestinians from Gaza and has actively worked to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian State by entrenching Israeli settlements and land seizures.

State-backed settler violence

38. Settler violence has been steadily increasing in recent years, in particular since the formation of the current Government in 2022 and significantly since 7 October 2023.³⁶ According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the

³⁰ See <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/05a7bec8c51f4ddb9d923554ffabef3/page/English-Map/>.

³¹ See https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/05a7bec8c51f4ddb9d923554ffabef3/page/English-Map-/#data_s=id%3AdataSource_add_from_url_entry-17e63b583f2-layer-9%3A76.

³² See <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2024-10-30/ty-article/.premium/00000192-d758-d91e-a9df-dff9ebe50000>.

³³ A/77/328, para. 15.

³⁴ See <https://www.facebook.com/makorrishon/videos/1385148569464900/>.

³⁵ See <https://next.obudget.org/i/budget/0004521318/2025>.

³⁶ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-december-2024>; and <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-268-west-bank>.

highest number of attacks occurred in October 2023, with an average of seven attacks per day.³⁷ In the first half of 2025, the Office documented some 740 settler attacks that led to casualties or damage to property.³⁸ The rise in settler violence is directly linked to settler attempts to take over more land in the West Bank, forcibly remove Palestinians and achieve ethnic cleansing. The Commission has documented multiple cases since October 2023 where settlers, dressed in army uniforms and likely enlisted or reserve soldiers, committed acts of violence against Palestinians, attacking, threatening or harassing them or damaging their property.³⁹ The rise in recruitment of settlers as reservists in the army's regional defence battalions has contributed to this trend.⁴⁰ These reservists reportedly received army uniforms, weapons and an army salary to guard settlements. The distinction between soldiers and settlers is increasingly blurred, with larger numbers of settlers serving in the military and the ideology of the settler movement being internalized and implemented by the military.

39. Settler attacks continue to be met with impunity. The Prime Minister and other coalition members have repeatedly rejected reports of settler attacks, arguing that there is a smear campaign against the settlers.

Impact of large-scale military operations in the West Bank on land and housing

40. Militarized Israeli operations in the West Bank have increased since January 2025, when a large-scale Israeli military operation, codenamed "Iron Wall" by Israeli authorities, was initiated in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams camps.⁴¹ It was preceded by an operation codenamed "Protect the Homeland", in Jenin camp in December 2024–January 2025, led by Palestinian security forces, reportedly aimed at arresting members of armed groups as part of the security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.⁴²

41. Israeli forces used helicopter fire, air strikes, tanks, bulldozers and ground troops during "Operation Iron Wall", causing extensive damage to residential areas and civilian infrastructure and resulting in mass displacement. Palestinian armed groups responded with M16 assault rifles and improvised explosive devices placed on access routes. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in June 2025 intensified military operations were also carried out in Nablus and Jenin cities and Askar and Balata refugee camps in Nablus.⁴³

42. Operation "Iron Wall" has been the single longest Israeli military operation in the West Bank since 2005. The operation resulted in loss of life and destruction of civilian property and infrastructure. From 21 January to 30 June 2025, 74 Palestinians, including 12 children and three women, were reportedly killed by Israeli forces in Jenin, Tubas and Tulkarm governorates. The majority of them were killed in the first 40 days of the operation.⁴⁴

³⁷ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-monthly-snapshot-casualties-property-damage-and-displacement-december-2024>.

³⁸ See <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-301-west-bank-enhe>.

³⁹ The Commission refers to such settlers dressed in military uniform as "settler-soldiers".

⁴⁰ A/HRC/56/26, para. 63.

⁴¹ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-260-west-bank>.

⁴² See <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/west-bank-palestinian-armed-actors-enter-and-use-unrwa-health-centre>; <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-has-been-forced-suspend-services-jenin-camp>; <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-21/ty-article/00000194-8877-dee1-aff7-cb7ff0860000>; and <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/14/jenin-brigades-commander-killed-as-pa-forces-raid-occupied-west-bank-camp>.

⁴³ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-298-west-bank>.

⁴⁴ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/northern-west-bank-humanitarian-response-update-21-january-30-april-2025>.

43. More than 1,000 homes have reportedly been completely destroyed and thousands damaged by Israeli security forces in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps since January 2025. At least 50 houses sustained severe damage in Jenin by Palestinian security forces in December 2024–January 2025. The Commission analysed satellite images of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps as at 24 July 2025, and assessment by the United Nations Satellite Centre from 18 July 2025 and found that Israeli forces had significantly changed the topography of the three locations as a result of the destruction of buildings and the creation or expansion of access roads. The Commission’s analysis revealed a marked shift from dense, contiguous housing in January 2025 to a fragmented landscape with visible fields of rubble and open clearings in July 2025. In May 2025, in a decision on a petition filed by residents of Tulkarm and Nur Shams whose homes were to be demolished, the Israeli Supreme Court gave its approval for the demolition of homes to expand military access routes.⁴⁵

44. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), by the third week of May 2025, more than 33,000 had been displaced.⁴⁶ This includes: more than 10,700 displaced from Jenin camp, representing 44 per cent of the population of 24,239;⁴⁷ more than 10,500 from Nur Shams camp, representing 78 per cent of the population of 13,519;⁴⁸ and more than 12,200 from Tulkarm camp, representing 44 per cent of the population of 27,631.^{49,50} As at July 2025, most of the displaced Palestinians had not returned, reportedly owing to a ban by Israel on accessing the area, with some who attempted return reporting experiencing attacks, assault, harassment, obstruction and detention by Israeli forces. The Minister of Defence, Mr. Katz, reportedly stated that residents will not be allowed back in the coming year.

45. On 21 January 2025, Mr. Smotrich linked this operation to Israeli settlements, noting that “Iron Wall” will be a strong and ongoing campaign against the elements of terrorism and its perpetrators, to protect the settlement and the settlers, and for the security of the entire State of Israel, of which the settlement is the security belt”.⁵¹ Mr. Katz stated more generally on 29 January 2025 that the Israeli response constitutes “a declaration of war on terror in Judea and Samaria”, the name used by Israeli officials for the West Bank, and that “the refugee camp of Jenin will not return to what it was”.⁵²

⁴⁵ See <https://supremedecisions.court.gov.il/Home/Download?path=NetVerdicts/2025/5/9/2025-5-12276-3-2&fileName=ba12f1b01df24af385e27144f6c9e43c&type=4>.

⁴⁶ See https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/West%20Bank_info-graphic_19_May_2025.pdf.

⁴⁷ See <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/west-bank/jenin-camp>.

⁴⁸ See https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/nur_shams_camp_profile_-2022_0.pdf.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/west-bank/tulkarm-camp>.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-293-west-bank>.

⁵¹ See <https://x.com/bezaelsm/status/1881674071521272181>.

⁵² See <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rk5eaqdoje>.

C. Palestinian land and housing in Israel⁵³

Discriminatory planning and zoning policies

46. Since the establishment of Israel, Israeli authorities have created more than 750 new Jewish localities⁵⁴ and very few non-Jewish localities, including seven Bedouin towns in the Negev. The contrast is most stark in the Galilee, where, as at 2019, there were 78 Palestinian villages, all of which existed prior to 1948, and 307 Jewish villages, the majority of which were established after 1948 as part of the Government's effort to increase Jewish settlement in the Galilee (see paras. 58–60).

47. The geographical boundaries of existing Palestinian localities allow almost no options for expansion and development. Israeli planning authorities have surrounded Palestinian localities tightly with “security zones”, military installations, parks and national roads, as well as adjacent Jewish villages. The exclusion of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship in local, regional and national planning and zoning decision-making processes under the Ministry of Interior is another contributing factor.

48. Consequently, requests to expand the territorial boundaries of Palestinian localities have been delayed, partially granted or granted in a manner which does not reflect the needs of the population, with desperately needed solutions for overcrowding in Palestinian localities stalled for years.

49. The coastal Palestinian town of Jisr al-Zarqa is densely populated, suffers from high crime rates and low socioeconomic levels and is completely encircled by Jewish localities, with local residents stating that it is virtually “under siege”. It took nine years for a comprehensive outline plan to be approved for the town. The plan received 70 objections, the majority from local Palestinian residents who did not find the key aspects of the plan (the construction of high-rise buildings) appropriate to their rural way of life and needs; other objections, from neighbouring Jewish localities, opposed any expansion towards their boundaries. While the outline plan was being considered, the municipality of Jisr al-Zarqa submitted a request to allow specific housing projects to be built, including “Jisr al-Zarqa west” for building 522 additional housing units. Following approval in 2017, the units were built in close proximity to the Jewish city of Caesarea and marketed generally to the wider Israeli population, resulting in mostly Jewish buyers. Reportedly, only one quarter of the units were purchased by residents of Jisr al-Zarqa.

50. High population density by comparison with neighbouring Jewish localities is a feature of the great majority of Palestinian localities in Israel. In the Negev, the Jewish village of Meitar had a population of 10,947 persons in 2022 and an allocated land area of 24.2 square kilometres (including public land not in use), while the neighbouring Bedouin town Hura had a population of 24,822 persons in 2022 and an allocated land area of 8.7 square kilometres (almost all in use).⁵⁵ Hura had limited or

⁵³ Official Israeli data in relation to non-Jewish citizens of Israel distinguishes between the following categories: Arabs, Bedouins, Druze and Circassians. The Commission uses the term “Palestinians with Israeli citizenship” to refer to Palestinians in Israel although it acknowledges that not all non-Jewish citizens of Israel define themselves as Palestinian. Where possible, the Commission disaggregated and adjusted data on the Palestinian population in Israel to exclude those Palestinians living in annexed East Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ The Commission uses the term “localities” (a translation of the Hebrew word “yeshuv”) to refer to population centres, including villages, towns and cities. The term is also used by Israeli authorities to refer to population centres of more than 2,000 residents. See https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/DocLib/2022/2.ShnatonPopulation/st02_16x.pdf.

⁵⁵ See https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/DocLib/2024/local_authorities22_1957/%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%AA%D7%A8.pdf; and https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/DocLib/2024/local_authorities22_1957/חורא.pdf.

no options for expansion and development, including of essential public services and housing.

51. Palestinian localities also suffer from financial challenges, since only 2.4 per cent of commercial areas in Israel are within their areas. They have fewer opportunities for economic growth, increasing their dependence on the central Government.⁵⁶

Building permits and unlawful building

52. The State Comptroller of Israel has highlighted in recent years a continued severe housing crisis which disproportionately impacts non-Jewish minorities in Israel. Natural growth of the population, combined with almost no changes in the allocated land for housing, results in increasing living density. He noted that these minority groups require approximately 12,000–13,000 new housing units annually, resulting in an annual shortfall of some 4,000–5,000 housing units. The Comptroller listed several contributing factors to the crisis, including inadequate allocation of State budgets, underrepresentation of minority communities in national and regional planning committees and deficiencies in land registration.⁵⁷

53. The housing crisis has been aggravated by extensive demolition of homes (primarily of Bedouins in the Negev) and the near impossibility of acquiring building permits. Building permits are normally issued by local planning commissions based on completed local outlines and detailed maps. Since many Palestinian localities do not have local outlines or face long delays in having outlines approved and/or receive an approved outline that does not reflect the community's needs and realities on the ground, significantly fewer building permits are approved. A 2022 report by the Israeli organization Sikkuy-Aufoq found that, out of 70 Palestinian local and regional councils, only 43 had an approved local outline after 2000, with an average approval time of 80 months.⁵⁸ One expert told the Commission that planning in Palestinian localities is perceived as a national threat and planning processes have slowed even more since 7 October 2023.

54. As a result, Palestinians in Israel have increasingly resorted to building without a permit, facing increasing fines and potential criminal liability. Buildings defined by Israeli authorities as “illegal structures” cannot be connected to basic services, including water, electricity and sewage. According to one study, as at 2022 there were approximately 13,918 unregulated buildings across Palestinian towns and villages in Israel (excluding mixed towns where both Jews and Palestinians with Israeli citizenship reside).⁵⁹ In some locations, including in mixed towns, almost entire neighbourhoods, such as Pardes Snir and the Train Neighbourhood in Lod, were built without permits and therefore had not been provided with essential services.

55. According to reports, demolition of Bedouin homes in the Negev increased by 400 per cent in 2024.⁶⁰ In August 2024, following the transfer of the National Unit for Enforcing Planning and Construction Laws from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of National Security, the Minister of National Security, Mr. Ben-Gvir, announced his full support for the demolition of Bedouin houses, noting that “we will

⁵⁶ See <https://library.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Documents/2024/2024.11-75A-PartB/2024.11-75A-PartB-502-Tichnun.pdf>, p. 16.

⁵⁷ See <https://library.mevaker.gov.il/sites/DigitalLibrary/Documents/69b/2019-69b-206-Diyur.pdf>, p. 550.

⁵⁸ See https://www.sikkuy-aufoq.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/hasdara_heb-1.pdf, p. 35.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁰ See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/news/pressreleases/pages/press18.12.24ed.aspx>; and <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1016565107150305&id=100063904760794&set=a.347010607439095>.

destroy as many houses as possible, until the governance and sovereignty will return to the long-neglected Negev”.⁶¹ In January 2025, Haaretz reported that Mr. Ben-Gvir had ordered the police to prioritize the demolition of houses occupied by families.⁶²

56. In November 2024, the destruction of the Bedouin village of Umm-al-Hiran in the Negev was completed to make way for a new Jewish village, Dror.⁶³ Demolition, harassment and forced relocation of residents had been continuing since 2017, with residents also being forced to demolish their own structures to avoid heavy fines. Residents of the village were relocated to the Bedouin town of Houra, with inadequate compensation and insufficient land allocation to allow for grazing and herding. Marking the end of the village’s demolition, Mr. Ben-Gvir stated that the authorities would not allow illegal building and the taking of land.⁶⁴ Contrary to Mr. Ben-Gvir’s statement, the residents of Umm-Al-Hiran had not illegally taken the land but had been instructed to settle in that location by the Government of Israel in 1956.

57. The Government, in its plans to solve the specific housing crisis in the Negev, largely recommended dismantling existing “unrecognized” villages and transferring Bedouin communities to recognized villages and to State-built towns. These plans have largely failed to accommodate the unique social fabric of the Bedouin people, including tribal culture and traditional agrarian living, and their own preferences, including integration in their locations or in nearby Jewish localities. Highlighting the discriminatory nature of the proposed solutions, the Bedouin Knesset Member Yusuf Atauna said, “We are just asking for equality in planning ... As Jews are allowed to live in a kibbutz, moshav or village, – you cannot impose one way of life on the Bedouin.”⁶⁵

Judaization and segregation

58. Since the foundation of Israel, Israeli officials have highlighted their growing demographic concern, fearing that an increasing Palestinian population would challenge the Jewish majority. In 2003, the then Minister of Finance and current Prime Minister, Mr. Netanyahu, reportedly said, “We have a demographic problem, but it is not the Arabs of Palestine, it is the Arabs of Israel ... we must ensure a Jewish majority”.⁶⁶ The 2018 Nation State Basic Law defined Israel as the nation State of the Jewish people alone. It shifted the country’s Judaization policy from de facto to de jure, indicating clearly that “the State sees the development of Jewish settlement as a national priority”.⁶⁷

59. Government plans were prioritized to expand Jewish settlement in areas with significant Palestinian population, primarily in the Galilee and Negev, in a manner that isolates or restricts Palestinian communities. These policies were promoted while implying that significant contiguous Palestinian presence in Israel is also a security risk.

⁶¹ See <https://x.com/itamarbengvir/status/1821138421185675606>.

⁶² See <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2025-01-09/ty-article/.premium/00000194-45b1-db19-abdd-6db7c86d0000>.

⁶³ See <https://x.com/landgov/status/1856945440383549442>.

⁶⁴ https://www.gov.il/he/pages/26_11_2024.

⁶⁵ See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/activity/committees/negevgalil/news/pages/%d7%94%d7%a1%d7%93%d7%a8%d7%aa-%d7%99%d7%a9%d7%95%d7%91%d7%99-%d7%94%d7%91%d7%93%d7%95%d7%90%d7%99%d7%9d-%d7%91%d7%a0%d7%92%d7%91.aspx>.

⁶⁶ See <https://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/2003-12-17/ty-article/0000017f-e396-d75c-a7ff-ff9fdb840000>.

⁶⁷ See <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/documents/BasicLawsPDF/BasicLawNationState.pdf>.

60. Settler organizations, which have largely focused on the West Bank, are increasingly involved in implementing these policies. The settler organization Nachala was actively involved in supporting, inhabiting and lobbying for the Jewish outpost Ramat Arbel, established by Government decision in 2002 in the Galilee, but this decision was later rejected by the national planning and building committee in 2007.⁶⁸ Building in the outpost was carried out without a permit and demolition orders were issued but these orders were not implemented. In July 2023, the Prime Minister, Mr. Netanyahu, praised “the pioneering families who are taking root there” and considered the outpost as “strengthening Jewish settlement in the Galilee, which is important to all of us”.^{69,70}

61. Judaization has resulted in effective segregation. As at 2022, 90 per cent of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship lived in Palestinian towns and villages, and only 10 per cent lived in “mixed cities”. One tool used by the Government to discourage Palestinian residence in Jewish villages is “admission committees”, an arrangement for small communities of up to 700 families to veto a person purchasing a house in the Negev, Galilee and other national priority areas.⁷¹ Recognizing this system as a form of segregation between Jewish and non-Jewish communities, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reiterated its concerns in 2019 about the unchecked discretion of admission committees to reject applicants that they deem unsuitable.⁷²

62. Another tool used by Governments of Israel involves establishing housing and financial incentives with eligibility clauses that largely exclude non-Jewish applicants, such as prior military or reserve duty service. In March 2023, the Government approved a plan to encourage settlement in the Galilee and Negev villages, which included incentives for new immigrants, all of whom are Jewish and immigrating under the Law of Return.⁷³

63. Several statements by public officials suggest that segregation is intentional and desirable. In November 2020, the Knesset Member and current Minister of Finance, Mr. Smotrich, said that Israel should invest in and develop “the Arab settlements”, so that “Arabs” do not move into Jewish settlements and mixed cities and create assimilation.⁷⁴ In April 2025, the deputy head of the Lower Galilee municipality said that Israel should address the housing crisis of “the Arab sector” so that those who seek to better their situation do not enter Jewish cities, noting that everyone should “live in their natural place”.⁷⁵ On 8 June 2010, the Knesset Judiciary Committee’s legal adviser said in a deliberation on the “admission committees” (see para. 61 above), that the two communities do not even want to assimilate into each other, emanating from the national conflict and a mutual feeling of threat.⁷⁶

Similarities between Israeli policies in the West Bank and within Israel

64. Israeli land and housing policies for Palestinians in the Negev and Galilee mirror housing policies applied towards Palestinians in the West Bank, in particular in relation to the restrictive planning and zoning policies, the establishment of settlement “seeds”

⁶⁸ See <https://x.com/RamatArbel/status/1676645352496332800>; https://x.com/T_Nachala/status/1864220326210556152; and <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/dec711-2023>.

⁶⁹ See <https://www.gov.il/he/pages/arbelleheights02072023>.

⁷⁰ See <https://x.com/RamatArbel/status/1919656472893424051>.

⁷¹ See https://fs.knesset.gov.il/globaldocs/MMM/b575c62c-f83d-ef11-8162-005056aa4246/2_b575c62c-f83d-ef11-8162-005056aa4246_11_20673.pdf (Hebrew only).

⁷² See CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19.

⁷³ See https://www.gov.il/he/pages/dec1319_2022.

⁷⁴ See <https://x.com/GLZRadio/status/1331868460599668738>.

⁷⁵ See <https://www.inn.co.il/news/665997>.

⁷⁶ See https://fs.knesset.gov.il/18/Committees/18_ptv_140562.doc, p. 17.

to increase Jewish presence and prevent Palestinian expansion and the demolition of unapproved structures built by Palestinians, at the same time as the promotion of Jewish villages, settlements and settlement blocks in a way that is intended to obstruct Palestinian geographical contiguity.⁷⁷ In addition, several prominent settler organizations, including Nachala and Regavim, are active in both the Negev and Galilee and in the West Bank, with a stated objective of ensuring Jewish prominence in all areas. Settler organizations and government officials have also increasingly presented a narrative in relation to both Israel and the West Bank of Palestinian actions to take over the territory which belongs to the Jewish people.⁷⁸

IV. The Commission's findings on genocide

65. The Commission analysed the military operations of the Israeli security forces in Gaza from October 2023 pursuant to the obligations of Israel under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention). The expanded findings are being published in September 2025 in a conference room paper.

66. The Commission found that Israeli forces have committed the following underlying acts of genocide under article II of the Genocide Convention: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

67. The Commission assessed the *mens rea* element of genocide and concluded on reasonable grounds that Israeli authorities and security forces had the requisite *dolus specialis* under article II of the Genocide Convention, namely, the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”. It relied upon the following facts: (a) the unprecedented number of Palestinians killed and harmed (physically and mentally), including widespread and systematic torture, and sexual and gender-based violence; (b) the intentional and direct targeting of children during military operations; (c) the nature and duration of the siege and starvation imposed on the Palestinians in Gaza; (d) the concerted policy of Israel to systematically destroy healthcare facilities and its attacks against healthcare professionals, forcing Palestinians to live without access to crucial medical care; (e) despite numerous warnings, including from the International Court of Justice, Israeli authorities’ refusal to change the military strategy, the continuation of the strategy of mass attacks against Palestinians in Gaza and imposition of stricter restrictions, especially on humanitarian aid, on Palestinians; and (f) Israeli authorities’ awareness that Palestinians were trapped in Gaza unable to flee outside Gaza, and their actively and knowingly preventing Palestinians, including those in need of urgent medical treatment, from leaving Gaza.

68. A State may be responsible for the commission of genocide through an organ whose conduct is attributable to that State or through its failure to prevent or punish the commission of genocide. Israeli security forces personnel carried out the genocidal acts on the instructions and under the control of the Israeli military and political leadership. As agents of the State of Israel, their acts were attributable to the State of Israel. The Commission thus concluded that the State of Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza.

⁷⁷ For similar policies applied in the West Bank, see [A/77/328](#), paras. 24–45.

⁷⁸ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ay-VQ3qpHU>; and https://fs.knesset.gov.il/24/Committees/24_cs_bg_617067.pdf (Hebrew only).

69. A State may also incur responsibility for failing to prevent or punish genocide. The Commission found that Israeli authorities have not prevented or punished genocide and often justified the Israeli security forces' conduct and made statements of encouragement, leading to the commission of further crimes. The Commission therefore concluded that the State of Israel has also failed to prevent the commission of genocide.

70. Furthermore, the Commission assessed specific statements made by the President of Israel, Isaac Herzog, the Prime Minister, Mr. Netanyahu, and the former Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, among others, and concluded that the "direct and public incitement to commit genocide" under article III (c) of the Genocide Convention was established and the officials were liable to prosecution for incitement to genocide. The Commission found that the acts of the officials, as agents of the State of Israel, were attributable to the State of Israel and Israel was therefore responsible under article III (c) of the Genocide Convention for its officials' direct and public incitement to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

V. Conclusions and legal analysis

The Gaza Strip

71. Since October 2023, Israeli officials have demonstrated a clear and consistent intent to establish permanent military control over Gaza and to change its demographic composition while systematically destroying Palestinian life in Gaza. This is evident in the extensive destruction and fragmentation of the territory, the establishment of military structures, the destruction of natural resources and infrastructure essential to the survival of the civilian population, forcible transfer and statements indicating the existence of plans for the deportation of the population. Some Israeli officials have explicitly supported the construction of settlements and their integration into Israeli territory, which may constitute a form of de facto annexation if implemented. Actions undertaken by Israel to expand the buffer zone and establish corridors have substantially reduced the territory available for Palestinians, with significant implications for the ability of Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination.

72. While acknowledging that creating security zones and establishing military bases may be undertaken to achieve a legitimate military objective, the Commission finds that Israeli actions undertaken in creating an extended buffer zone and corridors were vastly disproportionate to any reasonable military objective and therefore unlawful. Moreover, the Commission could not identify any reasonable security rational underpinning the formation in May–July 2025 of the "dangerous combat zone" engulfing Palestinian towns and infrastructure, the Philadelphi and Morag corridors and the expanded buffer zone and constituting 75 per cent of the Gaza Strip. The formation of this new single zone indicates a further move towards seizure of territory, which is consistent with statements from Israeli leadership.

73. These actions, in conjunction with proposals by Israeli officials of the expulsion of Gazans (referred to as "voluntary migration"), their confinement in a de facto concentration camp (referred to as a "humanitarian city") and support for the idea of re-establishing Israeli settlements, clearly indicate that Israel is using the zones to prepare for further displacement, settlements and possible annexation.

74. The widespread destruction of Gaza has created a situation in which Palestinians cannot return to their homes, effectively paving the way for Israeli

officials to propose that they “voluntarily migrate” to other countries. The Commission emphasizes that plans proposed by Israeli officials – “voluntary migration” and establishing a “humanitarian city” – if implemented, would constitute the war crime and crime against humanity of forcible transfer and deportation of the Palestinian population.

75. The destruction of civilian objects for expansion of territorial control has been part of a widespread and systematic attack by Israel directed against the civilian population in Gaza since 7 October 2023. Israeli authorities committed the crimes against humanity of forcible transfer of the civilian population and other inhumane acts causing great suffering. These actions also constitute collective punishment and a violation of the right to freedom of movement and enjoyment of private property under international humanitarian and human rights law.

76. The Commission found that, in destroying civilian objects and forcibly transferring the population, the Israeli security forces have deliberately deprived Palestinians in Gaza of resources indispensable for their survival, including food, agricultural lands and fisheries, sewage pumping and wastewater treatment, which were destroyed in the buffer zone and corridors and elsewhere in Gaza. The Commission therefore finds that, in conjunction with all previous findings that it has made on this issue, Israeli authorities deliberately inflicted conditions of life on the Palestinians in Gaza calculated to destroy, in whole or in part, the Palestinians in Gaza, which is an underlying act of genocide. The Commission finds that the underlying acts of genocide discussed above are part of the Israeli authorities’ consistent pattern of conduct to physically destroy the Palestinians, as a group, in Gaza, and, at the same time, maintain long-term military presence and control over the territory.

The occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem

77. Israeli policies and actions implemented since October 2023 in the West Bank demonstrate clear intent to forcibly transfer Palestinians, expand Israeli civilian presence and annex the entirety of the West Bank, preventing any potential Palestinian self-determination and statehood and maintaining an indefinite occupation.⁷⁹

78. Increasing violent attacks by settlers have resulted in the forcible displacement of communities and subsequent Judaization of areas of the West Bank. Many settler attacks were committed by settler-soldiers or were observed by Israeli military forces who took no action. The Commission considers such acts to have been committed with the support of the State of Israel and its agents. Through the actions and acquiescence of Israeli authorities regarding settler violence, Israel, as a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has violated the human rights of Palestinian communities, including: (a) the right to life; (b) the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment; (c) the right to liberty and security of the person; and (d) the right to privacy, family and home.

79. The Israeli military operations in Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps have significantly altered the geographical landscape through the destruction of buildings and infrastructure. The unnecessary demolition of

⁷⁹ See A/77/328; and <https://www.icj-cij.org/index.php/node/204160>.

“terrorist homes” and of buildings that had already been cleared of militants was not justified militarily and amounts to collective punishment.

80. Moreover, the Commission has identified several similarities between the military operations of Israel in the West Bank and those in Gaza. These include: (a) terminology used by Israeli officials referring to the military operations as “war”; (b) types of weapons used, including air strikes and tanks; (c) destruction of civilian homes and infrastructure; and (d) the impact on the civilian population, including the large number of displaced civilians. Like Palestinians in Gaza, Palestinians in Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarm have been forcibly transferred and reportedly not allowed to return.

81. The Commission expresses strong concern regarding the excessive use of force by Israel in the West Bank, where security operations fall under the law enforcement paradigm, governed by international human rights law, and notes that the similarities between Israeli operations in the West Bank and Gaza also give rise to concerns that Israel is targeting the Palestinian people as a whole.

Israel

82. Successive Governments of Israel have implemented laws and policies to diminish Palestinian space in Israel, including confining Palestinian localities and hindering Palestinians with Israeli citizenship from moving and integrating into Jewish localities. In addition, informal barriers resulting from wider, primarily socioeconomic, inequalities between the two populations have grown and become entrenched over decades, further preventing integration.

83. Some policies and laws are explicitly discriminatory. Others have a discriminatory impact, resulting in segregation. This is evident from the “admissions committees” policy and law, as well as statements of Israeli officials’ supporting the development of exclusively non-Jewish localities to deter and prevent Palestinians with Israeli citizenship from moving into mixed cities.

84. Such discrimination in laws and policies is a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Specifically, Israel has violated article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which obliges States to ensure adequate standards of living and housing and the continuous improvement of living conditions.

85. Land and housing policies impacting Palestinians in Israel are part of a broader policy towards the Palestinian population as a whole, aimed at striving towards a Jewish majority in all areas under Israeli control, reducing the possibility of geographical self-determination for the Palestinian people.

Individual criminal responsibility

86. The Commission has identified several Israeli ministers as likely bearing the most responsibility for the international crimes noted in the present report. The Ministers of Defence since October 2023, Yoav Gallant (until 7 November 2024) and subsequently Israel Katz, are responsible for actions of Israeli security forces in Gaza which amount to international crimes. The Minister of Finance, Bezalel Smotrich, and the Minister of Settlements and National Projects, Orit Strock, are jointly responsible for driving settlement construction and expansion in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Minister of National Security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, is responsible for the actions of police and prison authorities

noted by the Commission in its previous report to the General Assembly.⁸⁰ The Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is ultimately responsible for the conduct of Israel in the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. All six bear direct individual responsibility for establishing policies and taking actions noted in the present report that have killed and injured Palestinians, deliberately inflicted on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction in whole or in part and deepened the unlawful presence of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, including through security operations and channelling funds for settlements, farm outposts and settlement expansion.

VI. Recommendations

87. To the Government of Israel:

(a) Immediately end the commission of genocide in the Gaza Strip and comply fully with the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice in its orders of 26 January, 28 March and 24 May 2024;

(b) Recognize and ensure the Palestinian people's right to self-determination;

(c) Comply fully with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 19 July 2024; end without delay its unlawful occupation of the Palestinian territory; and remove all Israeli settlements and settlers from the West Bank and other occupied territories;

(d) Comply fully with international humanitarian and human rights law in military and law enforcement operations, including in relation to targeting civilians and civilian objects indispensable to the survival of a people; and ensure that all those responsible for violations are held accountable;

(e) Take effective action to prevent and punish violence by settlers against Palestinians; and take effective action to prevent and punish violence by members of the Israeli Security Forces who participate in or permit settler violence;

(f) End and reverse confiscation and appropriation of Palestinian property, including during military operations in the occupied Palestinian territory for the creation of buffer zones, corridors and access; and return all confiscated land to its Palestinian owners;

(g) Ensure that all displaced Palestinians are allowed to return to their homes; and reverse all plans to further forcibly transfer Palestinians to locations outside the occupied Palestinian territory;

(h) Provide effective remedies, including compensation, restitution and rehabilitation, for families of persons killed or injured and those who suffered destruction of property;

(i) End and reverse all discriminatory land, housing and planning policies promoting segregation in land allocation and housing;

(j) Reform the structure of Israeli building planning institutions to ensure the equitable representation of Palestinians in all levels of planning committees;

⁸⁰ See [A/79/232](#).

(k) Establish and strengthen consultative processes between relevant planning and zoning authorities and Palestinian communities to ensure that building plans reflect the needs, culture and way of life of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship;

(l) Allow the Commission access to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory to conduct investigations;

88. To the Government of the State of Palestine:

(a) Comply fully with international human rights law in the context of law enforcement operations in the West Bank;

(b) Provide effective remedies, including compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, public apologies and guarantees of non-repetition, for families of persons killed or injured and those who suffered destruction of property;

(c) Ensure that all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are held accountable;

89. To the de facto authorities in Gaza:

(a) Immediately release all hostages and ensure their humane treatment until their release;

(b) Comply fully with international humanitarian and human rights law;

(c) Provide effective remedies, including compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, public apologies and guarantees of non-repetition, for families of persons killed or injured and those who suffered destruction of property;

(d) Ensure that all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law are held accountable;

90. To all Member States:

(a) Comply with all international law obligations, including the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 2024, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(b) Act immediately on obligations to prevent and punish genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;

(c) Cease aiding or assisting in the commission of violations of international law, including by reviewing all relationships with Israel, such as trade, aid and assistance and arms transfers, and ending direct and indirect financial support for illegal settlements, including through tax-deductible donations;

(d) Conduct investigations under domestic law or universal jurisdiction to hold accountable the perpetrators of crimes under international law, grave human rights violations and abuses in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including those identified in the present report, including through criminal prosecutions and sanctions.
