Israel seeks permanent control of Gaza, Jewish majority in Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, UN Commission of Inquiry says

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<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/israel-seeks-permanent-control-gaza-jewish-majority-occupied-palestinian>

The Israeli government has demonstrated a clear and consistent intent to establish permanent control over the Gaza Strip while ensuring a Jewish majority in the occupied West Bank and inside Israel, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel said in a new [**report**](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coiopt/a80337_english.pdf) today.

The Commission investigated developments relating to land and housing in all areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel. The report provides relevant historical background, identifying historical origins to processes of land confiscation, population displacement, discrimination in land and housing, and construction and expansion of settlements.

The report also includes a summary of the Commission’s [**conference room paper**](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf) on Israel’s conduct in the Gaza Strip pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was published on 16 September during the Human Rights Council’s 60th session. In this paper the Commission found that four genocidal acts were carried out in Gaza. These acts were committed by the Israeli authorities and security forces with specific intent to destroy Palestinians in Gaza. Actions of Israeli leaders are attributable to the State of Israel; therefore, as a State, Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide, for failing to prevent it, and for failing to punish it. The Commission also found that the Israeli President, Prime Minister and former Defence Minister have incited the commission of genocide.

With regards to the Gaza Strip, the report published today found that Israeli authorities extensively and systematically demolished civilian infrastructure in the corridors and buffer zone and continuously enlarged areas under their control reaching 75 percent of the Gaza Strip by July 2025. Actions undertaken by Israeli authorities to expand the buffer zone and establish corridors have substantially reduced the territory available for Palestinians, with significant implications for their ability to exercise their right to self-determination.

In destroying civilian objects and forcibly transferring the population, the Commission found that the Israeli authorities deliberately deprived Palestinians in Gaza of resources indispensable for their survival. As such, the Commission found that such actions 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.

“Israel must immediately end and reverse its confiscation and use of Palestinian land in Gaza, including for the creation and expansion of the buffer zone and corridors. It must return all confiscated land to its Palestinian owners,” said Navi Pillay, Chair of the Commission. “Israeli confiscation and control of land ostensibly carried out for security purposes have not achieved more security for anyone but have deepened the misery of the Palestinian people and deprived them of resources indispensable for their survival, including the capacity to produce food.”

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli policies and actions implemented since October 2023 - including explicit and implicit support for actions of violent settlers - demonstrate clear intent to forcibly transfer Palestinians, expand Israeli Jewish civilian presence and annex the entirety of the West Bank, preventing any potential Palestinian self-determination and statehood and maintaining an indefinite occupation.

The Commission found that Israeli military operations in Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams refugee camps - which began in early 2025 - have significantly altered the geographical landscape through the destruction of buildings and infrastructure and the displacement of Palestinian residents. Some destroyed buildings were designated by the Israeli army as “terrorist homes” and were destroyed as punishment and for deterrence purposes. The Commission found that such actions were not justified militarily and amounted to collective punishment.

“I am particularly appalled by the Israeli Finance Minister Smotrich’s recently announced plan of annexing 82 percent of the occupied West Bank, and by the approval of a plan cementing the E1 settlement expansion, with Prime Minister Netanyahu asserting that this will ensure there will be no Palestinian State,” said Pillay. “These developments corroborate our findings. Israeli encroachment into the entirety of the West Bank and the dispossession and relocation of multiple Palestinian communities are now explicit goals, which Israeli officials proudly boast about. These plans and statements are abhorrent and must be condemned widely.”

In relation to the situation in Israel, the Commission found that successive Israeli Governments have implemented laws and policies to diminish Palestinian space, including through confining Palestinian localities and hindering Palestinians with Israeli citizenship from moving and integrating into Jewish localities.

Additionally, informal barriers resulting from wider, primarily socio-economic inequalities between the two populations have grown and become entrenched over decades, further preventing integration. Some policies and laws were identified as explicitly discriminatory, while others have a discriminatory impact, resulting in segregation.

Similarities between land and housing policies impacting Palestinians in Israel and those applied towards Palestinians in the occupied West Bank point to the existence of a broader policy towards the Palestinian population as a whole, intended to secure a Jewish majority in all areas under Israeli control, reducing the possibility of geographical self-determination for the Palestinian people.

The report identified six Israeli ministers as likely bearing the most responsibility for international crimes relating to land and housing, as well as other crimes identified in the Commission’s previous reports:

* Former Minister of Defence **Yoav Gallant** and current Minister of Defence **Israel Katz** are responsible for actions of Israeli security forces in Gaza;
* Minister of Finance **Bezalel Smotrich** and Minister of Settlements and National Projects **Orit Strock** are jointly responsible for driving settlement construction and expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem;
* Minister for National Security **Itamar Ben-Gvir** is responsible for mistreatment of Palestinian detainees by Israeli prison authorities identified by the Commission in its previous report to the General Assembly;
* Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** is ultimately responsible for Israel’s conduct in the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and is directly responsible for ordering the commission of acts that constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of genocide.
* Prime Minister **Netanyahu** and former Minister of Defence **Galant** are also responsible for the crime of incitement to genocide.

The report includes recommendations for all duty bearers. The Commission urges Israel’s Government to immediately end the commission of genocide in the Gaza Strip and comply fully with the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice and with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice from 2024. The Commission also urges the Israeli Government to end without delay its unlawful occupation of the Palestinian territory, remove all Israeli settlements and settlers from the West Bank and other occupied territories, and end and reverse the consequences of all discriminatory land, housing and planning policies promoting segregation in land allocation and housing inside Israel.

The Commission’s report will be presented to the General Assembly’s 80th session on 28 October 2025 in New York.