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**EUROPEAN UNION**

Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA)

**2025 Report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem**

**Reporting period: January - December 2025**

**Summary**

In 2025, the Israeli government accelerated its settlement project in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) by advancing plans and policies that will deepen territorial transformation unprecedentedly. These developments suggest an acceleration of settlement activity and moves towards annexation, as well as a progressive institutionalisation of Israeli civilian governance mechanisms across the oPt, endangering the prospects for a two-state solution.

The most acute expression of this acceleration was the government's official approval of plans to establish 54 new official settlements in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem); the highest number ever recorded in a single year. In parallel, 86 new outposts were erected throughout the year at an average rate of one to two per week.

This was further reinforced by unprecedented levels of planning and construction. According to Peace Now, 27,941 housing units (HU) were advanced for submission or final authorisation by the Higher Planning Council in 2025 for settlements in the occupied West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem). In occupied East Jerusalem, a further record 35,370 HU across 56 plans were advanced according to data from the Jerusalem-based civil society organisation Ir Amim, nearly double the level of 2024 (18,988 HU). Taken together, 63,311 HU were advanced through planning across the oPt in 2025, the highest annual total ever recorded. The plans have not yet been implemented.

The final approval in August 2025 and subsequent tendering in December 2025 of plans to build 3,401 HU in the E1 area of the West Bank (east of Jerusalem neighbouring the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim), represents one of the most strategically consequential settlement decisions in decades as it will bisect the West Bank, sever it from East Jerusalem, and displace thousands of Palestinians in the area. Together with the advancement of other new settlement plans that will, if implemented, cut East Jerusalem almost entirely from the West Bank, damaging to the prospects of East Jerusalem serving as the future capital of a Palestinian state.

The expansion of settlements was accompanied by increased levels of settler violence. UN OCHA documented 1,828 settler attacks resulting in casualties or property damage across approximately 280 communities in 2025, compared to 1,420 in 2024 and 1,189 in 2023. This is the highest annual total since monitoring began in 2006. Nine Palestinians were killed by settlers and 838 were injured — an average of two per day.

The EU has repeatedly called on Israel not to proceed with plans under its settlement policy and to halt all settlement activities. It remains the EU's firm position that settlements are illegal under international law. The settlement developments advanced in 2025 further undermine the prospects of a viable two-state solution.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2025, the total number of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem continued to grow substantially. According to available data, over 750,000 Israeli settlers (15 % of the entire West Bank population) reside across 147 settlements and a rapidly expanding number of outposts in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Beyond the record figures, 2025 marked a qualitative evolution in settlement policy. Government measures increasingly combined planning, legal regularisation of outposts, infrastructure development, land administration and governance reforms into a more integrated territorial strategy.

In 2025, the Israeli government took steps towards de facto annexation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with developments that represent a qualitative escalation beyond the levels documented in prior years. Most strikingly, the government officially approved the future establishment of 54 new settlements in the West Bank and erected 86 new outposts, both figures representing all-time records. These decisions reflect a deliberate policy of converting informal presence into permanent, state-sanctioned territorial control deep inside the West Bank.

The approved establishment of new settlements and outposts was accompanied by record levels of planning and construction. According to Peace Now, 27,941 housing units were advanced through different stages of planning in settlements across the occupied West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) in 2025 — more than double the previous annual planning record set in 2023. In occupied East Jerusalem, the Jerusalem-based civil society organisation Ir Amim documented the advancement of a further 35,370 housing units, the highest annual figure since it began documenting settlement advancements in 2012. The combined total of 63,311 housing units advanced in plans across the oPt considerably surpasses all previous years on record. An additional 9,629 HU were included in tenders in the West Bank while no tenders were published in East Jerusalem in 2025.

Furthermore, the allocation of 335 million shekels and the launch of works for a road (“Sovereignty Road”) designed to reroute Palestinian traffic between the north and south of the West Bank, closing off approximately 3 percent of the West Bank to Palestinians, is assessed by observers as a step toward de facto annexation of the area between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim.

In parallel, the Israeli government accelerated land appropriation. According to a joint report by Peace Now and Kerem Navot, between 2023 and 2025 Israel declared 25,959 dunams as state land — nearly half of all land declared as state land since the Oslo process began. Of this total, 24,258 dunams were declared in 2024 alone, already described as a peak not seen in at least 25 years. The government has furthermore allocated NIS 244 million to initiate land registration (settlement of land title) proceedings in the West Bank, a process that risks leading to large-scale dispossession of Palestinians who may be unable to prove ownership under the conditions set by Israel. According to Peace Now and Ir Amin, the declaration of state land facilitates the establishment of more settlements.

## 2. RECORD SETTLEMENT PLANNING AND ESTABLISHMENT

### Record Number of New Official Settlements and Outposts approved for establishment

2025 saw the highest number of new Israeli settlements officially approved for establishment in a single year since the beginning of the settlement enterprise. The Israeli government adopted three rounds of cabinet decisions approving the future establishment of 54 new settlements: 13 in March, 22 in May, and 19 in December. Of these, 14 were plans for entirely new settlements, 26 were the regularisation of existing illegal outposts, and 14 were the recognition of existing settlement 'neighbourhoods' as independent settlements. Almost all are located deep inside the West Bank.

**Table 1. The number of approved settlements from 2012-2025**

| 2012 | 2013-2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020-2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|------|-----------|------|------|------|-----------|------|------|------|
| 3    | 0         | 1    | 1    | 1    | 0         | 9    | 5    | 54   |

Source: Peace Now

To place this figure in perspective, 5 settlements were approved in 2024. The 2025 total of 54 represents a more than tenfold increase year-on-year and demonstrates a systematic policy of converting ad-hoc settler presence into permanent, state-sanctioned institutions. The Netanyahu government was the first to start the establishment of entirely new settlements since the Oslo agreement.

The establishment of new settlements was accompanied by a parallel record in outpost construction. Unlike previous years, government measures increasingly focused on converting informal settlement presence into permanent state-recognised entities. In 2025, 86 new outposts were erected, including 58 classified as 'agricultural farms', at an average rate of one to two per week. This substantially exceeds the previous record of 26 outposts erected in 2023, which had itself been the highest since 1991. According to Peace Now and Kerem Navot recent research, farm outposts currently effectively control more than 1,070,000 dunams — approximately 18% of the West Bank. These herding outposts restrict Palestinian access to grazing and agricultural resources; they are also a primary driver of settler violence and Palestinian displacement. According to B'Tselem data, the outposts and farms established in 2025 led to the full displacement of 15 Palestinian communities and the partial displacement of a further 7 communities during the year.

### **63,311 Housing Units across the West Bank and East Jerusalem**

The number of plans advanced in 2025 was more than double the previous annual planning record. In the occupied West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), a total of 14,623 HU were approved for depositing and 15,371 HU were approved for validation, amounting to 27,941 HU promoted through the Higher Planning Council in 2025 (following deduction of plans that received approval both for deposit and for validation during the year), as reported by Peace Now. Over the past three years (2023–2025), plans for 40,064 HU were advanced in West Bank settlements, supporting a potential future settler population growth of 160,000 to 200,000 according to Peace Now and Kerem Navot. In occupied East Jerusalem, Ir Amim documented the advancement of 56 plans comprising 35,370 HU in 2025. Taken together, 63,311 housing units were advanced through planning across the oPt in 2025.

Among the largest individual plans advanced in 2025 were: Atarot-East Jerusalem (9000 units), Ma'ale Adumim and E1 (6,916 units), Telmonim including Harsha and Zayit Ra'anana (2,321 units), Kedumim (1,806 units), Eli (1,561 units), Kokhav Ya'akov (1,247 units), and Ma'ale Amos (1,125 units).

### **Record Number of Tenders: 9,629 Housing Units**

A tender is the stage of execution in settlement construction managed by the Ministry of Housing, after plans are approved. Tenders published in 2025 included: E1 (3,401 units), Ma'ale Adumim (3,300 units), Efrat (974 units), Ariel (730 units), Beitar Illit (561 units), Geva Binyamin (364 units), and Kiryat Arba (296 units). Additional tenders were published for commercial and industrial projects, including a hotel of at least 180 rooms in the newly regularised Oz ve-Ga'on outpost.

This total of 9,629 units in tenders substantially exceeds any previous year on record. In comparison, 2,932 units were tendered in 2024 and 3,784 in 2021, the previously highest year for tenders. Notably, all tenders published in 2025 concerned settlements in the West Bank; for the first time since documentation began in 2012, no tenders were published in East Jerusalem, consistent with a broader pattern of maximising planning approvals while retaining flexibility over construction timing.

### 3. THE E1 AREA: A STRATEGIC THREAT TO A TWO-STATE SOLUTION

The most strategically significant development of 2025 was the final approval in August by the Higher Planning Council of plans to build 3,401 housing units in E1, followed by the publication of construction tenders in December 2025. After years during which successive Israeli governments refrained from advancing E1 due to sustained international and American pressure, the Netanyahu-Smotrich government approved the E1 plans. These plans are universally regarded as among the most damaging possible settlement decisions for the prospects of peace and a two-state outcome.

The E1 area sits at the geographic heart of the West Bank. Development of this area as an Israeli settlement would split the West Bank into two non-contiguous parts, cutting the territorial link between the northern and southern West Bank, and preclude the development of a Palestinian metropolitan area connecting Ramallah, East Jerusalem, and Bethlehem. It would also effectively consolidate the annexation of Ma'ale Adumim into the Israeli urban space.

In September 2025, the Israeli Prime Minister signed an agreement for accelerated development with the Municipality of Ma'ale Adumim, committing the government to invest 3 billion shekels in infrastructure for the E1 settlement and for the development of Ma'ale Adumim. These commitments signal that E1 is no longer merely a planning approval but an active construction project.

In March 2025, the government also allocated 335 million shekels to construct a road known as the 'Sovereignty Road', designed to reroute all Palestinian traffic from the north to the south of the West Bank onto a narrow Palestinian-only route. In doing so, it would close off approximately 3 percent of the West Bank to Palestinians and allow Israel to connect Ma'ale Adumim and E1 to the Israeli urban space without barriers. The construction of this road also threatens the displacement of dozens of Palestinian communities, including Khan al-Ahmar.

The approval of E1 should also be viewed within the broader context of the government's efforts to strengthen the Jerusalem-Ma'ale Adumim corridor through planning, infrastructure and administrative measures.

### 4. SEVERE SETTLEMENT ADVANCEMENT IN AND AROUND OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM

2025 was a record year for settlement advancement in occupied East Jerusalem. Unlike settlement expansion elsewhere in the West Bank, developments in East Jerusalem have direct implications for the future status of Jerusalem under any negotiated final status agreement. According to data documented by the Israeli civil society organisation Ir Amim, 56 plans comprising 35,370 HU were advanced in East Jerusalem during the year. This is nearly double the number of HU advanced annually in 2024 (18,988 HU) and 2023 (18,333 HU), and the highest annual figure since Ir Amim began documenting settlement advancements in 2012. **The extent of new settlement plans advanced in East Jerusalem since the beginning of the war in Gaza exceeds that of any other period in the past three decades.**

Among the 56 plans advanced, eight plans provide for the establishment of seven new settlements with a total of 12,775 HU. A further 13 plans provide for the territorial expansion of existing settlements with 8,636 HU. The remaining plans concern urban renewal within the built-up areas of existing settlements. These plans entail no change in territory but by replacing existing buildings with denser construction, would dramatically increase the Israeli population beyond the Green Line.

#### New Settlements Inside or Adjacent to Palestinian Neighbourhoods

It is important to underscore that all of the plans for new settlements are designated for land located within or directly adjacent to Palestinian neighbourhoods, an increasingly pronounced trend. This

pattern deprives Palestinian communities of vital land resources necessary for development, further fractures contiguous Palestinian space, and ultimately leads to increased friction and restrictions on freedom of movement. The new settlements advanced in 2025 include Atarot, Nofey Rachel in Umm Tuba, Umm Haroun in Sheikh Jarrah, the Begin Complex in northern Sheikh Jarrah, Givat Shaked in Beit Safafa, the 'Northern Quarter' in Shuafat, and a settlement inside the Palestinian neighbourhood of Umm Laysoon. The plans for Umm Haroun, the Begin Complex and the Northern Quarter were all introduced for the first time in 2025.

### **Sheikh Jarrah: A Cluster of Plans under the Guise of Urban Renewal**

Four interrelated plans advanced in 2025 target the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. These include a Jerusalem Development Authority (JDA) plan for the eviction of the Umm Haroun compound – home to approximately 40 Palestinian families – and the construction of a 320-unit settlement, presented as the renewal of a historic Jewish neighbourhood; a JDA plan for 1,500 housing units in the Menachem Begin government complex in northern Sheikh Jarrah, which the District Committee approved for deposit for public review at the end of the year; an urban renewal plan at the western edge of Wadi Joz, near the Karm al-Ja'ouni area long targeted for settler takeover; and a plan for an 11-storey dormitory yeshiva on public land designated for neighbourhood residents. As documented by Ir Amim, these initiatives – most of them presented under the framework of 'urban renewal' – are collectively expected to displace more than 100 Palestinian families and would fragment Sheikh Jarrah into several small Palestinian enclaves dominated by large-scale settlements.

### **Settlement of Land Title: A Primary Tool of Land Appropriation**

The so-called settlement of land title (SOLT) process, incorporated into the Israeli government's five-year plans for East Jerusalem since 2018, has become the primary tool for the expropriation of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem. In 2025, registration was completed in six land blocs, bringing the total since 2018 to 50 blocs, while SOLT processes were advanced in 47 additional blocs. Around 85 percent of the area in which SOLT was completed between 2018 and 2025 was registered in the name of state authorities, the municipality or private Jewish owners with the purpose of establishing new settlements; only around 1 percent was registered to private Palestinian owners. The process operates with limited transparency, with Palestinian owners often learning of proceedings only after their properties have been registered to others. The expanded role assigned in 2025 to the Custodian of Absentee Property, funded by budgets originally designated to alleviate the Palestinian housing crisis, risks dispossession on an unprecedented scale. This serves also as an indicator of how the SOLT process will take place in the West Bank as decided by the Israeli Government in the beginning of 2026.

The record settlement advancement contrasts starkly with planning for the Palestinian population. In 2025, a total of 152 plans comprising some 70,000 housing units were advanced for Israeli neighbourhoods across Jerusalem, including settlements in East Jerusalem. By comparison, only eight plans comprising 3,240 housing units were advanced for the city's Palestinian neighbourhoods despite Palestinians comprising 40% of the city's population. This is less than 4.5 percent of the total housing units advanced in the city over the year.

### **The Southern Periphery and 'Greater Jerusalem'**

From the perspective of safeguarding a two-state solution in which Jerusalem serves as the capital of both states, developments on the southern periphery of Jerusalem continue to sever the chances for contiguity between East Jerusalem and the southern West Bank. The Givat Hamatos expansion plan (known as the Hebron Road Strip), which provides for 3,500 housing units on approximately 140 dunams of land along Hebron Road, would if implemented, double the number of housing units in Givat Hamatos, enlarging the settlement's area by approximately 40 percent. Givat Hamatos is already under construction and represents the first new settlement built beyond the Green Line in Jerusalem

in over two decades. Together with the Lower Aqueduct plan (1,738 units, approved in late 2023), the Har Homa expansion and plans for Givat Shaked, the Hebron Road Strip would complete the southern ring of Israeli settlements **permanently blocking territorial contiguity between East Jerusalem and the southern West Bank**, directly severing Bethlehem from East Jerusalem. The EU has consistently opposed Israeli construction in Givat Hamatos, which it regards as particularly damaging to the prospects of East Jerusalem serving as the future capital of a Palestinian state.

## 5. TRENDS IN SETTLEMENT PLANS AND TENDERS SINCE 2018

The advancement of settlement plans in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has increased dramatically since 2018 — from 11,513 housing units in 2018 to 63,311 units in 2025, more than double the previous record of 30,682 units set in 2023. With 27,941 units advanced in the West Bank, a record 35,370 units advanced in East Jerusalem, and a further 9,629 units advanced through tenders, the overall trajectory demonstrates a comprehensive strategy of territorial transformation.

The nature of settlement advancement has also continued to shift qualitatively. Rather than merely increasing density within existing settlements, a growing proportion of plans now involve territorial expansion into new areas, including — for the first time since the Oslo Accords — in Area B.

**Table 2. Advancement of Housing Units as part of settlement expansion plans in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, 2018–2025**

| Year | Plans West Bank | Plans East Jerusalem | Total Plans | Tenders West Bank | Tenders East Jerusalem | Total Tenders |
|------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 2018 | 5,618           | 5,895                | 11,513      | 3,808             | 603                    | 4,411         |
| 2019 | 8,457           | 3,276                | 11,733      | 956               | 805                    | 1,761         |
| 2020 | 12,159          | 4,280                | 16,439      | 1,844             | 2,017                  | 3,861         |
| 2021 | 3,645           | 14,601               | 18,246      | 3,491             | 293                    | 3,784         |
| 2022 | 4,427           | 23,097               | 27,524      | 197               | 489                    | 686           |
| 2023 | 12,349          | 18,333               | 30,682      | 2,913             | 2,028                  | 3,228         |
| 2024 | 9,884           | 18,988               | 28,872      | 1,399             | 1,533                  | 2,932         |
| 2025 | 27,941          | 35,370               | 63,311      | 9,629             | 0                      | 9,629         |

*\* The 2025 West Bank figure reflects plans advanced by the Higher Planning Council as reported by Peace Now; the East Jerusalem figure reflects plans advanced through Israeli district and local planning committees as documented by Ir Amim. No tenders were published in East Jerusalem in 2025. Sources: Peace Now and Ir Amim annual reports.*

## 6. TRENDS IN SETTLER VIOLENCE

The settlement expansion documented above has been accompanied by an unprecedented escalation in settler violence against Palestinians and Palestinian property, creating a coercive environment that accelerates displacement and facilitates further territorial control.

UN OCHA documented **1,828 settler attacks resulting in casualties or property damage across approximately 280 communities throughout the West Bank in 2025, averaging five incidents per day — the highest daily average since OCHA began recording such incidents in 2006**. To contextualise the scale of this escalation: 1,189 incidents were recorded in 2023, already then described as the highest since monitoring began; 1,420 in 2024; and 1,828 in 2025. This represents a 54 percent increase in just two years. According to IDF and Shin Bet data, the number of settler attacks rose by 27 percent in 2025 compared to 2024, with severe incidents classified as terrorism rising by over 50 percent. October 2025 alone recorded 264 settler attacks — the highest monthly total ever



documented by OCHA. Nine Palestinians were killed by settlers and 838 were injured in settler attacks, representing an average of two Palestinians injured per day. Of those injured by Israeli settlers, nearly 60 percent were in Ramallah (267 injuries) and Hebron (223) governorates.

**Table 3. Incidents of settler violence, 2021–2025 (UN OCHA)**

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023  | 2024  | 2025  |
|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 535  | 861  | 1,189 | 1,420 | 1,828 |

Sources: UN OCHA annual figures. 2025 figure from OCHA HSU #352.

**A particularly worrying development in 2025 was the marked increase in settler violence in Area B, territory that under the Oslo Accords is subject to Palestinian civil control.** The establishment of new settlement outposts in Area B, including one on the outskirts of Atara village in Ramallah governorate in August 2025, was followed immediately by a dramatic surge in attacks on the surrounding Palestinian communities: OCHA documented at least 30 such attacks between August 2025 and January 2026, compared to only one incident in the preceding five and a half years. A similar pattern was documented in other communities in Areas A and B. According to a Peace Now and Kerem Navot report, approximately 4.4 percent of lands seized by settlers through shepherding outposts are located within Areas A and B. The incursion of systematic violence into territory under Palestinian jurisdiction represents a fundamental breach of the Oslo framework.

According to a joint report by Peace Now and Kerem Navot, **farm outposts now effectively control more than 1,070,000 dunams of land, approximately 18 percent of the entire West Bank, from which Palestinians are effectively excluded.** In 2025 alone, approximately 300,000 dunams were added to the areas over which settlers took control through farm outposts. Only around 40 percent of these areas are defined by the Israeli Civil Administration as 'state land'; the remainder includes private Palestinian land, waqf land, and land whose status has not been mapped. The same report documents that 118 Palestinian shepherding communities and shepherding clusters were expelled between 2023 and 2025, primarily as a result of settler violence, denial of access to pastureland and water, and the absence of effective protection by the authorities.

One illustrative incident occurred on 26 December 2025, when Israeli settlers attacked Palestinians in Deir Dibwan village in Ramallah governorate in two consecutive attacks. In the early hours, masked settlers broke into a Palestinian farm, assaulted two workers, tied their hands and feet, and stole 148 sheep. Later that day, dozens of settlers attacked Palestinians ploughing their land, firing live ammunition and physically assaulting nine Palestinians, including four children and a 70-year-old man, injuring 12 in total and stealing two agricultural tractors and two vehicles.

On 28 December 2025, the six last remaining Palestinian families – 22 people, including children and women - were displaced from Khirbet Yanun in Nablus governorate, where they had lived for more than 60 years, following sustained attacks from settlers associated with Itamar settlement and nearby outposts.

Accountability for settler violence remains grossly inadequate. Israeli law enforcement investigations of settler attacks continue to be insufficient, with Palestinians frequently fearful of retribution if they report incidents. As documented by Israeli civil society organisation Yesh Din, between 2005 and 2022, 93 percent of police investigations into settler attacks were closed without indictments.

## 7. DEVELOPMENTS OF CONCERN IN THE REPORTING PERIOD

**Unprecedented Number of New Official Settlements:** The government's three rounds of cabinet decisions resulted in 54 new officially recognised settlements in 2025, the highest number ever

recorded in a single year. The 2025 total represents more than a tenfold increase on the 5 new settlements established in 2024. Of the 54, 14 were entirely new settlements.

**Record Outpost Establishment:** The erection of 86 new outposts in 2025 substantially exceeds the previous record of 26 outposts in 2023, which had itself been the highest since 1991. Agricultural and herding outposts are a primary driver of settler violence and Palestinian displacement, controlling large areas of land and restricting Palestinian access to grazing and agricultural resources.

**E1 Final Approval and Tenders:** The final approval of plans to build 3,401 housing units in E1 in August 2025, followed by the publication of tenders in December 2025, is widely assessed by observers as one of the most consequential settlement decisions in decades. The area's strategic location means its development would sever the West Bank's territorial continuity and effectively pre-empt any future two-state arrangement.

**Record State Land Declarations and Land Registration:** Between 2023 and 2025, Israel declared 25,959 dunams as 'state land', nearly half of the total area declared since the Oslo process began. The government has additionally allocated NIS 244 million to initiate land registration (settlement of land title) proceedings in the West Bank, which observers warn could lead to large-scale dispossession of Palestinians unable to prove ownership under the conditions Israel will set.

**Land Takeover through Farm Outposts and Roads:** In 2023–2025, 185 new outposts were established, approximately 130 of them farm outposts and 'hilltops'. Farm outposts now effectively control more than 1,070,000 dunams — approximately 18 percent of the West Bank — of which only around 40 percent is defined as 'state land'. Settlers additionally took control of at least 11,520 dunams for agricultural purposes through ploughing, planting and denying Palestinians access to their lands, and have opened at least 223 kilometres of new dirt roads across the West Bank — many on private or non-state land, including within Area B — supported by government funding, including a January 2026 decision allocating NIS 125 million to 'paving security routes'.

**Erosion of the Oslo Framework in Areas A and B:** Land takeover processes now extend beyond Area C. Measures documented in the reporting period include an order banning Palestinian construction in the area designated as the 'agreed nature reserve', a February 2026 cabinet decision removing Palestinian Authority enforcement powers in Areas A and B in cases defined as harm to heritage sites, the environment or water sources, and the transfer of planning and construction authority at the Cave of the Patriarchs and the Hebron settlement enclave to the Civil Administration. These actions undermine the administrative framework established by the Oslo Accords and expand Israeli control into areas designated for Palestinian administration.

**Renewed Settlement in the Northern West Bank:** The government effectively lifted the ban on Israelis entering the areas evacuated under the 2005 'Disengagement' and resumed efforts to establish the settlements of Homesh, Sa-Nur, Ganim and Kadim, as well as additional settlements and outposts in the Jenin and Nablus regions, alongside tourism and archaeology projects such as Sebastia intended to reshape the northern West Bank.

**'Sovereignty Road' Infrastructure:** The allocation of 335 million shekels and the launch of works for a road designed to reroute Palestinian traffic between the north and south of the West Bank, closing off approximately 3 percent of the West Bank to Palestinians, is assessed by observers as a step toward de facto annexation of the area between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim.

**Structural Governance Changes toward De Facto Annexation:** According to the joint Peace Now and Kerem Navot report covering the current government's three years in office, broad civilian powers over planning and construction, land registration and management, infrastructure, roads, nature reserves, archaeology and enforcement have been transferred from the Civil Administration and the military chain of command to Finance Minister Smotrich and the Settlement Administration within the Ministry of Defence. This shift created a civilian-political mechanism that enables the rapid and



systematic advancement of annexation objectives while bypassing the limited checks previously in place within the military and legal systems. In parallel, the Ministry of Settlement and National Missions channels hundreds of millions of shekels to organisations involved in settlement expansion and land takeover, helping to establish and entrench illegal outposts, including farm outposts whose residents are frequently involved in violence against Palestinian communities.

## 8. EU PUBLIC STATEMENTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD IN RESPONSE TO SETTLEMENT ADVANCEMENTS AND SETTLER VIOLENCE

The EU issued the following statements related to settlements and settler violence during the reporting period.

- In March 2025, during a press briefing, the EU condemned the Israeli government's cabinet decision to officially establish 13 new settlements in the occupied West Bank, calling on Israel to halt all settlement activity.
- In May 2025, the EU issued a statement in reference to the cabinet decision to establish a further 22 new settlements, reiterating that settlements are illegal under international law and undermine the prospects for a two-state solution. [Link to statement](#).
- In August 2025, in several statements, the EU strongly condemned the final approval of plans to build 3,401 housing units in E1, calling the decision an extremely serious blow to the viability of a two-state solution and urging the Israeli government to reverse the decision. Link to statements [here](#) and [here](#).
- In October, the EU stressed in its Council Conclusions, the importance of de-escalation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and called for an end to settler violence, including against Christian communities, to the expansion of settlements, which are illegal under international law, and to Israel's military operation. It called on Israel to reverse the E1 settlement plan that further undermines the two-state solution. [Link to Council Conclusions](#).
- In December 2025, in its Council Conclusions, the EU called on Israel to reverse the expansion of settlements which are illegal under international law. [Link to Council Conclusions](#).
- Throughout 2025, the EU issued multiple statements condemning specific incidents of settler violence, including the escalation of attacks during the olive harvest season, and called on Israeli authorities to hold perpetrators accountable.

*It remains the EU's firm position that settlements are illegal under international law and that their continued expansion fundamentally undermines the prospects of a viable two-state solution. The EU calls on Israel to immediately and completely halt all settlement activity and to meet its obligations under international law, including the July 2024 ICJ advisory opinion.*

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*Principal sources: Peace Now, Settlement Watch, Summary of 2025 in the Settlements (2026); Peace Now and Kerem Navot, joint report on three years of de facto annexation under the 37th Israeli government (2026); Ir Amim, 2025 in Review: Israel's Policy in East Jerusalem (January 2026) and annual settlement data; UN OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Update #352: West Bank (January 2026); B'Tselem, Settler Violence Updates 2025.*