A CRY FOR HOME

WHEN YOUR LAND IS ILLEGALLY SETTLED

THE WEST BANK

SETTLEMENTS are illegal colonies established by Israel within the occupied Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Only Jewish people may live in them.

200,000 hectares

More than a third of the West Bank has been taken by Israel for settlements. That’s about 200,000 hectares of Palestinian land, including farm and pasture land.¹

790,000 settlers

In 1992, there were 248,000 Israeli settlers living in illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian areas. Today that number is almost 800,000.²

70% increase

Between April 2016 and March 2017, construction starts in settlements increased 70 per cent over the same period in 2015-2016.³

Thousands displaced

The demolition of homes and businesses to make way for settlements has displaced thousands of Palestinians. In 2016 alone, demolitions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem displaced 1,600 Palestinians, half of them children. The livelihoods of more than 7,000 Palestinians were affected.⁴

Settlers bring soldiers

For each of the almost 700 settlers living in the middle of the Palestinian city of Hebron there is one soldier permanently stationed there. That’s one settler per soldier.

Why are settlements considered illegal?

According to the Geneva Conventions, an occupied power is prohibited from:

• making permanent changes to the territory it has occupied;
• moving its own citizens into the territory occupied.

Israel settlements violate both of these provisions.

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A Cry for Home offers stories, videos and fact sheets from MCC on Palestine and Israel. Everyone needs a home – where families are safe and secure, where their basic needs are met, where they can come and go freely, and where they can imagine a future. But that is not the reality for Palestinians – or even for some Israelis. To view other fact sheets and learn more, visit: mcc.org/cry-for-home.
How do settlements impact Palestinians?

As of June 2017, there were 196 settlements and 232 outposts in occupied Palestine.

Water and farmland

The illegal confiscation of land means that Palestinians lose access to their farmland, orchards and water sources. Many settlements are strategically positioned to secure control over aquifers. Israeli settlers have three to four times as much water as Palestinians in the occupied areas.

Strategic control

The occupied areas are being carved up into unconnected pieces. This is most apparent in areas like East Jerusalem, where settlements slowly cut the city off from the West Bank. Palestinian families and communities are isolated from each other, and travel to work, places of worship and hospitals is very difficult.

Militarization

To protect settlers and facilitate settlement building, Israel imposes a strong military presence throughout the West Bank, creating tension and violence. Settlers and soldiers disrupt daily life for Palestinians and put them at risk for excessive and unjustified use of force.

Two kinds of law

Settlers effectively live under Israeli civilian law, while Palestinians in the West Bank live under military law and are routinely deprived of their civil and political rights. Ninety-nine percent of the cases against Palestinians tried in the military court system result in conviction. When cases against Israelis are brought to the civilian court system, only 8 percent result in charges.

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