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Israel Cuts Ties With UN Human Rights Council, Bars Entry into West Bank

By John Glaser

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Israel has [severed working relations with the United Nations Human Rights Council](#) and barred it from entry into Israel or the West Bank after it announced a plan to investigate Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Cutting ties and barring entry to the Human Rights Council is a revealing confession by the Israeli government that its policy of settlement expansion in Palestinian territory indeed violates human rights. Otherwise, the council would surely be welcomed to investigate.

About 500,000 Israeli Jews live in more than 100 settlements built since the start of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. Settlements and the related destruction of Palestinian homes is widely recognized as illegal under international law.

The council said the fact-finding mission, overwhelmingly approved last week, would "investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem."

The United Nations [recently called on Israel to immediately halt](#) the destruction of Palestinian homes in the West Bank. Israeli forces destroyed 622 Palestinian homes in the West Bank in 2011, forcibly displacing over 1,100 people, over half of them children.

A [recent report from the European Union warned](#) that “if current trends are not stopped and reversed, the establishment of a viable Palestinian state within pre-1967 borders seem more remote than ever.” And that seems to be the intention.

The EU report explained how “a combination of house and farm building demolitions; a prohibitive planning regime; relentless settlement expansion; the military’s separation barrier; obstacles to free movement; and denial of access to vital natural resources, including land and water, is eroding Palestinian tenure of the large tract of the West Bank on which hopes of a contiguous Palestinian state depend.”