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## **The state-backed settler war to annex the West Bank**

With an indebted Trump soon to be back in the White House, Tel Aviv is orchestrating a calculated campaign of militia formation and settler violence to seize control of the West Bank, aiming for annexation and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

Despite Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and military aggression against Lebanon, Tel Aviv is preparing to unleash its fanatical Jewish settlers in a coordinated war against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, aiming to ethnically cleanse what remains of the territory and pave the way for further annexation.

Adding fuel to the fire, billionaire Miriam Adelson, the wealthiest Israeli in the world, [bankrolled](#) Donald Trump's "huge victory" in his successful presidential campaign with one clear condition: support for annexing the West Bank.

Last month The [Times of Israel](#) noted that the wealthy widow "is carrying on a legacy she built with her late husband, casino magnate Sheldon Adelson," and that "The Adelson

family has long been one of the largest sources of campaign money for Republican candidates and has backed Trump during each of the last three general elections.”

### **The complete consolidation of the West Bank**

Speaking to *The Cradle*, Ubai al-Aboudi, executive director of Palestinian rights group ‘Bisan Center,’ says that “the Israeli settlers are preparing to carry out a major attack, to ethnically cleanse the Palestinian population,” adding that this attack will be particularly focused on completely erasing Palestinians from what is known as Area C, which constitutes roughly 60 percent of the West Bank.

That escalation has already begun. On 4 November, [armed settlers](#) launched a brazen assault on the Palestinian city of Al-Bireh, marking a surge in the violence that has gripped the West Bank. In October alone, settlers carried out at least [1,490 attacks](#) against Palestinians, their property, and their land – often under the supervision and protection of occupation soldiers.

In the past, extremist settler attacks against Palestinians were characterized by their spontaneous nature and uncoordinated thuggery, but this has begun to change. During a recent [interview with Israel’s Channel 7 News](#), West Bank Settlement Council leader Israel Gantz commented on a meeting he had with the recently [sacked](#) Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant:

**“We asked that the West Bank be treated as Jabalia, Rafah, and the villages of southern Lebanon were treated, which means displacing the residents, killing the terrorists in these villages, cleansing the terrorist infrastructure, confiscating the weapons and then returning them to their villages.”**

While the statement includes the idea of returning Palestinians to their villages, if such an operation replicated Gaza and southern Lebanon, there would be no village to return to. Gantz also requested that Palestinian villages bordering illegal Jewish settlements be ‘cleansed’ due to the potential security threat posed to Israelis living there – both ideas reportedly opposed by Gallant.

On 5 November, however, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu replaced Gallant and handed the defense minister position to long-time ally Israel Katz. While serving in his previous role as Israel’s foreign minister, Katz openly [called for expelling Palestinians](#) from their homes in the West Bank, unlike his predecessor.

### **‘Organized militias’**

Last November, it was revealed that National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir had [ordered the police to stop enforcing](#) the law against West Bank settlers.

This is why the armed settler assault on Al-Bireh was seen as so significant. As Netanyahu reshuffles his cabinet to include a full deck of right-wingers, many of whom are themselves West Bank settlers, these groups are becoming even more brazen.

The assault on Al-Bireh was particularly alarming – a “pogrom-style attack,” according to Aboudi, as “they feel emboldened by the impunity they enjoy.” Rampaging settlers burned 18 vehicles and two apartments while Israeli soldiers looked on.

One West Bank Palestinian described to *The Cradle* how settlers showed up outside her home armed with Molotov cocktails, but “were luckily scared off” prior to assaulting family members:

**“I had just left my home prior to the attack, but I knew something was wrong because the soldiers were acting very violently at all the checkpoints as I was leaving ... you have to understand that these kinds of attacks don’t happen without the soldiers participating in some way.”**

“The settlers are acting more and more like organized militias; they are an extension of the Israeli army working towards an agenda of ethnic cleansing,” insists Aboudi, affirming that this year’s attacks have been dramatically increasing. According to statistics, [settler violence has been escalating every year since 2021](#), reaching an unprecedented number of attacks in 2024.

Through the use of state-backed settler ‘[defense squads](#),’ Israel has managed to ethnically cleanse 16 Palestinian communities in the southern hills of Al-Khalil (Hebron). In 2023, it was discovered that the Israeli army had established the ‘[Desert Frontier](#)’ unit, comprised of the most extremist Jewish settlers from the notorious ‘[Hilltop Youth](#)’ group. Human rights groups have also [documented the use of Israeli standard-issue rifles](#) by West Bank settlers attacking Palestinians, all pointing toward state complicity in these attacks.

According to Aboudi, “around 700 [Israeli] roadblocks cut off Palestinian villages from each other.” Set up by occupation forces, the roadblocks provide cover for “attacks from violent settlers who target Palestinians passing by ... greatly affecting the ability to even travel safely across the West Bank.” The attackers can rely on unconditional impunity from Tel Aviv, he explains:

**“They feel that they have enough resources, weapons, arms, political backing, to commit whatever crime they choose.”**

### **Trump and West Bank annexation**

Yossi Dagan, the settler leader of Samaria Regional Council, [recently purchased some 500 rifles](#) to arm and prepare “emergency security teams” in anticipation of a war in the West

Bank. In September, Israel declared the West Bank a “[combat zone](#),” and created closed military zones as buffers surrounding the illegal Jewish settlements.

Bezalel Smotrich, Israel’s finance minister who was recently gifted control of settlement affairs for the occupied Palestinian territories, [issued a public call for annexation in late October](#). As a longtime West Bank settler himself, Smotrich openly works on behalf of a 2017 settler movement proposal, outlined in a document entitled ‘[Decisive Plan](#),’ which seeks to double the settler population of the West Bank.

If this is combined with Israel’s decision to begin transferring the Israeli settler population from [military to civil control](#), it becomes clear that the process of annexation is already underway.

With the victory of Donald Trump in the recent US elections, it is more than likely that Netanyahu views annexation of the West Bank to suddenly be a very viable option, despite the historic opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July that declared Israel's occupation of the territories to be a violation of international law and demanded that Tel Aviv end its occupation, dismantle all settlements, pay reparations for damages to Palestinians, and facilitate the return of all displaced natives.

But Trump's sweeping electoral victory was aided by uber-Zionist Adelson’s contribution of \$100 million to his campaign, with the single request that the Republican leader [permit Israeli annexation of the West Bank](#).

Recall too that the Adelsons financed Trump's first presidential bid, in 2016, with the [quid pro quo](#) that the Republican leader move the US embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognize the Holy City as Israel’s undivided Capital – a promise that Trump implemented in 2018.

Now, Miriam Adelson is pushing for the annexation of the West Bank. Combined with the surge in settler violence, the formation of Jewish militias, [military training programs](#) for settler civilians, and the distribution of [120,000 rifles](#), a calculated strategy is taking shape. This is not just about sporadic attacks – it is a deliberate, state-backed campaign to alter the demographics of the West Bank permanently in line with the expansionist, settler-colonial ideology of the most extremist coalition government in Israel's history.

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