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Palestinian Authority: Protecting the “Homeland,” or a New Zionist Bantustan



Image by Planet Volumes.

Since the 1993 Oslo Accord, Israel has invaded Jenin Camp numerous times. The City of Jenin and the nearby camp are in what is considered as Area A of the Accord. Area A, which comprises approximately 18% of the West Bank, or 18% of the 22% of historical Palestine, is supposed to be under the full control of the Palestinian Authority (PA). This means that the PA runs both civil affairs and security within this area.

In the Jenin Palestinian refugee camp, Israel has conducted repeated raids since the infamous massacre of April 2002. Most recently, at the end of May, the Israeli army raided the camp murdering several Palestinians before bringing in American-made and U.S. funded bulldozers digging asphalt roads, infrastructure facilities and demolishing homes.

Dismissing the PA responsibility in Area A under the Oslo Accord, the Israeli army operates freely, invading and arresting Palestinians in any city, town, or refugee camp across the West Bank. Last August, the Israeli army launched large-scale incursions on cities and town

designated as Area A, killing dozens of Palestinians. In Jenin Camp, the Israeli military completely cut off the area from the outside world—blocking communications, barring outside journalists, and restricting access to food and water. After at least a week of raids, over 30 Palestinians were murdered and dozens were arrested without charge. According to a U.N. report, in the last year, more than 630 Palestinians were murdered by Israel in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Furthermore, attacks by Israeli Jewish colonists in the West Bank and East Jerusalem had surged significantly since the election of Israel’s most racist government. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 1,423 settler attacks were documented last year, averaging four per day. During the peak of the olive harvest season in October, Zionist colonists’ terror spiked to a record 32 attacks. Emboldened by government officials and a pervasive sense of impunity, these Jewish colonists went on vandalizing homes, torching vehicles, poisoning livestock, and olive groves—an enduring symbol of Palestinian resilience and a critical source of livelihood—were deliberately set ablaze or uprooted.

What makes these terrorist acts particularly egregious is the blatant complicity of the Israeli military. Israeli forces have a track record of enabling colonist violence, stand by or join in these brutal attacks. It should be understood that the systematic, and racially motivated violence by Israeli Jewish zealots is part of a calculated Zionist strategy to instill psychological fear and achieve the “voluntary” ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Palestinian villagers who attempt to defend their properties, face arrest or are met with live fire by soldiers. This stark dual legal system—where settlers act with impunity while Palestinians endure harsh military rule—epitomizes the apartheid conditions documented by leading human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Last week, the Israeli army has waged a wide military campaign in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus, Tubas, towns outside Ramallah, and Qalqilya in the West Bank. In Hebron, Israeli forces started to bulldoze a new colonial road south of Hebron, uprooting trees, razing and confiscating Palestinian land for the benefit of new Jew-only colonies.

Now juxtapose this with the PA initiated security operation, “Protect the Homeland,” aimed at disarming Palestinian fighters inside Jenin refugee camp. It is difficult not to view the PA’s activities in the camp as an extension of Israel’s efforts, which have failed to crush the resistance since 2002.

Protecting the homeland for the PA should mean defending Palestinian towns from the invading occupying army, safeguarding Palestinian farmers from settler attacks, and resisting the construction of colonial roads and the expropriation of Palestinian land—not disarming the only forces challenging the Israeli occupation and its racist policies.

The PA's malleable collaboration with Israel poses a fundamental question about the future of current Palestinian leadership. As frustration with the status quo grows, demands for a new strategy that prioritizes resistance and self-determination over accommodation are destined to gain traction. Grassroots movements reflect a desire for leadership that is more accountable to the Palestinian people and less beholden to Israel and International donors.

Ultimately, the PA's collaboration with Israel highlights the profound challenges facing Palestinian governance under occupation. Breaking free from this dynamic will require not only internal reform but also a reinvigorated national movement capable of uniting Palestinians, in the homeland and diaspora, around a shared vision for justice, freedom, and self-determination.

By subcontracting Israel's suppression of Palestinian resistance to the occupation and settler violence, the PA's current trajectory not only undermines Palestinian aspirations for statehood but also risks transforming the "Homeland" it purports to protect into Zionist run Bantustans.

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