



Beyond an illegal Occupation:

55 years of Full Impunity & Zero Accountability

June 2022

Background

On June 5, 1967, Israel took control of the rest of historical Palestine by occupying the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The United Nations Security Council adopted several resolutions calling for the end of Israel's occupation (including Resolution 242 which called for full Israeli withdrawal) which remain unimplemented. Israel's illegal occupation has transformed into *de facto* annexation (*de jure* in Jerusalem since 1980) and is part of its apartheid regime applied across historical Palestine.

The brutal Israeli occupation is characterized by perpetual unchecked crimes and human rights violations and is maintained by various means, such as killings, mass arbitrary detention, home demolitions, forced displacement, construction of illegal settlements, a network of military checkpoints, theft of land and resources, and state-sanctioned settler terrorism. As recently stated by an Israeli army commander: "the army and the settlements are one and the same".

For 55 long years, the Israeli occupation continues with full impunity and no accountability, due to international inaction and double standards. Despite decades-long calls by Palestinians and reports by the most reputable human rights organizations, the world remains silent on the longest military occupation in modern history.

Israeli Crimes

since 1967



Around 400,000 Palestinians displaced in 1967, still denied their right of return



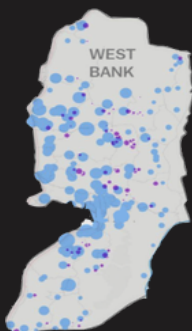
At least **60,000** Palestinian homes demolished



Tens of thousands of Palestinians killed, including women and children



Over 1 million Palestinians detained, enduring various forms of torture



More than **300 illegal Jewish-only Israeli settlements** built in the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem



700,000 Jewish-Israeli settlers reside in them and commit acts of **terrorism**.

Beyond occupation

As an occupying power, Israel has continuously violated international law throughout its 55-year-long illegal occupation. Situations of military occupation are regulated by the Hague (1907) and the Geneva (1949) Conventions. They prohibit the occupying power to annex parts of the occupied territory or transfer into it its own civilian population, based on the principle that occupation is temporary in essence. Therefore, Israeli settlements are illegal and are considered war crimes under the Rome Statute. An occupying power should also provide protection for the occupied population and not impede it in its pursuit of the right to self-determination and sovereignty.

From the onset, Israel's illegal occupation evidently was not meant to be temporary, with the construction of the first illegal settlements on occupied territory right after June 1967. Since then, the occupation continued to morph into a more permanent situation; manifested through a dual legal system that was imposed to favor Jewish Israelis over the occupied Palestinian population. Former United Nations Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk has described it as a “political regime which so intentionally and clearly prioritizes fundamental political, legal and social rights to one group over another, within the same geographic unit on the basis of one's racial-national-ethnic identity”.

The occupation is part of the wider Israeli settler-colonial project, implemented across historical Palestine using varying practices and policies with the overall goal of displacing the indigenous Palestinian population and replacing them with Jewish Israelis. Now more than ever, it is clear what the intention of the Israeli occupation is. Several international and Israeli prominent voices like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UN Special Rapporteurs, and B'Tselem, are now recognizing what Palestinians have declared decades ago: the apartheid regime is employed by Israel to facilitate its settler-colonial project.

Recommendations

The inaction of the international community and its failure to hold Israel accountable for its countless crimes and human rights violations created this culture of impunity which fuels Israel's brutal and illegal 55-year-old occupation. Beyond just an illegal occupation, it is manifesting into an apartheid regime applied across historical Palestine.

As indicated by former UN Special Rapporteurs on Palestine, Richard Falk, John Dugard and Michael Lynk, the international community has an obligation to act.

MIFTAH urges the international community to:

- **Hold Israel to the same standard as other states and end its exceptionalism**
- **Hold Israel accountable for its persistent crimes and human rights violations through effective and concrete measures**
- **End the Israeli occupation and lift the land, air and sea blockade of the besieged Gaza Strip**
- **Support the investigation of the International Criminal Court into the situation in Palestine**
- **Stop trade and all relations with illegal Israeli settlements**
- **Hold Israeli settlers with dual citizenship accountable in their respective states**