

# Monitor of Israeli Imperialism and the Policies of Apartheid

A monthly newsletter prepared by a specialized team at the Institute for Palestine Studies. It monitors the most important apartheid policies, positions and steps taken by the Israeli occupation in Palestine.



Apartheid wall in the west bank (source: Sicha Mekomit)

## Summary:

What transpires from the report is that the Israeli occupation authorities are aggressively seeking to institutionalize and deepen control over the West Bank. In terms of settlement and land control, it seems clear that Israel is moving toward resolving the conflict over the West Bank, by pushing for policies of racial segregation between Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the West Bank and eluding the price of Israel's withdrawal. Through the "Apartheid Road" and the statements made by the finance minister and minister in the defense ministry, Bezalel Smotrich, it is obvious that there is an intention to strengthen the Jewish geographical extension at the expense of the dismantled Arab-Palestinian extension, by diverting the Palestinians to a network of private underground roads, adjacent to the wall, hiding them from the scene and the main roads. This approach is the Israeli solution to the dilemma of segregation without any withdrawal. It comes in line with the vision of the religious and nationalist rightwing in Israel, and at a time when, in Israel, there is no longer any talk of a "political solution."

In this context, it is important to point out that the occupation forces have recently been dealing with the West Bank as "enclaves" to be besieged locally, as is the case in Jericho, for example, which was besieged for 16 days, during which periodic raids took place. The same applies to Nablus and Jenin. After besieging and dismantling Palestinian communities through the road network and settlements, isolating them merely

requires a gate and closing two entrances, turning them into an island isolated from its extension in the West Bank, and sometimes in the governorate itself, as a form of abuse. Access to – and out of – the area becomes an arduous task that requires long waiting hours at checkpoints. The latter have become more stringent and seek to cut off the West Bank, while the Jewish connection process is taking place non-stop.

As for executions and martyrdoms, 48 Palestinians were martyred during the past month throughout historic Palestine. In Gaza alone, 30 Palestinians were killed during the aggression, including 4 women and 6 children, in addition to more than 90 injuries of varying severity. In the West Bank, 16 Palestinians were martyred, most of them directly executed by the occupation forces. The charges were only revealed after the assassination, which turned into an undeclared policy in Palestine, – officially at the hands of Israel –, and in fact became a real practice.

### **Settlement and Land Control:**

- At its meeting on Sunday May 7, the Israeli government approved a budget of 32 million shekels, with the aim of establishing a “tourist settlement” at the archaeological site located in the town of Sebastia and its surroundings in the Nablus governorate. The budget is allocated, first to open a new settlement road to reach the archaeological site by bypassing the Palestinian town; second, for archaeological excavations at the site; and third, for efforts to transform the site into an “attraction” for tourism. It is important to note that the Israeli Nature and Parks Authority, in cooperation with the Civil Administration, is responsible for the site and will turn it into a closed site, which can be entered upon purchasing tickets. Therefore, closing the site, –which was open to everyone for free–, and turning it into a military barracks administered by an authority considered “civilian,” and not the military administration in control in the West Bank, can be considered part of the actual process of annexing the West Bank and subjecting it to “civil” Israeli law.
- On April 28, the Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing published a tender to build 260 settlement units in the West Bank, including 156 units in the “Kiryat Arba” settlement located in Hebron, 60 units in the “Adam” settlement northeast of Jerusalem, and 44 units in the “Duma” settlement in the Valley. The common denominator among all the settlements for which tenders have been announced for expansion is that they are located in areas with a high Palestinian density and are considered “strategic.” In addition, the Israel Land Authority announced that tenders would be held to build about 1,248 new settlement units in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and northern areas of the West Bank. These units are located in the settlements of “Betar Illit”, “Ma’ale Ephraim” and “Karnei Shomron”, in addition to “Gilo” located west of Jerusalem.
- The Civil Administration announced, after Israeli media and institutions revealed the start of excavations and preparations to launch the construction of the “Apartheid Road”, which is a road designated for Palestinians, extending between Al-Eizariya and Al-Za’im, and aiming to divert Palestinian traffic from the main road and from the settlements of the so-called “Adumim bloc”, in view of preparing for settlement construction in the area, completing the construction of the Apartheid Wall around the “Adumim bloc” and diverting Palestinian traffic from it, and thus from the targeted and strategic “E1” area that connects the “Adumim bloc” to the Jerusalem settlements. Construction there is permitted to prevent Palestinian geographical contiguity, as indicated on the “Maale Adumim Municipality” website in its explanation of the road. It says that “the road will separate the overlapping movement of Palestinian and Israeli vehicles and allow Palestinian vehicles to cross from the north of the West Bank to its south, without passing alongside Jewish towns; it also allows construction in “E1 area,” which means that the location of the checkpoint will also change to divert Palestinian traffic. It is important to point out in this context that, as in Sebastia, the Israeli ministry of transportation is responsible for

completing the road, for which a budget of 279 million shekels was allocated, and 30 million was added by agreement between the ministry of finance and the ministry of transportation, although the project was initially defined as a "security" project.

### Politicians and Racism:

- Member of the Knesset and head of the Labor Party parliamentary bloc, Efrat Reiten, considered that the killing of children in Gaza was nothing but a crisis for Israeli *Hasbara*. She commented on the martyrdom of children during the aggression on Gaza in May, saying, "Israel is anticipating a complex mission due to the killing of children, including a five-year-old girl, and women, at the hands of our forces," adding that they are "difficult images for *Hasbara*."
- On the occasion of "Israel's Independence Day," national security minister Itamar Ben Gvir delivered a speech at the "Jewish Idea" Synagogue, which was founded by Meir Kahane, the founding rabbi of the "Kach" movement, - considered by Israeli law as terrorist-, while behind him were hung pictures of both Kahane and Baruch Goldstein, the criminal who carried out the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque, in addition to writings glorifying Kahane and Goldstein and calling for revenge in their names.
- The finance minister and minister in the Israeli defense ministry, Bezalel Smotrich, revealed the true intentions behind the evacuation and demolition of "Khan al-Ahmar," saying that "Khan al-Ahmar must be evacuated, not because it is illegal, but because it is located in a strategic area, between the city of Jerusalem, Street No. 1 and the Dead Sea region". He added that not building and evacuating the Khan creates an Arab geographical extension, linking Bethlehem to Ramallah, which could lead to a state of terrorism in the heart of the State of Israel. Instead, construction must be done there to impose a Jewish geographical extension from the East to the West. Therefore, "we are investing, and we will invest there. During the next phase, we are planning major works to control this important strategic axis." With his statement, Smotrich reveals, in practice, the real reasons for targeting "Khan al-Ahmar," which is in line with the "Apartheid Road" announced in the same area, and for the same goals.
- National security minister Itamar Ben Gvir commented, after a female soldier from the Border Guard unit was convicted of assaulting a Palestinian woman in the Bab al-Amud area, saying that the decision was "unjust and unfair, and that this was not the final word." As a matter of fact, the female soldier returned to the police ranks and service in the Border Guard, after a clear conviction from the same Israeli court in the city of Jerusalem, by a decision from the Commander of the Border Guard and with the support of the minister and the Inspector General of Police.

### Legislation and Laws:

- Knesset Member Zvi Sukkot, from the Religious Zionism party, submitted a draft law amending the "counter - terrorism" orders, under the title "Draft Law on Combating Terrorism." The bill stipulates that anyone who raises a "flag or symbol of a terrorist organization" will be fined 1,000 shekels the first time, and double this amount the second time. The law practically targets all symbols of Palestinian resistance and struggle, including pictures of Palestinian militants. The bill was approved at preliminary reading.
- The "Jewish Power" list, headed by Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, submitted a draft decree under the title "Zionism as a supreme and decisive value in government decisions." The draft decree adopted by the government stated that the values of Zionism, as identified in the Nation-State Law, will be a crucial and guiding value in formulating the government's internal and external policies, legislation, and public policies of the various ministries, and in formulating and implementing decisions as well. This

constitutes an additional round of restrictions on the Palestinians in the 1948 territories, and on the Palestinians in general, and reinforces the racism that already exists, by legally institutionalizing and strengthening it.

### Crimes and Violations:

The reporting period witnessed daily raids on Palestinian towns and cities in the West Bank. The attacks usually take place in the late hours of the night and include arrests and home raids. The number of detainees during the last period (360 detainees) and the number of martyrs in the West Bank specifically (16 martyrs in the West Bank alone during the aforementioned period) overwhelmingly come as a result of the storming operations of Palestinian towns and cities. Here are the most prominent raids and violations:

- During the reporting period, the occupation forces besieged the city of Jericho for 16 consecutive days, during which they carried out checkpoints, inspections, surveillance photography, and confrontations. The forces besieging Jericho were carrying out periodic incursions. On April 24, the occupation forces stormed Aqabat Jaber camp in Jericho governorate, and confrontations broke out after the occupation besieged homes and fired tear gas, during which Suleiman Ayeshe (20 years old) was martyred, and 3 young men were injured by bullets. On May 1, the occupation forces again stormed the camp, which led to the martyrdom of the boy, Gabriel Al-Laddah (17 years old), from his wounds after being hit in the head by live bullets.

The losses incurred during the siege of Jericho, which relies on Palestinian domestic tourism, have reached the equivalent of \$90 million resulting from the siege operations, attacks and closures that have continued since the beginning of the year, according to the head of the Jericho Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. This is in addition to the hardship imposed by the occupation forces on visitors and residents, through besieging the city and restricting movement, in addition to information collection and control, which turned Jericho into a small, isolated, and segregated prison. In this context, it is important to point out that Jericho is the gateway for Palestinian travel to Jordan and is the only exit from the West Bank to the outside world for most Palestinians in the West Bank, which makes the siege of Jericho a suffering journey added to the hardships of Palestinian travel in general, and the suffering caused along the bridge and by airport denial.

- On May 4, the occupation forces stormed the city of Nablus during the daylight hours and executed three Palestinian youths, after opening heavy fire and using an anti-tank missile to target them in their home. During the raid, 152 Palestinians suffered from suffocation, most of them school students who were on school hours, in addition to 4 citizens who sustained various injuries from bullets. The occupation forces claimed that the three young men carried out a shooting operation in the Valley, and that their assassination was a settlement of scores. However, what is interesting here is the fact that executions are now being carried out based on the Israeli narrative, even without a mock trial or fabrication of charges; it is rather a direct field execution decision issued against the youth.
- In addition to the military incursions, a report by Amnesty International revealed the surveillance and facial recognition systems used by the occupation under the title "digital apartheid." This report and the report of the Israeli "Break the Silence" Foundation revealed a competition within the Israeli army units to record the largest possible number of Palestinian faces, when soldiers stop Palestinians and photograph them with their phones, so that the photo is linked to all information and data about the Palestinian in systems called "Blue Wolf", "Pack of Wolves", and "Red Wolf", aiming to monitor the Palestinians in Jerusalem and Hebron in particular, and monitor their movements inside the neighborhoods and homes by recognizing their faces through cameras. In the same context, a report

by "Break the Silence" indicates that Israeli cameras are directed to the homes of Palestinians in Hebron, and they sometimes monitor them even while they are in their own homes.

### **Martyrs and Wounded:**

The total number of martyrs in the West Bank during the reporting period reached 16 martyrs - that is, an average of a martyr every two days, in addition to the execution by a settler of a young man from the town of Sandala in the 1948 territories, Diyar Al-Omari, and 30 martyrs during the Israeli aggression on Gaza, as well as another martyr who fell during a previous aggression in early May. This brings the total number of martyrs in Palestine during the past month to 48 male and female martyrs.

- One of the most obvious executions was the refusal of the Israeli authorities to release the prisoner on hunger strike, Khader Adnan, after 87 days, and their decision not to release him, and thus to execute him. Israel is trying to put an end to the hunger strikes carried out in Israeli prisons in protest against injustice and administrative detention without trial or any pressed charges.
- What is noticeable in the executions that took place in the West Bank, especially in Nablus and Tulkarm during the past month, is that the Israeli intelligence services published the accusation charges after the assassination was carried out without a trial, without any evidence, and without any opportunity for the young men to reject these accusations or defend themselves.
- The execution of the young man, Diyar Al-Omari (19 years old), was carried out by a settler, as part of the process of arming Jewish citizens, encouraged by the Israeli police represented by Inspector General Kobi Shiftai and National Security Minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, and within the framework of the state of incitement and hostility to everything that is Arab in the public sphere within the 1948 territories. This encouragement takes place on two levels: the first level is to grant facilities to everyone who applies to obtain a firearm; the second is through the open call to bear arms.
- More than 291 citizens were injured by gunfire and rubber bullets, in addition to injuries of various types. More than 1,868 trees and plants, some of which were fruitful, were uprooted and destroyed in several areas of the West Bank.

### **Arrests and Detentions:**

- During the period April 15 - May 11, the Israeli authorities arrested 360 Palestinian citizens, most of whom from the West Bank, including detainees from Jerusalem and Gaza. It is noteworthy that some of these detainees are freed prisoners, and a large portion of them are youth.
- It is to be noted that the freed prisoner, Khader Adnan, was martyred while he was on strike against his administrative detention lasting for 87 days, during which Adnan was subjected to solitary confinement in his cell, was not transferred to the hospital, and did not receive any medical care. Press sources spoke of the sadistic practice of investigators and jailers. They used to eat in front of Adnan, who was on a hunger strike, to undermine his resolve and determination.
- As of April 21, 2023, the number of prisoners in the occupation prisons reached 4,900 prisoners, including 31 female prisoners, 160 children, more than 1,000 administrative detainees, and 4 deputies from the Legislative Council. The number of sick prisoners exceeded 700, including 24 suffering from cancer and various tumors. The number of those sentenced to life imprisonment amounts to 554 prisoners. Since 1967, the number of martyrs of the inmate movement has reached 236 martyrs (with

the martyrdom of Khader Adnan, the number has risen to 237), some of whom, - about 400 prisoners-, spent more than 20 years in prison, while the number of prisoners whose bodies are being held is 12.

- The Israeli occupation authorities still practice administrative detention as more than a quarter of the detainees are administrative detainees. The duration of their detention ranges between two and six months, automatically renewed at times. Prison authorities practice a policy of medical neglect and solitary confinement against prisoners, at times as a punitive policy against a given individual, and against all prisoners at others.

**Sources on which the report was based:**

- Palestinian News and Information Agency – Wafa report on daily violations and arrests.
- “Peace Now” Foundation and its reports on settlement and land control.
- Palestinian Prisoners Club.
- B’Tselem Foundation.
- Palestinian Ministry of Health.
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- The Knesset website - the National Legislation Compilation.
- Israel Land Administration website – Calls for tenders.
- Israeli media.
- International media.
- “Selections from the Hebrew Press” newsletter and IPS daily monitoring platforms.
- “Break the Silence” Foundation.
- Subsequent reports will be based on the reports of Al-Haqq Foundation, Addameer, and Yesh Din.