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EUROPEAN UNION

Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA)

2024 Report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem
Reporting period -January - December 2024

Summary

In 2024, the Israeli government continued to deepen the settlement project in the occupied Palestinian territory, advancing plans that are further endangering Palestinian development and territorial contiguity, thereby undermining prospects for a two-state solution.

The total number of settlement plans and tenders advanced by Israel in 2024 was 28,872, slightly lower than the 30,682 in 2023. In 2024, 18,988 housing units (HU) were advanced in occupied East Jerusalem, while 9,884 HU were advanced in the occupied West Bank. While 2024 saw a decrease compared to record numbers in 2023, the advancement represents a 250 percent increase over a period of seven years since 2018.

From the perspective of safeguarding a two-state solution where Jerusalem is the capital of both states, the Israeli settlement developments on the southern periphery of Jerusalem continue to sever the chances for contiguity between East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The advancement of the Givat Hamatos expansion plan (Hebron Road Strip) toward final approval in December 2024, would tighten and complete the southern ring of Israeli settlements, blocking any contiguity between East Jerusalem and the southern West Bank. New settlement plans were also advanced in 2024, often spearheaded by a so-called settlement of land title process and slated to be constructed within Palestinian neighbourhoods, thereby causing friction.

In the West Bank, the majority of the settlement plans advanced were located deep inside the West Bank. The government established five new settlements (Evyatar, Givat Asaf, Sde Efrayim, Adorayim, and Nachal Cheletz) and advanced an unprecedented “bypass legalization mechanism” enabling 70 illegal outposts to receive government funding and infrastructure without completing the formal legalization process. Israeli authorities also advanced unprecedented land appropriation, with 24,258 dunams declared as “State Land” in 2024 alone, approximately half of all land declared as state land since the Oslo Accords.

Other trends and developments contributing to settlement expansion in the reporting period included advancements of infrastructure and road projects, with 7 billion NIS allocated for settlement roads.

The rise in settlement expansion plans by the Israeli authorities was also accompanied by a worrisome trend of rising settler violence in the oPt. UN OCHA registered 1,420 incidents of settler violence in 2024, representing a further increase from the 1,189 incidents recorded in 2023, which was already the highest since the UN started recording such incidents in 2006. Settler violence was a major contributing source to the coercive environment of many Palestinian communities resulting in approximately 47 Palestinian communities being forcibly displaced since October 2023.

The EU has repeatedly called on Israel not to proceed with plans under its settlement policy and to halt all settlement activities. It remains the EU's firm position that settlements are illegal under international law. Israel's decision to advance plans for the approval and construction of new settlement units in 2024 further undermines the prospects of a viable two-state solution.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is unlawful, leads to the displacement of Palestinians and should be brought to an end as rapidly as possible.

1. INTRODUCTION

By the end of 2024, there were 503,732 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and 233,600 in East Jerusalem, totalling 737,332 Israeli settlers across 147 settlements and 224 outposts in the occupied West Bank¹. This represents a substantial settler population that has grown significantly since Israel began its settlement enterprise in 1967.

The scale of settlement development becomes evident when examining construction patterns in East Jerusalem, where Israeli authorities have initiated the construction of 57,000 housing units for Jewish neighbourhoods compared to only 600 housing units for Palestinian neighbourhoods since 1967².

During 2024, 28,872 housing units were advanced through different stages of planning and implementation across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Of these, 18,988 units were designated for settlements in occupied East Jerusalem while 9,884 units were planned for settlements in other parts of the West Bank, many in locations that further fragment Palestinian communities and undermine territorial contiguity³.

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2025, March). *State of Palestine: Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (Report No. A/HRC/58/73)*. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-73-infographic-march2025.pdf>

² Peace Now. (2024, August). *Peace Now settlements map 2024*. <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Peace-Now-Settlements-Map-2024.pdf>

³ Data compiled from Peace Now and Ir Amim annual reports 2018-2024.

The concentration of settlement activity in East Jerusalem during 2024 reflects the strategic importance of this area for determining the future viability of a two-state solution.

2. ADVANCED SETTLEMENTS IN AND AROUND OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM

East Jerusalem developments in 2024 continued the sustained expansion observed in 2022 and 2023, in particular in areas that are considered crucial for the viability of Jerusalem serving as the future capital for both states.

A total of 40 planning schemes for approximately 18,988 housing units were advanced in East Jerusalem during 2024⁴. The most strategically significant development was the advancement of the Givat Hamatos expansion plan (known as the Hebron Road Strip) toward final approval in December 2024. This plan calls for 3,500 housing units and would more than double the number of housing units in the Givat Hamatos settlement, enlarging its area by nearly 40%, representing a critical threat to any future two-state arrangement. Givat Hamatos is currently under construction and is the first new settlement built beyond the Green Line in Jerusalem in over two decades. The advancement of the Hebron Road Strip expansion, alongside plans for Givat Shaked and Har Homa expansion, would complete a southern ring of Israeli settlements that permanently blocks any contiguity between East Jerusalem and the southern West Bank⁵.

Among the 40 plans advanced, 12 were for either new settlements or settlement expansions with a total of 9,186 housing units. The remaining 28 plans were for urban renewal within existing settlements, totalling 9,802 housing units. Several of these developments, including in Sheikh Jarrah, are slated for construction inside existing Palestinian neighborhoods — a pattern that has historically increased friction between communities and is accompanied by heightened Israeli security measures through private security companies.

These developments often coincide with a “settlement of land title” process led by the General Custodian (the Israeli state body that manages assets allegedly belonging to Jews prior to 1948). This process operates with limited transparency and appears to function as a systematic method for land appropriation and Palestinian displacement in East Jerusalem⁶.

The planning environment reveals stark disparities. Only 13 percent of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction — much of it already built up — while 35 percent has been allocated for Israeli settlements. This restrictive planning regime makes building permits virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain⁷. Consequently, 2024 saw a record number of Palestinian home demolitions in East Jerusalem, with 214 structures demolished due to alleged lack of building permits. The Jerusalem Municipality systematically demolished homes in Silwan’s Al-

⁴ EJ Settlement Advancements 2024 - Ir Amim

⁵ Ir Amim. (2023, January 9). *Israeli authorities poised to advance new settlement plan to significantly expand Givat Hamatos*. Home Blog. <https://old.ir-amim.org.il/en/node/2931>

⁶ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2024, October 24). *Humanitarian situation update #232: West Bank*. OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territory. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-232-west-bank>

⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2025, January 2). *Humanitarian situation update #252: West Bank*. United Nations. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-252-west-bank>

Bustan neighborhood as part of plans to create the “King’s Garden” tourist park, with over 15 homes demolished in Al-Bustan alone⁸.

Summary of 2024 East Jerusalem Settlement Activity:

- Total Plans: 40
- Total Housing Units: 18,988
- New settlements/expansions: 6,265 housing units
- Territorial expansion of existing settlements: 2,921 housing units
- Urban renewal within existing settlements: 9,802 housing units

Source: Ir Amim

3. TRENDS IN SETTLEMENT PLANS AND TENDERS SINCE 2018

These East Jerusalem developments are part of a broader pattern of settlement expansion that has accelerated dramatically since 2018. While 2024 saw a decrease from record numbers in 2023, the overall trajectory reveals systematic territorial transformation that fundamentally challenges the viability of the two-state solution.

Settlement plans have increased by 250% over the seven-year period⁹, growing from 11,513 units in 2018 to 28,872 units in 2024. The 2023 peak of 30,682 units marked the highest level since monitoring began, making the decrease in 2024 notable but still substantially above historical norms¹⁰.

The nature of settlement advancement has also shifted qualitatively. Rather than merely increasing density within existing settlements, a greater proportion of plans now involve territorial expansion into new areas. In East Jerusalem, nearly half (48.4%) of all units advanced in 2024 were for new settlements or territorial expansions¹¹.

Settlement implementation operates through two distinct mechanisms that are important to understand. Planning approvals establish territorial claims and legal frameworks for future development, while construction tenders represent actual building contracts. This distinction explains apparent inconsistencies in the data: while housing unit plans have grown substantially over the seven-year period, tender publication follows different patterns. In 2024, only 1,399 new tenders were published for the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), compared to 3,784 in 2021. This suggests a strategy of maximizing planning approvals while maintaining flexibility in construction timing¹².

⁸ Cohen, A. (2024, December 30). *Israeli authorities renew efforts to construct massive yeshiva in Sheikh Jarrah*. Ir Amim. <https://us20.campaign-archive.com/?u=6a7a435a1c6d7fa55daae8d58&id=df2b59bb52>

⁹ EJ Settlement Advancements 2024 – Ir Amim

¹⁰ Data compiled from Peace Now and Ir Amim annual reports 2018-2024.

¹¹ EJ Settlement Advancements 2024 – Ir Amim

¹² Settlement Watch Team. (2025, February). *2024 in the West Bank – The year of annexation and expulsion*. Peace Now. <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SW-Report-Summary-2024-Peace-Now-February-2025.pdf>

Table 1. Advancement of settlement units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, 2018 – 2024¹³

Year	Plans West Bank	Plans East Jerusalem	Total Plans	Tenders West Bank	Tenders East Jerusalem	Total Tenders	Grand Total
2018	5,618	5,895	11,513	3,808	603	4,411	15,924
2019	8,457	3,276	11,733	956	805	1,761	13,497
2020	12,159	4,280	16,439	1,844	2,017	3,861	20,300
2021	3,645	14,601	18,246	3,491	293	3,784	22,030
2022	4,427	23,097	27,524	197	489	686	28,210
2023	12,349	18,333	30,682	2,913	2028	3,228	34,141
2024	9,884	18,988	28,872	1,399	1533	2,932	31,804

Chart 1. Advancement of plans in East Jerusalem and the West Bank 2018 – 2024.

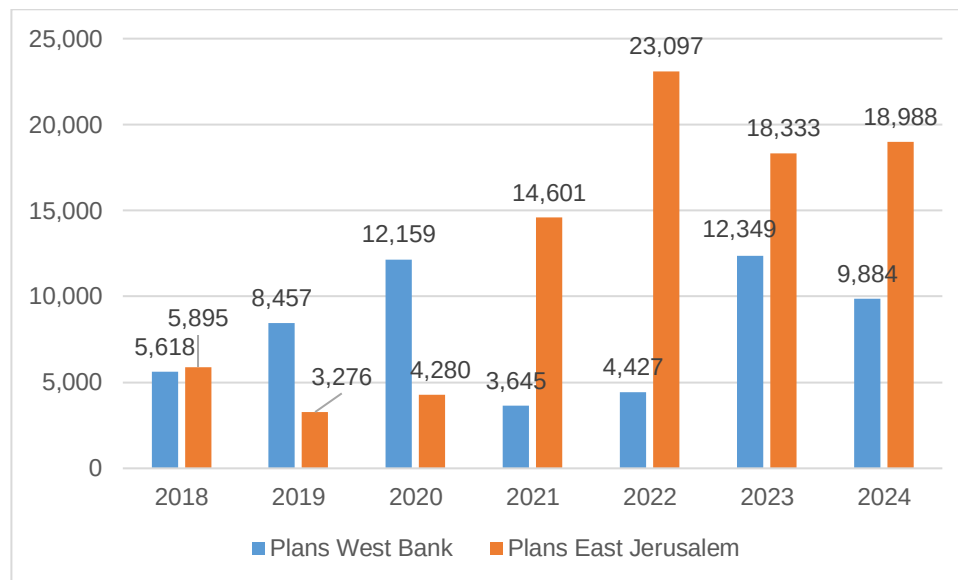
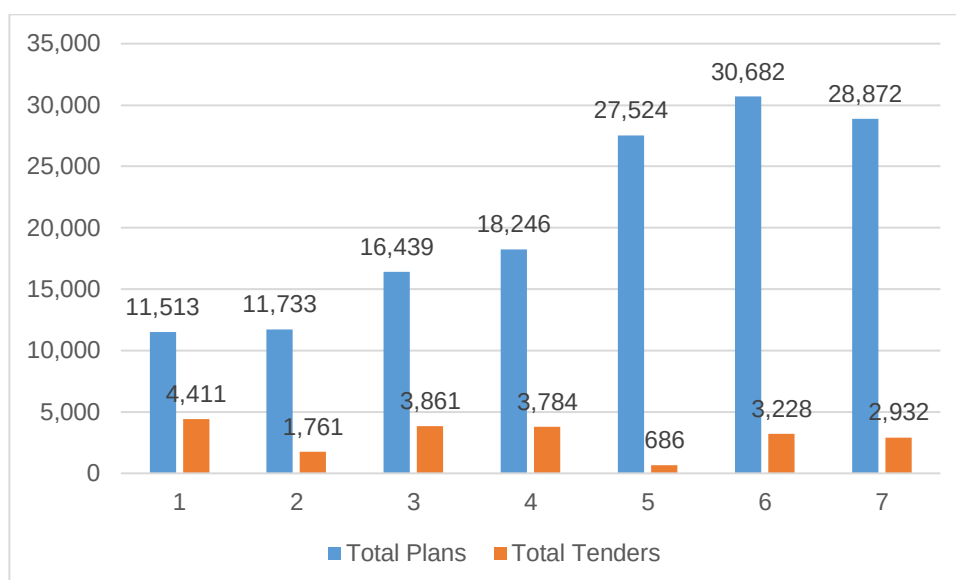


Chart 2. Advancement of plans and tenders in the occupied Palestinian Territory 2018 – 2024.

¹³ Data compiled from Peace Now and Ir Amim annual reports 2018-2024.



Two significant policy changes in 2024 institutionalized previously irregular practices. The government established a “bypass legalization mechanism” allowing 70 illegal outposts to receive government funding and infrastructure without completing formal approval processes. This represents a fundamental shift that normalizes previously, also according to Israeli law, illegal settlement activity¹⁴.

Additionally, Israel established five new settlements in 2024 — Evyatar, Givat Asaf, Sde Efrayim, Adorayim, and Nachal Cheletz — by converting illegal outposts into official settlements. Combined with unprecedented infrastructure investment of 7 billion NIS for settlement roads, these developments indicate a comprehensive strategy to permanently alter the territorial reality of the occupied Palestinian territory¹⁵.

4. TRENDS IN SETTLER VIOLENCE

The settlement expansion documented above has been accompanied by a dramatic escalation in settler violence against Palestinians, creating a coercive environment that accelerates Palestinian displacement and facilitates further territorial control.

Settler violence reached unprecedented levels during 2024, with UN OCHA recording 1,420 incidents — a further increase from the 1,189 incidents recorded in 2023, which was already the highest since monitoring began in 2006. At least 5 Palestinians were killed by settlers and 356 were injured throughout 2024¹⁶.

The violence has created widespread displacement among Palestinian communities. Approximately 47 Palestinian communities have been forcibly displaced since

¹⁴ Settlement Watch Team. (2025, February). *2024 in the West Bank – The year of annexation and expulsion*. Peace Now. <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SW-Report-Summary-2024-Peace-Now-February-2025.pdf>

¹⁵ Settlement Watch Team. (2025, February). *2024 in the West Bank – The year of annexation and expulsion*. Peace Now. <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SW-Report-Summary-2024-Peace-Now-February-2025.pdf>

¹⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2025, January 2). *Humanitarian situation update #252: West Bank*. United Nations. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-252-west-bank>

October 2023 due to settler violence, including at least 300 Palestinian families (around 1,762 individuals, including 756 children) who lost their homes due to a combination of settler violence, access restrictions, diminished access to grazing land and water sources, and the psychological impact of living under constant threat.

The scope of the threat is extensive: humanitarian organizations assess that out of 195 Palestinian communities primarily in Area C (the area of the West Bank under full Israeli control), 50 percent are at extreme risk of displacement, experiencing on average three settler violence incidents per week¹⁷.

The olive harvest period between September and November has become particularly dangerous for Palestinians. OCHA documented over 100 harvest-related incidents where Israeli settlers attacked Palestinians, damaged trees, or stole crops, with thousands of olive trees vandalized or uprooted. This represents both immediate economic loss and the destruction of multigenerational agricultural investments¹⁸.

The case of Khallet al Louza in the Bethlehem area illustrates the escalating pattern. Residents experienced increased settler attacks since August 2024, following the establishment of a new caravan outpost (Givat Etam) on Palestinian land. Five settler attacks were documented in the first seven months of the year, compared to eight over the final three months, including five during the olive harvest season. Of the 13 incidents in 2024, 10 resulted in casualties or property damage, including incidents where settlers physically assaulted farmers and their families, set fire to 40 olive trees over 50 years old, and severely assaulted two elderly farmers, leaving them with limb fractures¹⁹.

Accountability for settler violence is grossly inadequate. Israeli law enforcement investigations of settler attacks are insufficient, with Palestinians often fearful of retribution if they report incidents. The location of Israeli police stations inside Israeli settlements makes them difficult or impossible for Palestinians to access. As reported by the UN and several human rights organisations, the IDF frequently stands by without intervening during settler attacks against Palestinians. Israeli CSO Yesh Din reports that between 2005 and 2022, 93% of police investigations into settler attacks were closed without indictments²⁰.

¹⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2025, January 2). *Humanitarian situation update #252: West Bank*. United Nations. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-252-west-bank>

¹⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2024, November 28). *Humanitarian situation update #242: West Bank*. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-situation-update-242-west-bank>

¹⁹ *Humanitarian Situation Update #232 | West Bank*. (2024, October 24). UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

²⁰ Yesh Din – Volunteers for Human Rights, & Physicians for Human Rights Israel. (2025, March). *Displaced communities, forgotten people: Israel's forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank*. https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Displacedcommunities_ENG.pdf

5. DEVELOPMENTS OF CONCERN IN THE REPORTING PERIOD

Several developments in 2024 are of particular concern as they fundamentally alter the legal and administrative framework governing settlements and according to observers represent steps toward de facto annexation.

Unprecedented Expansion into Area B: A particular development in 2024 was the unprecedented establishment of outposts in Area B for the first time since the Oslo Accords. At least 8 outposts have been established in Area B, representing approximately 13% of the total outposts established in the West Bank in 2024. This marks a shift in settlement expansion beyond Area C and represents a fundamental breach of the Oslo framework that has governed Palestinian-Israeli arrangements since 1993. The establishment of settlements in Area B, designated for Palestinian civil control under the Oslo Accords, constitutes a direct violation of agreed territorial divisions and undermines the legal basis for any future negotiations²¹.

Settlement Administration Enforcement Changes: In February 2024, Finance Minister Smotrich directed the head of the Civil Administration to implement the previous year's cabinet decision to officially recognize approximately 70 outposts, including eight shepherding outposts, as "sites undergoing regulation," authorizing infrastructure connections and halting enforcement actions against illegal construction. In March 2024, GOC Central Command Major General Yehuda Fox acknowledged that enforcement against illegal settlement construction had "dwindled to the point where it has disappeared" since the introduction of the Settlement Administration, while "the Administration regularly approves the enforcement plan for illegal Palestinian construction in full"²².

Record State Land Declarations: In the first half of 2024 alone, 23,700 dunams were declared state land – a record not seen in at least 25 years. In comparison, in the entire decade between 2014 and 2023, only 13,000 dunams were declared. The total for 2024 reached 24,258 dunams, approximately half of all land declared as state land since the Oslo Accords²³.

Bypass Legalization Mechanism: The government established an unprecedented "bypass legalization mechanism" enabling 70 illegal outposts to receive government funding and infrastructure without completing the formal legalization process. This represents a significant departure from previous practices and effectively normalizes illegal settlement activity²⁴.

New Settlement Establishment: The government's decision to establish 5 new settlements in 2024 (Evyatar, Givat Asaf, Sde Efrayim, Adorayim, and Nachal Cheletz) - all converted from illegal

²¹ Settlement Watch Team. (2025, February). *2024 in the West Bank – The year of annexation and expulsion*. Peace Now. <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SW-Report-Summary-2024-Peace-Now-February-2025.pdf>

²² Yesh Din – Volunteers for Human Rights, & Physicians for Human Rights Israel. (2025, March). *Displaced communities, forgotten people: Israel's forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank*. https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Displacedcommunities_ENG.pdf

²³ Peace Now. (2024, July 3). *The government declares 12,000 dunams in the Jordan Valley as state lands*. <https://peacenow.org.il/en/state-land-declaration-12000-dunams>

²⁴ Yesh Din – Volunteers for Human Rights, & Physicians for Human Rights Israel. (2025, March). *Displaced communities, forgotten people: Israel's forcible transfer of Palestinians in the West Bank*. https://www.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Displacedcommunities_ENG.pdf

outposts - demonstrates the systematic transformation of the settlement enterprise from ad-hoc initiatives to formal state policy²⁵.

International Court of Justice Ruling: In July 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is unlawful, and that various practices it employs lead to the displacement of Palestinians. It further stresses that Israel has an obligation to bring an end to its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible²⁶.

6. EU HQ PUBLIC STATEMENTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD IN RESPONSE TO SETTLEMENT ADVANCEMENTS SETTLER VIOLENCE

The EU issued the following statements related to settlements during the reporting period.

- On 7 March, the spokesperson of the High Representative/Vice-President (HRVP) issued a statement on the approval of the Israeli High Planning Committee of plans for the advancement of over 3,426 housing units across the West Bank.²⁷ This was followed by a statement on 8 March, by the HRVP.²⁸
- On 24 March, the spokesperson of the HRVP issued a statement on the announcement to confiscate occupied land. The European Union condemned the announcement of the Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich that over 800 hectares of land in the occupied Palestinian territory have been declared as 'state lands'.²⁹
- On 16 April, the spokesperson of the HRVP issued a statement on increased settler violence and the killing of four Palestinians in the West Bank.³⁰
- On 29 June, the spokesperson of the HRVP issued a statement of the European Union condemning the announcement by Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich that five Israeli settlement outposts are to be legalised in the occupied Palestinian territory.³¹ This was followed by a statement of the HRVP, On 3 July, where the European Union further condemned the planned legalization of the outposts, the announcement of thousands of new housing units in the occupied West Bank, and the continued policies of dispossession implemented in the occupied West Bank by the current Israeli government.³²

²⁵ Settlement Watch Team. (2025, February). *2024 in the West Bank – The year of annexation and expulsion*. Peace Now. <https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SW-Report-Summary-2024-Peace-Now-February-2025.pdf>

²⁶ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024, July 30). *Experts hail ICJ declaration on illegality of Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territory as "historic" for Palestinians and international law*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/experts-hail-icj-declaration-illegality-israels-presence-occupied>

²⁷https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-further-settlement-expansion_en

²⁸https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representative-further-settlement-expansion_en

²⁹https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-announcement-confiscate-occupied-land_en

³⁰https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-increased-settler-violence-and-recent-killings-west-bank_en

³¹https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-announced-further-expansion-illegal-settlements_en

³²https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representative-so-called-legalization-outposts-occupied-west-bank_en