

25 June 2024 – Aid agencies demand concrete action to protect Palestinians as the number of Israeli settler attacks since 7 October surpasses 1,000

*The number of Israeli settler attacks in the occupied West Bank continues to rise, surpassing the chilling milestone of 1,000 attacks since 7 October 2023, according to the UN. **The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) calls on the international community to urgently move beyond condemnation and limited measures to ensure the effective protection of Palestinian communities, reverse Israeli annexation of Area C of the occupied West Bank, and hold accountable the state, organisations and individual perpetrators of settler violence and illegal settlement expansion.***

Over the past nine months, settler attacks have reached a daily average of four attacks per day, compared to two attacks per day during the same period last year. At least 10 people, including two children, have been killed during these attacks, and at least 234 have been injured, including 20 children. Since 7 October, 1,260 people, including 600 children, have been forcibly displaced amid settler violence and movement restrictions. The displaced households are from 20 herding and Bedouin communities throughout Area C of the West Bank. As one survivor of settler violence explained, “No place is safe here.”



Confronted daily with the threat of violence and lacking any protective measures, Palestinians find themselves without any authority to turn to for protection. Emergency services and humanitarian organisations are routinely and systematically blocked by Israeli soldiers and settlers with rubble, dirt, and rocks to prevent entities from reaching affected communities during or after settler attacks. *Left: Israeli Forces blocked the main entrance to*

Al-Minya, November 2023.

Settler violence is premeditated and orchestrated by organised groups from known outposts and settlements, with the support of Israel’s government, including local and regional settlement councils. AIDA members’ engagement with local communities indicate that [limited sanctions](#) against a few individuals by [some countries](#) have failed to reduce the frequency of attacks as community members report that sanctioned settlers [continue to attack](#) Palestinian communities undeterred. In April and May, attacks in Ramallah, Nablus, and Jericho were more organised, sustained, and aggressive, with a greater impact on civilian life than before. “[The settlers] were too violent,” said one community member who fled to Al-Mughayyer after his family was forcibly displaced from Ein Al-Rashash in October 2023 due to settler violence. He was attacked yet again in early April after settlers organised a series of large and unprecedented attacks on dozens of Palestinian communities in the West Bank. “They even shot the dogs that were trying to defend the village. They stole our livestock and killed the little lambs that couldn’t walk with them. I’ve lived my entire life in these rural areas, encountered settler violence countless times, but this attack wasn’t like anything I’ve witnessed in my life.”

As the occupying power, Israel is obligated under international humanitarian law to protect Palestinian communities, however, in almost half of all [recorded](#) incidents after 7 October, Israeli forces either accompanied or were reported to be supporting settlers in these attacks. While a few individuals have been detained, no civilian or soldier has been prosecuted in connection with any of these 1,000 attacks. [Reports](#) indicate that some illegal outpost farms operated by sanctioned settlers – many of whom have been reported to be at the centre of multiple violent incidents – have received hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of material support from the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Settlements, the Settlement Administration in the Ministry of Defence, and through local and regional settlement councils.

AIDA is also deeply concerned by the [transfer](#) of significant legislative and administrative powers in the occupied West Bank from the Israeli military commander to the civil government and servants reporting to Bezalel Smotrich, as additional Minister of Defence and Orit Stroom as Minister of Settlements. Spatial planning, building regulations and the administration of agriculture, forestry, water resources and energy are just several examples of the acquired powers. International law is clear: annexation is forbidden and amounts to an act of aggression. This decision exacerbates decades of human rights violations, reinforces the coercive environment, leading to the forcible transfer of Palestinians, and upholds the impunity of violent settlers and the organisations and government entities which support them.

AIDA calls the international community to decisively act to protect vulnerable communities in the occupied West Bank, many of whom are at risk of being permanently displaced, and particularly:

- The international community should adopt new restrictive measures which go beyond individual settlers to target identified organisations and state entities who promote violence and/or take part in attacks on Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure. This should also include an immediate end to any third-state funding of settler NGOs or organisations which support and/or enable settler violence and settler expansion.
- The Government of Israel should be held accountable for the repeated and evidence-based allegations that the military and other state authorities are tolerating, enabling, and at times, participating in settler violence. A plethora of measures and mechanisms are available and would allow progressive and proportional actions. For example, the European Union should seriously consider these actions as part of their review of the 'essential elements' human rights clause included in the free trade agreement between the bloc and Israel.
- The international community should also fully assess the legal consequences of the transfer of legislative and administrative power from the military commander of occupied territory to the civil government of Israel and act accordingly to uphold international law, which absolutely prohibits the acquisition of occupied territory. The upcoming opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, will provide a definitive answer on these legal consequences. It will be critical for all members of the international community to act based on the content of this opinion to ensure that the fundamental rights of Palestinians are actively protected.
- The international community must also call for the removal of settlements and outposts, and support replacement of the existing discriminatory planning regime imposed by the Government of Israel in Area C (the area fully Israeli-controlled and only contiguous



territory in the West Bank) with an autonomous, rights-based and Palestinian-led construction process.

- The international community should demand – on behalf of Palestinian victims of settler violence and forced displacement – the appropriate reparations, including restitution of affected communities to their homes and properties, rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure and monetary compensation for losses and damages, and guarantees of non-repetition of future violations.