



## Palestine Briefing June 2017

---

### **Illegal Israeli Settlements**

There are [588,000 Israeli settlers](#) living on stolen Palestinian land. Since 1967 Israel has established over a hundred settlements in the West Bank, and dozens more settlement outposts. These settlements are established on vast tracts of land taken from the Palestinians, in breach of international humanitarian law. The illegality of Israeli settlements was reaffirmed in [the UN Security Council Resolution 2334](#), which was passed in December 2016.

The very existence of the settlements violates Palestinian human rights, including the right to property, equality, a decent standard of living and freedom of movement. Israel's dramatic alteration of the West Bank map has precluded realisation of Palestinians' right to self-determination in a viable Palestinian state.

These illegal settlements have been consistently expanded for a number of years and just last week, Israel [began construction on the first new settlement](#) in the West Bank since the Oslo Accords over 25 years ago. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called it an "honour" to build this new illegal outpost in defiance of international law.

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office have acknowledged Israeli settlements to be illegal and a barrier to peace, but the UK still provides substantial support to settlements through business ties.

### **Links:**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12657.doc.htm>

<http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5693/2017/en/>

<https://www.palestinecampaign.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/settlements-factsheet-2016-v6.pdf>

---

### **Gaza Blockade**

Israel controls Gaza by land, sea, and air. The coastal strip is isolated from the outside world, making it the world's largest open air prison. The 10 year long blockade has had a devastating effect on the 1.9 million Palestinians living in Gaza,

and the humanitarian crisis has been exacerbated by repeated military attacks from Israel.

The blockade prevents Palestinians from leaving Gaza for economic, educational, and even medical reasons. Access restrictions for people and goods severely undermine Gaza's economy, and 70% of Gaza's population is [dependent on foreign aid](#). Basic services and infrastructure are strained to breaking point. Only 10% of Gaza's population have access to safe drinking water, and 47% of households in Gaza suffer from moderate or severe food insecurity. Basic materials are banned by Israel, which has made reconstruction efforts following the 2014 conflict painfully slow. [Over 51,000 Palestinians remain displaced](#) as damaged homes and infrastructure remain unrepairs.

In recent months the crisis has worsened further with Israel restricting electricity supplies to between just two and three hours a day which has put thousands of lives in danger. The Israeli authorities' decision to slash the electricity supply to Gaza could have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, especially on essential services such as healthcare. [Amnesty International has warned](#) that a public health disaster is imminent. [A UN report in 2015](#) stated that if the blockade continues Gaza could become uninhabitable by 2020. Just last week, [three babies](#) in need of specialist medical care died after being denied medical exit permits.

Israel, as an occupying power, is legally responsible for the wellbeing of Gaza's population. The blockade contravenes article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits all forms of collective punishment. The only way that stability and peace can be established is by immediately lifting the blockade.

#### **Links:**

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-blockade-november-2016>

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/22/water-situation-alarming-in-gaza>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51770#.WRQqkIXyvIV>

<https://www.palestinecampaign.org/resources/factsheets/gazafacts/>

---

#### **Arms Trade with Israel**

Israel has launched three major military offensives against Gaza over the last decade. [1,462 Palestinian civilians were killed](#), a third of them children, during the summer of 2014 alone. The indiscriminate targeting of civilians is a war crime, and the [UN has repeatedly raised concerns](#) about the apparent impunity with which Israel has acted. Horror stories such as the [father who gathered his child's remains](#) in a plastic bag after an Israeli shell exploded in their home made headlines around the world in 2014.

The UK Government has criteria against which arms export licence applications are considered. This is to prohibit the use of UK arms exports for internal repression, external aggression or any other criminal behaviour overseas. Israel has a long track record of using its military to repress and occupy Palestine, including through extrajudicial killings and the targeting of civilians. Despite this, the UK continues to export arms to Israel and to do business with the Israeli arms industry.

By continuing to export arms to Israel, and by supporting the Israeli arms industry, the UK Government is complicit in the crimes committed by Israel against Palestine.

#### **Links:**

<http://gaza.ochaopt.org/2015/06/report-of-the-independent-commission-of-inquiry-on-the-2014-gaza-conflict/>

<https://blackfriday.amnesty.org/>

<https://www.stoparmingisrael.org/wp-content/uploads/arming-apartheid.pdf>

---

#### **Child Prisoners**

Every year between 500-700 Palestinian children, some as young as 12, are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. There is now widespread evidence that most Palestinian child prisoners are arrested at night, and forcibly removed from their homes and families without access to legal advice or independent adult supervision.

Their hands are tied with plastic ties and they are blindfolded. They are subjected to coercive interrogations, often accompanied by verbal and/or physical abuse and many are shown/sign documents written in Hebrew. Children are illegally transferred from Palestine and detained inside Israel in contravention of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In February 2017, [five children convicted of throwing stones](#) by an Israeli military court got longer sentences than Elor Azaria, the soldier who shot dead at point blank range an injured Palestinian man.

The UK Government funded an independent legal investigation into the plight of Palestinian child prisoners in 2012. The consequent report, 'Children in Military Custody', found Israel guilty of at least 6 breaches of the UN Conventions and made over 40 recommendations. The FCO accepted the report's findings, but so far very little progress has been made.

Defence for Children International – Palestine Section have made the following 8 recommendations for immediate action:

1. Children must not be prosecuted in military courts that lack basic and fundamental due process guarantees;
2. Detention must only be used as a measure of last resort;
3. Children must not be arrested at night;
4. Children must not be subjected to any form of physical violence;
5. Children must have access to legal representation and parents prior to and during interrogations;

6. All interrogations of children must be audio-visually recorded;
7. Any statement made as a result of torture or ill-treatment must be excluded as evidence in any proceeding; and
8. All credible allegations of torture and ill-treatment must be thoroughly and impartially investigated in accordance with international standards, and perpetrators brought promptly to justice.

**Links:**

<https://www.palestinecampaign.org/campaigns/child-prisoners/>

<http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org.uk/report/>

[http://www.dci-palestine.org/palestinian\\_children\\_held\\_in\\_solitary\\_confinement\\_for\\_longer\\_periods](http://www.dci-palestine.org/palestinian_children_held_in_solitary_confinement_for_longer_periods)

---



**Palestine Solidarity Campaign**

Web: [www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org)

Facebook: [palestinesolidarityuk](https://www.facebook.com/palestinesolidarityuk)

Twitter: [@PSCupdates](https://twitter.com/PSCupdates) | Phone: 020 7700 6192

Email: [info@palestinecampaign.org](mailto:info@palestinecampaign.org)