

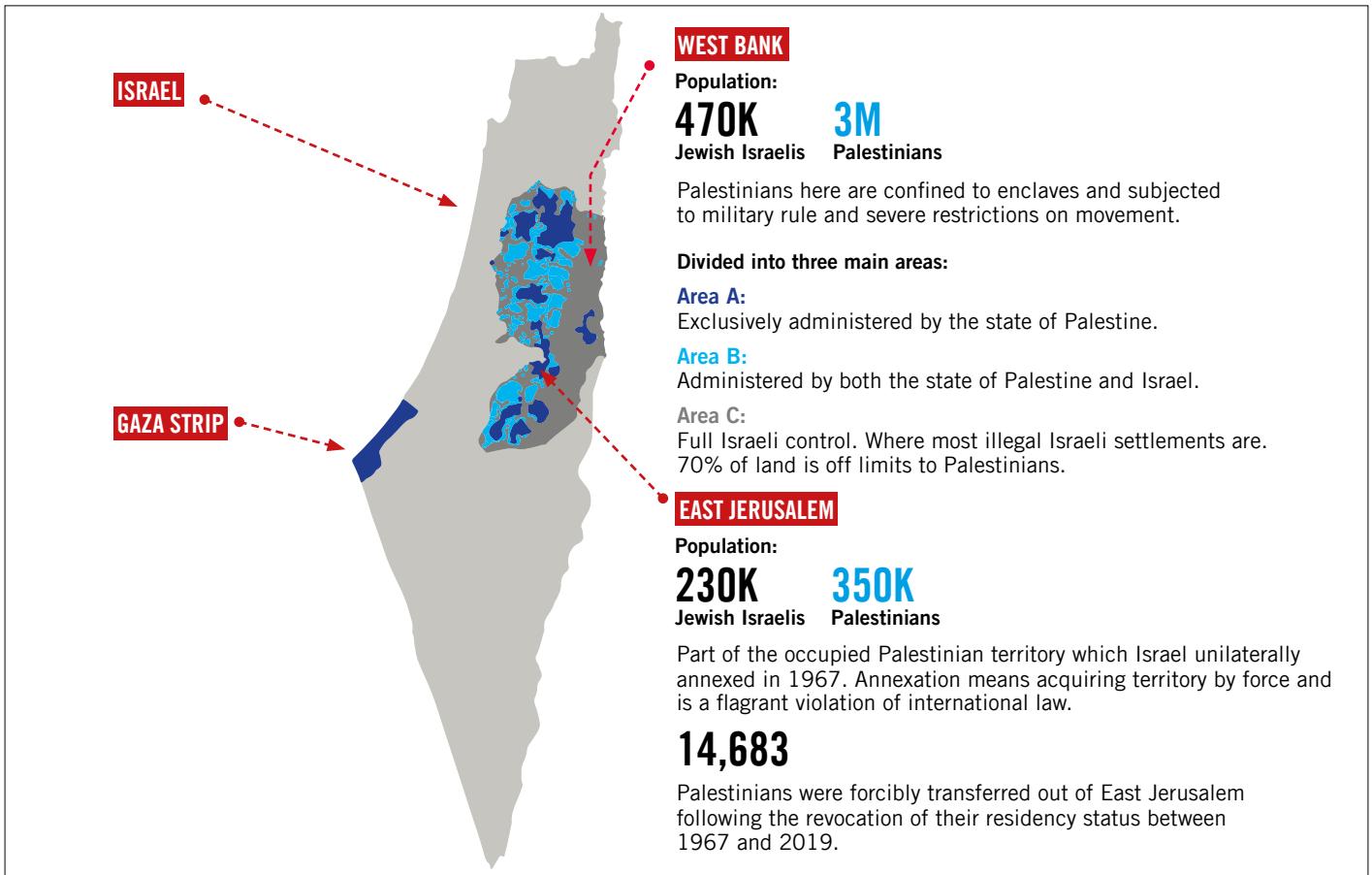
# WHY THE UK SHOULD BAN ISRAELI SETTLEMENT GOODS



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AMNESTY  
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To maintain domination, Israel keeps Palestinians segregated from each other and from Jewish Israelis.

## Why the UK should ban Israeli settlement goods

Israel's policy of constructing and expanding illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian land is a major driving force behind the mass human rights violations in the territories. Since the start of the occupation in 1967, the Israeli authorities have demolished tens of thousands of Palestinian properties and displaced large swathes of the population in order to build homes and infrastructure to illegally settle their own population in the occupied territories. The ongoing displacement of Palestinian communities to create illegal settlements is a key component of Israel's system of apartheid.

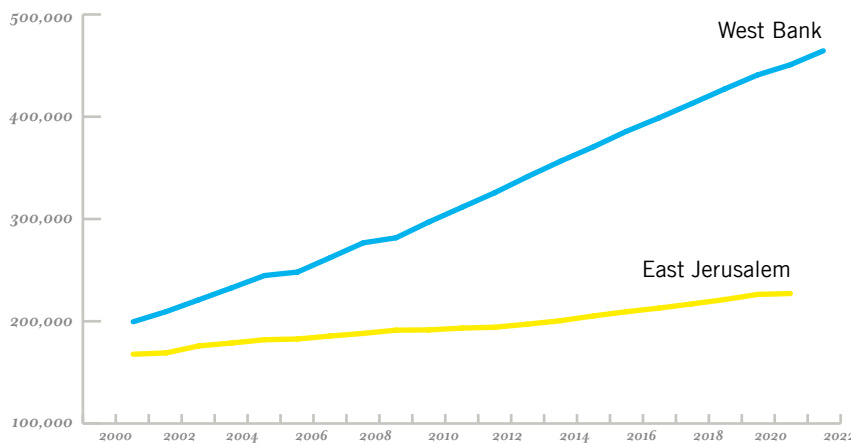
**The very existence of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories violates international humanitarian law and is a war crime. Despite multiple UN resolutions, Israel continues to appropriate Palestinian land and support at least 700,000 settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.**

## What can parliamentarians do?

- Write to the foreign secretary, calling for the UK to ban the importation of Israeli settlement goods. Merely labelling these goods or exempting them from trade preferences does not go nearly far enough.
- Table written and/or oral questions asking what assessment the UK government has made of the impact of 'settlement enterprise' on facilitating settlement expansion.
- If your party does not already have a stated position to ban Israeli settlement goods, write to your leader requesting that this commitment is made.

COVER PHOTO The aftermath of an attack by Israeli settlers in Sinjel, West Bank, in March 2023 © Alaa Badarneh/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock

**Settlements are Israeli colonies unlawfully established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.** There are at least 700,000 Israeli settlers living in at least 250 settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli settlements are illegal under international law.



■ Illegal Israeli settlements and outposts

The population of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is **growing at a faster rate** than the population of Israel.

Sources: PeaceNow (2000 - 2023).

West Bank settlements have been expanding year on year. Israel's finance minister recently announced his intention to double the number of West Bank settlers. Settlements are often built in strategic locations to stop the contiguity of Palestinian land and/or surround Palestinian areas in order to make it impossible for Palestinians to go about their daily lives.

In recent months, Israel has accelerated settlement expansion. According to Israeli NGO Peace Now, more than 13,000 settlement housing units were approved in the West Bank in the first six months of 2023. This is nearly three times the number of homes approved in all of 2022 and the most approvals in any year since monitoring began in 2012. As well as illegally building homes and infrastructure on Palestinian land, Israeli and international businesses have established a thriving economy to sustain the presence and expansion of settlements. This 'settlement enterprise' relies on using unlawfully appropriated Palestinian resources – including land, water and minerals – to produce goods that are exported and sold for private profit. Hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of settlement goods are exported internationally every year.

By allowing the importation of settlement goods, the UK government is legitimising and facilitating an illegal enterprise.

## IS THIS A BAN OR A BOYCOTT – AND WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

As a human rights organisation, Amnesty International's focus is on ensuring governments uphold their obligations under international law. We are calling for a ban on settlement goods to stop the UK from financially sustaining an illegal enterprise. It would not affect goods originating from within Israel's internationally recognised borders and is separate from our opposition to the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill, known as the 'anti-boycott' Bill, which undermines freedom of expression and the role of public procurement in incentivising ethical business.

## Settlements violate international law

Israel's policy of settling its civilian nationals in occupied Palestinian territory contravenes two fundamental principles of customary international humanitarian law: the temporary nature of occupation and the prohibition on transferring civilians into occupied territory.

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states categorically: 'The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population in the territory it occupies.' Article 55 of the Hague Regulations forbids occupying countries from changing the character and nature of an occupied territory's property, except for security needs and/or the benefit of the local population. Israel's building of civilian settlements in occupied Palestinian territory does not meet these two exceptional criteria.

### Banning settlement products will not harm Palestinian workers

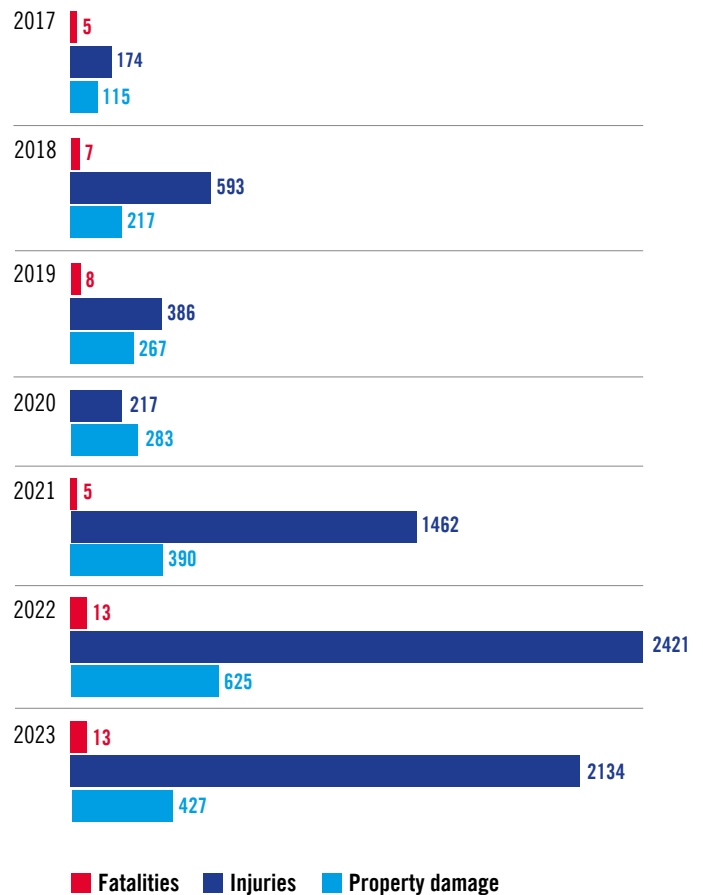
The settlements, their expansion and their trade cause significant damage to the Palestinian economy, which has been stunted by years of restrictions. The International Monetary Fund, the UN and the World Trade Organisation have all identified the Israeli occupation, the settlements and their related policies as the main obstacles to the economic development of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

### Settlements are a component of Israel's system of apartheid over Palestinians

Since Israel was established in 1948, its policies and legislation have been shaped by an overarching objective: to maintain a Jewish demographic majority and maximize Jewish Israeli control over land at the expense of Palestinians. In order to achieve this, successive governments have deliberately imposed a system of apartheid that privileges Jewish Israelis at the expense of Palestinians:

- Settlers can travel freely around the West Bank and are well served by roads connecting settlements to urban centres in the occupied West Bank and Israel. Palestinian movement around the occupied West Bank is heavily restricted through a complex permits system and network of checkpoints.
- Settlements are expanding faster than ever. Palestinians are systematically denied building permits, resulting in repeated home demolitions and forced evictions.
- Settlers are tried in Israeli civil and criminal courts with full due process rights. Palestinians are tried in a military court system with a 99.74 per cent conviction rate.
- Settlers consume 370 litres of water per day. Palestinians consume 73 litres per day.

## Settler-related incidents resulting in Palestinian fatalities, injuries and property damage



Settlers often attack Palestinian communities with the protection of the Israeli military. State-backed settler attacks are increasing in frequency and severity. Since the start of 2022, settler violence has displaced 399 Palestinians.

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2023 data for fatalities and injuries covers the first eight months of the year. 2023 data for property damage covers the first half of the year.

[amnesty.org.uk/endisraeliapartheid](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/endisraeliapartheid)