

Unsettled, unlawful, unresolved Israeli settlers in a foreign land

By Graham Peebles

Violence, abuse, non-accountability, hate, such is communal living today within the occupied West Bank, where some 518,974 colonisers¹ sit within “200”² illegal settlements. Noam Chomsky, “The settlements cover over 42% of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), not counting the Jordan valley, which they are taking over”³ Estimates of colonisation vary from the 42% reported by Chomsky and BT Salem to that of Human Rights Watch who at 60% set the figure even higher.

Around half a million ‘settlers’, more accurately, colonisers, now squat upon Palestinian soil, huddled within walled encampments upon stolen land, branded blue and white. Noisily perching upon hilltops, rooms with a view, or flourishing in verdant valleys, these settlements creep shamefully throughout the West Bank and the sacred city Jerusalem, East, West North South; The City of Peace.

Jimmy Carter, “The occupation & confiscation of Palestinian land that doesn’t belong to Israel, the building of settlements on it, the colonisation of that land, and the connecting up of those isolated but multiple settlements, (there are some 200), with each other by high-ways on which Palestinians can’t travel and where quite often cannot even cross. The persecution of the Palestinians under the occupation [by the Israelis] is one of the worst examples of human rights deprivation”

Inside the West Bank Outside the Law

The building of one single settlement is illegal. This is a fact, a fact well known, a fact Israel signs up to and a fact in International Law. Article 49 of The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which Israel is a signatory (1949) and has ratified (1951) and Mother-ship USA is a High Contracting Party, “aims at protecting the civilian persons in enemy hands, notably those residing in occupied territories”⁴ and “*explicitly prohibits an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into occupied territory*”. [Emphasis mine] Foundation For Middle East Peace (FMPEP),

The Geneva conventions agreed and adopted after the Second World War are “one of the major sources of international humanitarian law and are *binding* [emphasis mine] upon [the] 189 signatory states” (FMPEP), meaning you can’t simply ignore them. As a party to the Geneva Conventions, the United States is obligated “*to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances.*”⁵ [Emphasis mine] Israel and the USA, two of those *bound*, some feel gagged and bound would serve well, by the conventions, failed to attend a conference in December 2001 in Geneva, concerning the application of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories. A scandalous absence by the two key ‘players’ or ‘builders’ – not of peace, but builders of conflict, separation walls and Israeli housing condos.

¹ The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

² Jimmy Carter. Interviewed on ETV1. See – ‘Peace Not Apartheid’ by Jimmy Carter

³ Noam Chomsky From ‘a conversation with Noam Chomsky at MIT 2/09/2010

⁴ The four Geneva Conventions were adopted in 1949 by the representatives of 48 states convened at Geneva

⁵ Foundation for Middle east Peace

“Notwithstanding this ban, almost half-a-million Jewish Israelis with Israeli government support have moved into settlements it has constructed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and formally annexed occupied territory in East Jerusalem, a move not recognized by any other government in the world.”⁶

The settlers are living illegally, often violently, supported by all manner of subsidies from the Knesset, “which entitles them to a number of benefits: in housing, by enabling settlers to purchase quality, inexpensive apartments, with an automatic grant of a subsidized mortgage; wide-ranging benefits in education, such as free education from age three, extended school days, free transportation to schools, and higher teachers’ salaries; for industry and agriculture, by grants and subsidies, and indemnification for the taxes imposed on their produce by the European Union; in taxation, by imposing taxes significantly lower than in communities inside the Green Line, and by providing larger balancing grants to the settlements, to aid in covering deficits.”⁷

These subsidies are little more than bribes, all thanks to Mother Goose USA. Chomsky “We’re [USA] paying for it [settlement building, subsidies, security], stop paying for it, stop supporting it, stop subsidising. Stop allowing the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) to remain in the territories. The settlers are subsidized to stay there [the OPT], if the subsidies are withdrawn, they [settlers] will have to face the fact that they are not the ‘Lords of the Land’ they will then go back to Israel”

Israel however disregards, with impunity the many and various, *binding* agreements, such is the arrogance of the aggressor. Tzipi Livni, when serving as Israel’s foreign minister, “I’m a lawyer and I’m against the law, international law in particular”. Norman Finkelstein commenting “She had good reason for saying that because under international law “Israel loses, on Jerusalem, on the West Bank and Gaza, on settlements and right of return for refugees”⁸There is a rising light of freedom and unity throughout the World Miss Livni, it glints from the cleansing sword of justice, law, International, National, ignore it at you’re peril Israel.

Israel is supported, sustained and supplied, in words, arms and deed by the US. During 2011, the U.S. provided Israel with at least \$8.2 million *per day* in military aid⁹ alone. The One who rides shotgun above any treatise, convention and or nation, Big American Brother, allows [Israel] to dissent encourages violation of international law and leads by example. One has only to recall the International Court of Justice judgement against them (USA) in 1984, when the ICJ found in favour of Nicaragua. As Noam Chomsky puts it, “America was condemned by the World Court for, what they called unlawful use of force for political ends, another word for International terrorism. Tens of thousands of people [were] killed [and] the country ruined perhaps beyond recovery. The ICJ ordered the US to terminate their crimes and pay substantial reparations”.¹⁰ The US ignored the court and continued unabated, in fact escalating the terror. It seems international laws apply to some but not to others, ‘Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you’. Good idea unless it’s Israel or their Godfather in and of arms, America.

In February 2011 the USA, vetoed a proposed United Nations Security Council Resolution calling upon Israel ‘to end illegal policies that promote settlements in the occupied West

⁶Human Rights Watch (HRW) February 2011

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⁸Norman Finkelstein. November 15, 2011 [occupied Palestine](#)

⁹If only Americans knew

¹⁰Noam Chomsky. 9-11 Seven Stories.

Bank, including East Jerusalem' (HRW)¹¹. In so doing they undermined international law and gave the green, or should we say the blue and white light, to their Middle East proxy, to continue committing criminal acts, by expanding the settlement building, the colonisation, within and of the West Bank, to include East Jerusalem.

In the UN report (UNSCIIPA)¹², the concerns of the General Assembly are made plain. 'Despite the repeated calls from the international community and the illegality of settlements, the State of Israel is continuing to expand settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, *in violation of its international legal obligations* [emphasis mine]. The report continues, 'Israel is in violation of international humanitarian law, relevant United Nations resolutions, agreements reached between the parties and obligations under the Quartet road map'.

The Clash

Clashes between settlers living illegally upon the West Bank, a line drawn in the 1967 sand – walled and fenced, and Palestinians in *their* homes, upon *their* land, inside *their* schools and mosques, is growing, intensifying and escalating. The UN report makes clear how serious the problem is "Many of these incidents have been overtly violent acts targeting Palestinian individuals and communities with live ammunition, destruction and denial of access to property, physical assault and the throwing of stones. Some incidents have led to the killing and injury of Palestinians".

According to Defence for Children International (DCI) 'there has been a sharp increase in settler violence incidents against children. As of May 2011, DCI documented 19 cases of violence against children involving settlers, two of them fatal'.¹³

Two cases of murder, murder of two innocent children at the hands of the colonisers.

We find in the UN report (UNSCIIPA) the following. "From September 2010 to May 2011, 5 deaths (including three children) and more than 270 cases of injury of Palestinians by Israeli settlers were recorded, lack of accountability for Israeli settlers persists. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) not only failed to protect Palestinians, there are documented instances of their direct involvement in violence perpetrated against Palestinians". Noam Chomsky says, "We [USA] now have in the OPT a neo-colonial army, the IDF, to control the population."¹⁴

The following shocking examples of settler violence as monitored by the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights(OHCHR) are given in the UN report, they are illustrative of the violence that Palestinians suffer at the hands of Israeli settlers, and are simply some of the loudest in a crowd of screaming atrocities committed by Israeli colonists against Palestinian men women and children, their places of worship and of education. So here they are, to the shame of the 'settlers'.

"On 7 March 2011, a group of at least 12 settlers from the "outpost" of Esh Kodesh in the northern West Bank attacked Palestinians from the adjacent village of Qusra. Three of the settlers were armed with a handgun and two rifles while the rest were carrying baseball bats and metal bars. One of the settlers had a dog. The settlers hurled stones at the Palestinians and fired guns in the air, before physically assaulting the Palestinians. Israel Defence Forces

¹¹ Human Rights Watch

¹² UN report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (UNSCIIPA) September 2010

¹³ Defense for Children International (DCI)

¹⁴ Noam Chomsky From 'a conversation with Noam Chomsky at MIT 2/09/2010

soldiers reached the scene 30 to 45 minutes later, but the Israel Defence Forces personnel acted only in support of the settlers. One of the Palestinians was shot in his left wrist by a settler. An Israel Defence Forces soldier shot another victim in the leg from a distance of some 30 metres. Once on the ground the same Israel Defence Forces soldier shot him again from close range in the other leg. While trying to flee, the victim was hit in the leg and kicked in the face by a settler with a wooden stick, in the presence of the Israel Defence Forces soldier who had just shot him. An Israel Defence Forces soldier hit another Palestinian in the head with the butt of his rifle. Once the victim fell on the ground, a settler and the Israel Defence Forces soldier started kicking him”.

“On 27 January 2011, an 18-year-old Palestinian grazing his goats on his land was shot dead at point blank range by a settler on Palestinian land south of the village of Iraq Burin. Footage of the killing captured by a security camera appeared in various media. On 15 February 2011, an 18-year-old Palestinian from the village of Jalud south of Nablus, which is surrounded by six Israeli settlements and “outposts”, was shot in his stomach”¹⁵

“Settler violence [According to the UN] is not random criminal activity; in most cases, it is ideology-driven, organized violence, the goal of which is to assert settler dominance over an area.”

The Israeli methodology of suppression, control and terror, is organised and systematic, ‘policies and practices’, as the UN calls them, the settlement building, land theft (UN diplomatically, calls it ‘confiscation’), ‘zoning’ – a term invoking images of social, ethnic and racial manipulation, or cleansing. Add to this Eviction, from their *own land*, and the barbaric practice of house or home demolitions and you have a witches brew of control, victimisation and criminality, which has cast a toxic cloak over the lives of Palestinians and a shadow over history.

In their Sites

Sites for settlements, like everything else the occupying Israeli force undertakes, are chosen with care, on hilltops overlooking valleys, Palestinians, and Bedouins. A demographic dot to dot, one colony merges with another, the dots connected, a line is formed. The line a triangle, the triangle a star, six armed and driven hard into the freshly watered Palestinian earth, to flutter in full intimidation, as the settlers sit high above the valley and the law, eagle eyeing the Palestinians, upon their homeland. And from that height settlers establishing new lows “dump raw sewage down the hillside, contaminating the well[s] and making it unusable for agriculture and drinking’. (IMEMC)¹⁶

Duel Lives

Two parallel ways of life exist within the West Bank, a controlled, unjust, frightening existence for Palestinians living behind walls of servitude upon their homeland. And a comfortable, flourishing life within their tree lined encampments for the settlers. Palm trees and gardens bursting with colour create a theme park image of artificial beauty upon a battleground of injustice and hate. Defence for Children International states “Over 90% of settler violence incidents that are investigated by Israeli authorities are closed without any charges being filed. There is a dual system of law operating in the West Bank. The settlers are subject to Israeli civil law, with all the rights of a democratic state guaranteed to them. Palestinians, on the other hand are governed by a series of military orders within a military

¹⁵UN report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (UNSCIIIPA) September 2010

¹⁶IMEMC

system, which deprives them of the rights guaranteed to their Israeli settler neighbours. This dual system of law discriminates against Palestinians'.¹⁷

A 'dual system' indeed, "Human Rights Watch recently documented Israel's two-tier system for the Palestinian and Israeli Jewish populations in the 60 % of West Bank area that Israel controls and in East Jerusalem. Israeli policies deliberately withhold basic services from Palestinians, causing tremendous hardships by preventing and punishing the construction of homes and infrastructure for their communities, while providing generous financial benefits and infrastructure for Jewish settlements. Such differential treatment lacks any security rationale, but is meted out on the prohibited basis of race, ethnicity, and national origin"¹⁸

A two tier system of injustice, cruelty and control, If they could they would bottle sunlight and ration its use. They have turned day to night, and in the darkness of division, violence and hate they march, out of step with the men and women of goodwill that would bring peace and harmony to the land, out of pace with the winds of change that are sweeping humanity towards peace and unity, out of sync with the destiny of the nations to live safely side by side as enshrined in International Law.

A 'dual system', where a settler, shoots and kills, with *impunity* an innocent Palestinian, as in the case of the "18-year-old Palestinian grazing his goats on his land was shot dead at point blank range by a settler on Palestinian land south of the village of Iraq Burin"¹⁹ A system which allows a six year old child on his way to the neighbourhood shop for his grandfather to be 'detained' by the Israeli army, "they kept the child in detention for four hours at a nearby police station (to Al-Esawiyya town), and *interrogated* him in an attempt to intimidate him in to giving them names of youth who hurled stones at the soldiers" said. Mohammad Ali Dirbas, after the 'kidnapping', "The Police tried to terrify me, but they can't scare me, they must leave our land." (IMEMC).

The UN concludes its detailed excellent report(UNSCIIIPA)with six clearly articulated recommendations. All recommendations should be applied forthwith. The two most prescient measures are:

1. 'The Government of Israel should bring its policies and practices into compliance with its international legal obligations and its commitments in the Road Map, as well as the repeated calls of the international community to immediately cease the transfer of its civilian population into occupied territory and to completely freeze all settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, and to immediately dismantle all "outposts".
2. The Government of Israel should take all necessary measures to prevent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and their property in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Enough, enough of the injustice, violence and fear, let International Law be done and let the Palestinian people live in peace in their country. Mohammed Ali Dirbas, you speak for all decent men and women everywhere, here here and God bless that child and all those upon the land that is rightly their home.

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¹⁷ Defense of Children International

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch (HRW) February 2011

¹⁹ UN report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (UNSCIIIPA) September 2010. OHCHR monitored case

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