

Colonial Settlement in West Bank and Means to resist it

Ibrahim Saqer AL-Zaeem (Corresponding Author)
Ph.D. in Islamic civilization, University of Malaya
PALM Strategic Initiative Centre
alzaeemibrahim@gmail.com

Abstract

The settlement project is considered as the cornerstone of the Zionist Movement. It is one of the pillars of Israel's establishment of its entity after 1948 and 1967, following which Israel managed to control every part of the occupied lands. This study aims to understand the Zionist ideology, policies and goals, demonstrate the Palestinian and international positions on settlements, and recognize how serious those positions are. The researcher uses the descriptive and historic approaches, and addresses two main topics: The Settlement Projects, its concepts and practices, and the international position on the settlement project and means to resist it. The study also concludes that the Israeli occupation was based on two essentials cornerstones: Immigration and Settlements. After the Jewish immigration was reduced, the settlements became the most important element of the Jewish creed. Settlements are the heart of the Israeli existence; thus, the occupation believes that its presence is bound by the continuation of establishing settlements.

Keywords: Settlement, Israeli Occupation, West Bank.

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*Corresponding Author:
Ibrahim Saqer AL-Zaeem,
Ph.D. in Islamic civilization,
University of Malaya,
PALM Strategic Initiative Centre,
alzaeemibrahim@gmail.com

Introduction:

Settlement poses a serious risk to the Occupied West Bank. Until the end of 2020, the number of colonial settlements in the West Bank reached 151, including 26 in Al-Quds, whilst the number of settlers, at the end of the same year, was 712,815; the most of them were from Al-Quds (Israeli settlements in West Bank, annual report 2020, Ramallah).

The Israeli occupation's ongoing policy of settlement construction in the West Bank aims to formulate first lines of defense, protect Al-Quds, and confiscate the water tank. Thus, it is impossible to evacuate those settlements.

Based on the reality of land theft, the cities and villages of Occupied West Bank witness an apartheid regime that prevents the Palestinian citizens from enjoying their rights to residence, movement, and establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Problems of the Study:

The problem of the study lies in determining the features of Israeli colonial settlement in the West Bank. Thus, the main question is: what are the risks of Israel's colonial settlement over the West Bank? in addition to a number of sub-questions:

- 1.1 Where does settlement lie in the Zionist ideology?
- 1.2 What is the world's position towards the colonial settlement?

Methodology:

The researcher uses the descriptive and historic approaches

Goals of the Study:

3.1 to understand the colonial ideology, its policies, and goals, and to determine the Palestinian and international position towards settlement.

Previous Studies:

The study has depended on several books, studies and periodicals to understand Israel's policy of colonial settlement and its risk to the West Bank, and realize the Palestinian and international position on settlement.

Following is the study's discussion.

Topic One: The Settlement Project, its Concept and Practice

The settlement project first started as an idea called for by several Jewish scholars and rabbis. Later, however, it realized and became an actual practice around the end of the Ottoman era. The Ottoman Empire exerted great efforts to prevent the implementation of such project. Still, the Jews succeeded in building several settlements indirectly. The settlement project was the most prominent after the Israeli occupation of Palestine. It became a haunting nightmare for the Palestinians, disturbing and affecting their livelihoods.

First: The Zionist Movement's Concept of Settlement

At the end of the 18th century, Zionist ideas and propositions calling for the Jewish settlement in Palestine spread. Zvi Kalischer is one of the Jewish authors to write about this in his book “Derishat Tzion” (Seeking Zion) along with Judah Alkala. They both handled this topic from a religious perspective. As for the political and social aspects, they first appeared in the writings of some Jewish intellectuals in Europe. For example, Leon Pinsker called for addressing and solving the Jews' problem in Europe. He advocated the idea of Jewish immigration to Palestine through the activities of 'Hovevei Zion' associations (Johnny, 2005)

The settlement project is the essence of Zionism. The Israeli occupation is a settlement that does not aim at oppressing a nation and occupying its lands to exploit its economic and human potentials only, but also at bringing all extra Jews around the world to Palestine in order to grab its lands, expel its people and take their place (El-Messiri , 2008)

From this particular point, the Zionism movement made a huge mistake. It started its work claiming that the Jews are one people without a land, and Palestine is a land without people. The Zionists see Palestine as the place where the Zionist project can realize, and that it belongs to the Jews whether the Palestinians lived there or not. It was necessary for the Jews to organize their existence in Palestine, and to have their own economic, social and military institutions to begin the implementation of the Zionist project (El-Messiri , 2008)

The Jewish Agency was therefore established to do most of the planning and implementation of the immigration project, and to train the settlers and secure whatever tools or services needed by the immigrants (El-Messiri , 2008). The Agency would purchase lands for the Jewish National Fund so the Jews would have the ownership of the property (Hussein, 1995).

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In the Ottoman Era, the Jews tried all available means to purchase lands in Palestine. Thus, the Ottoman authorities followed some procedures to prevent the Jewish settlement in Palestine. In 1887, the Ottomans separated Al-Quds from Syria and assigned a central government to directly supervise and care for it (Mohsen, 2012).

The laws of the Ottoman Empire did not allow the Jews to grab lands. However, in the beginning of the 19th century and as foreign consuls started working in Al-Quds, these consuls, the British consul more than the others, protected the Jews. British mission societies established associations for the poor Jews under the pretext of helping them. In 1855, the British Lord Montefiore bought a land near Sultan pool to the south west of Al-Quds, where the first settlement was established (Hammad & Al-Farra).

The Palestinian people started resisting the Zionist danger at an early stage. The first armed clashes between the Palestinian peasants and Jewish settlers was in 1886. The Palestinians submitted petitions to the Ottoman Empire and the newspapers, such as Al-Karmel and Palestine (Mohsen, 2012), soon warned from the approaching danger. Al-Munadi Newspaper, issued in Al-Quds, played a role in raising awareness about the Zionist ambition to grab lands, encouraged resisting the Zionist project, and condemned the collaborators (Kafafi & and others, 2008).

Second: Policy of Settlement Expansion

The Zionist Movement did not surrender, of course. It doubled its efforts to seize as many Palestinian lands as possible after failing to purchase them from Sultan Abdulhameed Al-Thani. The Jews believed that those lands were the most powerful tool to threaten Palestine and pave the path for the establishment of their own entity (Yaghi, 1983).

In 1870, Makfa Israel (i.e. Israel's hope) was established in Al-Quds. A school was built to teach the settlers agriculture and to facilitate their work. The Jewish historians believe this settlement to be the first Jewish agricultural settlement in Palestine (History of Jewish Settlement in Palestine).

In 1878, a group of Jews purchased 3375 donums from Mulabbis village and registered them under Solomon's name; he was Austrian. The Jews continued their attempts to grab Palestinian lands until 1881 (History of Jewish Settlement in Palestine).

Several associations interested in the Jewish immigration to Palestine were established. In Romania, a Jewish association for immigration was established, and was successful in purchasing 270 donums (Donum = 1000 meters) from Al-Ja'ouna Village to the north of Palestine. There, they established Rosh Pina settlement in 1882 (Johnny, 2005).

The Alliance Francaise Society's main goal was to establish agricultural settlements to teach the Jews how to farm. The Society was able to implement its first project in 1881 when it received a decree from the Ottoman Empire allowing them to establish an agricultural office in Jaffa. The settlement was then called 'Makfa Israel'. Rothschild made it his responsibility to fund the purchase of lands and resettlement of Jews, making him the biggest financer of the settlement project in Palestine in the end of the 19th century (Ghanem & Rubay'a, 2011).

In 1882, three settlements were established: Rishon LeZion, Zikhron Ya'akov and Rosh Pina. The second World Zionist Congress, held in 1898, granted the World Zionist Organization the approval to take the responsibility of all affairs related to the settlement project. The agricultural Israeli settlements had reached 22 settlements; and the 200,000 donums grabbed increased to 418,000 donums (History of Jewish Settlement in Palestine).

From 1948 – 1967, the Zionist associations managed to establish 419 Jewish settlements. They managed to have hundreds of thousands of Jews immigrate from Arab and Muslim countries to Palestine, claiming they were in grave danger. However, it was later discovered that the Zionist Movement would assassinate Jews to spread fear forcing others to immigrate to Palestine. The Movement would explode some synagogues, schools and Jewish associations in Iraq for the same purpose as well (Johnny, 2005).

In later stages, the settlement activity fluctuated. When the settlement activity would slow down, the occupation would follow other policies that reaffirm their adherence to the settlement policy. For instance, from 1991 – 2018, the expansion of settlements slowed down due to the attempts to reach agreements and due to the international pressure on the occupation to stop the establishment of settlements. In order to compensate for such delay, the occupation started expanding existing settlements; whether through increasing the number of settlers or building new neighborhoods within the borders of the existing settlements (Israeli Settlements in Palestine: Annual Statistical Report 2018, 2019).

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Looking at the settlement project from 1967-2018, it can be noticed that the number of settlements in the West Bank increased from one settlement in 1967 to 150 settlements in 2018 (See appendix 1). Al-Quds, Ramallah and Al-Bireh were the three most damaged cities because of the settlements. There are currently 26 settlements in Jerusalem, and 26 others in Ramallah and in Al-Bireh (See appendix 2).

Israeli Consensus on the Settlement Project

Official and non-official settlement activities have been carried out after receiving approval from the government, which either directly or indirectly plans and executes through the settlement movements. Thus, the Israeli government's sometimes strict attitude towards the unofficial movements is either tactical or part of the propaganda (Suleiman, 1990).

The differences between the two main parties (Labor and Likud) constituting the political structure of the occupation are very minimum when it comes to the settlement project. As for their similarities in this regard, they are as follows:

- **The Settlement project serves a purpose:** The parties believe that the future of the occupied lands is determined by having a regional and geographic solution that divides the lands but maintains the military and human presence of the Israeli occupation.
- **Palestinians and Israelis have roles to play:** The Israelis share the Palestinians some roles, but with the Israelis permanently staying in the Palestinian lands.
- **The ideology:** Both parties believe that the settlement project represents the idea of 'one vast Israel' as a political strategy where all occupied lands are united under the Israeli occupation with the settlements, then, established there (Mansour, 2014).

Third: Objectives of Settlement and Its Impact on the Palestinian People

Going forward with its settlement policy, the Israeli occupation realizes the importance of such policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict. From one side, the settlements give the Jews a demographic privilege, stands as defense for its military posts, and troubles the Palestinian people.

The Objectives of Settlement

1- Unbalancing the Palestinian Demography

The settlement project was planned to serve security reasons, mainly to legalize the Israeli presence in the West Bank. Moshe Dayan, Israeli politician and militant, explained, “the settlements are the essence of the Zionist project and the cornerstone for achieving its objectives. We do not build settlements in the West Bank because they guarantee the safety of the army but because we cannot have the army in those lands without them” (Al-Atrash, 2014).

The Israeli occupation aims at building Israeli housing units that push away the Palestinians from the occupied lands. In one area, the occupation would build more than one settlement that together work under one network. Although there are several settlements covering different areas from east Palestine, the Gaza Strip, Sini and Golan, which were built for this particular reason, the settlements built in Al-Quds and Hebron are the most reflective example (Suleiman, 1990).

The main objectives of building settlements in the eastern side of Al-Quds are changing the city’s landmarks, increasing the Jewish population to outweigh the Palestinians’, and surrounding the Arab communities to monitor them (Kafafi & and others, 2008).

2- Establishing Security Posts for Protection

One of the objectives of establishing the settlements is to provide military defense since the military posts in the border areas are not enough. The settlements give more support to the military forces deployed in those areas (Suleiman, 1990). Similarly, the settlement in Al-Quds stresses the impossibility of Israel leaving Al-Quds hence secures the city (Kafafi & and others, 2008).

3- Absolute Hegemony

The leaders of the Israeli Labor party believe that dominating the occupied lands can happen through economic hegemony and horizontal demographic intersection with the Palestinians, or through social interaction by providing job opportunities and creating communication channels with the Palestinian people. Those leaders believe that mak-

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ing this project successful is connected to the potentials of the settlements in developing advanced, diverse and multiple-production projects in the fields of agriculture and industry (Suleiman, 1990).

The Impact of the Settlement Project on the Palestinians

The settlements have had a catastrophic impact on the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank. The Palestinians have been suffering from movement restraints and violence practiced by the settlers making the Palestinians' lives difficult and preventing them from receiving basic services (Al-Atrash, 2014).

The impact of the settlements on the economy of Palestine can be clearly spotted through the restraints imposed on the Palestinians' movement and communication channels, through the losses in investments in the construction sector, and through the losses resulting from the Apartheid Wall and from controlling the eastern side of Al-Quds which is considered the center of global and religious tourism (Atrash, 2014).

The agricultural sector suffers from annual losses of about 153 million dollars, the industrial of about 212.7 million dollars, the tourism sector of about 63 million dollars, and the construction sector of about 60 million dollars. The total amount of losses is 488.7 million dollars; i.e. 5.7% of the West Bank's GDP (Atrash, 2014).

Topic Two: The International Position on Settlements and Means to Resist it

The international institutions have agreed on the illegality of the settlements, and on the importance of putting an end to such policy. The Israeli occupation and the USA were the only two to disagree. After the most recent American resolution legalizing settlements, it is the Palestinians and their advocates' responsibility to stand against such resolution and seek its cancelation depending on the international decisions supporting the Palestinian right.

First: Settlements in the International Law

The UN General Assembly issued resolution no. (2253) on July 7, 1967 stating that the measures taken by the Israeli occupation to change the situation in the eastern side of Al-Quds are void. The UNGA called Israel for stopping all its procedures and any future work that might change

the city's landmarks (Resolution 2253 (ES-V) July 4, 1967). None of the countries voted against the resolution, (90) countries voted in favour and (20) abstained. The Israeli occupation did not take part in the vote (Kafafi & and others, 2008).

The Security Council's resolution no. (452) issued on July 20, 1979 considers the Israeli occupation policy of establishing settlements on Arab occupied lands illegal and violates the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Resolution 452 of 20 July 1979, The Security Council).

Arabs, the Islamic world and the international community agree on denouncing the settlements. During its meeting in Morocco in March 1980, Al-Quds Committee demanded cutting all diplomatic and economic ties with the countries wishing to move their embassies to Al-Quds, or to accept placing Al-Quds under the Israeli occupation rule (Kafafi & and others, 2008).

The European position was similar. They called for the implementation of the international law. The Venice Declaration of 1980 stated, "The nine stress that they will not accept any unilateral initiative designed to change the status of Jerusalem... [T]hese settlements, as well as modifications in population and property in the occupied Arab territories, are illegal under international law" (Venice Declaration on Palestine, 1980).

Second: The Palestinian Position on the Settlements

Every now and then the Israeli occupation attempts to legalize the settlements it had established despite the illegality of their establishment in Palestine.

In this regard, the PLO's Negotiations Affairs Department said in a report to the UN that the Israeli occupation uses the term 'Settlement blocs' to legalize their construction in the areas under the Israeli control should an agreement be reached. Such 'blocs' encompass all Israeli settlements and the lands between them. Therefore, the land areas will be available for settlement expansion and will thwart any attempts of the emergence of an independent Palestinian state (The Question Of Palestine).

In the same report, the Negotiations Department added that the legal situation of the eastern side of Al-Quds is the same as the entire occu-

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pied Palestine. The international community condemned the Israeli occupation's attempts to unilaterally change the status of Al-Quds by issuing the Security Council Resolutions no. (476) and (478). The settlements are in fact considered war crimes according to the Rome Statute's International Criminal Court of 1988 (The Question Of Palestine).

As for Hamas, it considered Oslo Accords responsible for wavering 78% of the Palestinian lands, leaving the remaining 22% for negotiations with the balance of power in favor of the occupation. The Accords did not bind the occupation nor stop it from expanding or establishing its settlements. They liberated the occupation from any constraints that might prevent it from changing the geopolitical situation of Al-Quds and the West Bank using its different tools for grabbing lands and demolishing houses (Press release on the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of Oslo Accords, 2018).

Because the occupation continued its land grabbing policy, Hamas called for upgrading the different forms of resistance in the West Bank and for building a national strategy to face the occupation and its violence (Hamas Calls for Upgrading Resistance against the Settlements, 2016). In addition, it called for the necessity to begin a national and comprehensive movement for the protection of lands and prevention of the occupation army and settlers from seizing them. Hamas said that forming national committees in all areas where settlements were established became a priority to prevent the occupation cancer from further spreading in the occupied lands (Hamas Calls for a National Comprehensive Movement for Land Protection in the West Bank, 2019).

The truth is Palestine is internally divided into 3 political programs: The first seeks equality for the Palestinians in the occupied lands, the second seeks establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and the third seeks to facilitate the return of refugees. The third program is agreed on by all Palestinians inside and outside Palestine and all factions. However, the political understanding of such program differs. The Palestinian Authority suggests the return of a limited number of refugees to its areas and not to Palestine as a whole (Nabulsi , 2017).

Undoubtedly, the Palestinians unanimously refuse the settlements and agree on the need to stop them. However, this requires a unified Palestinian program with all Palestinians working together understanding its constituents, agreeing on its objectives and ensuring its applicability.

If the Palestinian people, factions and officials do not succeed in unifying their position and taking one strong stance against the settlements, it will be difficult to receive international support. As a result, the occupation will desire to build more settlements until there is nothing left of the West Bank.

Third: The American Position on the Settlements

On November 18, 2019, Michael Pompeo, the US Secretary of State, declared that the USA changed its position and now opposes the earlier American administrations' position on the establishment of Israeli settlements. The establishment of Israeli settlements, it now believes, in the West Bank does not contradict the International Law.

The USA attempts to legalize the settlements through such resolution to satisfy the Israeli occupation with clear violation of the International Law. The Security Council resolution no. (242) in 1967 emphasized, "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" (Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, Security Council). This resolution was once again affirmed when the Security Council adopted with a vast majority the same position on December 23, 2016 as Senegal, Malaysia, Venezuela, and New Zealand condemned the Israeli settlement and demanded its ban in the occupied Palestinian lands. For the first time in 36 years, (14) members of the Security Council voted in favor, while the USA solely abstained (The UN Security Council Resolution on the Israeli Settlement in Palestine/ no. 2334, 2016).

The American resolution was greatly opposed internationally by Arabs, Muslims, Europe, Christian and Islamic entities, and Palestinians inside and outside Palestine. What matters now is developing strategies to face such resolution. The Popular Forum of Palestinians Abroad presented some points that can function as a base for designing a comprehensive strategy to face the American resolution:

First: Inviting all Palestinian national powers to meet in Beirut to unite the Palestinians and mobilize all popular and national potentials to face the Zionist occupation.

Second: Upgrading the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank until evoking a popular intifada that uproots the occupation and its settlements.

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Third: Calling the International Community's states and organizations to contain the American unleashed disparaging of the International Law and international resolutions and to condemn such irresponsible behavior.

Fourth: Inviting the Security Council and UN General Assembly to hold an urgent meeting to condemn the American position and emphasize its contradiction with the international law.

Fifth: Calling the International Criminal Court to take a serious stance and prosecute the Israeli occupation for its war crimes and violation of Geneva conventions on civilians, expelling them from their lands and grabbing the lands for the establishment of settlements (On the American Resolution to Legalize Settlements, 2019).

Conclusion

This section includes both the results and recommendations.

First: Results

- 1- The Israeli occupation was based on two essential cornerstones: Immigration and Settlements. After the Jewish immigration was reduced, the settlements became the most important element of the Jewish creed.
- 2- The settlements are the heart of the Israeli existence. The occupation believes that its presence is bound by the continuation of establishing settlements.
- 3- The Israeli occupation continues to contravene the international laws, especially because of the limitless support it receives from the USA.
- 4- The settlements pose a grave danger on the Palestinian people. The lands have been Judaized, the Palestinian community has been constrained, the communication between the villages and cities has been prevented, and the Palestinian economy has been greatly damaged.

Third: Recommendations

- 1- Building a national and comprehensive strategy to resist the settlement project, expose the Israeli occupation crimes and resist the most recent American resolution.
- 2- Forming popular committees to protect the lands from theft. These committees should encompass Palestinian and foreign members. The foreigners must be famous and influencing.
- 3- Activating all forms of resistance in the occupied West Bank: popular resistance, economic boycott and armed resistance against the occupation army and settlers.
- 4- Reviving the international position through encouraging the UN to reactivate its resolutions and oppose the American resolution which clearly contravenes the international laws.
- 5- Demanding international institutions to take stance against the Israeli war crimes including grabbing lands by force.
- 6- Conducting studies on the states' votes on the UN resolutions concerning Palestine, and trying to change the position of the countries supporting the Israeli occupation and polarize neutral countries.

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Appendix (1): Number of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank according to their Year of Establishment

Year of Establishment	عدد المستعمرات الإسرائيلية Number of Israeli Settlements	سنة التأسيس Year of Establishment	المجموع Total
Total	150		
1967	1		1967
1968	5		1968
1969	5		1969
1970	4		1970
1971	4		1971
1972	4		1972
1973	3		1973
1974	1		1974
1975	6		1975
1976	1		1976
1977	16		1977
1978	9		1978
1979	5		1979
1980	10		1980
1981	13		1981
1982	12		1982
1983	14		1983
1984	12		1984
1985	3		1985
1986	3		1986
1987	1		1987
1989	4		1989
1990	4		1990
1991	1		1991
1994	1		1994
1996	2		1996
1997	2		1997
1998	1		1998
1999	1		1999
2013	1		2013
Not Stated	1		غير مبين

Source: Israeli Settlements in Palestine: Annual Statistical Report 2018, Central Bureau of Statistics, (Ramallah, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

Appendix (2): Number of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank according to the Governorate and Classification 2018

Governorate	المجموع	Classification		المنطقة	المنطقة الغربية
		مستوطنات تم ضمها إلى إسرائيل	مستوطنات تابعة لمجلس يشوع		
West Bank	150	25	125	جبلين	جبلين
Jenin	5	-	5	طربروس والأغوار الشمالية	طربروس والأغوار الشمالية
Tubas & Northern Valleys	7	-	7	طربروس والأغوار الشمالية	طربروس والأغوار الشمالية
Tulkarm	3	-	3	طربروس	طربروس
Nablus	12	-	12	نابلس	نابلس
Qalqilya	8	1	7	قلقيلية	قلقيلية
Salfit	13	-	13	سلفيت	سلفيت
Ramallah & Al-Bireh	26	6	20	رام الله والبيلا	رام الله والبيلا
Jericho & Al-Aghwar	17	-	17	أريحا والأغوار	أريحا والأغوار
Jerusalem	26	16	10	القدس	القدس
Area J1	16	16	-	J1	J1
Area J2	10	-	10	J2	J2
Bethlehem	13	-	13	Bethlehem	Bethlehem
Hebron	20	2	18	الخليل	الخليل

Source: **Israeli Settlements in Palestine: Annual Statistical Report 2018**, Central Bureau of Statistics, (Ramallah, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019).