

Israeli Settlements

Background Information

Israel's government has allowed Israeli settlers to take land in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem (remember that the West Bank and East Jerusalem are two regions where the majority of people are Palestinian). Some of these settlers believe that God granted the land to the Jews and therefore they have a right to the land. By 2014 there were some 700,000 Israeli Jews living in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinians believe that the Israeli settlers are stealing their land. Under international law, the Israeli settlements are illegal.

Israeli Perspective

Here in brief is the case for Jewish settlements in the West Bank: It is in Israel's best interest to prevent the West Bank from serving as a Palestinian terrorist base. From the West Bank, the Palestinians can launch rockets, mortars, and other weapons. The only way effectively to prevent these Palestinian terrorist attacks is by allowing Israeli settlers to move to the West Bank. A larger Israeli population in the West Bank will make it more difficult for Palestinian terrorists to continue to attack Israel.

Source: Steven Plaut, (Business Professor at Haifa University in Israel)

Parts of the West Bank are the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. Israelis have the right to live on this land. This land is an important part of Jewish culture and to deny Jews the right to live there would be morally wrong. Furthermore, the settlements have employed thousands of Palestinians. Preventing the construction of more Israeli settlements would mean fewer jobs for the Palestinians.

Source: Mudar Zahran, PhD (Secretary General of the Jordanian Coalition of Opposition, in a July 13, 2012 article)

Palestinian Perspective

The construction of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory must not continue. Israeli settlers must not take more land. These settlements create problems and obstacles: they hurt the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis. Palestinians feel that their land is being taken and that makes it harder to convince them to live in peace with the Israelis.

Source: Mahmoud Abbas (leader of the Palestinian Authority)

A potential solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a plan known as the **Two-State Solution**. This plan would make the West Bank part of a Palestinian country. Israel would remain its own country. Therefore the Palestinians would have their own country and the Israelis would also have their own country (hence the name of the plan: Two State Solution). Many people believe that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank will prevent this plan from happening. In the view of many people, the Israelis are taking land that in the future should be part of a new Palestinian country.

The United States strongly opposes the construction of more Israeli settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Settlement construction threatens the Two State Solution and calls into question Israel's commitment to peace.

Source: The United States Department of State (July 29th, 2015)

