

# **Settler violence - 'Death to the Arabs': racialized violence has always defined Israel**

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**Recent racist anti-Palestinian riots in Jerusalem show that settler-colonial violence is fundamental to Israeli society.**

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During the racist anti-Palestinian riots that ensued in Jerusalem last week, a protester was [interviewed](#) by a journalist concerning the approach, specifically, the language used by the enraged crowds.

The journalist asked the young protester if the phrases employed by the demonstrators, phrases like, "Burn the Arab's villages" and "Death to Arabs", represented them and their presence at the protest.

In response, she said "I say it in a mannered and proper way. I don't say 'let's burn their villages,' I say that 'they should get out and we take over their lands'," she smirks "...exactly what we do in the Old City."

There is a great deal to unpack in this telling response. Primarily, the colonial attitudes which exist within all sects of Israeli society, not simply the government or military. But also, the ways in which settler communities have normalized racial violence and the perpetual ethnic cleansing - what some call the ongoing Nakba - that their ever-growing settlements have required.

## **Settler violence**

Settler violence is just as old as Israel and acts as an imminent threat to Palestinians on a daily basis, rooted in European settler entitlement to Palestinian land. In fact, during the Nakba, the original mass expulsion of [750,000](#) Palestinians to create room for the Jewish state, was materialized not only by the Zionist forces, but by settlers who promptly replaced the native population, building homes on the ruins of the exiled and protected by the developing Zionist regime and the [British](#) government before them.

Currently, there are at least [600,000](#) Israeli settlers living in illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian West Bank as well as East Jerusalem in direct contravention with international law.

Regardless of their unlawful presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the rogue and extremist violence many of these settlers produce is not only heavily protected by the state and Israeli security forces, but the state relies on the presence of these settlers to indirectly consume more land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem without consequence.

Many reports have documented that army or police personnel protect and assist settlers in their attacks against Palestinians. Many Palestinians, including children at play, have been arrested and imprisoned by Israeli forces in order to meet the needs of those residing in these illegal outposts.

The Israeli human rights organization, Yesh Den, [recorded](#) 1,293 cases of settler violence between the years of 2005 and 2019. Out of these incidents, a mere 8 percent of investigations resulted in criminal charges against the offending settler.

Just days after extremist mobs rioted in Jerusalem, a group of three extremist Jewish settlers [attacked](#) and hospitalized 66-year old shepherd, Ibrahim Hamdoun, while he grazed his stock on his land in Jenin, West Bank.

### **A reflection of Israeli society**

If this should teach us anything, is that settler-colonial violence, and that of the state, is part and parcel of Israeli society as a whole. These connections between all sects of Zionist violence are verified in a 2019 public opinion [poll](#) conducted by the Institute for National Security Studies which concluded that 70 percent of Israelis surveyed believe that the values of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) do indeed align with the values of Israeli society as a whole.

Even if Israelis choose to sugar-coat their approach to settlement expansion and annexation, they will continue partaking in and benefiting from the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem, and the rest of historical Palestine, through evictions, home demolitions, the racist denial of building permits, and as we witnessed this week, physical violence and intimidation.

**Zarefah Baroud**

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**P.S.**

- Mondoweiss. May 3, 2021:

- <https://mondoweiss.net/2021/05/death-to-the-arabs-racialized-violence-has-always-defined-israel/>

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