



VIOLENT SETTLEMENT

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ILLEGAL OUTPOSTS
AND SETTLER VIOLENCE**

PEACE NOW Settlement Watch, November 2021

The phenomenon of violent assaults by settlers against Palestinians and their property has been on the rise in recent years. As reported last October by Ha'aretz military correspondent Yaniv Kobovic, according to military officials, in 2020 and the first half of 2021, the number of incidents was almost twice as high as in 2019. Whereas in 2019, 363 such acts of violence and crime were documented, in 2020 the number soared to 507 and in the first half of 2021 it reached 416 (nearly 2.5 incidents a day).

A map of the points of violence indicates a direct relationship between the erection and expansion of illegal outposts and violent acts by settlers. Throughout the years we have seen more and more serious attacks and the crossing of red lines around specific outposts, as seen recently in the South Hebron Hills, when settlers opened fire on Palestinians, injuring two of them, according to reports in Haaretz. These outposts, partly populated by extremist settlers, are characterized by a constant effort to expand, develop, and take over more and more land. To achieve these goals they frequently use violence to intimidate the Palestinians and evict them from their land. Meanwhile, the law enforcement system lacks the will to deter or penalize such incidents and by conducting few and shallow investigations and failing to prosecute the vast majority of assailants. In light of the aforesaid behavior the situation will continue to deteriorate unless there is a significant policy change.

Read more about the outposts and recent trends of expansion – [click here](#)
The data in this report was obtained from Yesh Din, a human rights organization that documents acts of settler violence and helps victims file police reports. The data includes 1,256 of the incidents documented by Yesh Din throughout the West Bank from 2012 until mid 2021. The data is partial and does not attempt to encompass the entire phenomenon that has been raging for the last years, but only the incidents that Yesh Din has documented and handled.

We mapped the data geographically and found that most of the violent incidents occur next to illegal outposts. We wish to clarify that the data that was documented indicates only the physical proximity between many of the violent incidents that were documented and the outposts mentioned in the report. It can only be assumed, given the physical proximity, that it is possible that some of the violent acts committed in the area were committed by people who came from the outposts, whether they are residents of the outpost or visitors.

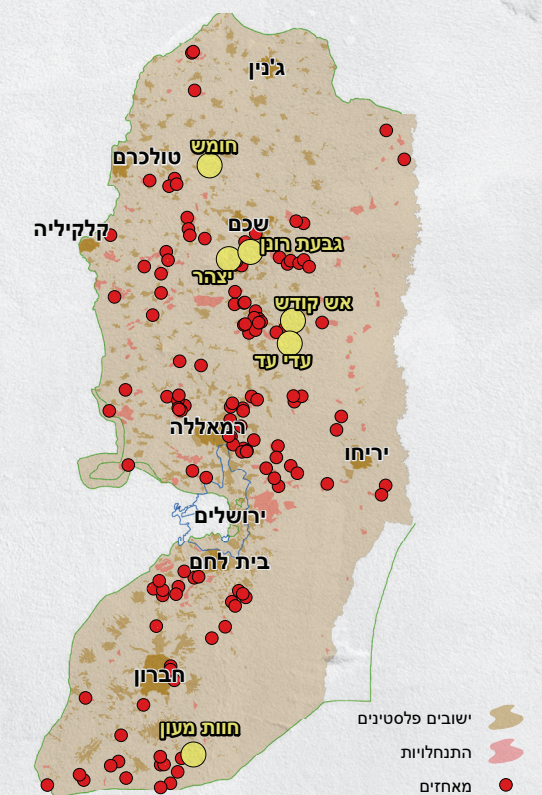
MOST OF THE VIOLENT INCIDENTS OCCUR NEXT TO ILLEGAL OUTPOSTS

out of 1,256 violent incidents including attacks on property, agriculture and people, we found that 796 incidents (63%) occurred near illegal outposts. The Yesh Din data also indicates that 584 of the incidents (46.5%) consisted of attacks on people, 560 of the incidents (44.6%) were attacks on property, and 6.3% were incidents of takeover and theft of Palestinian land.

Over the years Yesh-Din saw an inverse relationship between police reports filed by Palestinians and the number of settler attacks. As attacks have increased there has been a significant decline in complaints filed by Palestinians.

The Yesh Din data explains this phenomenon: of the incidents documented by Yesh Din, only 678 complaints were filed with the police, 559 were closed by the police, and only 47 led to charges. The lack of accountability for settler violence erodes Palestinian faith in the judicial system while simultaneously emboldens future attacks.

In this report we will focus on the most significant centers of violence we found: The outposts of the Yitzhar settlement; the outpost of Adei Ad; the outpost of Esh Kodesh; the outpost of Ma'on Farm; the outpost of Givat Ronen - and we will review the development and expansion of these outposts over the years at the expense of Palestinian land, using the Peace Now Settlement Watch data. We will also discuss the case of the outpost at Homesh.



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YITZHAR AND THE OUTPOSTS SURROUNDING IT

Name	Attacks on people	Attacks on property	Land takeover	Other	Total
Yitzhar	66	52	1	2	121

From 2012 to the middle of 2021 Yesh Din researchers documented at least 121 incidents of violence in the area of Yitzhar. These included one case of takeover of Palestinian land, 52 cases of attacks on property and 66 attacks on people (more than 100 additional incidents were documented around Yitzhar and its outposts, but for the purpose of this report they were counted under the nearby outpost of Givat Ronen).

Peace Now Settlement Watch data:

The settlement of Yitzhar was established in 1983 but a number of illegal outposts were erected around it since the late 1990s.

The first outpost, **Lehavat Yitzhar**, was built in 1998. Over the years from 2012 to the present, 33 new housing units were built in it illegally, with demolition orders issued on each new unit. But on the ground, not only did law enforcement officials fail to enforce the demolition orders, but the outpost was permitted to continue to grow and develop.

In 1999 the outpost **Ahuzat Shalhevet** was built near Yitzhar, and from 2012 to the present 33 illegal housing units were built in it and given demolition orders.

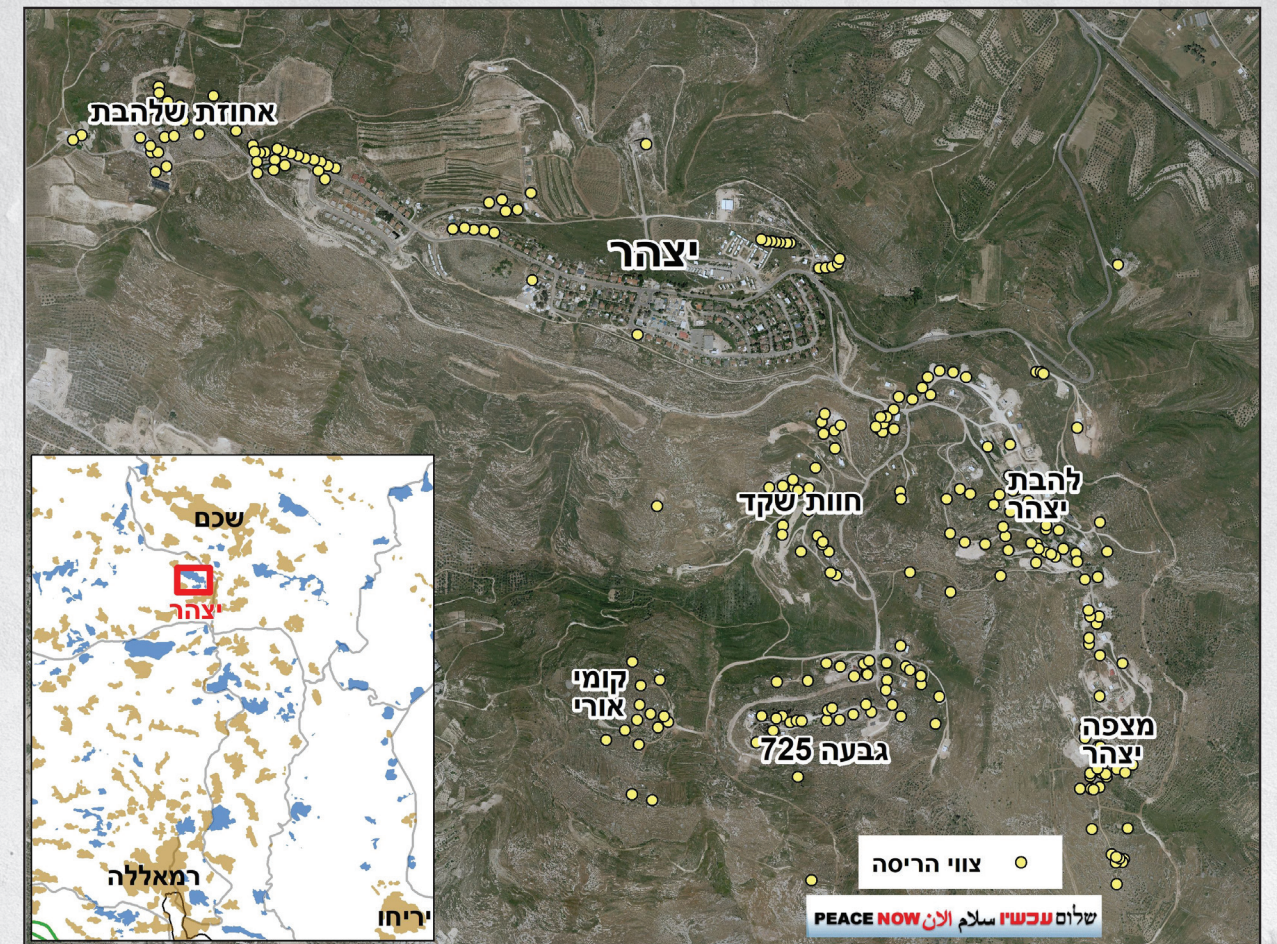
Hill 725 (also called Givat Tekuma) is another outpost built south of Yitzhar in 2001. Between 2012 to present, 24 illegal housing units were constructed (some built on private Palestinian land) and each was issued demolition orders.

In 2002 two more outposts were built, Mitzpe Yitzhar and Shaked Farm. In those two outposts, from 2012 to the present, 24 illegal housing units were added (some built on private Palestinian land) and demolition orders were subsequently issued against each new unit.

The outpost of **Kumi Ori** was built in 2013. Since 2012, 10 illegal structures were built in the outpost and demolition orders were issued against them. Some of them were periodically demolished but they were rebuilt and continue to grow.

The government has not only failed to take any real measures to dismantle the outposts around Yitzhar, but government documents in 2020 reveal efforts to begin the retroactive legalization of dozens of outposts, including three in Yitzhar. That is a clear message to the settlers that they can continue breaking the law without consequences and the government will eventually legalize it retroactively.

[Read more about the plan to retroactively legalize outposts – click here.](#)



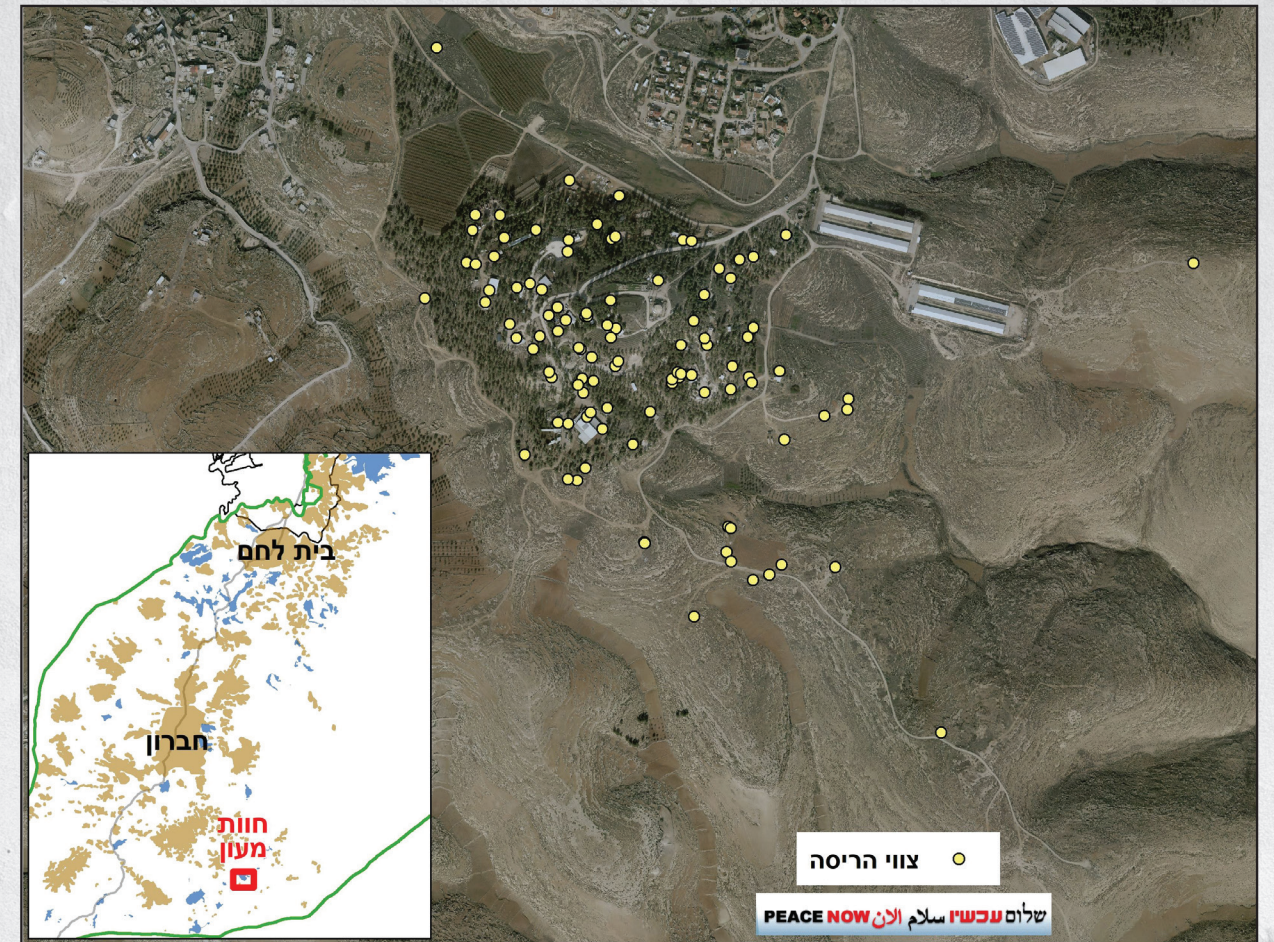
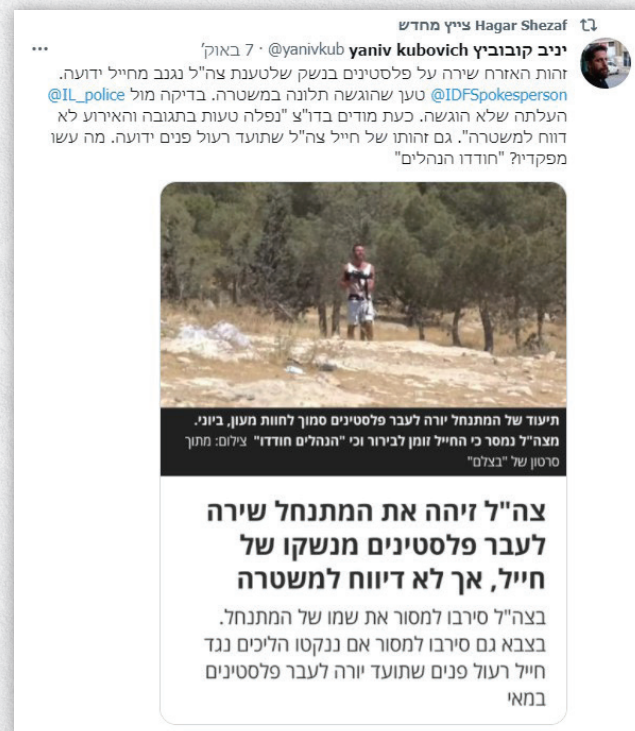
MA'ON FARM

Name	Attacks on people	Attacks on property	Land takeover	Other	Total
Ma'on Farm	17	20	3		40

According to Yesh Din data (which does not include all of the incidents), from 2012 to mid-2021, 40 violent incidents were documented in the area of **Ma'on Farm**. These included 20 cases of vandalism, three cases of takeover of Palestinian land, and 17 attacks on people.

Peace Now Settlement Watch data:

The outpost was built in 2001 next to the Ma'on settlement in the South Hebron Hills. From 2012 to present-day, 16 new housing units were built in it illegally, against all of which demolition orders were issued. Part of the outpost is on private Palestinian land, yet it was included on the 2020 list of outposts slated for legalization. The outpost is one of the first agricultural farms in the West Bank and despite its illegality it receives state funds both directly and indirectly, including support and volunteers from the organization Hashomer Yesh, which is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture.



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ADEI AD

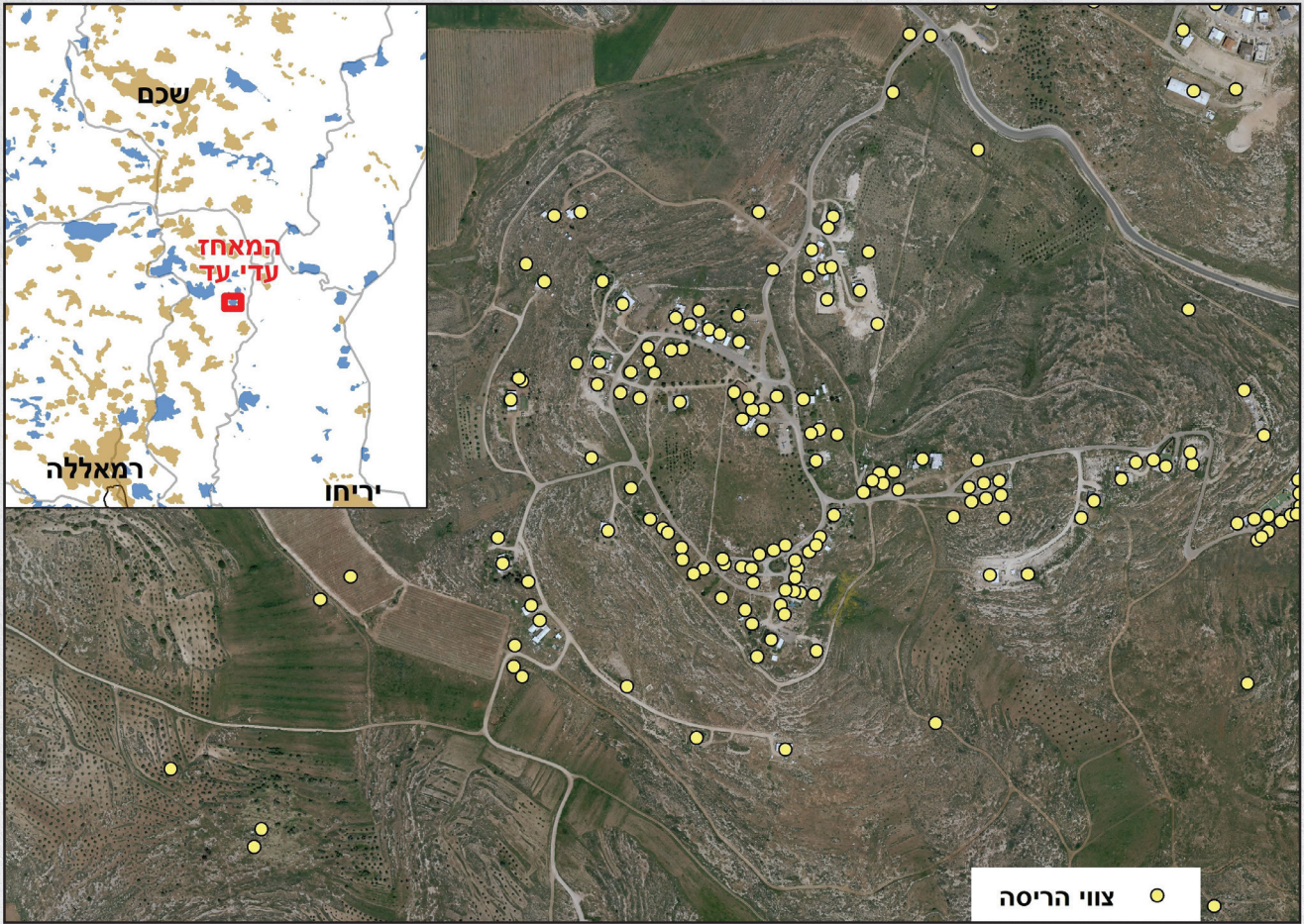
Name	Attacks on people	Attacks on property	Land takeover	Other	Total
Adei Ad	19	45	7		71

According to Yesh Din data (which does not include all of the incidents), from 2012 to mid-2021, 71 violent incidents were documented near the outpost, including seven cases of land takeover, 45 cases of attacks on property, and 19 attacks on people.

Peace Now Settlement Watch data:

Adei Ad was built in 1998 east of the settlements Shvut Rachel and Shilo, and between 2012 and mid-2021, 41 illegal housing units were built in it and received demolition orders. Part of the outpost is on private Palestinian land, yet the orders were not enforced and construction at the site continues. In recent years there have been attempts to legalize this violent outpost. One of the plans is to expand the jurisdiction of the settlement Amihai (a new settlement built in the area for the evacuees from Amona), and to include the outpost of Adei Ad in its jurisdiction. This has not yet led to legalization but, despite the violence and the illegal construction, the political echelon presently intends to legalize the site rather than enforce the law. [Read more about the legal struggle of the Palestinian residents against the outpost with the help of Yesh Din – Click here.](#)

The Shilo Valley area, to which Adei Ad belongs, is notorious for the extreme measures settlers will take to push Palestinians, including violence. As a result, many dozens of acres that were owned by Palestinians are currently being cultivated by the settlers. [Read more about Adei Ad and the assaults as a tool of dispossession, at Yesh Din report: “The Road to Dispossession” – click here.](#)



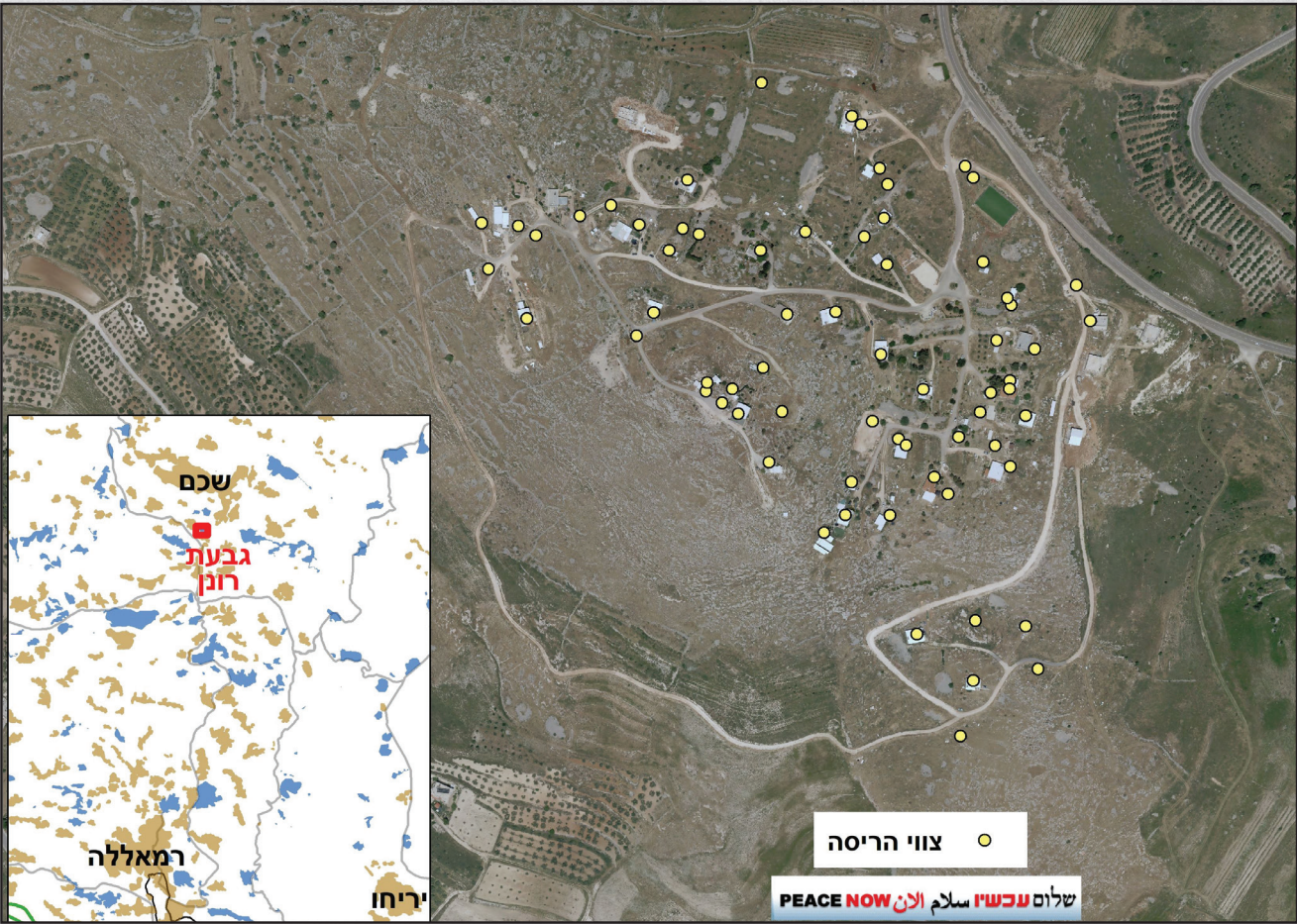
GIVAT RONEN (SNEH YA'ACOV)

Name	Attacks on people	Attacks on property	Land takeover	Other	Total
Givat Ronen	56	56	1	3	116

According to Yesh Din data, from 2012 to mid-2021, 116 violent incidents were documented near Givat Ronen. These included one case of land takeover, 56 cases of attacks on property, and 56 attacks on people.

Peace Now Settlement Watch data:

The outpost was built in 1999 next to the Har Bracha settlement (is also called Sneh Ya'acov). From 2012 to mid-2021, 20 new housing units were built in it illegally, against all of which demolition orders were issued. Part of the outpost is on private Palestinian land.



ESH KODESH

Name	Attacks on people	Attacks on property	Land takeover	Other	Total
Esh Kodesh	27	22	1	1	51

According to Yesh Din data, from 2012 to mid-2021, 51 violent incidents were documented near the outpost. These included 22 cases of attacks on property, one case of land takeover, and 27 attacks on people.

Peace Now Settlement Watch data:

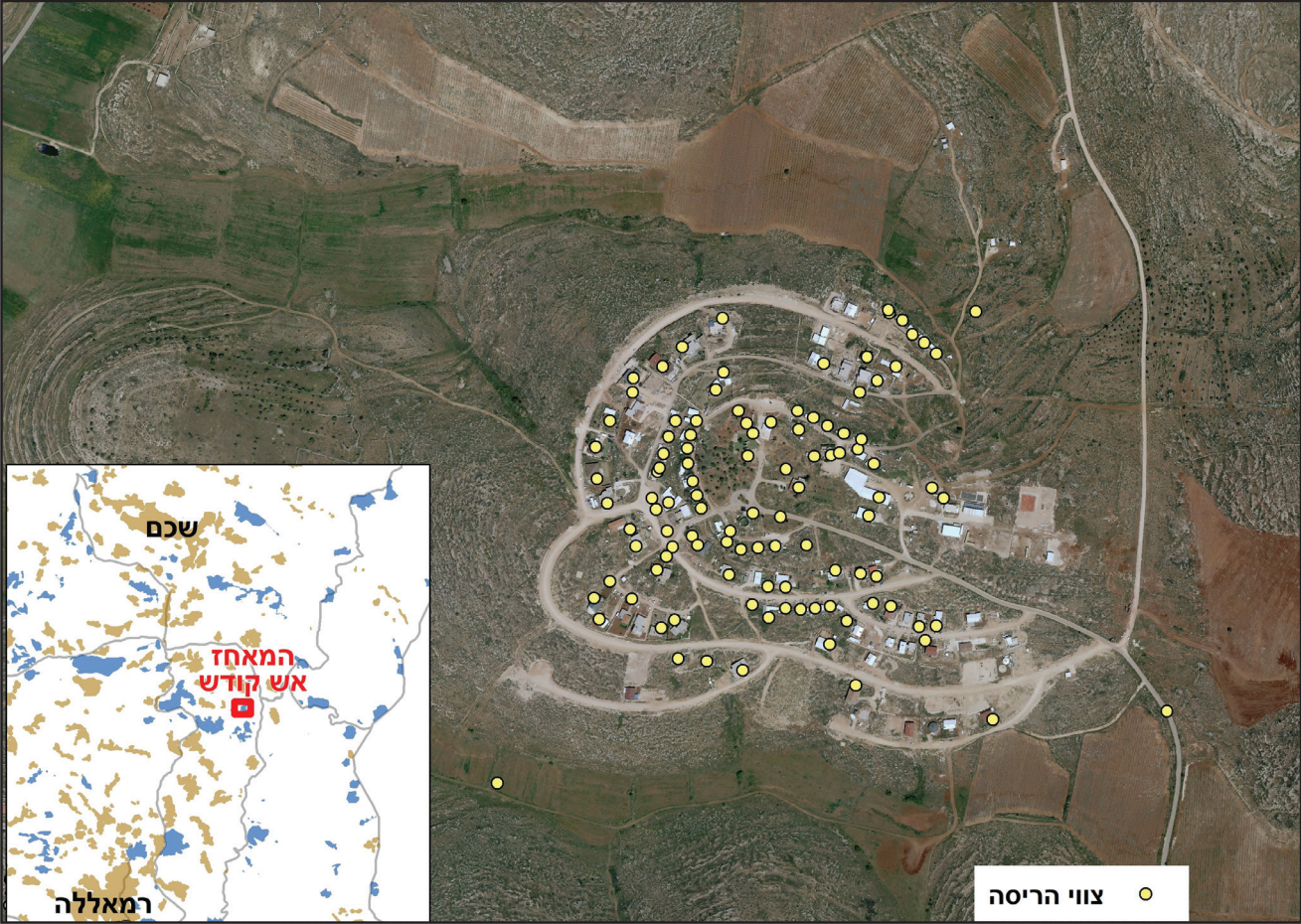
The outpost was built in 2000 east of the settlements Shilo and Shvut Rachel. From 2012 to mid-2021, 80 new housing units were built in it illegally, against all of which demolition orders were issued. Despite the illegality of the outpost, in 2020 it was on the list of outposts slated for retroactive legalization.

Or Heller
@OrHeller

הפלסטינים:מתנחלים הציתו רכב אחהצ של פלסטינים בכפר קוסרה בשומרון. עפ הדיווח ב16:30 קבוצת מתנחלים הגיעה מכיוון המאחז אש קודש, הציתו רכב פלסטיני ובהמשך נכנסו לתוך קוסרה והשליכו אבנים על תושבי הישוב ועל בתים פלסטינים.



8:52 אחה"צ · 13 בפבר' 2021 · Twitter for iPhone



חדשות 13
@newsisrael13 · 21 באוק' 2019

קבוצת מתנחלים ממאחז אש קודש הפריעו באלימות למסיק זיתים של פלסטיני בכפר קוסרא שבאזור שכם. במקום התפתח עימות אלים שכלל יידוי אבנים. לאחר מכן נכנסו המתנחלים לכפר ויידו אבנים על מכוניות וניפצו את שמשותיהן. כוחות מג"ב והמנהל האזרחי נמצאים במקום @OrHeller



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THE OUTPOST AT HOMESH

Name	Attacks on people	Attacks on property	Land takeover	Other	Total
Homesh outpost	14	9			23

One cannot ignore what is happening at the outpost built on the land of **Burqa**, in the area of the former settlement of Homesh, north of Nablus. The settlement of Homesh was evacuated in 2005 as part of the Disengagement Plan. Presently, Israeli entry into the area of the evacuated settlement is illegal, yet, in the years following the disengagement, a yeshiva began operating at the site. First operating outdoors, Peace Now's Settlement Watch has observed that in recent years structures have been built and it has grown into an actual outpost with dozens of teens and young adults living there permanently.

The area upon which the settlement of **Homesh** was built is private Palestinian land, registered in the land registry ("Tabu"). The land owners, residents of Burqa, asked permission to return and cultivate their land after the disengagement, but a military order prevented them from doing so. They entered into a lengthy legal battle, with the support of Yesh Din, ending only a decade later when the order was annulled. Though they were formally given permission, they have yet to actually return to their land. Attempts by Palestinians to approach the former settlement are frequently met with violent attacks by the youths residing at the site. According to Yesh Din data, from 2012 to mid-2021, 23 attacks on Palestinians were documented. These included 9 cases of attacks on property, and 14 attacks on people. A week before publication, three Palestinians were wounded by truncheons and stones thrown at them by settlers near the outpost at Homesh when they tried to reach their land to plow it and cultivate it.



THE OUTPOSTS ARE A SIGNIFICANT TRIGGER OF SETTLER VIOLENCE

Yesh Din data, which documents only some of the incidents in the West Bank, indicates clearly that most of them occur near illegal outposts. The almost complete absence of enforcement by the authorities against building violations and the violence committed by those settlers gives settlers a sense of impunity.

Currently there are 450,000 settlers in the West Bank. Of them, Peace Now estimates that 22,000 (5%) live in the illegal outposts. This group has produced wholesale criminality for decades, which in part leads to assaults and violence that have been increasing over the years.

This lawlessness must be stopped. The law enforcement agencies must act and do their job of enforcing the law, demolishing the illegal construction, not allowing new outposts to pop up, and apprehending the criminals and prosecuting them. The first step should be the evacuation of the outposts mentioned in this report and around which violence regularly erupts against Palestinians and their property.

Yesh Din: *"The important exposé by Peace Now proves what we at Yesh Din have been seeing and documenting for years: settler violence is one of the most dangerous, effective and frightening measures in Israel's large arsenal of instruments to terrorize the Palestinians and take over their land. Settler violence flourishes because both the military and the police default on their duty to provide protection to the Palestinian communities. The authorities do not prevent the violence in real time when it occurs, do not properly investigate later, and do not prosecute the known perpetrators. Furthermore, settler violence receives significant encouragement from the state when it allows the expansion of the settlements and the outposts at the expense of Palestinian land, as the Peace Now report demonstrates. In this way, the apartheid regime in the West Bank encourages and supports settler violence."*

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The phenomenon of settler violence against Palestinians throughout the West Bank has been accelerating in recent years. According to security officials, there has been a dramatic rise in the volume of crime by Jews against Palestinians in the West Bank in the last two years. Numerous assaults occur near illegal outposts throughout the West Bank and in some cases there is solid evidence that settlers who perpetrated the attacks on Palestinians are based in illegal outposts.

This report reviews the documentation of 1200 violent incidents from 2012 until July 2021, collected by Yesh Din, and examines the location of the incidents and their proximity to the various settlements. **The conclusions are unequivocal: most of the documented violent attacks on Palestinians (63%) occurred near illegal outposts in which Peace Now estimates less than 5% of Israeli settlers reside.**

This small minority lives in outposts that were erected to establish political and military facts on the ground, without government approval and in violation of the law, yet have been allowed to continue to expand and develop with almost no enforcement or interference by the authorities. The correlation between a significant number of violent incidents and the location of these outposts raises the suspicion that the outposts are the staging grounds for violent activities whose purpose is to take over land and expel Palestinians from their land. There is a direct relationship between the building violations and the physical violence. To avert future acts of violence, the Israeli government must follow its own laws and evacuate these outposts and prevent the construction of additional outposts.

We emphasize that this data is not a comprehensive report of every occurrence of settler violence, but only 1200 incidents that were documented and handled by Yesh Din, which accompanies victims, helps file complaints with the police, and monitors the investigations and their results. Sadly, due to intimidation and flaws in reporting, the real number of violent assaults by settlers is unfortunately much higher (the Ministry of Defence counted at least 775 such attacks between 2019-2021 alone).

Peace Now: “This report shows that the raging violence has an address. The illegal outposts, which receive the backing of the settler leadership in order to prevent a political solution, have been functioning in recent years as Jewish terror outposts in the occupied territories. Instead of calling them ‘young settlement’, (as referred to in Hebrew),’ it is time for the government to enforce the law and dismantle them immediately. Defense Minister Gantz must wake up and order first the dismantlement of the outposts that constitute the main centers of violence, and order the security forces to show zero tolerance towards outpost criminals and leaders who incite violence. That is the only way to restore security and quiet and prevent the next murder.”

In accordance with Israeli government measures targeting critics of its policies in the occupied territories, Peace Now clarifies that this year the majority of its funding came from foreign political entities as defined by the law, and they are listed at the website of the Associations Unit