


**Looking the
OCCUPATION
in the eye**

ננוظر للاحتلال باعيننا
מסתכלים לניבוש בעיניים

Jerusalem

7.2.2022

To: Jewish Communities Around the Globe

RE: GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WEST BANK

Dear friends,

We are a group of Israeli human rights activists operating in the rural areas ("Area C") of the West Bank and of concerned Israeli citizens. Evidence we witness daily confirms that the Israeli government has targeted these areas for future annexation, and has therefore pursued a series of policies designed to drive as many Palestinian farmers as possible off the land and into urban centers in areas A&B. These policies include a total ban on any construction, forced evictions, demolition of homes and agricultural facilities, confiscation of land, blocking and destroying roads, restriction of access to water, intimidation, nightly invasions of private homes, arbitrary arrests and so on. The goal is clearly to dispossess much of the Palestinian population in Area C, which Israel seeks to annex.

In recent years we have seen a dramatic escalation of settler and army violence, which has become a daily occurrence and has made Palestinian lives unbearable. The settlers cut down or burn olive trees, kill sheep, invade homes, destroy property, and attack people. We often see soldiers stand by while settlers attack Palestinian farmers or shepherds. Frequently the soldiers participate in the activities by arresting those Palestinians who are trying to defend themselves from the settlers

We are aware of the inconvenience, maybe antagonism this letter may cause, but the IDF, the effective sovereign in the territories, carries out the policy of the Israel's government and is executing this de facto annexation. As suggested by the name of our group, we deliver the distressing, painful reality with no filters, in the most authentic form, observed by activists.

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Sadly, most Israelis seem to have the ability to “ignore” the crimes committed in their name by their government and the IDF. Israeli media coverage of the occupied territories is very sparse, and it is easy for the Israeli public to look the other way. Signs are growing that the tense situation in the occupied territories is about to explode in a new wave of violence. The only hope of halting the deterioration is intervention by the international community, and especially by the United States.

For years we have been watching in amazement and disappointment as the United States, the champion of democracy and human rights, provides support – diplomatic, financial, and military – to the State of Israel, even while Israel commits grave human-rights violations and continues policies that the U.S publicly considers illegal and harmful to the cause of peace and world order. Equally disappointing are the other western countries, who claim to be highly committed to human rights, but refrain from taking any steps against Israel other than occasional weak verbal protests.

We understand that you share our criticism of the Israeli government’s policies in the occupied territories and of the grave human rights violations there. But we doubt that you also share the feeling of urgency and despair that we have as we witness the reality on a daily basis, as well as our anxiety for Israel’s future character if current social trends continue. As Israelis, we have not yet given up on the possibility to “influence from within” but feel obliged to seek foreign support. We wish to work together with you to put pressure on your administration to stop looking away from the crimes of the occupation and apply real pressure on Israel to abide by international law and respect for human rights and to stop the harassment of Palestinians.

CHAIRPERSON

Guy Hirschfeld

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מִסְתַּכְלִים לְכִיבוּשׁ בְּעֵינֵינוּ

Dr. Salim Abbas
Dr. Henry Abramowitz
Nuna Abu Dalu
Dr. Ines Adin
Dafna Alexandrovitch
Dr. Chen Alon
Roy Aloni
Prof. Benjamin Arbel
Adi Argov
Talia Ariav
Meira Asher
Rutie Atsmon
Elyahu Avidor
Rabi Rutie Baidatz
Daphne Banai
Prof. Ron Barkai
Tom Barkai
Helya Bar-Mag
Racheli Bar-Or
Ambassador (ret.) Ilan Baruch
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Irit Ben Moshe
Noa Ben Ner
Itzhak Ben Ner
Guy Ben Ner
Neta Ben Porat
Izhar Ben Sasson
Rachel Ben Shitrit
Former Att. Gen. Israel Michael Ben Yair
Prof. Avner Ben-Amos
Dr. Naomi Benbassat
Naomi Benzer

Dov Bernard Hercenberg
Anat Betzer
Ada Bilu
Prof. Yoram Bilu
Michal Brody Bareket
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Magali Brosh
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Silvia Cabib
Adi Adina Cohen Harari Moshe Cohen
Wollin
Liora Cohlany
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Avi Deul
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Ben Z. Eshel
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Michal Fischer
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Bat-El Galor
Erez Ganor
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Noga Geva
Sandy Geva
Alon Gil
Batya Gil

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Angela Godfrey-Goldstein
Yaacov Godo
Martin Goldberg
Prof. Amiram Goldblum
Dana Goldman
Maya Goldman
Pepe Goldman
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Carmel Gorni
Shraga Gorni
Diane Greenberg
Dr. Jeffrey Green
Judith Green
Prof. Charles W. Greenbaum
Alan Greenberg
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Abraham Inbar
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Gali Israel Tal
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Noam Kadmon
Shlomit Kafri

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Omer Karp
Dalia Kata
Adam Keller
Amy Klein
Prof. Menachem Klein
Arza Kuttner
Writer Tzruya Lahav
Dan Lantzet
Ofer Lavie
Boaz Levin
Gabriel Levin
Dr. Einat Lichtinger
Ambassador (ret.) Alon Liel
Jude Liemburg
Eliav Lilti
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Dalia Migdal
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Dubi Moran
Bili Moscona Lerman
Txvika Mrkovitz
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Roxana Neiman
Amir Noham
Eden Nov
Merav Nov
Jonathan Ofer

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Smadar Or
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Hava Ortman
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Miriam Rattenbach
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Avshalom Rov
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Maya Savir
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Haim Shadmi
Reut Shaer
Eli Shagam

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Eti Yehiely Harari
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