

Israel's Expanding Settlement

Why in news?

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Israel passed a legislation that would legalise nearly 4,000 Jewish settler homes on private Palestinian lands in the West Bank.

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What are settlements?

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- Settlements are communities established by Israel on land occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.
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- This includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. $\space{1mm}\space$
- Prior to that no Israeli citizens had lived in the territory. \slashn
- In 1968 Israeli government reluctantly allowed Jews to stay "temporarily." $\space{1mm}\space{1m$
- Since then hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews now reside in the West Bank, citing religion, history and Israel's security among their reasons for being there.

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• There are 131 settlements in the West Bank, housing about 385,000 Israeli Jewish settlers, and 97 outposts - settlements built without official authorisation.

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• Palestinians, along with the rest of the world, see their presence as one of the key obstacles to a peace agreement and the creation of a Palestinian state.

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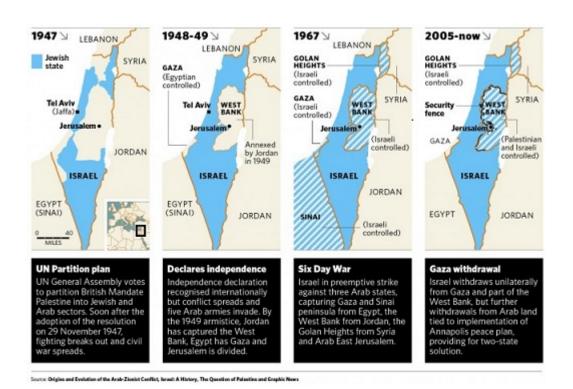
• Palestinians say the presence of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem - land they seek for a future state - make such a state with contiguous territory impossible.

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• They have demanded Israel freeze all settlement activity as a precondition for resuming peace talks.

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What is the legislation about?

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• Despite international criticism, successive governments have supported the settlements.

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- The legislation allows the Israeli government to confiscate private Palestinian land if the land-owners are unknown. \n
- If known, they will be compensated in cash or kind. $\space{1mm}\space{1mm$

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What will be the impact?

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• The legislation seeks to extend Israeli law to the West Bank.

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- It can be overturned by the judiciary. $\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space{\label{eq:linear} \space{\space\space{\spacae{\space{\space{\space{\sp$
- Israel's Attorney-General has said he wouldn't defend the bill in the high court as it is unconstitutional and violates international law. \n
- But this is unlikely to stop the current government from taking more Palestinian land.
- Earlier UN Security Council demanded that Israel stop all settlement activity in the Occupied Territories.
- An international conference attended by more than 70 countries urged both sides in the conflict to resume talks \n
- In this scenario, Israel's legislation shows its disregard for international opinion and institutions.

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What is the Israel's stand?

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- Israel still says it is committed to the **two-state solution**.
- But the two-state solution will not be relevant if it continues to grab Palestinian land.

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- The current government has shown no interest in resuming negotiations. $\ensuremath{\sc vn}$
- This is compounded by the election of Donald Trump as U.S. President, who also does not believe in two state solution. \n

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Source: The Hindu

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