

RESOURCE 13

What is the occupation?

‘Occupation’ means taking and holding land by military force. Israel’s army has control of land outside its internationally recognised borders.

Israel took control of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem in the Six-Day War of 1967, when it fought the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Egypt and Syria. Israel also took over the Golan Heights from Syria and the Sinai from Egypt. Before the war, like today, Palestine was not recognised as a country by much of the world. The West Bank and East Jerusalem were under Jordanian control, and Egypt ruled in the Gaza Strip and Sinai.



Though outnumbered, Israel pushed back the Arab armies and took control of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. Sinai was returned to Egypt in a peace treaty in 1979, but the other “occupied territories” have remained under Israeli control.

Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are under the control of Israel’s army, making it an occupation.



School run, Tu’qu Bethlehem, 13 October 2014.

Top image: Tay’be Checkpoint, 6am. Photo EAPPI/D

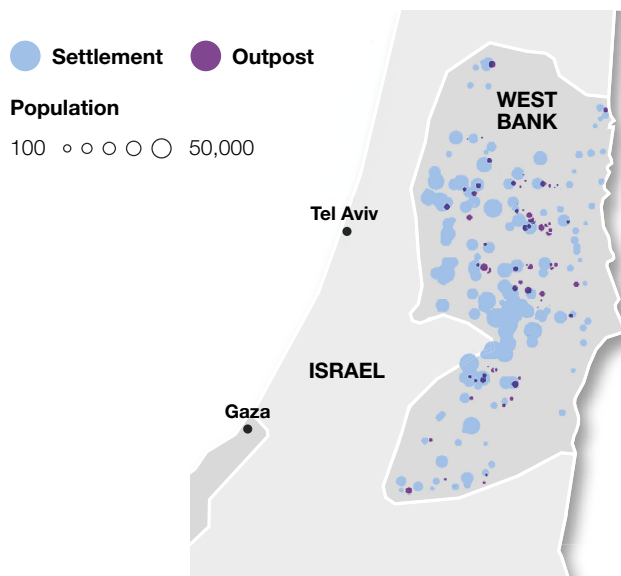
Israel: the occupying power

Occupation is not illegal under international law, but it is not supposed to last forever and should only be for strict military necessity. Having fought a series of wars with neighbouring countries since 1948, some Israelis argue that the country needs to control the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to protect itself. In the run-up to the Six-Day War in 1967, many Israelis feared the country was in danger. As a narrow country, the Israeli government says it could be cut in half by an attack.

Many people and organisations in Palestine, Israel and around the world believe that the occupation should end because of its effect on human rights and peace.

While Israel is occupying the land, however, international law says they have some jobs to do. For example, it should maintain safety for the civilians under its control and not degrade the environment or natural resources.

Israeli settlements and outposts in the West Bank, by population



Source: Americans for Peace Now

