

Netanyahu breaks silence on burgeoning settler violence, vows ‘forceful action’

At cabinet meeting, PM says Israel is a ‘nation of laws’ and violent perpetrators represent a minority of settlers in the West Bank, where attacks against Palestinians have soared

By [Lazar Berman](#) and [Tol Staff](#) 16 November 2025



Palestinian and Israeli activists take part in a protest against settler violence as they gather in the West Bank town of Beit Jala, Nov. 14, 2025. (AP/Mahmoud Illean)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday blasted violence perpetrated by Jewish extremists in the West Bank, after a growing number of such incidents have drawn reproach in the past week from the IDF chief as well as from abroad.

In his first public comments on the violence that has been marring the West Bank for months, Netanyahu told a weekly cabinet meeting that Israel “will take very forceful action against the riots against IDF soldiers — against Palestinians, and against IDF soldiers — because we are a nation of laws, and a nation of laws acts in accordance with the law.”

Netanyahu called the extremists “a minority that goes into Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] and does not represent the large community of law-abiding, loyal settlers.”

Settler violence has been a near-daily occurrence in the West Bank, with little to no law enforcement to stop attacks on Palestinians.

Hours after Netanyahu’s comments Sunday, police said that they had detained three Jewish settlers who, armed with makeshift weapons, had entered a closed military zone en route to a Palestinian village a day earlier.

Police said the suspects tried to evade arrest and that one of them, a minor, was freed to house arrest while the other two remained in custody.



*Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks at the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, November 16, 2025.
(Screenshot/GPO)*

Last week, amid a spate of brazen and violent incidents carried out by extremist settlers in the West Bank, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal [Zamir said he](#) “strongly condemns” the recent attacks.

“We are aware of the recent violent incidents in which Israeli civilians attacked Palestinians and Israelis. I strongly condemn them. The IDF will not tolerate phenomena of a criminal minority that besmirches a law-abiding public,” Zamir said in remarks provided by the IDF.

The IDF chief added that the violent acts “cross a red line and divert the attention of our forces from fulfilling their mission, defending the communities, and conducting offensive operations. We are determined to stop this phenomenon and will act on this matter severely until justice is done.”

According to [UN figures](#) published earlier this month, attacks against Palestinians carried out by settlers in the West Bank hit an all-time high in October, the largest figure since it began tracking such incidents in 2006.

The UN alleged that Israeli settlers carried out at least 264 attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank during that month, and that around 1,500 such incidents have been recorded so far in 2025.

The IDF figures differ from those reported by the UN, but also show a marked rise. During October, the IDF recorded 86 incidents of “nationalistic crime” compared with 25 in the same period last year. And since the beginning of the year, 704 incidents of “nationalistic crime” have been recorded by Israeli defense authorities, compared with 675 in all of 2024.



Palestinians stand next to scorched copies of the Quran inside in the Hajja Hamida Mosque after it was reportedly set on fire and vandalized by Israeli settlers in the Palestinian village of Deir Istiya, in the West Bank, November 13, 2025. (Zain JAAFAR / AFP)

Violence against Palestinians often rises during [olive-picking season](#), which began in early October. There have been a string of attacks by settlers and soldiers on olive pickers, who sometimes include Israeli, Jewish and other volunteers from abroad.

On Wednesday, [Israeli settlers allegedly](#) torched and defaced a mosque in a Palestinian village in the central West Bank. A day earlier, dozens of settlers allegedly launched a [large-scale arson attack](#) on Palestinians, targeting factories and farmland between the major cities of Nablus and Tulkarem.

President Isaac Herzog last week described the attacks as “shocking and grave.”

Herzog said the violence committed by a “handful” of perpetrators “crosses a red line,” adding that “all state authorities must act decisively to eradicate the phenomenon and to strengthen the IDF fighters and security forces who protect us day and night.”

The growing number of incidents has also grabbed attention in Washington. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio [said last week](#) that the White House was concerned about “events in the West Bank spilling over and creating an effect that could undermine what we’re doing in Gaza.”



A Palestinian man uses a cellphone to record a burning truck after an alleged settler attack in the village of Beit Lid, east of Tulkarm in the West Bank on November 11, 2025. (JAAFAR ASHTIYEH / AFP)

Despite the vows in Israel to crack down on the phenomenon, three of the four Israeli suspects who were arrested over the Tuesday [arson attack](#) were released from police custody a day later.

As the number of settler attacks climbs, police investigations of Jewish nationalist violence in the West Bank have sharply declined over the past three years, according to figures reported by Channel 12 news.

The commander of the police's West Bank division is under investigation for ignoring settler violence in order to curry favor with far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, who oversees the police. The commander was [allowed](#) to return to the police force as the probe into his conduct continues.

Under Ben Gvir, there has been a 73 percent decline in the number of investigations opened since 2023, according to Channel 12. Police have opened only 60 investigations into settler violence this year, compared to 150 cases in 2024 and 235 cases in 2023.

About 94% of all investigation files opened by the Israel Police into settler violence from 2005 to 2024 ended without indictment, according to monitoring by Israeli human rights group Yesh Din. Since 2005, just 3% of the investigation files opened into settler violence have led to full or partial convictions.

Emanuel Fabian, Charlie Summers and Nurit Yohanan contributed to this report.