

Israeli settlements in the West Bank continue to increase, what happens next?

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While the Israeli government decided the future of the West Bank, several Israeli civilians moved to said territory without permission from the government, establishing a Jewish presence in the region.

Hence, the Israeli government had to take into consideration the growing population of Israeli civilians in the West Bank. Meanwhile, the United Nations (UN) “*Determines* that the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East” (United Nations Security Council, 1979, para. 5) stated through the resolution number 446.

By moving into the West Bank, some saw it as the return of the Israeli community to their homeland which had historical and spiritual significance to them, while others believed that said settlers were colonizing the land to expand their nation.

Through the increment in the population of settlers, the Israeli government began to support this movement by granting permits for building which helped the development of the West Bank and, consequently, several Israeli communities in the West Bank emerged which were supported by the Israeli State.

Moreover, in the last decade of the XX century, the President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton; the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo Accords which consisted of the division of the West Bank into three sections; area A gave Palestine full government and security control (marked in green in the map at the right), area B gave the Palestinian government control while being under the Israeli military control (intense red section) and area C gave Israel full control (light coloured red section) where Israeli settlements began to increase significantly.



In 2005, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon removed eight thousand five hundred settlers from the Gaza Strip (another disputed territory) which, as a consequence, the settlements in area C of the West Bank continued to increase.

Furthermore, the delegation of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland passed their resolution with the support of the Kingdom of Belgium, The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, The French Republic, Russian Federation, Republic of Poland and the Republic of South Africa regarding the issue. In said resolution, they urge for the United Nations to act as an intermediary between both nations to reach a peaceful agreement where the territory would be divided between these countries and for Palestinians to stop depending on Israelis by recognizing Palestine as an independent state. It continues to demand that both nations should eradicate the use of weapons towards civilians and reduce their military to ensure peace and safety in these territories. In addition, it requests the establishment of a United Nations

sub-organization with the purpose of observing the Palestinian development and controlling the actions commanded by the State of Israel.

Bibliography

United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Resolution 446, (22 March 1979), UN Doc, S/RES/446

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