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DATA REPORT AUGUST 6, 2026

What Do Israel's Own Reviews and Court Records Say About Settler Outposts?

The 2005 Sasson Report, the 2012 Levy Report, a 2016 High Court order and the UN inquiry: what each document records about outposts and enforcement.

Settler Outposts

Sasson Report

Levy Report

West Bank

Israeli High Court

Documentary Record



Israel's own government-commissioned review found in March 2005 that 61 of roughly 105 West Bank outposts it examined stood wholly or partly on land not registered to the state or to Israelis, and that government ministries, the IDF Civil Administration and the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization had supplied money, land and infrastructure to outposts no cabinet had approved. Seven years later a second commissioned review, the Levy Report of July 2012, reached the opposite legal conclusion and was never adopted or published as a government record. On enforcement outcomes there is no consolidated official Israeli series at all: complaints, investigations, indictments and convictions arising from offences by Israeli civilians against Palestinians in the West Bank are not published as a continuing statistic. The plain question underneath is checkable: when an outpost goes up without a cabinet decision, what does the state's own paperwork show about who paid for it and who was supposed to stop it?

Key Findings

- The Sasson Report, commissioned by the Israeli Prime Minister's Office and published by it in March 2005, found that government ministries, the IDF Civil Administration and the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization funded or serviced outposts established without the cabinet decision Israeli procedure requires.
- 61 of roughly 105 outposts the Sasson Report examined stood wholly or partly on land not registered to the state or to Israelis, on the report's own count as reported by Haaretz on 10 March 2005.
- On 1 September 2016 Israel's High Court of Justice ordered the removal of 17 homes at the Netiv Ha'avot outpost built on land privately registered to Palestinians, with a compliance deadline of March 2018; the petition had been filed in November 2014 (Haaretz, 1 September 2016).
- The Levy Report, delivered in July 2012 by a committee chaired by former Supreme Court Justice Edmond Levy, concluded that Israel's presence in the West Bank is not belligerent occupation and recommended retroactive authorization of outposts. The cabinet did not

adopt it and it has never been officially published; it circulates in reprints issued by outside organizations.

- No consolidated official Israeli statistical series on complaints, investigations, indictments or convictions arising from settler violence is published. The State Comptroller has audited law enforcement in the territory in individual audit chapters rather than in a running count.

Did state money reach outposts no cabinet approved?

Yes, and the finding is the Israeli government's own. The Sasson Report, an opinion commissioned by the Prime Minister's Office and published by it in March 2005, found that government ministries, the IDF Civil Administration and the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization supplied funding, land and infrastructure to outposts established without the cabinet decision Israeli procedure requires.

The opinion was prepared by Talia Sasson, formerly head of the special tasks department in the State Attorney's Office, at the request of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and the Prime Minister's Office published an English summary of it under the title "Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts." The operative word in that title is the document's own: unauthorized, meaning built where the decision Israeli procedure requires before a settlement is established was never taken.

The distinction the document rests on is procedural rather than rhetorical. A settlement requires a government decision. An outpost, in the report's usage, is what stands where no such decision exists. The 2005 opinion is the state's record that support reached the second category anyway, through ordinary budget lines: ministries with civilian budgets, the Civil Administration that governs planning and land allocation in the territory under the Ministry of Defense, and the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization, a body sitting outside the government structure that received state budgets.

Two things follow from what kind of document this is. It is a review commissioned by a serving prime minister and published on the government's own website, which is why it carries weight on the funding question: it is the state's account of its own administrative

conduct, not an outside assessment of it. And it is dated. It describes the position as of 2005 and says nothing about the two decades since, a limit that matters more because no comparable government-commissioned enumeration has been published and released in the years that followed.

The report's remit was construction. It examined how outposts were established, funded and serviced, not what happened between settlers and Palestinians on the ground, and it should not be read as evidence on the second question.

How many outposts sat on land not registered to Israelis?

61 of roughly 105 outposts examined stood wholly or partly on land not registered to the state or to Israelis, on the Sasson Report's own count as reported by Haaretz on 10 March 2005. The category is a registry category, drawn from the land records the Civil Administration itself maintains, not an interpretive judgment about ownership.

Outposts examined by the Sasson Report

WHOLLY OR PARTLY ON LAND NOT REGISTERED TO THE STATE OR TO ISRAELIS, THE REPORT'S OWN REGISTRY CATEGORY



Source: Sasson Report count, reported by Haaretz, 10 March 2005.

How outposts are counted in the first place is itself a documented convention. Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Lihi Ben Shitrit, reviewing the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics Yearbook from 1967 onward in a 2020 POMEPS paper, record that the Bureau excludes unrecognized outposts from its counts of Israeli localities, and note that Peace Now documented about 121 such outposts in 2019. A locality straddling the Green Line, Shani Livne, is placed by the Bureau in Israel's Southern District while Peace Now and B'Tselem count it as a settlement.

The same authors document how the yearbook's treatment changed over time: East Jerusalem moved into the general population count for Israel proper in the 1968 edition; a 1970 footnote folded settlers into Israel's total as "Israeli residents in the Administrated Territories"; by 1983 settlement localities were counted within the total number of Israeli localities; and in 1997 the separate territories chapter was removed. Hirsch-Hoefler and Ben Shitrit call that trend the "normalization of settlements," which is their analytic framing and should be read as theirs.

The convention runs both ways, and it is why [the Israeli and Palestinian population totals](#) differ between sources that are all reporting accurately. The Central Bureau of Statistics counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel's national total. B'Tselem publishes its West Bank settlement count and its count for the annexed East Jerusalem neighbourhoods as separate series. Neither choice is arithmetic error; each is a stated scope, and a reader comparing two totals without checking scope will find a gap that no one created.

Who has found that security forces accompany settler attacks?

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established by the Human Rights Council at a special session in May 2021, stated in findings presented in 2023 and 2024 that Israeli security forces were frequently present during settler attacks and did not act to stop them. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects the Commission's mandate and its findings.

The Commission is a standing inquiry body with an open-ended mandate covering Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem, reporting to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. Its findings in this area run to three connected claims: that authorities in most cases it investigated did not prevent attacks, that perpetrators were not investigated and punished, and that responsibility was attributed to Palestinians. It works from testimony, written submissions and open-source material.

Israel's published position is that the Commission's mandate is unbounded in time and scope and that its findings are not credible on that basis, and the state has not cooperated with the

Commission or granted it access since its establishment in 2021. That position is stated in Ministry of Foreign Affairs communications rather than in a rebuttal dataset.

What each of these is matters for how far it can be pushed. The Commission's conclusions are the findings of an inquiry body. Israel's rejection is the published position of a state that is party to the events described. Neither is an enumerated national statistic, and the disagreement between them is not the kind that a further reading of either document resolves. The quantity that would bear on it directly, how many complaints were filed, investigated and prosecuted and with what outcome, sits with the authority that handles the complaints, which is the subject of the next section.

What does Israel publish about enforcement against settler violence?

No consolidated official Israeli series exists. Complaints, investigations, indictments and convictions arising from offences by Israeli civilians against Palestinians in the West Bank are not published by the Israeli government as a continuing statistical series, and the search conducted for this report located none. The State Comptroller has examined law enforcement in the territory in individual audit chapters rather than in a running count.

The State Comptroller is Israel's state audit institution, reporting to the Knesset and publishing its findings at mevaker.gov.il as audit chapters on a specified body or programme. That output form is decisive here: an audit chapter examines a period and a practice and closes, while the enforcement claim turns on a rate over time, and a rate requires a series.

Figures do circulate. Yesh Din, an Israeli organization founded in 2005, publishes periodic data sheets on the outcomes of Israeli police investigations into offences by Israeli civilians against Palestinians in the West Bank, drawn from the case files it monitors on behalf of complainants. Those are the organization's own counts on its own case set, and they are named here as such rather than cited as a rate, because there is no official denominator against which they can be checked.

One continuing series does exist outside the Israeli record: the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs publishes ongoing counts of settler-related incidents

in the West Bank on its own definitions. It is an intergovernmental body's series, named here as such and not cited for a figure, and it is a count of incidents rather than of complaints, investigations or prosecutions, so it does not carry the enforcement quantity either.

The absence is the finding, and it is worth stating without ornament: the decisive quantity in the enforcement question, the share of complaints that reach indictment and conviction, has no published Israeli official series. That is not a claim about what the missing numbers would show. It is a statement about what a reader can and cannot verify from the public record, and it applies equally to a figure that would support the enforcement claim and to one that would cut against it.

The single government-commissioned enumeration that touched enforcement in this arena, the 2005 Sasson opinion, addressed unauthorized construction. It is not a count of violent incidents, of complaints, or of prosecutions, and it does not stand in for one.

Has Israel's high court ordered outposts removed?

17 homes at the Netiv Ha'avot outpost, built on land privately registered to Palestinians, were ordered removed by Israel's High Court of Justice on 1 September 2016, with a compliance deadline of March 2018, as Haaretz reported the same day. The petition that produced the order was filed in November 2014.

The public court record carries the case as HCJ 7292/14. The intervals are measurable from those dates: about 22 months from the filing of the petition to the order, and about 40 months from the filing to the deadline the court set for vacating the homes.

The ground the court worked from is the same registry ground the Sasson opinion used eleven years earlier, namely whose name appears on the land record. That link between land registration and judicial remedy has a longer line behind it. In Ka'adan v. Israel Land Administration, HCJ 6698/95, decided in March 2000, the High Court held that the state may not allocate land on the basis of nationality, including where the allocation is routed through a third-party body. Land allocation and registration are, on that authority, matters the court decides rather than matters left to administrative practice.

One limit belongs on the page. The sources in hand document the order and its deadline. They do not document what was executed on the ground, or when, and this report does not carry a verified record of the demolition itself.

What the 2016 order establishes is narrower than either side of the public argument tends to allow. A judicial remedy against unauthorized construction on privately registered Palestinian land exists in the Israeli system, has been sought by petition, and has been granted with a dated deadline attached. The interval from petition to deadline was more than three years, which is also part of the record.

Did the Levy Report call the presence occupation?

The Levy Report, delivered to the Israeli government in July 2012 by a committee chaired by former Supreme Court Justice Edmond Levy, concluded that Israel's presence in the West Bank is not belligerent occupation in the sense of international law and recommended retroactive authorization of outposts along with changes to planning procedure. The cabinet did not adopt it.

Its publication status is unusual and needs stating precisely. The report was never officially published as a government record. Its text circulates in reprints issued by outside organizations, which is why it can be named and dated as a legal position advanced by a government-appointed committee, and why it cannot be cited here as an official Israeli statistic or decision. The Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs, a research institute, published an analysis of the report in 2025 restating its argument and its reception.

Set beside the 2005 opinion, the pair is the more useful object. Both were commissioned by Israeli governments. The Sasson opinion applied Israeli administrative and planning law and found that outposts had been established and funded outside it. The Levy committee argued that the international-law framework under which the arrangement is usually assessed does not apply as belligerent occupation, and proposed regularizing what the earlier opinion had described as unauthorized. One was published by the Prime Minister's Office and remains the state's own account of its funding practice. The other was not adopted, and no cabinet decision endorsed its conclusions.

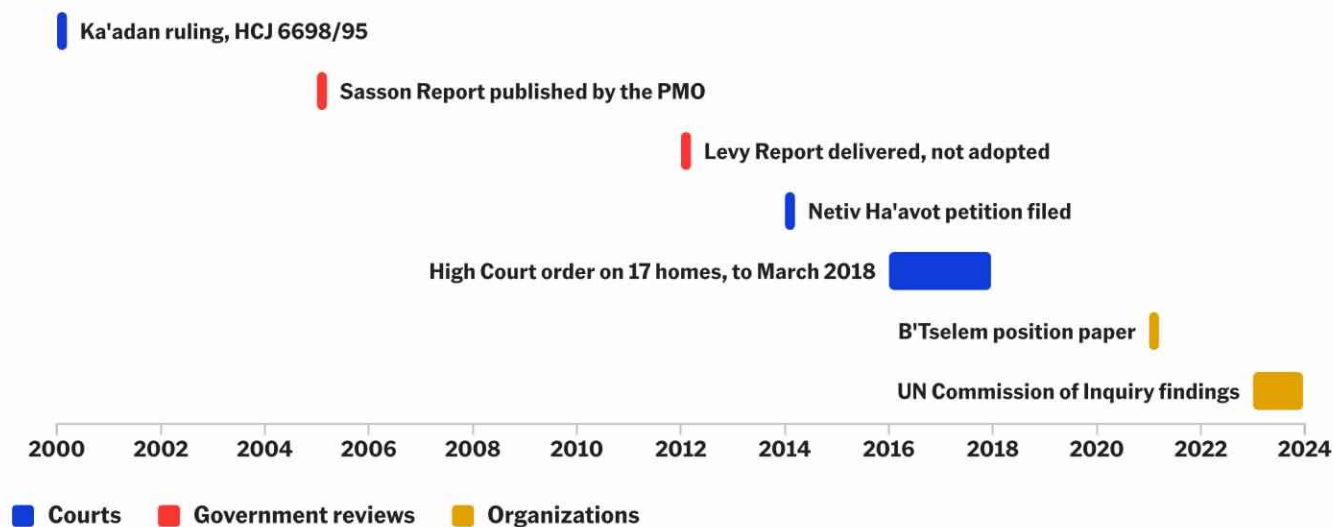
That is the state's legal record running in two directions within seven years, and both directions are dated and attributable. A reader looking for a single settled Israeli legal position on the outposts will not find one in these documents; what exists is one commissioned review that found the practice unlawful under Israeli procedure and a second that argued for changing the frame, with only the first published by the government that commissioned it.

Who calls it deniability, and who rejects the label?

It is often said that the arrangement leaves the state able to benefit from settler activity without formally owning it. That characterization is carried in dated documents by named bodies, and it is contested in others: B'Tselem set out its version in January 2021, the UN Commission of Inquiry in findings presented in 2023 and 2024, and NGO Monitor and Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs contest the organizations and the mandate respectively.

The dated documents in the settlement outpost record

GOVERNMENT REVIEWS, COURT RULINGS AND ORGANIZATIONAL POSITIONS, 2000 TO 2024



Source: Prime Minister's Office of Israel, 2005; Levy Committee, 2012; Haaretz, 2016; B'Tselem, 2021; UN Commission of Inquiry, 2023 to 2024.

B'Tselem's January 2021 position paper, titled "A regime of [Jewish supremacy](#) from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid," argues that Israeli legal and

planning instruments have given the settlement enterprise an impression of legality.

B'Tselem is an Israeli human-rights monitoring organization with a stated advocacy mission, and the paper is a position document rather than a measurement.

NGO Monitor's Annual Report for 2024, published in 2025, takes the opposite side of that argument by mapping the organizations rather than the territory, publishing its own counts of groups it links to what it describes as an anti-Israel network in the United States and Canada. Those are NGO Monitor's own counts on inclusion criteria its report does not state, and they are named here rather than cited, on the same footing as Yesh Din's tallies above: an organization's count with no stated method and no external denominator is a position, not a rate.

The pattern across all of it is that the dispute is conducted in documents that can be named, dated and read: two Israeli government-commissioned reviews reaching opposite conclusions in 2005 and 2012, a High Court order of 1 September 2016, a monitoring organization's 2021 position paper, an inquiry body's 2023 and 2024 findings, and a counter-monitoring organization's 2024 report. What is missing from that list is a published Israeli enforcement series, and its absence is what the strongest version of the deniability claim and the strongest version of the rejection both reach for and neither can produce.

Methodology and limitations

This report is assembled from named documents, each labelled by type. The primary and official records are the Prime Minister's Office summary of the Sasson opinion (March 2005), Israeli High Court of Justice rulings (HCJ 6698/95, March 2000; HCJ 7292/14, order of 1 September 2016) and the published positions of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The intergovernmental record is the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, reporting to the Human Rights Council. Academic and think-tank material comprises the 2020 POMEPS review by Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Lihi Ben Shitrit and the Jerusalem Center for Security and Foreign Affairs analysis of 2025. Monitoring organizations with advocacy missions, B'Tselem, Yesh Din and NGO Monitor, are named for their positions and their own tallies and are not cited for rates; the UN OCHA incident series is likewise named and not cited.

Where the report relies on a party's own reporting, that is stated in the sentence. The Sasson Report is the Israeli government's account of its own administrative conduct. NGO Monitor's network counts are its own. Neither is independently verified here.

Four limits are load-bearing. First, the 2005 Sasson figures describe the position as of 2005 and no later government-commissioned enumeration of outpost funding has been published since. Second, the Levy Report of July 2012 has never been officially published, so it is named and dated as a committee's legal position and is not treated as a government record. Third, no consolidated official Israeli series on complaints, investigations, indictments or convictions arising from settler violence could be located, so no enforcement rate appears in this report from any source, including organizations that publish their own. Fourth, the sources in hand document the 2016 High Court order and its March 2018 deadline but not the execution of the removal, and no execution date is asserted.

The subject measured here is the documentary record: what named bodies published, when, and what each document states. Where the bodies disagree, as the 2005 and 2012 reviews do and as the Commission of Inquiry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do, both positions are reported with their dates and their document types attached.

Conclusion

So when an outpost goes up without a cabinet decision, what does the state's own paperwork show? A great deal, and it is specific. The 2005 Sasson opinion, commissioned by a serving prime minister and published on the government's own site, names ministries, the IDF Civil Administration and the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization in the funding chain for outposts nobody formally approved. Its own count put 61 of roughly 105 outposts examined wholly or partly on land not registered to the state or to Israelis. The High Court ordered 17 homes at Netiv Ha'avot removed on 1 September 2016, more than three years after the petition was filed. The 2012 Levy Report argued the frame itself does not apply and was never adopted or published.

One thing is not in the paperwork. There is no published Israeli series of complaints, investigations, indictments and convictions arising from settler violence, which is precisely the quantity the enforcement argument turns on. Everything else in this report can be

checked against a dated document; that one number cannot be checked against anything, because it has not been published.

A record shaped like that admits two readings. One stays with the documents and says what they say, including that the state's own reviews contradict each other and that its own court has ruled against its own administration. The other fills the missing series with an assumption about intent, and an assumption about concealed intent is where an older vocabulary is waiting, the one that has always explained an absent number by a hidden hand. Which reading a reader reaches for when the figure they want has never been printed is not settled by anything in the record, and it is the part of this subject that does the most work outside it.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does an unauthorized outpost differ from a settlement in Israeli procedure?

The difference is a government decision. The 2005 Sasson opinion, published by the Prime Minister's Office, uses "unauthorized outposts" for structures established without the cabinet decision Israeli procedure requires before a settlement is created. The distinction is procedural within Israeli law and is separate from the question of the settlements' status under international law, on which the 2005 and 2012 commissioned reviews took different positions.

Why does a body outside the government appear in the outpost funding chain?

The Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization is not a government ministry, but it received state budgets, and the 2005 Sasson opinion identifies it alongside government ministries and the IDF Civil Administration as a source of support for outposts established without cabinet authorization. Its position outside the ministerial structure is why it appears in an account of funding that ran without a formal decision.

Why do challenges to outposts carry HCJ case numbers?

The High Court of Justice is the Supreme Court of Israel sitting as a first-instance court for petitions against state authorities, which is why the outpost cases in this report, Ka'adan

(HCJ 6698/95) and Netiv Ha'avot (HCJ 7292/14), carry HCJ numbers. A petition against an administrative decision goes directly to the country's highest court rather than rising through appeals.

Can the Levy Report be read as a government document?

No. It was delivered to the government in July 2012 and never officially published as a government record; its text circulates in reprints issued by outside organizations. A reader can learn its conclusions from those reprints and from analyses such as the Jerusalem Center's 2025 restatement, but there is no official text to cite.

Where does Israel publish audits of law enforcement in the West Bank?

The State Comptroller, Israel's state audit institution reporting to the Knesset, publishes audit reports at mevaker.gov.il. Its output form is the audit chapter, which examines a specified body or practice over a specified period, rather than a continuing statistical series. That form is why an audit can document a problem in enforcement without producing a rate that can be tracked year to year.

What kind of evidence is an organization's own tally?

It is a count made on the organization's own definitions, from cases reported to it or held in its own files, and it is a different kind of evidence from an official statistic or a court order. Yesh Din's investigation-outcome data sheets and NGO Monitor's 2024 network counts of 157 groups in the United States and 111 in Canada are both of this kind; NGO Monitor's report does not state its inclusion criteria.

What is the mandate of the UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory?

The Human Rights Council established the Commission at a special session in May 2021 with an open-ended mandate covering Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem, reporting to the Council and to the General Assembly. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejects the mandate as unbounded in time and scope, and Israel has not cooperated with the Commission or granted it access since 2021.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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