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DATA REPORT AUGUST 7, 2026

What Is the “End Game of Zionism” Concerning Palestinian Land? Reading the Enacted Texts and the Land Records

Israel’s 2018 Basic Law, the Levy and Sasson reviews, and the Palestinian census records, set against the river-to-sea reading of Zionism’s stated end.

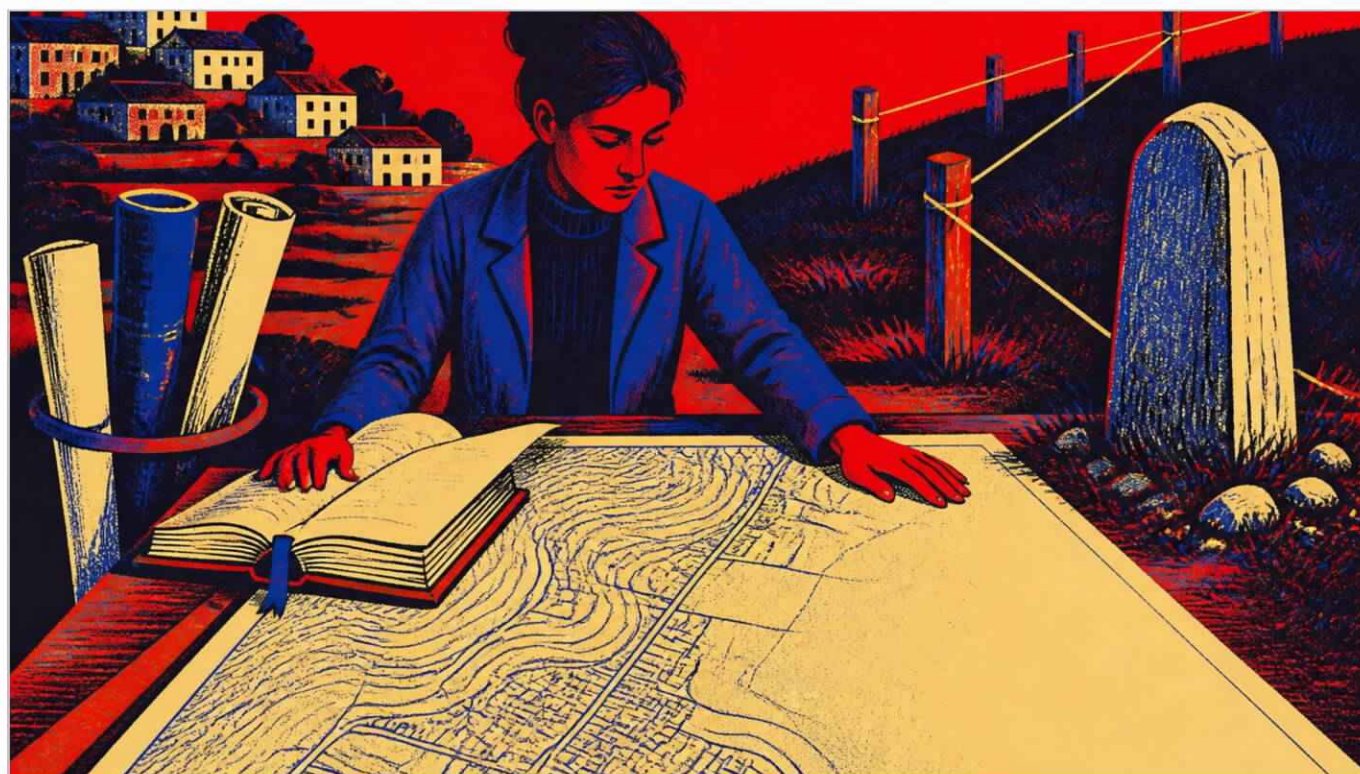
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The phrase “end game of Zionism” carries a destination inside it, and the plain question underneath is whether any current text states one. One enacted Israeli law does: Article 1 of Basic Law: Israel, the Nation-State of the Jewish People, passed by the Knesset in 2018, declares Israel “the national home of the Jewish people” and states that the right to exercise national self-determination in the state “is unique to the Jewish people.” The law names no eastern border, no final territorial extent, and no Palestinian population. The wider reading, that the end is control of everything between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and the displacement of Palestinians, is held by named organizations and is documented in their own published words: B’Tselem gave its January 2021 position paper the title “A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid.” On the land itself, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counted 2,881,687 residents of the West Bank in its 2017 census, against 2,895,683 counted across the West Bank and Gaza combined in 1997.

Key Findings

- Article 1(c) of Basic Law: Israel, the Nation-State of the Jewish People (Knesset, 2018) states that the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel “is unique to the Jewish people.” The law fixes no territorial end point.
- Article 7 of the same law states that “the State views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value, and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation.” Settlement promotion is enacted text; annexation is not.
- The 2012 Levy Report, commissioned by the Israeli government, proposed retroactive authorization of West Bank outposts and held that the territory is not occupied. No cabinet adopted it, and it was never officially published as government policy.
- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counted 2,881,687 West Bank residents in 2017, and the World Bank records about 5.29 million for the West Bank and Gaza combined in 2024, a projection off that census.
- In the expert-annotated corpus of 4,016 English tweets studied by Jikeli and colleagues (2022, peer-reviewed), 15% of the antisemitic tweets mentioning Jews fit the IHRA

paragraph on denial of Jewish self-determination.

What do Zionism's own current texts state as the goal?

The current statement is one page long. Basic Law: Israel, the Nation-State of the Jewish People, passed by the Knesset in July 2018, states in Article 1(b) that “the State of Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, in which it fulfills its natural, cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination,” and in Article 1(c) that **the right to exercise national self-determination in the state “is unique to the Jewish people.”**

That is the whole of the object as the enacted text states it. Article 1(a) of the same law describes the Land of Israel as “the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established,” a historical characterization rather than a boundary. The law defines the state's flag, emblem, anthem, capital, official language and calendar. It does not define borders, does not name the West Bank or Gaza, and does not mention Palestinians, Arab citizens, or any non-Jewish population.

A Basic Law occupies a constitutional tier in Israeli law, which is why this text carries weight the platform of any party or movement does not. It is also recent: the movement it codifies is more than a century older than the statute, and how research operationalizes [the concept of Zionism](#) has never depended on a single document. What the 2018 law supplies is the only currently enacted, officially published sentence in which the state itself says what it is for.

Two things follow from reading it directly. The self-determination clause is exclusive by its own wording, which is why it is the clause most often quoted in the arguments over the law. And the destination the phrase “end game” implies, a defined final map, is absent from the text: the law states an identity, not an extent.

Who says the end game is taking all the land?

It is often said that the end game of Zionism is control of all the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, with Palestinians displaced from it or confined within it.

The organization most closely associated with the first half of that formulation names itself in its own title: **B’Tselem, the Israeli human-rights monitor, published its position paper in January 2021 under the heading “A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid.”**

B’Tselem is an established human-rights monitoring organization with an advocacy mission, and its paper argues about the present, not a stated future goal: it describes a single governing authority operating over the whole area between the river and the sea, and Palestinian populations administered in separated areas under different legal regimes. The paper does not quote an Israeli government document declaring that arrangement as an objective, and it does not claim to.

The adjacent claims come from other named bodies, each measuring something narrower than the phrase suggests. The European External Action Service, in its 2024 report on settlements and settler violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, describes continued settlement expansion and its effect on the territorial contiguity of Palestinian-populated areas; the report is the European Union’s own institutional assessment, published annually, not a measurement of intent. Amnesty International, in its 2026 statement on West Bank annexation, describes settlement growth as entrenching dispossession and as making annexation progressively harder to reverse; Amnesty is an advocacy-mission organization and the statement is its own position.

Three named bodies, three dated documents, three different claims: a characterization of the present regime (B’Tselem, 2021), an assessment of territorial contiguity (European External Action Service, 2024), and a warning about reversibility (Amnesty International, 2026). None of the three is an Israeli government statement of aims, and none presents itself as one.

What does the official record state about settlement and annexation?

On settlement, the official record is explicit. Article 7 of Basic Law: Israel, the Nation-State of the Jewish People (Knesset, 2018) states: **“the State views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value, and will act to encourage and promote its establishment**

and consolidation.” The clause names no location. It is the only settlement provision in an Israeli Basic Law.

On annexation, the record runs the other way. In 2012 an Israeli government-appointed committee headed by former Supreme Court justice Edmund Levy produced a report holding that the West Bank is not occupied territory in the legal sense and recommending that unauthorized outposts be retroactively authorized. The Levy Report was submitted in 2012, was never adopted by an Israeli cabinet, and was never issued as official government policy. It is a proposal in the record, and it stayed a proposal.

The state's own earlier review pointed in the opposite direction. The 2005 report by Talia Sasson, commissioned by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, found that Israeli state bodies had channelled funding and resources into unauthorized West Bank outposts in the absence of the government decisions that Israeli law requires for establishing a settlement. That is a government-commissioned finding of state involvement in construction the state had not authorized, and the tension between the 2005 finding and the 2012 recommendation is documented in Israel's own paperwork rather than inferred from outside it. What Israel's own reviews and court records establish about outposts is set out at greater length in a companion report on [the outpost record](#).

One absence belongs in the same paragraph, stated plainly: in the assembled record of enacted Israeli texts and government-commissioned reviews, no document states the removal of Palestinians from the territory as an objective. Settlement promotion appears in constitutional text. Annexation appears as a rejected recommendation. Removal appears in neither.

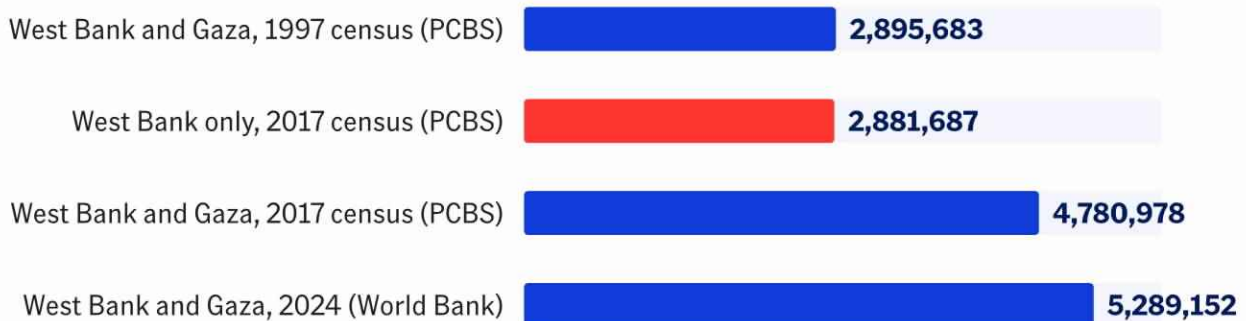
Has the land emptied of Palestinians?

It has not, on the Palestinian statistical authority's own count. **The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics enumerated 2,881,687 residents of the West Bank in its 2017 census**, a figure that on its own roughly equals the 2,895,683 the same authority counted across the West Bank and Gaza combined in its first census, in 1997.

The 2017 round counted 4,780,978 residents in total, 2,881,687 in the West Bank and 1,899,291 in Gaza. The World Bank's World Development Indicators put the combined territory at about 5.29 million for 2024, a projection off the 2017 census rather than a count; the same series records fertility in the West Bank and Gaza at 6.81 births per woman in 1990. The Jewish population living in the same territory grew as well: Sergio DellaPergola's demographic estimates put 418,900 core Jews in the West Bank at the beginning of 2019, alongside 221,800 in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods incorporated after 1967. Both populations on the land are larger than they were, which is the arc the census series shows and the reason it is the relevant series. The relationship between settlement growth and that population record is examined directly in a separate report on [settler expansion and the West Bank population record](#).

Palestinian population counts and projections

CENSUS COUNTS (1997, 2017) AND A PROJECTION OFF THE CENSUS (2024)



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 1997 and 2017 censuses; World Bank World Development Indicators, 2024 vintage (projection off the 2017 census).

One counter-movement is in the same authority's record and belongs here. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported Gaza at about 2.13 million at the end of 2025, against a pre-war baseline of roughly 2.2 million on 6 October 2023, a decline of about 10.6% relative to pre-war estimates, with roughly 100,000 people having left the Strip. Those are estimates rather than enumeration, and they describe a demographic net decline, not a casualty count. East Jerusalem could not be directly enumerated in 2017 and administrative estimates were

used there, so the census base itself carries that limit forward into every later figure in the series.

Is a Palestinian state foreclosed in the record?

Not in the enacted record, and not in the measured opinion. **Gallup's February 2025 reading found 55% of US adults favoring the establishment of an independent Palestinian state**, in line with its readings since 2020, on a national sample of about 1,000 adults with a margin of error near 4 percentage points.

The more common political formulation is that the two-state outcome has been blocked in practice rather than ruled out in text, and the internal Israeli record is genuinely unresolved on the point. The 2012 Levy Report recommended a legal frame under which the West Bank is not occupied, and no cabinet adopted it. The 2005 Sasson Report found state bodies funding outposts without the required government decisions, and it was published by the government that commissioned it. Basic Law: Israel, the Nation-State of the Jewish People (Knesset, 2018) establishes no Palestinian state and forecloses none; it does not address the question.

Gallup's separate forced-choice sympathies question, which asks respondents to choose between the Israelis and the Palestinians, moved sharply over the same period: 63% sympathized more with the Israelis in February 2010, against 46% in February 2025, the lowest in 25 years of the trend, with 33% sympathizing more with the Palestinians. Gallup's own 2018 methodology work documents that the placement of that question within a survey changes the shares it produces, so the two readings measure different things and the statehood figure is the one that speaks to this question.

What the record contains, then, is a rejected legal proposal, a government-commissioned finding of unauthorized construction, a constitutional text silent on the matter, and a US public majority that has answered the statehood question affirmatively for five consecutive readings. No treaty text, recorded vote, or enacted statute in this assembled record settles the outcome in either direction.

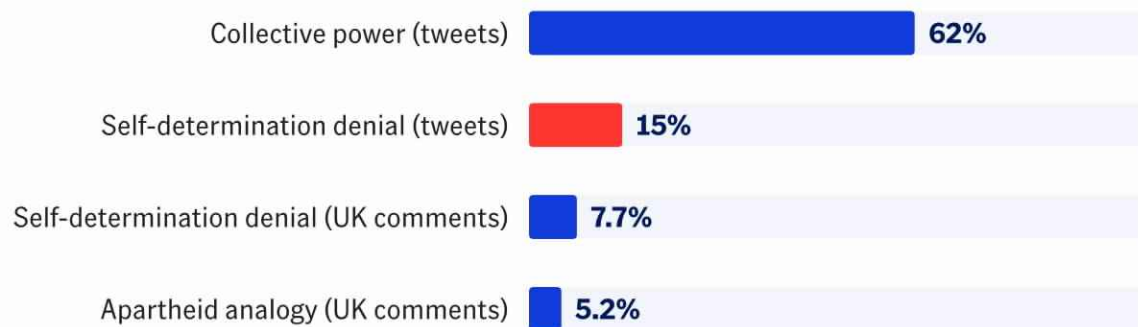
What has been measured about the end-game framing itself?

The category has been counted, under a stated definition, in expert-annotated corpora. **In the gold-standard corpus of 4,016 English-language tweets built by Jikeli and colleagues (2022, peer-reviewed), 15% of the antisemitic tweets containing “Jews” fit the IHRA paragraph on denial of the Jewish people’s right to self-determination**, against about 62% fitting the paragraph on mendacious or stereotypical allegations about Jewish collective power.

Becker, Ascone and Troschke (2022, peer-reviewed) coded 4,500 comments on the Facebook pages of leading British, French and German media outlets reacting to the May 2021 escalation, and found 26.9% of the 1,504 UK comments antisemitic under their IHRA-based scheme. Within those UK antisemitic comments, denial of Jewish self-determination accounted for 7.7%, the apartheid analogy for 5.2%, and the Nazi analogy for 4.2%, while the largest single category was the “evil” stereotype at 39.8%. The same study found that thread context was needed to infer the antisemitic meaning in 38.7% of the UK antisemitic comments.

Share of antisemitic content fitting selected IHRA-based categories

TWO INDEPENDENT CORPORA, CODED SEPARATELY; CATEGORIES ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE AND THE SAMPLES ARE NOT COMPARABLE TO EACH OTHER



Source: Jikeli and colleagues, 2022, Computational and Mathematical Organization Theory (4,016 annotated tweets); Becker, Ascone and Troschke, 2022, Humanities and Social Sciences Communications (1,504 UK comments).

Both figures are shares of content already classified as antisemitic under an IHRA-based coding scheme, within keyword-drawn samples, not shares of all discourse and not measurements of anyone using the words “end game.” Where the boundary between criticism of Israeli policy and antisemitism should be drawn is a contested scholarly question, and the measured evidence on both sides is treated separately in a companion report on [anti-Zionism and antisemitism](#). What these two studies establish is narrower and checkable: the self-determination category is a small and consistently present slice of coded antisemitic content in both corpora, and in both it is far smaller than the collective-power and stereotype categories.

Methodology

This report measures the discourse and the documentary record, not the underlying political claim. It does not assess whether any characterization of Zionism’s aims is correct; it sets out what the enacted texts say, which named organizations hold which positions and in what dated documents, what the population records count, and what has been measured about the framing in annotated content corpora.

Four source types are drawn on, in the order of the evidence hierarchy. Primary and official records: Basic Law: Israel, the Nation-State of the Jewish People (Knesset, 2018), quoted from the Knesset’s English text; the Israeli government-commissioned Sasson Report (2005) and Levy Report (2012); the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics censuses of 1997 and 2017 and its end-2025 status brief; the World Bank’s World Development Indicators. Peer-reviewed research: Jikeli and colleagues (2022) and Becker, Ascone and Troschke (2022). Academic reference: Sergio DellaPergola’s world Jewish population estimates (2019). Established monitoring and advocacy organizations, labelled as such: B’Tselem (2021), Amnesty International (2026), and the European Union’s External Action Service (2024).

Limitations. Palestinian population figures after 2017 are projections off the last census rather than counts, East Jerusalem was covered by administrative estimate rather than direct enumeration in that census, and the end-2025 Gaza figures are the statistical authority’s own estimates, describing a net demographic change and not a casualty count. Gallup’s figures are survey estimates with sampling error, and Gallup’s own methodology work notes that

question placement changes the sympathies trend's shares. The two content studies coded keyword-drawn samples under an IHRA-based scheme; their category shares are shares of content already classified as antisemitic, they are drawn from different platforms, periods and languages, and they are not comparable to one another. B'Tselem, Amnesty International and the European External Action Service are cited for their own published positions, dated and attributed, and not as measurements. The Levy and Sasson reports disagree with each other on the legal frame and on the status of outpost construction; both are in the record, and the disagreement is not resolved here.

Conclusion

The question assumes a destination, so the first thing to report is what the destination looks like in the documents. In the only enacted Israeli text that states the project's object, the 2018 Basic Law, the object is an identity and an exclusive right of self-determination, with settlement named as a national value in Article 7 and no border, no extent, and no Palestinian population anywhere in the text.

Around that text sit two other bodies of record that do not resolve into one another. Named organizations hold the river-to-sea reading in their own dated words, B'Tselem in a January 2021 paper describing a present regime rather than a stated aim, the European External Action Service in 2024 on contiguity, Amnesty International in 2026 on reversibility. And the counts on the land show growth on both sides of the ledger: 2,881,687 West Bank residents in the 2017 Palestinian census, about 5.29 million across the territory projected for 2024, and 418,900 core Jews in the West Bank at the start of 2019. A legal frame treating the territory as unoccupied was proposed in 2012 and adopted by no cabinet; a government-commissioned review in 2005 found state money in construction the state had not approved. That is an unfinished record, not a stated end.

The framing itself has a measured life. Denial of Jewish self-determination accounted for 15% of the antisemitic tweets mentioning Jews in the 4,016-tweet corpus of Jikeli and colleagues (2022) and 7.7% of antisemitic UK comments in Becker, Ascone and Troschke (2022), a steady minority share in both. Which leaves the question a reader is actually holding when the phrase reaches them: when a political argument is compressed into a single destination

that no document states, does the compression itself become one of the inputs the counting keeps finding?

Frequently Asked Questions

How many people did the last Palestinian census count in Gaza?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics counted 1,899,291 residents of the Gaza Strip in its 2017 census, within a territory-wide total of 4,780,978. It is the third and most recent Palestinian census, after the 1997 and 2007 rounds, and every later figure in the UN and World Bank series is a projection off it.

Why do population figures for the territory differ between sources?

The World Bank reports the West Bank and Gaza as one combined economy at about 5.29 million for 2024, while the UN Population Division's State of Palestine series is reported by the UNFPA dashboard at about 5.6 million including East Jerusalem. Both are projections off the 2017 census rather than counts, and neither publishes Gaza as a separate area.

How does Israel count residents of East Jerusalem?

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counts Jerusalem, including the neighborhoods annexed after 1967, as a single municipal population: it reported the city passing one million residents at the end of 2023, 60.5% Jews and Others and 39.5% Arabs. B'Tselem publishes its West Bank settlement figures and its East Jerusalem figures as separate series, the counterpart convention.

What is Israel's total population, and how is it broken down?

The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics put the population at about 10.148 million in September 2025, roughly 7.758 million Jews and others (78.5%) and 2.130 million Arabs (21.5%), with growth of about 1.0% over the year. The Bureau counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside that total.

How much have American sympathies in the conflict shifted?

On Gallup's forced-choice sympathies question, 63% of US adults sympathized more with the Israelis in February 2010, against 46% in February 2025, the lowest in 25 years of the trend, with 33% sympathizing more with the Palestinians. Gallup's own methodology work notes that the question's placement within a survey changes the shares it produces.

How often does antisemitic content need surrounding context to be identified?

In the study by Becker, Ascone and Troschke (2022), thread context was required to infer the antisemitic meaning in 38.7% of the UK antisemitic comments, about 62% of the French, and 48.3% of the German. The finding bears directly on how much of this content any keyword-based method can see.

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