

International Agencies Warn Israeli Annexation Will Deepen Suffering and Poverty

As humanitarian, development, and religious organizations serving Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, we urge Israel to refrain from unilaterally annexing any territory in the West Bank. We further urge the United States to use its diplomatic influence to prevent such annexation and promote a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is consistent with international law and guarantees safety for all of the region's people.

The United States government must convey its opposition to unilateral annexation, which has already led to increased violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and their property.¹ U.S. influence over the Israeli government is critical to protect Palestinian homes, assets, and resources including humanitarian structures funded by international donors. We remain concerned about the possibility of further escalation of violence on all sides.

We are concerned that the annexation of territory outside the framework of a final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority endangers the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike. In particular, we are concerned that Palestinian communities living in and adjacent to annexed territory will lose access to Palestinian-run healthcare facilities, further depriving them of much needed resources, services and basic healthcare during this critical COVID-19 pandemic. The West Bank economy is already suffering as a result of the current health crisis, with unemployment at 14%² and commercial revenues down by 50%.³

The impacts of annexation will be different for women, men, boys, and girls: men and boys will likely be subject to greater violence, with women more often isolated and less financially empowered. Girls' education, often viewed as a poor investment by families in poverty, is likely to decline precipitously in areas near annexed territory. Moreover, all communities will likely experience limitations on their rights, freedom of movement, and access to land, services, and livelihoods, threatening to exacerbate the unemployment crisis and severely curtail economic activity.

U.S. Congressional leaders and the U.S. Administration must oppose Israel's annexation of territory in the West Bank because it would lead to the sort of instability, displacement and suffering that would require increased humanitarian assistance for the foreseeable future. Israel, with the encouragement of its allies, should refrain from taking this unilateral step and instead move forward toward an equitable, negotiated settlement to the conflict that guarantees security and human rights for all Israelis and Palestinians.



¹ *Violence and Impunity in the West Bank During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Oxfam.

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/violence-and-impunity-west-bank-during-covid-19-pandemic>

² Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3662#>

³ "PA Easing Coronavirus Restrictions in Occupied West Bank." Al Jazeera, 25 May 2020.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/pa-easing-coronavirus-restrictions-occupied-west-bank-200525121054400.html>