



## [Israel Appoints a Settler of Illegally-Occupied Palestinian Territory as Its Military Chief of Staff](#)

Rights activists have expressed criticism of Israel's recent decision to appoint a settler of illegally-occupied Palestinian territory as its military chief of staff. Many are understandably concerned that this may further exacerbate tensions and settler violence in the West Bank. Additionally, the move highlights the problematic interconnected nature between illegal settlers and the Israeli military and government. Allowing them to hold prominent positions only regrettably serves to worsen and embolden injustices against Palestinians such as unlawful land seizures, settler attacks, and military misconduct. The recent appointment is part of a long and alarming trend of illegal settlers being given these offices of authority. There is an array of Cabinet ministers, politicians, supreme court judges, and others with similar backgrounds. 3rd Alternate Prime Minister of Israel Naftali Bennett himself is a former leader of an illegal Israeli settler group.

The Israeli military is notoriously known for committing horrible acts of violence against Palestinians. There have been many instances where the Israeli police have unjustly killed or injured Palestinian civilians, harassed them while they have been protesting, and forcibly displaced them from their homes to make way for illegal Israeli settlements. In contrast, the military protects settlements and escorts Israeli settlers when they want to visit sensitive sites in Palestinian areas or hold oftentimes provocative marches and protests. Many of the Israeli military's top commanders are settlers occupying the stolen Palestinian land.

Settler attacks against Palestinians continue to take place at a disturbing rate, as under the protection of the Israeli military, settlers feel emboldened to act violently knowing that they will be defended if there is any retaliation from Palestinians. There are often reports of the Israeli army encouraging, instigating, and joining these attacks, in addition to even conducting their own violent military raids as well. A plethora of video and documented evidence shows soldiers often acting with settlers in carrying out violent attacks against local Palestinians. Military figures also utilize these destructive methods in an attempt to intimidate and force Palestinians to leave their homes, opening the door for the creation of new illegal Israeli settlements.

Since the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, hundreds of thousands of unlawful settlers have moved into the West Bank. The Israeli government even goes as far as trying to lure new illegal settlers by offering what is often cheap and subsidized housing. Despite the fact that these settlements are universally deemed illegal and illegitimate by the international community, Israel has continued to construct them and push out Palestinians, with the number of settlers growing to close to 750,000. Among those is Herzi Halevi, the new chief of staff of the Israeli military. He lives in the illegal settlement of Kfar HaOranim in the West Bank. Like many of these, the settlement was built on stolen land, in this case from the Palestinian village of Saffa.