

WEST BANK: RISING SETTLER VIOLENCE FORCES 10 TIMES MORE CHILDREN FROM THEIR HOMES IN 2026

1 APR 2026 OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

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their homes in the West Bank in the first three months of 2026 compared with the average of the previous three years, Save the Children said. [1]

Save the Children analysis of UN data on settler violence in the West Bank found 685 children were displaced in the first three months of 2026, compared to an average of 63 across the same period in the three previous years. A total of 122 children were displaced in the first three months of 2025, 17 in 2024, 51 in 2023. [2]

In January alone, about 350 children were among nearly 700 Palestinians forcibly displaced from nine communities, with the settler violence frequently assisted or facilitated by Israeli security forces, entire communities were displaced. [3]

So far this year, a total of 7 Palestinian children have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank and 35 injured by the military and Israeli settlers, including 22 by settlers. This is almost the equivalent to all the children injured by settlers in 2023 (37) and 2024 (33). [4][5]

Palestinian families are living under constant threat of attacks by settlers, who have consistently burned homes, vehicles, and agricultural land, destroyed or stolen livestock, and committed violent assaults and intimidation at gunpoint. [6]

Recent escalation in the Middle East has intensified the situation in the West Bank. Intensified military operations has increased the risk of falling debris following missile interceptions alongside an increase in checkpoints and road closures.

Children are reporting being increasingly harassed and attacked while on route to school, resulting in reduced school attendance and learning time while heightening fear and mental distress among students, caregivers, and educators. [7]

Movement restrictions have further isolated Palestinian communities near settlements and outposts, creating siege-like conditions.

The rapidly deteriorating situation follows the Israeli cabinet's approval of measures enabling settlers to acquire or take over land in the West Bank with minimal government oversight. The International Court of Justice and successive UN resolutions have found Israeli settlements to be illegal under international law.

Khalid* 15, from south of the West Bank, was shot by settlers while he was in his village. This was not t rst time he had been attacked by settlers as he was previously hospitalised after an assault. He told Save the Children's partner organisation that this time: "I saw death with my own eyes".

gone.

Save the Children's partner is supporting Khalid by supporting access to services to ensure he is provided with child protection, wellbeing and psychosocial support services.

Kareem*,16, lives in a rural village in the West Bank. On his way to school, he is often harassed and attacked by settlers. He describes his walk to class as "the path of fear". Kareem* told Save the Children staff**:**

"It's hard for me when I walk and encounter a settler shepherd on my way [to school]. He attacks and harasses me, even on the way back. Sometimes he hits me, takes my schoolbag, and tears up my textbooks."

Ahmad Alhendawi, Save the Children's Regional Director for the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe, said:

"We are only three months into 2026 and settler violence has reached shocking levels. These attacks have left Palestinian children with no homes and terrorised them with near total impunity. Children in rural and Bedouin communities, as well as those commuting between cities, to go to school or to work, are in repeated danger.

"Over the years, Palestinian children have been killed, injured, harassed and intimidated by Israeli settlers. They have witnessed the destruction and damage of their homes and schools alongside being forcibly separated from their parents and relatives. They are now threatened with egregious new laws that breach international law.

"Our team are reporting a noticeable increase in children diagnosed with toxic stress, due to continuous and ongoing trauma. This environment, marked by state-sanctioned violence, racial discrimination, the loss of loved ones, detention, and the destruction of homes and schools, is destroying the aspirations and futures of Palestinian children and devastating their mental health. This must be stopped. The world cannot look away from the occupied Palestinian territory."

Save the Children is calling on governments to pressure the Israeli authorities to end all discriminatory policies and practices contributing to the coercive environment in the West Bank. There must be an end to state-sanctioned violence and attacks by settlers as well as ensuring those responsible are held to account and providing full reparations to affected people.

Save the Children has worked in the occupied Palestinian territory since 1953, with a permanent presence since 1973. Save the Children works with partners to support children affected by violence from eli forces and settlers, helping to deliver essential items and creating safe spaces for children.

inclusive education. We are the largest cash assistance provider in the West Bank.

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Sources

[1] According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) data; 685 children were displaced in the first three months of 2026 as of 15 March 2026.

[2] According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) data in total 2,628 children have been displaced since the start of 2023 until 15 March 2026.

[3] Humanitarian Situation Update #356 | West Bank | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory

[4] https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties

[5] In 2023 (37) and 2024 (33) children were injured by Israeli settlers, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

[6] Humanitarian Situation Update #332 | West Bank [EN/AR/HE] | OCHA

[7] Data shows that in 2025, 195,000 class-minutes were lost for children in the West Bank - the equivalent of about 4.5 months of learning time - due to targeted attacks on education by settlers and the Israeli military. Education-Related Incidents in oPt - Academic Year 2024-2025 (Sept. 2024– June 2025) - occupied Palestinian territory | ReliefWeb

Notes

- No data is currently available for military raids only settler violence in the West Bank. The settler violence is frequently assisted or facilitated by Israeli security forces.
- Calculations are based off data provided by OCHA going up to 15 March 2026.
- The rapidly deteriorating situation follows the Israeli cabinet's approval of measures enabling settlers to purchase land in the West Bank with minimal government oversight in February 2026. The new laws mean an increased lack of autonomy for Palestinians living in the West Bank through deeper Israeli oversight, expanded military authority, and policies that make it easier for settlers to acquire or take over land, all settlements are currently illegal under international law.

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