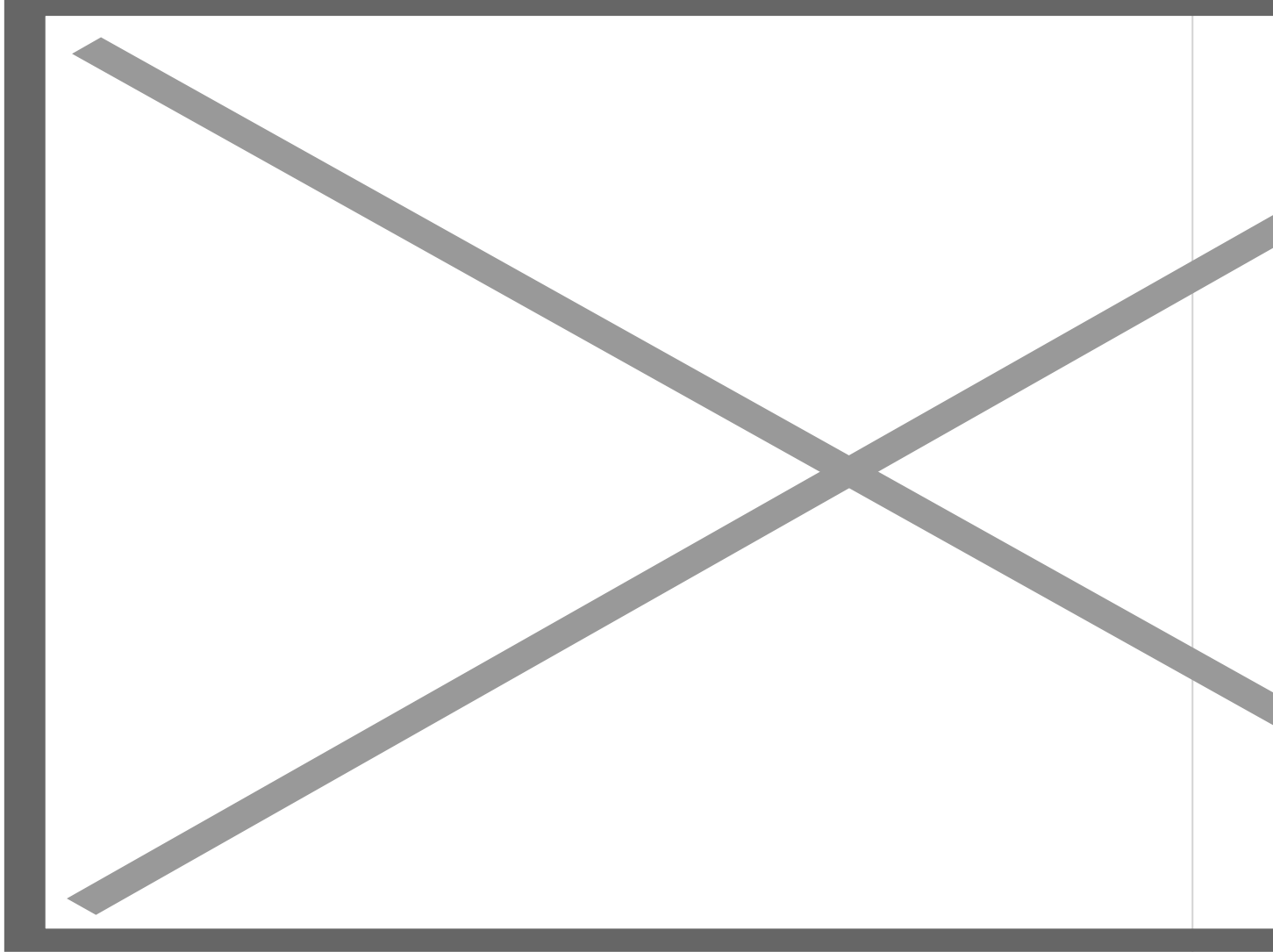


Israel occupies 6,000 acres of land in West Bank in largest land grab in decades

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A Palestinian man points towards a spot seized by Israeli forces outside the Palestinian village

of Jiftlik in the occupied West Bank. (File photo by AFP)

Tel Aviv, December 8 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime has announced the occupation of some 6,000 acres of Palestinian territories in the West Bank as part of the illegal entity's land grab policy, marking the largest annexation by the Tel Aviv regime in decades.

Israeli finance minister Bezalel Smotrich was cited by the regime's Channel 14 on Friday as declaring the confiscation of 24,000 dunums (5930.5 acres) of the occupied West Bank and classifying them as what he claimed to be "state lands."

Stressing that the decision covers nearly half of the land confiscated as "state lands" since the Oslo Accords in 1993, the broadcaster said the announcement is a dramatic step that is expected to affect regional planning and change the face of the region.

"At the right time, today we completed a complex process to announce 24,000 dunums of new state lands in the West Bank," Smotrich said. "This process creates a settlement sequence, builds land reserves for Israel to develop settlements, infrastructure and roads, and guarantees that we will continue to strengthen the settlements, and we are here to stay," he added.

In a post on X, the Israeli finance minister also wrote, "More than 23,000 dunams of land for the benefit of the settlement in Yosh. We determine facts on the ground and thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state!"

According to Channel 14, the illegal settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, east of occupied al-Quds, would be expanded by approximately 2,600 dunums (642 acres) to the south to create a settlement chain linked to the illegal settlement of Kedar.

Other illegal settlements such as Migdal Oz and Susya in the southern West Bank and Yafit in the Jordan Valley will also be expanded. The Israeli channel also quoted Smotrich as claiming that the decision was a "historic achievement that contributes to strengthening settlement activity and expanding land designated for infrastructure and settlement projects."

Last month, the far-right minister claimed that next year would see the application of "Israeli sovereignty" over the occupied West Bank.

More than 700,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds, with international law viewing both as "occupied territories" and considering all Jewish settlement-building activity there as illegal.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a landmark advisory opinion in July and declared Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land "illegal" and demanded the evacuation of all settlements in the West Bank and al-Quds.

The latest Israeli land grab comes as the regime has ramped up its aggression against Palestinians across the West Bank since October 7 last year, when it launched a genocidal war against the Gaza Strip. The occupation has since claimed more than 44,500 lives in the besieged enclave.



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