

HB1394

March 5th, 2025

Maryland House Judiciary Committee
101 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Testimony SUPPORTING HB1394

Dear Chairperson Clippinger and the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Mary Ella Jourdak. I am writing to express my strong support to HB1394, the Unauthorized Support of Israeli Settlement Activity (Not On Our Dime Act). This is a small step towards addressing Maryland's role in the ongoing displacement and genocide of the Palestinian people.

While I appreciate that the genocide and displacement of Palestinians may not be at the top of all Maryland lawmaker's minds, it is important to understand that both our tax dollars, and the donations of Marylanders to non-profit organizations, can be directly linked to Israel and their occupation and theft of Palestinian land.

In 2024, Israel illegally claimed 23.7 sq km of Palestinian land. That is the equivalent of 3,330 football fields, or 322 White House grounds. Please refer to graphic 1 and graphic 2 at the end of this letter.

These illegal claims on land create illegal settlements, which the United Nations security council has called "a flagrant violation under international law". Furthermore, this landgrab does not happen in a vacuum, where land is peaceably stolen. In 2025 alone, 81 residents of the Westbank, including 17 children, have been killed.

(Source:

www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-161-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem)

In 2015, Israeli newspaper Haaretz wrote that at least 50 non-profit organizations across the US were involved in fundraising for Israeli settlements. Haaretz wrote that money went "toward providing legal aid to Jews accused or convicted of terrorism, and supporting their families" through a "legal aid society" called Honenu. "Among those who benefited from the group's support in 2013 were the family of Ami Popper, who murdered seven Palestinian laborers in 1990, and members of the Bat Ayin Underground, which attempted to detonate a bomb at a girls' school in East Jerusalem in 2002."

(Source:

<https://www.haaretz.com/2015-12-07/ty-article/haaretz-investigates-u-s-donors-to-israeli-settlements/0000017f-f6bb-d460-afff-ffffd93e0000>)

While we cannot take retroactive action for the loss of life and land in Palestine, we can certainly take steps towards ensuring that support for continued violence and illegal land theft does not happen on Maryland's watch or with the financial backing of residents.

HB1394 seeks to hold non-profit organizations accountable for their role in violating international law, and would allow Maryland to do its part to enforce international law. Aiding and abetting war crimes is not a value that we should share as Marylanders. Please, I ask that you find a favorable report for HB1934. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mary Ella Jourdak

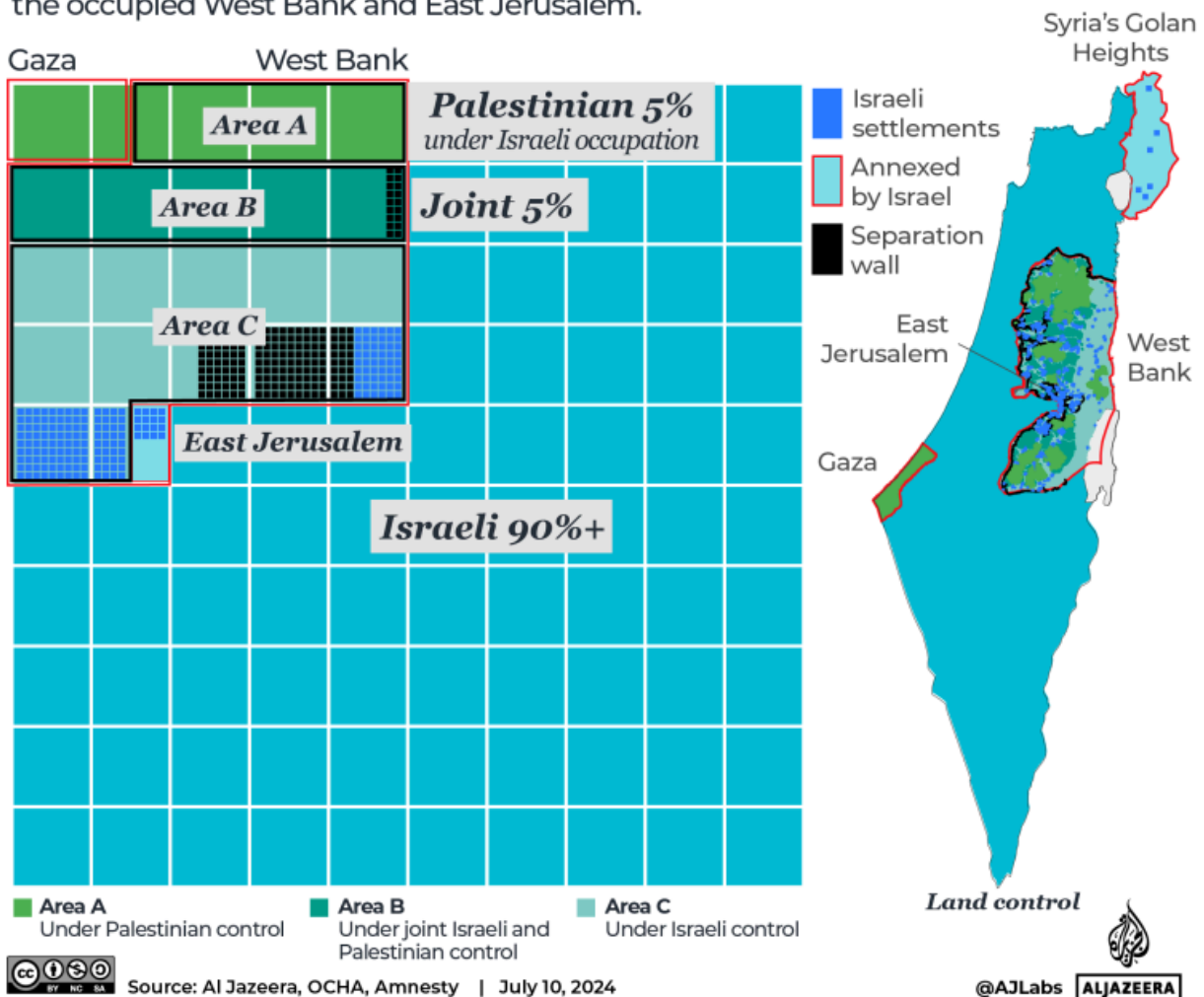
GRAPHIC ONE

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/11/how-israel-keeps-stealing-palestinian-land>

MIDDLE EAST

2024 Further land grabs and settlements

Today, 700,000 settlers live in about 300 settlements and outposts dotting the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.



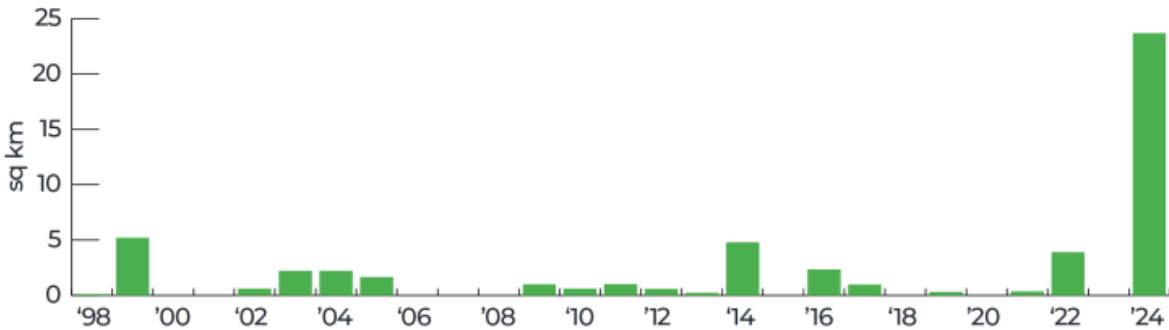
GRAPHIC TWO

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/11/how-israel-keeps-stealing-palestinian-land>

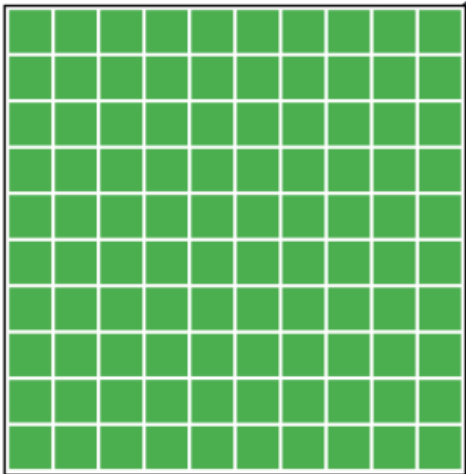
MIDDLE EAST

Israel's illegal seizure of Palestinian land

In 2024, Israel has illegally claimed 23.7sq km (9.15sq miles) of Palestinian land, exceeding the total land seized over the past 20 years combined.



How big is 23.7sq km?



- 3,300 • football fields
- 1,250 • Colosseums in Rome
- 322 ■ White House grounds
- 17 ■ Hyde Parks in London
- 7 ■ Central Parks in New York City



Source: Peace Now | July 10, 2024

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