

Israel Moves to Resume West Bank Land Registration: A Precursor to Annexation and Land Grab

15 February 2026

Overview

The Israeli government is taking concrete steps to resume land registration processes in the occupied West Bank for the first time since 1967. This land registration process, or settlement of land title (SOLT), has been frozen for nearly six decades and is now being revived despite its violation of international law. Experience from East Jerusalem suggests this move is not an exercise in the rule of law, but about systematizing the dispossession of Palestinian land to further Israeli settlement expansion and cement the apartheid regime.

Key Developments: A Timeline

- May 2025: Israel's Security Cabinet orders the military commander to resume SOLT (land registration) in the West Bank.
- December 2025: The government allocates 41 public positions to carry out the work.
- January 2026: Israel's Supreme Court rejects a petition against this move filed by human rights groups (Yesh Din, Bimkom, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, HaMoked), deeming it "premature".
- Feb 2026 (current status): a detailed government decision was adopted, setting an objective of completing SOLT in 15% of the unregistered land within four years. To this end, staff positions and budgets were allocated, and authorities for carrying out land registration were specified, including the establishment of a dedicated administrative unit.
- Implementation is contingent on final approval of the 2026 budgetary law.

Why This Matters: The Illegal Exercise of Sovereignty

Land settlement is the process by which land ownership is definitively registered with the state. International law is clear: as an occupying power, Israel cannot exercise sovereign powers, including final determination of land ownership, in an occupied territory. This position was reinforced by the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) 2024 advisory opinion, which found that similar SOLT proceedings in East Jerusalem violate the laws of occupation. Furthermore, the decision to authorize Israeli civilian authorities to manage the land registration procedures likewise constitutes a clear indication of the annexation of the area. The planned West Bank SOLT process is hence not an administrative technicality, but a direct extension of government policy to advance annexation of large areas of the West Bank.

The "Warning Sign" of East Jerusalem

SOLT has been implemented in East Jerusalem since 2018, and its outcomes to date offer a clear preview of what to expect in the West Bank:

- Near-zero Palestinian benefit: In East Jerusalem, only 1% of settled land was registered to Palestinians between 2018-2024 (Bimkom, 2025)
- Settlement tool: Land registration has largely proceeded in areas designated for new settlements or the expansion of existing ones, as well as related infrastructure.
- Lack of Transparency: The process operates within a discriminatory legal system with no transparency, effectively functioning to strip Palestinians of their property rights rather than secure them.

Bimkom's position

Despite the Supreme Court's preliminary rejection of our petition, we maintain that the resumption of SOLT in the West Bank

- Contravenes international law
- Deepens the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and precludes a viable political resolution
- Violates the most fundamental rights of Palestinians to a life of dignity, proper spatial planning, and self-determination.

Summary:

- On February 15, 2026 the Israeli government has formally declared it will renew SOLT (Settlement of Land Title) in the West Bank, setting an objective of completing SOLT in 15% of the unregistered land within four years, allocating budgets and staff positions.
- These steps align with the current government's broader annexation policy and constitute an exercise of sovereign authority prohibited under international law in an occupied territory. The intent is not to facilitate a rule of law, but rather to further cement Israel's Apartheid rule in the West Bank, which is based on a discriminatory law system, advancing Israeli territorial expansion at the expense of Palestinian space.
- In East Jerusalem, where SOLT is being carried out since 2018, only 1% of settled land was registered for Palestinians, while most registered land is in areas planned for new or expanding settlements and related infrastructure.
- SOLT is thus functioning to undermine Palestinian property rights, and as another mechanism of land grab. As the Israeli government itself declares, SOLT will be used to facilitate land takeover and the expansion of the settlement enterprise in the West Bank.
- A Supreme Court petition against resuming SOLT in the West Bank, filed by Yesh Din, Bimkom – Planning and Human Rights, ACRI, and HaMoked, was deemed premature in January 2026.
- The entire move contravenes international law, deepens the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, precludes any political resolution, and violates the most basic rights of Palestinians to dignified life, proper spatial development, and self-determination.