

## The Story of Three Jerusalem Suburbs Pulled Toward Displacement



A somber fate looms over three towns west of Jerusalem, where landowners are turning into strangers in their own homes. Yesterday they were free on their land; today they require a permit just to cross their thresholds.

This is another link in a long chain of restrictions part of a creeping plan to absorb what remains of both memory and territory.

Under Military Order No. 1651 issued by the Israeli occupation army, Israeli authorities have required the residents of three Palestinian towns north-west of occupied Jerusalem to obtain permits to enter and stay in their own areas.

### New military orders

Journalist Bilal Kiswani from Beit Iksa told Noon Post that at the beginning of September three military orders were issued by Israel, targeting the villages west of Jerusalem, with Beit Iksa at the top of the list.

He explained that the first order confiscated all the village's ten agricultural basins. The second order changed the classification of the village from Areas B/C (according to the Oslo Accords) to "a contact zone" under Israeli nomenclature.

He added that this legal reclassification means in practice full responsibility for the village moves over to the Israeli army, excluding the Palestinian Authority entirely and preventing the village from being treated as part of the West Bank in

effect a de facto annexation under different names.

In his definition of the “contact zone,” Kiswani clarified that it is an area under full control of the Israeli occupation army, designated due to its proximity to settlements, forming a geographic buffer between occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank.



The checkpoint established by the Israeli army at the entrance to Beit Iksha village.

The army controls entry to it, issues fixed-term permits (typically not exceeding one year) only for original residents, prevents any visitors without previous coordination with the municipality, and prohibits any activity without direct permission from the Israeli army or its competent body.

The zone is subject to continuous surveillance, and residents must comply with army instructions that may change at any time in the absence of any civil law framework, only the military orders of the occupation apply.

The third order relates to stringent procedures requiring residents to report to the Qalandiya Checkpoint in order to obtain magnetised cards enabling smart entry to the village, plus special permits to reach their homes.

Kiswani explained that these three orders apply to three communities in the area: Nabi-Samuel village, the Khalayleh-Neighbourhood in the village of Al-Jib, and Beit-Iksa.

They have already been applied fully to the first two communities, and are now being rolled out gradually in Beit-Iksa. He said: “What is happening in Beit-Iksa is a form of slow displacement of its residents, after the de-facto annexation of the town’s lands through a series of military orders first and foremost the confiscation of all the village’s basins.”

Beit-Iksa covers about nine thousand dunams, yet the occupation has seized the majority of that land over past years, leaving the residents only about five- to six-hundred dunams for agriculture and construction which now itself is threatened with seizure, narrowing the squeeze on what remains of life in the town.

In his concluding remarks, Kiswani issued a warning: “We must keep our eyes open to what is happening in these areas, and pay close attention to the conditions of residents in villages such as Beit-Iksa, Nabi-Samuel and Khalayleh.

What is taking place is not merely restriction, but soft displacement, step-by-step. When services are stripped away, movement is impeded and doors to normal life are shut, staying in these villages becomes virtually impossible and people are coerced to leave. These policies must be confronted, and the world must recognise their danger and act immediately.



A widely circulated image of the new card distributed by the Israeli authorities to residents of Nabi Samuel village.

The experience we are seeing now in these villages might be extended tomorrow across the entire contact zone of the West Bank. What is being practiced here is a test of what may be implemented on a larger scale and therefore confronting these measures is an urgent national and humanitarian duty.”

On his part, the mayor of Beit Iksa, Murad Zaid, told NoonPost that the Israeli decision came suddenly with no consultation with residents or opportunity for objections, which caused fear and anxiety among the inhabitants.

Zaid explained that the new ruling obliges residents to obtain permits to enter their homes and forbids any person without a permit from entering the village. He added that this policy aims to isolate residents from their Palestinian surroundings and turn their lives into a series of restrictions and harassment until landowners are treated like new arrivals, as though they were guests in their own land.

He pointed out that Beit Iksa has been under siege for decades because of the separation barrier and military checkpoints: the occupation erected a checkpoint at the village entrance in 2010, operational since 2013, and since then it has

been used to harass residents daily and turn their movement into a nightmare.

He clarified that citizens' entry is conditional on showing ID, while the occupation records their identity numbers in advance. Formerly visitors and workers could enter with coordination via the municipality, with their IDs held at the checkpoint and an obligation to leave before 10pm; now that has been stopped entirely, and entry is only possible via a formal permit.

Zaid confirmed that Israeli soldiers intervene even in details such as bringing in food supplies, cooking gas, or building materials requiring prior coordination and checking the permitted quantities.

Similarly, Zaid spoke of residents' suffering in terms of addressing changes in official identity cards: the occupation refuses to register anyone new residing in Beit Iksa. For instance, new wives are registered only at the checkpoint, without modification of the address on the ID, and are treated as second-class residents.

Even newborns, if one parent is from outside the village, are not registered in Beit Iksa but at the address of the other parent outside it; wives who are not registered in the village must bring their husbands each time they enter or leave adding extra burdens on daily life.

He emphasized that the aim of this policy is to gradually reduce the number of residents and push them to abandon the village. He added that the policy is not limited to Beit Iksa only, but also applies to Nabi Samuel and the Khalayleh neighbourhood, as part of an integrated plan to isolate those areas from their Palestinian surroundings and impose a new reality by force.

He concluded by saying: "After 4 November no one who does not hold a permit will be allowed to enter the village; what comes next is unknown and we live at the whim of sudden decisions that threaten all the elements of life."

In an interview with retired Dr. Sa'ada Al-Khatib from Beit Iksa regarding the new permit policy recently imposed, he noted that things are still ambiguous and unclear at this stage.

He said: "We don't have precise information the distribution of permits was random; some residents received them, others are still waiting.

This chaotic distribution has created confusion and anxiety among citizens, but we are waiting until the beginning of November to see whether things become clearer or more complicated."

He stressed his full rejection of violating the residents' right to their land, saying: "We are the people of the village, we were born here, our fathers and grandfathers were born here, and it is inconceivable that landowners are treated like new residents, forced to enter their homes by a temporary permit valid for

just one year. What comes after the permit expires? No one knows. There are many rumours but no official clarification yet.”

Khatib warned that what is happening in Beit-Iksa may not be an isolated case, but the beginning of a larger plan. He said: “What is happening in Beit-Iksa is not the end, but the beginning of a dangerous trajectory aiming to isolate Palestinian towns one by one, turning them into enclosed islands in a sea of settlements and imposing a new reality by force.”

He pointed out that the imposed isolation has weakened the ability to maintain social and familial relations, restricted residents’ access to work and services, and obstructed entry of workers, suppliers and service-providers which has negatively impacted the provision of basic services.

He added: “These strict restrictions deny the inhabitants of Beit-Iksa the ability to live a normal daily life they affect an entire village and its population in a very serious way.”

Khatib highlighted a painful irony facing the village, saying: “Beit-Iksa is the Palestinian village closest to Jerusalem from the northwest, but after the occupation, siege and closure it has effectively become one of the furthest from the city that forms its natural extension.”

#### Deepening isolation in the Khalayleh neighbourhood

In this context, Samer-Abdul-Rabb, mayor of the town of Al-Jib, said the new Israeli procedures are already being implemented in the Khalayleh neighbourhood, which administratively belongs to Al-Jib but has been isolated behind the separation wall since 2003 and is home to around 600 citizens.

He explained that the occupation erected a permanent checkpoint at the entrance of the neighbourhood known as “Al-Jib-Checkpoint” and since then residents’ daily lives have been subject to strict military procedures.

He said: “The imposition of permits on residents and reclassification of the neighbourhood as a contact-zone came arbitrarily. Today no citizen can enter their house without a special permit; even bringing in food supplies or groceries is subject to restriction and army surveillance.

These policies aim to impose a new reality that separates residents from their Palestinian surroundings and prevents them from reaching their lands or maintaining them.”

He also warned of the dangers looming over the lands of Al-Jib located behind the wall and adjacent to the Khalayleh neighbourhood, totaling about four thousand dunams, noting that previously residents were allowed access during agricultural seasons, especially olive-picking.

He added: “Today we do not know whether Al-Jib residents will be permitted to enter their lands during the olive harvest season as in previous years. There is a state of anxiety and confusion among the people in absence of any official instructions as the season approaches.”

### Nabi-Samuel and the silent displacement

In a conversation with Noon-Post, journalist and activist Na'il Barakat from Nabi Samuel village north-west of Jerusalem described the complex reality his village lives under, amid an escalating Israeli administrative policy that relies on the new permit system widely regarded by many as a tool of soft displacement that establishes demographic filtering and gradually empties the village of its original inhabitants.

In September 2025, occupation authorities notified residents of Nabi-Samuel of the requirement to obtain magnetised cards and special permits enabling them to enter their village. These permits are valid for only one year, and there is no guarantee of renewal. To date, approximately 40% of the village's residents have not obtained these permits, including Barakat himself.

He warns that the full implementation of the decision is set to begin in November 2025, after which no one without a permit will be allowed entry. He states: “What is happening is the first screening, followed by a second after a year, then a third... until no one remains. This is indirect displacement, noiseless but with catastrophic results.”

Nabi-Samuel, home to no more than 400 residents, has been encircled by the separation barrier since 2010, isolating it from its Palestinian surroundings geographically and socially; entry is allowed only via the checkpoint at Al-Jib, which is entirely controlled by the occupation military and also used by neighbouring villages such as Khalayleh.

Barakat pointed out that in the past visitors were allowed entry on special social occasions weddings or funerals provided they were direct relatives of a village resident. But since 7-October-2023, no person not officially registered as a permanent resident is permitted entry, even in emergencies or humanitarian situations.

He adds: “The checkpoint has become a source of suffering. Once the body of a man was held inside an ambulance for hours before it was allowed to enter the village.”

In Nabi-Samuel, daily life is extremely harsh:

Garbage trucks enter only once a month.

Building materials are banned; no restoration or expansion is permitted.

Even food supplies and cooking gas are allowed only in limited quantities and are subject to detailed inspection.

“No new brick has been laid in the village for years, and hundreds of young people were forced to move out after marriage for lack of decent housing,” adds Barakat. He also points out that a large part of the village’s historic mosque has been seized and converted into a Haredi Jewish synagogue in an attempt to erase the village’s Arab-Muslim identity.



The Israeli army uses the mosque rooftop to hold its events and celebrations (Al Jazeera).

In his final remarks, Barakat expressed deep concern for the residents of Nabi Samuel, saying: “Nabi Samuel holds many properties of missing persons and the occupation’s plan for them is clear. If what is happening now is not de facto annexation, then what is it? We are like those clinging by the threads of wind... waiting in limbo for the unknown.”

And journalist Aseel Eid describes the lived reality of the residents of these towns with bitterness: “Not only are prisoners locked behind walls and gates watched by guards, not only have their weddings and funerals been cut off from the outside world, not only do visitors require special permits to see them.

Many Jerusalem and West Bank neighbourhoods suffer a reality so similar they have become small prisons distinguishable from detention centres only by the ability to see the sky without bars.”

Systematic isolation policies threatening the social fabric

What is being applied today to Beit Iksa, Nabi Samuel and Khalayleh is not simply a new system of movement restrictions, but a full legal and security architecture that aims to redefine who has the right to stay in these areas and who does not through imposing temporary entry permits linked to security/or military vetting, with no civil legal framework or independent oversight.

A mounting demographic crisis emerges, with many residents living outside these villages in various parts of the West Bank, inside Jerusalem, or abroad. This trend stems from the prohibition of construction and narrowing of livelihoods, which has driven many families to seek stability elsewhere.

A large share of the population of the three villages is married to persons from outside them posing a new challenge under the permit system, which gives no clarity whether spouses coming from outside will be allowed entry.

The matter is more complex when women from those villages marry outside them and likely will not receive permits meaning they are barred from visiting their families or participating in social occasions.

More worryingly, according to multiple testimonies, children born after 7 October whose mothers are from outside the village are not registered at their father’s village address but at their mother’s effectively denying them residency rights in their fathers’ hometowns.

Also, anyone with a security file even one that is old or minor has not received a permit, threatening entire segments of residents with denial of entry to their villages and possible loss of their legal and administrative ties to them altogether.

This systematic dismantling of families, and the arbitrary linking of residence rights to security status and temporary permits, reflect a policy aimed at reshaping the demographic fabric of the villages, reducing the number of original residents and turning them into “conditional visitors” in their own towns a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights principles.

Dr. Saeed Yaqin, professor of political science at Bethlehem University, sees the Israeli policies imposed on villages on the fringes of Jerusalem such as Beit Iksa, Nabi Samuel and Khalayleh as a mounting pattern of administrative and military tightening that ultimately leads to soft and gradual displacement of residents by choking normal life and restricting ways to stay.

He adds: “If explicit ethnic cleansing cannot be carried out, the alternative is harsh subjugation and full control over the Palestinians who find themselves inside a zone targeted by settlement and Israeli expansion. These villages pose a geographical and political obstacle for the settlement project, hence they are treated like a thorn in the occupation’s throat.”

Yaqin points out that many families already living in these areas but whose official addresses are outside them may be denied permits which will push them to leave these communities forcibly, resulting in the eventual breakdown of social and economic structures.

According to Yaqin, most of Beit-Iksa’s land is categorised as Area C under the Oslo Accords, while the densely built portion classified Area B does not permit expansion. With all the village’s basins confiscated, opportunities for urban growth are closed off, effectively boxing residents into closed cantons restricting life and accelerating the pace of displacement.

As for Nabi-Samuel and Khalayleh, they were already classified as Area C and subject directly to occupation control making the new procedures an extension of a long-standing reality. But these new measures complicate life further and deepen the isolation and squeeze.

“Everything happening now in these zones is the entrenchment and expansion of the colonial reality, making daily life impossible,” says Yaqin.

He notes that Israeli officials once acknowledged that a major mistake of theirs was not including Beit-Iksa in the three LATRUN („Latrun“) villages (Amwas, Yalo and Beit-Nuba) that were entirely destroyed after the 1967 defeat hinting ominously at the possibility of repeating similar exclusionary scenarios by “legal” means.

In his final remarks, Yaqin calls on international and human-rights organisations to treat these villages with full seriousness, and to work to stop the ongoing harm to their residents by pressing for expanded structural plans, and allowing them the right to build and develop their towns as a minimum to guarantee their staying in their villages and preserve what remains of their social fabric and national identity.

Amid a struggle for sovereignty, memory and place, the residents of these towns stand as the last fortress refusing to break; no matter how much the occupation tries to destroy their dreams of freedom and stability, their resilience remains a testimony to an unbreakable will and an indelible memory.