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**Ethnic Cleansing in East Jerusalem is
Not a Paranoid Worry...
It's Happening Now
African World
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The Israeli government often reminds me of a dog I once owned. My dog was forbidden to enter into the living room. Nevertheless, she would creep into the living room, usually moving a few inches at a time in order to see whether we reacted. If we did not react, she would move further into the living room. Sometimes, when she was in the mood, she would move so far into the living room that she would feel comfortable tearing apart the furniture.

A recently released United Nations report confirms what many human rights activists have alleged: at least 60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem face the prospect of eviction by Israeli authorities. Yet this story has received relatively little mainstream attention, and even less official condemnation.

Ever since the Israelis captured East Jerusalem in the June 1967 war they have made clear their intent, despite widespread international protest and in clear violation of international law, to annex Jerusalem. In order to expedite this annexation, the Israeli occupation authorities have put pressure on the Palestinians to "vacate the premises." The pressure has included actions such as encouraging Israelis to settle in what had been Palestinian East Jerusalem, while failing to build new and adequate housing for the Palestinian people.

The current trick of the Israeli government is to move against Palestinian residents by claiming that the Palestinians are living in homes that show no proof of a legal building permit. What is perverse about this is that the Israelis are not talking about housing built in the last several years or even housing built since the June 1967 war. They are discussing housing that has been occupied by Palestinians in many cases for decades! In fact, according to the **Washington Post** [May 2, 2009] the dispute even involves searching through archives from the time of the Ottoman Empire (which ended when

World War I ended in 1918) in order to prove ownership.

The Israeli government, of course, denies that they have any intent to ethnically cleanse the Palestinian population. How could they, of course, given that they are supposed to be the model of democracy in the Middle East??!! The reality is that what the Israeli government has been conducting in East Jerusalem is part of the larger Israeli strategy in its Occupation of the Palestinian territories: drive the Palestinians from the best lands and replace them with Israeli settlers. Insofar as the world does nothing, the Israeli government behaves much as my dog did; it moves further and further in, increasing the intensity and scope of their destructive behavior.

It should surprise no one that the Israelis are attempting to remove the Palestinian population from Jerusalem. This has been consistent since the June 1967 war. The extent of the projected removal - 60,000 people - should, however, outrage any democratic minded person. Irrespective of one's stand on the history of the development of Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians, the fact of the matter is that the Israeli government continues to violate international law and precedent without having to fear any sort of international sanctions.

The proposed removal of 60,000 Palestinians increases the relevance and timeliness of discussions regarding the need to develop a movement of boycott, divestment and sanctions aimed at undermining the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Since it seems obvious that most governments, including but not limited to the US government, are unwilling to take steps to insist upon justice for the Palestinians, then pressure needs to be brought about by squeezing corporations and governments that are complicit in the criminal activities of the Israeli government.


Silence in the face of ethnic cleansing is simply unacceptable. The Israeli government and its friends must understand that there is a cost involved when it snubs its nose at the Palestinian people, and in fact, at the world as well.


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BlackCommentator.com Executive Editor, Bill Fletcher, Jr., is a Senior Scholar with the [Institute for Policy Studies](#), the immediate past president of [TransAfrica Forum](#) and co-author of, [Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path toward Social Justice](#) (University of California Press), which examines the crisis of organized labor in the USA. He is also on the advisory board of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (<http://www.endtheoccupation.org/>). Click [here](#) to contact Mr. Fletcher.

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