

Talking Points for Protect the Harvest

This document provides talking points for both PtH participants and partner organizations when speaking with the media. This document builds on the Guidance for Partner Organizations.

The Problem:

- 1. Palestinian communities in the West Bank are facing the imminent threat of ethnic cleansing.** Through a combination of sustained economic pressure, restrictions on freedom of movement, and violence from the Israeli military and settler militias, the Israeli government is orchestrating a campaign to depopulate Palestinian villages throughout the West Bank with the explicit goal of ethnically cleansing Palestinians from as much of the territory as possible.
- 2. The Israeli government and settlers are targeting the olive harvest.** Rural Palestinian communities rely significantly on the olive harvest for economic sustenance. By limiting their ability to peacefully harvest, the Israeli government is imposing further economic pressure on Palestinian communities – and undermining their ability to stay in their homes.
- 3. Laying the groundwork for ethnic cleansing.** The Israeli government's goal is to implement the ethnic cleansing (referred to as "population transfer" in mainstream Israeli-Jewish discourse) of Palestinians from the West Bank. Building on the Israeli military's genocidal assault on Gaza, ethnic cleansing has been largely normalized in Israeli-Jewish society and enjoys widespread public opinion support amongst Israeli Jews. *Ethnic cleansing is not an idle threat.*
- 4. Settler violence is state policy.** Settler violence is not the product of isolated bad actors. Rather, anti-Palestinian violence and pogroms enacted by Jewish vigilantes throughout the West Bank is supported by the infrastructure of the Israeli state. This includes but is not limited to: Israeli military protection of vigilantes, no prosecution of settler vigilantes, economic and political support to Israeli settlements and outposts, and extreme economic pressure and violence towards Palestinians.

What Protect the Harvest is Doing:

- 1. Getting Olives off Trees.** This campaign is about getting *olives off trees*. (You can and should return to this phrase when speaking with the media!) By picking as

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many olives as possible, we are trying to support the economic livelihood of Palestinian communities – and support their ability to stay on their land and in their homes.

2. **Growing the global consensus in support of international intervention to stop ethnic cleansing.** By bringing hundreds of internationals to the ground, we are helping grow the emerging consensus that international intervention is necessary to stop the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the West Bank.
3. **Building momentum at home for international intervention.** Our work on the ground is operating alongside transnational activism, especially in the US and Europe, for government and civil society initiatives that pressure the Israeli government to stop ethnic cleansing.
4. **Refusing a repeat of Gaza.** The Israeli government's destruction of Gaza was made possible by a global permission structure that undermined possibilities for international pressure that might have stopped the violence. *The international community cannot make this mistake again.* Today, Israeli ministers such as Bezalel Smotrich speak [openly](#) of doing to the West Bank “what we did in Gaza.” We are mobilizing public opinion and governments to stop this from happening.

On Possible Activist Arrest/Deportation:

In the past two years, the Israeli government has significantly escalated its targeting of international and Jewish activists in the West Bank. This includes increased arrests, deportations, and denial of entry at the border. These risks are significant. **But they do not compare to the daily violence and repression faced by Palestinian communities.** In discussing issues of activist arrest/deportation, we do not want to create a false equivalency between the targeting of activists and violence against Palestinians. Instead, we want to use potential arrests/deportations to redirect media attention onto the escalating threat of ethnic cleansing.

Talking Points:

1. **The Israeli government is targeting international activism to implement ethnic cleansing.** The escalated targeting of international solidarity activists is a deliberate attempt to make it easier to expel Palestinians from their home and divert attention from the violence being imposed on Palestinian communities.

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2. **Solidarity activism is not illegal.** Participating in the Palestinian olive harvest is not a crime under Israeli law. The Israeli military is ignoring its own regulations and legal procedures to ensnare nonviolent activists and prevent a successful harvest.
3. **Focusing on settler and state violence.** By targeting nonviolent activists, the Israeli government is providing further evidence of its support for settler violence and of its commitment to make Palestinian life in the West Bank intolerable and unlivable.
4. **The international community must act.** The arrest and deportation of activists underscores the radical extremism of the present Israeli government, its commitment to ethnic cleansing, and the need for sustained international pressure to prevent further violence and dispossession of Palestinian communities.

On possible settler violence/attacks against activists:

1. **These attacks are the product of Israeli state policy designed to make life unlivable for Palestinians in the West Bank.** Settlers enjoy active support from the Israeli military and government because they play a crucial role in the government's project of ethnic cleansing: they seek to terrorize Palestinians and those who stand in solidarity with them.
2. **Attacks on activists represent the daily terror experienced by Palestinian communities.** For every attack on international activists that is covered by the media, there are dozens more against Palestinians that go unreported.
3. **Settler vigilantes are operating as lawless militias.** Settler violence is not a problem of a couple hundred disaffected youth. It is organized by settler militias operating throughout the West Bank for the express purpose of terrorizing Palestinians into leaving their homes. Attacks on activists are one prong in that campaign of terror and dispossession.
4. **Israeli government impunity is key.** The Israeli government is vainly trying to distance itself from settler attacks on activists and Palestinian communities. But these attacks are possible because settler violence enjoys widespread political and institutional support. These attacks would not be possible without that support.