



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on November 21, 2023

White House Calls Out Israeli Settler Violence

U.S. President Joe Biden has ordered his administration to prepare a schedule of sanctions against Israelis who assault or harass Palestinians in the West Bank, Politico reported on November 18, quoting a classified document.

According to Politico, a senior U.S. official read out a confidential Cabinet memo that had been sent to senior Biden administration officials, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, instructing their departments “to develop policy options for expeditious action against those responsible for the conduct of violence in the West Bank.” A list of possible restrictions is said to include visa bans.



AP Images

Palestinian children near Israeli settlement in West Bank

The United States may enforce sanctions on persons who “have directly or indirectly engaged in actions or policies that threaten the security or stability of the West Bank,” and who have participated in intimidating or displacing civilians there, the document reportedly read. Other reasons for sanctions could allegedly entail human-rights breaches that “significantly obstruct, disrupt or prevent efforts to achieve a two-state solution.”

The alleged order came after Biden wrote an op-ed for last Saturday’s *Washington Post* that saw the president reinforce his stance on the two-state solution, which lays the foundations for a peaceful coexistence of the two entities.

While stopping short of calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Biden wrote that he objected to any forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, and to its reoccupation or encircling by Israeli forces. He also highlighted that he had told Israel that “extremist violence against Palestinians in the West Bank must stop.”

To penalize people involved in those activities, Washington is prepared “to take [its] own steps, including issuing visa bans against extremists attacking civilians in the West Bank,” he continued.

Israel began establishing settlements in the Palestinian territories after the 1967 Six-Day War, when it seized sections of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Many countries deem such Israeli settlements illegal, while Israel also deems some outposts as unlawful. Based on UN data, as of March 2023, there were some 700,000 settlers living in 279 settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Animosities between settlers and Palestinians have led to recurring violent clashes. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has recorded an average of seven settler-related incidents a day since the October 7 Hamas attack.



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