

In Knesset caucus hearing, shocking data revealed: Seven new illegal Palestinian structures per day, Report by Regavim

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This morning (Monday), the Knesset Land of Israel Caucus held a hearing focusing on the battle for Judea and Samaria.

Meir Deutsch, Director General of the Regavim Movement, shared updated data upon which Regavim based its recently released precise map of Area C. The satellite mapping project revealed the alarming situation on the ground: From 2019 -2021, the Palestinians built 5097 new illegal structures in areas under full Israeli jurisdiction, an average of 7 new illegal structures per day. These new structures joined the tally of illegal construction for a total of 72,274 illegal structures in Area C.

On a parallel track, during the same two-year period the Palestinian Authority used agricultural projects to seize control of 7,125 dunams of Israeli state land, for a total of 93,071 dunams (93,071,000 square meters or 23,268 acres).

By planting hundreds of thousands of trees in the undeveloped open spaces of Area C, creating agricultural roads spanning dozens of kilometers each year, digging wells, cisterns and water delivery and irrigation systems, the Palestinian continues to exploit a loophole in Ottoman Land Law, still in force in Judea and Samaria, to wrest land rights from the State of Israel and establish de facto Palestinian control.

While the newly - released data indicate a slight reduction in the rate of illegal Palestinian construction compared to the previous two-year period, when 7,957 illegal structures were built (an average of 11 per day), the rate of agricultural landgrabs has remained virtually unchanged.

Regavim explained the lower rate of construction coupled with a steady rate of agricultural annexation as the result of the European Union's decision to shift its funding away from illegal construction to focus on two alternative tracks: "lawfare" to prevent enforcement against new and existing illegal structures, and agricultural projects that achieve much greater territorial gains with far smaller financial investment.

"The Palestinian Authority is drawing the lines of the State of Palestine and presenting Israel with immutable facts on the ground. This is a strategic challenge of the first order, and one that Israel's governments have done virtually nothing to address. It is a policy failure of a magnitude not seen since the Yom Kippur War," said Deutsch.

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