

Cairo, 13 June 2026

Occupied Palestine

Israeli Occupation Intensifies Efforts to Undermine the Christian Presence in the West Bank and Jerusalem

The past ten days have witnessed a frenzied Israeli escalation aimed at undermining what remains of the Palestinian Christian presence in the West Bank. Among the latest incidents was the deliberate burning of agricultural lands and vegetation in the town of Taybeh, east of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, before the attacks subsequently spread to the city of Bethlehem.

According to field sources, Israeli settlers set fire on Monday evening to a mountain area belonging to the town of Taybeh, which is considered the last town with a Christian majority in the West Bank. Settlers fired live ammunition and hurled Molotov cocktails at residents' homes in order to prevent them from reaching the site of the fire to extinguish the flames and stop their spread. They also set fire to a fuel station, and only existing safety measures prevented a massive and catastrophic explosion.

As has become customary, occupation forces provided protection to the settlers. Occupation soldiers fired stun grenades to terrorize residents and prevent them from offering any resistance to the settlers.

According to eyewitnesses, the settlers, under the protection of occupation forces, then moved to the city of Bethlehem, a city of profound religious significance, where during the night they vandalized residents' vehicles.

The attack on the town of Taybeh constitutes a notable escalation in the pattern of racist Zionist attacks targeting the Christian presence in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Such attacks have been increasing since the summer of 2025, in addition to the wave of assaults carried out two months ago during Easter against Christians among the Palestinians of 1948 in the Galilee and Haifa regions.

Mr. Alaa Shalaby, President of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, notes that attacks targeting Palestinian Christians have intensified over the past two weeks in connection with a retaliatory racist tendency responding to the

positions taken by the Pope of the Vatican and several European leaders, who criticized attacks against Christians, restrictions on their religious freedom, and the contempt shown toward them through spitting incidents in streets and public roads. This escalation has also been linked to the exposure of deep-rooted and traditional Zionist hostility toward Christianity and Christians, which has been the subject of numerous reports and interviews broadcast in the American media, resulting in considerable embarrassment, particularly among conservative religious constituencies.

Shalaby added that the sanctions recently imposed by several European governments on the most extreme and defiant occupation ministers, as well as on some notorious terrorist settlers, have provided an additional incentive for acts of revenge against innocent civilians and for directing attacks against Christians of all denominations.

Shalaby expressed his firm belief that retaliatory reactions by Israeli terrorists will intensify in the near future as a means of further challenging the international community in general and European parties in particular. He reiterated the importance of a serious European decision to suspend the Partnership Agreement with the occupation government, stressing that Israel's far-right government understands only the language of concrete measures and neither understands nor cares about appeals and warnings.

A report issued by the United Nations had previously confirmed that the Israeli government finances, arms, and protects settlers involved in attacks against peaceful Palestinians. It is noteworthy that 15 Palestinians have been killed by settlers alone since the beginning of 2026.

The Arab Organization for Human Rights has repeatedly warned of Israeli efforts to replicate the crime of genocide in the West Bank, noting the displacement of approximately 60,000 Palestinian refugees from camps in the northern West Bank in preparation for the further displacement of residents. This has occurred in parallel with the expansion of illegal settlement activities, the completion of plans to isolate occupied Jerusalem, and the enactment of unlawful legal instruments aimed at confiscating Palestinian property.

It should be noted that approximately 72,000 people were killed as a result of the international community's failure and complicity in stopping the crime of genocide in the occupied Gaza Strip, while nearly 170,000 others were injured during the period from October 2023 to October 2025.

Since the ceasefire of October 2025, occupation forces in Gaza have killed more than 970 Palestinians and wounded more than 3,000 others. Meanwhile, 2.1 million people remain displaced within less than 40 percent of the territory of the Strip. Leaders of Israel's far-right government continue to affirm their intention to forcibly displace the population of Gaza outside the territory and to resume the crime of genocide.
