

**Hagit Ofran**  
**Settlement monitor, Peace Now**

**Control without annexation**

In 1967 there was a war and Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza. And since then Israel has been controlling those lands without annexing it to Israel. And although many Israelis know that, they don't internalize the fact that it's not part of Israel. Because Israel has been dealing with those lands, with the West Bank and Gaza, as if it was part of Israel, in many ways because mainly of security excuses, and the fact that it is our father's land. It is the Biblical land and many people felt connected to it.

**Settlements to secure Israeli control**

So in order to make sure that those lands will stay under Israeli control, Israel started to build settlements in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. And it developed and developed so that today we have 120 settlements scattered around the West Bank, and another almost 100 outposts, which are another kind of settlement, smaller. And there are over 300,000 Israelis who live in those settlements that make it much, much harder to withdraw from the West Bank and to have a two-state solution.