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Israel must remove new settler outpost in the West Bank

The Israeli authorities must immediately remove a new outpost set up yesterday by Israeli settlers in the Nablus district of the occupied West Bank, Amnesty International said today.

The new outpost was set up following the killing of Evyatar Borovsky, a resident of the illegal Israeli settlement of Yitzhar, on Tuesday.

Borovsky, a civilian who was carrying a gun at the time of the attack, was stabbed and killed by a Palestinian man who was wounded and later arrested by Israeli forces.

Following the killing, settlers unleashed a wave of violence against Palestinian civilians and their property in the northern West Bank, stoning vehicles and burning hundreds of trees.

“We deplore all deliberate attacks on civilians, including settlers. But this killing must not be used as an excuse for further violations of the human rights of Palestinians,” said Ann Harrison, Deputy Director of Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Programme.

“The authorities in Israel must urgently remove the new settler outpost and prosecute all those responsible for the violence in the West Bank,”

"The Israeli authorities arrested four settlers on Tuesday, but seemed to turn a blind eye to much of the violence perpetrated against Palestinian civilians and their property. The Israeli authorities have a responsibility to protect Palestinian civilians under occupation, and to prevent and punish violent attacks by settlers."

There are approximately 100 unauthorized settler outposts and more than 130 settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, all of which are illegal under international law.

In 2012, the Israeli government retroactively authorized 10 outposts and took no action to prevent settlers establishing four others.

The Israeli authorities also continue to demolish Palestinian homes and structures in the West Bank. So far in 2013, more than 200 structures have been demolished, displacing almost 400 Palestinians from their homes and affecting more than 500 others.

“The Israeli government’s long-running policy of settling civilians in occupied territory violates international humanitarian law. Such a policy, under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, constitutes a war crime,” said Ann Harrison.