



The Israeli occupation of the West Bank is widely acknowledged to be unsustainable and costly to the country's image. But one more blunt truth must be acknowledged: the occupation is morally repugnant.

On one side of a barbed-wire fence here in the southern Hebron hills is the Bedouin village of Umm al-Kheir, where Palestinians live in ramshackle tents and huts. They aren't allowed to connect to the electrical grid, and Israel won't permit them to build homes, barns for their animals or even toilets. When the villagers build permanent structures, the Israeli authorities come and demolish them, according to villagers and Israeli human rights organizations.

On the other side of the barbed wire is the Jewish settlement of Karmel, a lovely green oasis that looks like an American suburb. It has lush gardens, kids riding bikes and air-conditioned homes. It also has a gleaming, electrified poultry barn that it runs as a business.

Elad Orian, an Israeli human rights activist, nodded toward the poultry barn and noted: "Those chickens get more electricity and water than all the Palestinians around here."

It's fair to acknowledge that there are double standards in the Middle East, with particular scrutiny on Israeli abuses. After all, the biggest theft of Arab land in the Middle East has nothing to do with Palestinians: It is Morocco's robbery of the resource-rich Western Sahara from the people who live there.

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