

Committee: SOCHUM

Topic: The question of settlements in the west bank

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Summary

The Palestine Israel conflict has been going on for 54 years and there still seems to be no end in sight. Israel have started to build new settlements on the West Bank. These settlements are growing rapidly in the West Bank, and this is causing even more tension between the two sides. The Under-Secretary-General for political and Peacebuilding Affairs have told the security council on the 21st of January 2020 that peace will ever be achieved, citing a deadlock political process, illegal settlement expansion and a pervasive hopelessness among young people.

The UN have said that these Israeli settlements are built in violation of international law on land which are said to be occupied by Israel in the 1967 six-day war. The Israeli settlements are currently being built of Palestinian territory of the West Bank which includes the area of East Jerusalem, also in the area of the Syrian territory of the Golan Heights. These two areas have all been annexed by Israel. What does this mean? It means that residents are treated equivalently to rest of Israel and under Israeli law.

It is said that some half a million Israelis are now living over the Green Line. More than 300,000 in 121 settlements and there is around one hundred outposts and these outposts control 42% of all of the land area of the West Bank, the rest around 12 neighbourhoods that Israel decided to establish on some land it decided to annex to the Jerusalem Municipality. Israeli settlements are civilian communities inhabited by the Israeli people; these settlements are only available to people who are of Jewish ethnicity.

Israel's annexation plans

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his intention to annex the Jordan Valley, a large swathe of the occupied West Bank, if he wins the September elections. He also reaffirmed a pledge to annex all of the settlements Israel has established in the West Bank.

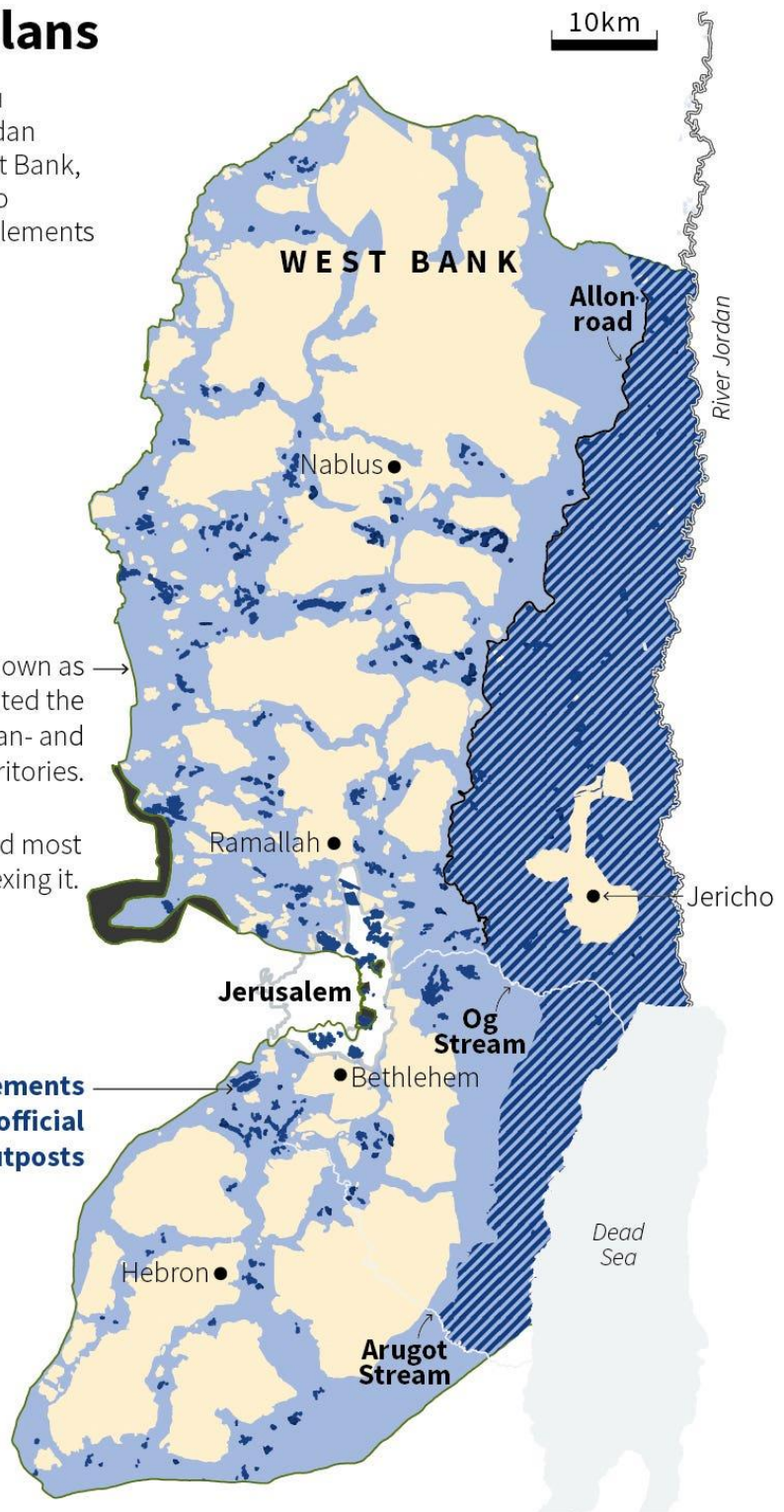
- AREAS 'A' AND 'B'**
Controlled by Palestinian Authority
- AREA 'C'**
Controlled by Israel
- PROPOSED ANNEXATION**
- NO MAN'S LAND**

1949 Armistice Lines, known as the **Green Line**, separated the Israeli from the Jordanian- and Egyptian-held territories.

During the 1967 Six Day War Israel captured most of the Golan Heights from Syria, later annexing it.



Israeli settlements and unofficial outposts



Note: Part of the western boundary of the proposed annexation is defined by the Allon Road. The remaining exact boundaries are unknown.

Sources: B'Tselem; Peace Now; Economic Cooperation Foundation; Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Planning; Maps4News, OpenStreetMap; Reuters

Definition of Key Terms

Settlements – an official agreement intended to resolve a dispute or a conflict

Annexed – add to ones own territory by appreciation

Green Line – refers to the demarcation lines. This is rather than permanent borders

Outposts - Small military camps or positions at a distance from the main army, used especially as a guard against surprise attacks

West Bank – where the Jewish people have set up their settlements. It is on the region west of the river Jordan

Background Information

In the year 1967, the people of Israel captured chunks of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and parts of the Golan heights which are situated on the border of Syria following the six-day Arab-Israeli war. Beginning in the early 1970's, Israeli Zionists built small outposts or settlements on these lands in a drive to reclaim lands they considered in a drive to reclaim lands that they believe are rooted in Jewish biblical history.

The military and certain political leaders were among others that also supported the expansion of the Jewish state to include these captured territories. For the army, these areas/regions provided very valuable land buffer that could improve Israel's precarious security. While many politicians saw this territory as potentially valuable bargaining chips in any future Arab Israeli negotiations that may happen in the near future

This consensus among some Israeli political, military and religious leaders to occupy the disputed territory is a critical point in the understanding the Israeli determination to not yield on this obviously highly sensitive issue. It has proved to be very resilient amid decades of intense international pressure to return the land in exchange for peace with all of their Arab neighbouring's.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

- Palestine – The Palestinians are victims of illegal settlements being built which violate international human rights laws.
- Israel – they are responsible for building these illegal settlements.
- United States of America – The USA has supported the Israeli government in building these new settlements.
- UNICEF – they are providing aid for all those who are suffering who are innocent civilians.
- United Nations – The UN has stated that these settlements are illegal and against International law.
- JC Bamford Excavators Ltd (United Kingdom) – they are manufactures and distributes construction equipment. The company offers machines which have been aiding Israel in building.

Timeline of Events

1917 - Britain conquers Palestine from Ottomans. Gives support to "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration, along with an insistence that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities".

1918 - First significant Palestinian Arab nationalist organisations emerge - the mainly cultural Muntada al-Adabi and the Damascus-based Nadi al-Arabi.

1920 - San Remo Allied Powers conference grants Palestine to Britain as a mandate, to prepare it for self-rule. Jerusalem riots against Balfour Declaration assert distinct Palestinian Arab identity.

1921 - Britain appoints Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, a member of a leading Palestinian Arab family, as Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and leader of the Muslim community. He rallies the Arabs and Muslims against any further concessions to the Jews.

1922 - Palestinian Arab delegation rejects British proposal for Legislative Council, saying inclusion of terms of the Balfour Declaration in draft constitution not acceptable.

1929 - Arab rioters kill about 200 Jews in Jerusalem's Old City and Hebron. British troops kill 116 Arabs in suppression of riots in Jerusalem.

1930 - British White Paper and Royal Commission recommend limiting Jewish immigration.

1930-35 - The Black Hand Islamist group led by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam launches campaign of violence against Jewish community and British rule.

1935 - Palestinian Arab leadership accepts British High Commissioner's proposal for Legislative Assembly, but the British House of Commons rejects it the following year.

1936-39 - Arab revolt begins with a general strike in Jaffa. Britain declares martial law and dissolves Grand Mufti Al-Husseini's Arab Higher Committee. More than 5,000 Arabs killed and 15,000 injured in suppression of revolt, Al-Husseini flees to French-run Syria to avoid arrest.

1947 - United Nations recommends partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states after Britain signals end to Mandate, with international control over Jerusalem and its environs. Arab High Committee rejects partition.

1948 - Israel declares independence as British mandate ends.

1949-1950s - Fedayeen Palestinian guerrillas based in Egypt and Gaza carry out raids into Israel with Egyptian encouragement. This increases after pan-Arab officers seize power in Cairo in 1952.

1956-1957 - Israel colludes with Britain and France to invade Egypt during the Suez Crisis, partly to end Fedayeen incursions. UN buffer force in Sinai and Gaza drastically reduces raids.

1959 - Yasser Arafat forms Fatah fighting group in Egypt to carry out raids into Israel.

1964 - Arab League sets up Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Palestine Liberation Army under Ahmad Shukeiri.

1967 June - Six-Day War leaves Israel occupying East Jerusalem, all of West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai. Jewish settlements are set up in all of these areas in coming years, with government approval.

1969 - Yasser Arafat takes over PLO leadership after debut as military leader in clashes with Israeli forces in Jordan in 1968, and asserts the group's independence from Egyptian control.

1970 - Increasing tension over the strength of the PLO in Jordan leads to the Black September clashes with Jordanian forces, driving the PLO into exile in southern Lebanon.

1970s-1980s - PLO and other armed Palestinian groups turn to airline hijackings and attacks on Israeli soldiers, officials and civilians within Israel and abroad to highlight their cause.

1972 - Palestinian "Black September" gunmen take the Israeli team hostage at the Munich Olympics. Two of the athletes are murdered at the site and nine more killed during a failed rescue attempt by the German authorities. Israel launches a series of reprisal assassinations.

1973 - Israel raids PLO bases in Beirut and southern Lebanon before and during the October Yom Kippur/Ramadan War.

1974 April-May - Two hardline factions, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, carry out raids into northern Israel and kill 43 civilians, including many children, in a block of flats in Kiryat Shmona and a school in Maalot.

1974 June - After 1973 Yom Kippur/Ramada war, PLO adopts Ten-Point Programme allowing compromise with Israel on the way to establishing complete Palestinian control over historic Palestine, including the territory of Israel.

1974 October - Arab League recognises PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" and it admits it to full membership of the League.

1974 November - Yasser Arafat becomes first non-state leader to address the United Nations General Assembly, delivers "olive branch... and freedom fighter's gun" speech.

1975 - Rejectionist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and German far-left armed group hijack Air France plane en route from Israel to France, divert it to Entebbe in Uganda. Israel commandos rescue most of passengers and crew, kill hijackers.

1977 May - The right-wing Likud party wins surprise election victory in Israel and encourages settlements policy on West Bank and Gaza.

1978 March - PLO attack kills 38 civilians on Israel's coastal road. Israel carries out first major incursion into southern Lebanon, driving PLO and other Palestinian groups out of the area.

1978 September - Israel pledges to expand Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the Camp David Accords establishing diplomatic relations with Egypt.

1982 June - Israel invades Lebanon again to expel PLO leadership from Beirut after assassination attempt by Palestinian faction on Israeli ambassador to London.

1982 September - Massacre of Palestinians in the Beirut Sabra and Shatila camps by Israel's Christian Phalangist allies.

PLO leadership moves to Tunisia, where it remains until it moves to Gaza in 1994.

1985 October - Israeli air force strikes PLO headquarters in Tunis after PLO group kills three Israeli tourists on a yacht. Palestine Liberation Front PLO faction hijacks Achille Lauro cruise ship, demanding

release of 50 Palestinians from Israeli prisons. Hijackers kill elderly American wheelchair user Leon Klinghoffer.

1987 December - First Palestinian Intifada uprising begins in Palestinian Territories. Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza forms the Hamas movement, which rapidly turns to violence against Israel.

1988 Jordan abandons claim to West Bank, ceding it to PLO. Palestinian National Council meeting in Algiers proclaims State of Palestine.

1990 - PLO backs Iraq over its annexation of Kuwait, which severs ties with the PLO and subsequently expels about 400,000 Palestinians.

1991 October - US-Soviet sponsored conference in Madrid brings Israeli and Palestinian representatives together for the first time since 1949.

1992 - Israeli Labour government of Yitzhak Rabin pledges to halt settlement expansion programme and begins secret talks with PLO.

1993 September - Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat sign Oslo Declaration to plot Palestinian self-government and formally end the First Intifada, which had been running out of steam since the Madrid Conference. Violence by various Palestinian groups that reject the Oslo Declaration continues.

1994 February - Baruch Goldstein of the extremist Jewish Kach movement kills 29 Palestinians at prayer at the Cave of the Patriarchs shrine in Hebron on the West Bank.

1992 May-July - Israel withdraws from most of Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho, allowing Yasser Arafat to move his PLO administration from Tunis and set up the Palestinian National Authority.

1992 December - Yasser Arafat, along with Yitzhak Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, are jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1995 - Interim Agreement sets out path for transfer of further power and territory to Palestinian National Authority. Forms basis of 1997 Hebron Protocol, Wye River Memorandum of 1998 and internationally-sponsored "Road Map for Peace" of 2003.

2000-2001 - Talks between Israeli Labour Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat break down over the timing and extent of a proposed further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. Palestinian protests escalate into new Intifada.

2001 December - Israel sends troops to encircle Ramallah after series of deadly Palestinian attacks inside Israel. Yasser Arafat is unable to leave his government compound.

Barrier goes up

2002 March - Israeli army launches Operation Defensive Shield on the West Bank and begins building barrier there to stop armed Palestinian entering Israel. The route of the barrier is controversial as it frequently deviates from the pre-1967 ceasefire line into the West Bank.

2002 March - Arab League meeting in Beirut offers to recognise Israel in return for its full withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, agreement to a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and "fair solution" to refugee question - the "Arab League Peace Plan".

2003 March - Yasser Arafat establishes post of prime minister and appoints Fatah veteran Mahmoud Abbas to lead contacts with US and Israel, both of which refuse to deal with Arafat.

2003 May - Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says the occupation of Palestinian territories cannot continue indefinitely.

2003 June - Arab League meeting in Egypt expresses support for "road map" proposed by US, European Union, Russia and UN and accepted by Palestinian National Authority and Israel, positing an independent Palestinian state and a freeze on West Bank Jewish settlements.

2003 September - Mahmoud Abbas resigns as prime minister, citing US and Israeli intransigence as well as internal Palestinian opposition to his government. Succeeded by Fatah veteran Ahmed Qurei.

2004 March - Israeli forces kill Sheikh Yassin, the founder and leader of Hamas, and his successor Abd al-Aziz al-Rantissi, the following month.

2004 July - International Court of Justice issues advisory opinion that the Israeli separation barrier violates international law and must be removed.

2004 November - Yasser Arafat dies in hospital in France, where he went for urgent medical treatment in October.

2005 January - Mahmoud Abbas elected Mr Arafat's successor as head of the Palestinian National Authority.

2005 September - Israel withdraws all Jewish settlements and military personnel from Gaza, while retaining control over airspace, ports and border crossings.

Hamas wins elections

2006 March - Hamas Islamist group's Ismail Haniyeh forms government after winning parliamentary elections in January. Struggle for primacy with Fatah begins. United States and European Union suspend aid, and Israel ends tax transfers, because of Hamas's refusal to recognise Israel, renounce violence and accept previous peace accords.

2006 June - Hamas militants from Gaza seize Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit near border crossing and hold him hostage for five years, demanding release of Palestinian prisoners. Major clashes between Israel and Hamas forces in Gaza follow. Israel imposes restrictions on Gaza.

2006 September - Clashes break out between Fatah and Hamas supporters in Gaza. Various Arab states and Palestinian groups seek to mediate between them in coming months in order to avert civil war.

2007 March - Fatah and Hamas form national unity government to end months of intermittent clashes in Gaza.

2007 June - Unity government founders. Hamas ousts Fatah from Gaza and reinforces its control of the territory. Israel tightens blockade after increase in rocket attacks from Gaza; Egypt closes border with Gaza.

Mahmoud Abbas appoints Salam Fayyad as prime minister, but Hamas refuses to recognise him. Two rival governments in West Bank and Gaza emerge. US and European Union resume aid to the Fayyad government.

2007 November - US-hosted Annapolis Conference for the first time establishes the "two-state solution" as the basis for future talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

2008 March - Efforts at reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas begin in Yemen, but next round in Cairo in November stalls when Hamas objects to Fatah arrest of its West Bank activists.

2008 November - Israel launches incursion into Gaza, seen by Hamas as a ceasefire violation. Hamas responds by launching rockets.

2008 December - Israel launches Operation Cast Lead month-long invasion of Gaza to stop Hamas and other militant groups firing rockets into Israel.

2010 February - Fatah and Hamas resume talks on national reconciliation.

Direct talks resume between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, only to falter over the question of settlements.

2010 May - Nine Turkish pro-Palestinian activists killed in Israeli capture of ships attempting to break maritime blockade of Gaza.

2011 April-May - Fatah and Hamas agree at talks in Cairo to reform a unity government and hold fresh elections, but no practical implementation follows.

Bid for UN membership

2011 - Palestinian National Authority launches campaign for UN membership of "State of Palestine", as means of highlighting stalled talks with Israel. Bid fails, but UNESCO cultural agency accepts Palestine as member in October.

2012 May - After preliminary talks in Qatar, Fatah and Hamas sign Cairo Agreement pledging to maintain non-violent resistance to Israeli occupation in pursuit of an independent state within the 1967 ceasefire lines.

2012 October - Local elections on West Bank undermine Fatah's position, as it wins only two-fifths of the seats contested on a turnout of 55%. Lists led by Fatah rebels win four of the 11 major towns and cities, and independents and leftists take control of a fifth. Hamas boycotts the poll and allows no elections in Gaza.

2012 November - UN upgrades Palestinian representation to that of "non-member observer state", allowing it to take part in General Assembly debates and improving chances of joining UN agencies.

2012 December - Fatah allows Hamas celebration rally on West Bank over UN status upgrade, a gesture reciprocated by Hamas in Gaza the following month.

2013 April - Prime Minister Fayyad resigns after long-standing dispute with Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas. He is succeeded by academic Rami Hamdallah in May.

2013 Newly appointed US Secretary of State launches a series of Israeli-Palestinian talks aimed at reaching a framework peace deal by April 2014. Palestinian officials say continuing Israeli approval of Jewish housing in occupied East Jerusalem undermines progress. Israel accuses the Palestinians of incitement.

2013 July - Fall of Morsi government in Egypt dashes Palestinian hopes for lifting of Egyptian blockade of border with Gaza, and suspends Egyptian mediation in the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation process.

2013 December - Israel, Jordan and Palestinian Authority sign water-sharing pact to halt and eventually reverse the drying-out of the Dead Sea by laying pipeline to carry brine from Red Sea desalination plant while providing drinking water to region.

2014 March - Egypt bans Hamas activities and seizes its assets because of links to Egypt's illegal Muslim Brotherhood.

2014 July-August - Israel responds to attacks from armed groups in Gaza with a military campaign by air and land to knock out missile launching sites and attack tunnels. Clashes end in uneasy Egyptian-brokered ceasefire in August.

2014 December - Minister Without Portfolio Ziad Abu Ein dies at clash with Israeli troops at West Bank protest.

2017 October - Hamas signs a reconciliation deal intended to administrative control of Gaza transferred to the Palestinian Authority, but disputes stalled the deal's implementation.

2017 December - US President Donald Trump recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, upsetting the Arab world and some Western allies.

2018 March - Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah visits Gaza, where his convoy survives a roadside bomb attack.

2018 July-August - UN and Egypt attempt to broker a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas amid an upsurge in violence on the Gaza border from March.

2019 November - US says it no longer considers Israeli settlements on the West Bank to be illegal.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Resolution 242 (UNSC) - calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict, without specifying the extent of the withdrawal. The resolution, therefore, neither commands nor prohibits total withdrawal.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The US tried to solve the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israeli's. this was Donal Tump came up with the idea of the 'Trump Peace Plan'. However, this did not go down very well with the Palestinian leaders as they believed that this [plan was too in favour of the Israeli people. The leaders had rejected the plan even before its release and were absent during its unveiling. Following the announcement at the white house, Palestinians denounced the proposal as utterly biased in favour of Israel and instead that "Jerusalem is not for sale".

With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu standing by his side, US president Donald Trump on Tuesday the 29th of January 2020 unveiled his long-delayed middle east plan, claiming that it would lay the foundations for a "realistic two-state solution" in the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Trump decided to call his plan a “historic opportunity” for Palestinians to achieve an independent state of their own by doubling the territory currently under their control. But under the proposal, the United States said Jerusalem would remain the “undivided capital” of Israel and it would recognise Israeli sovereignty over parts of the occupied West Bank. The Palestinians want both occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank to be part of a future state.

Possible Solutions

The West Bank settlements are a very difficult problem because Israeli’s are said to have deliberately made them so, this has according to some sources intentionally created “facts on the ground” and as a result of this, it now impedes Israel’s orderly withdrawal. Seeding this territory with the Jewish settlers began soon after the 1967 occupation of the West bank. This intensified under the Likud government of Menahem Begin, and this continued all the way to the present day.

A two state solution based on a Palestinian state in the West Bank is in everyone’s interest except those who support their causes with great passion on both sides, Those who want the West Bank to be a part of the Jewish Greater Israel , and those who want Israel destroyed and replaced by an enhanced Palestine since no territorial compromise would satisfy those elements on either side of the states, their positions can’t be considered in forming a genuine solution between the two sides.

Once a territorial swap has been agreed upon, one that will move the border of Israel to include most of the settlers where they are now, inducements to resettle, the end of the prospect of a Jewish Greater Israel, and the obvious tendency of events will lead many of those remaining outside to relocate voluntarily to Israel. Israel can offer resettlement aid, new housing or housing subsidies, and other material incentives to settlers not to be left behind.

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