



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Pro-Settlement advocates protest Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and West Bank, 2004-2005

Time period notes: *Following the announcement of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's "Disengagement Plan" in June 2004, demonstrations against the Israeli pullout occurred weekly and escalated in August 2005 when the evacuation plan was implemented*

June

2004

to: August

2005

Country: Israel

Country: Palestine

Location City/State/Province: *West Bank and Gaza Strip*

Goals:

To prevent Israeli settlement destruction and partial withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols

- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 4th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 5th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings

Methods in 6th segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols

- 020. Prayer and worship
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 048. Protest meetings
- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 125. Boycott of government employment and positions
- 129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents
- 139. Noncooperation with conscription and deportation
- 141. Civil disobedience of "illegitimate" laws
- 171. Nonviolent interjection
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Classifications

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

National/Ethnic Identity

Group characterization:

- Israeli Settlers
- Pro-Settlement Advocates

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

No single leadership was identified in this particular struggle. However, the Yesha Council, led by chairman Benzi Lieberman, played an active role in promoting Israeli settlement growth in the Palestinian Territories. In addition, right-wing orthodox Jewish rabbis played important roles in leading protest chants and prayers as demonstrators were sheltered in synagogues during the protest.

Partners:

Not known.

External allies:

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)

Involvement of social elites:

Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resigned from his post on 7

August 2005 in protest of the Israeli settlement pullout.

Rabbis advocated for the retention of the settlements

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

- Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Additional notes on joining/exiting order:

All other groups seemed to have been part of the campaign at the beginning

Segment Length: *Approximately 2 months*

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Israeli Government, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known.

Campaigner violence:

Reported fights broke out between settlers and Israeli soldiers.

Repressive Violence:

Protesters arrested by military personnel.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

The pro-settlement demonstrators were unable to prevent Israeli security forces from forcibly removing Israeli citizens from the designated settlements. The Disengagement Plan, although a bit forestalled, was completed in August 2005.

The pro-settlement demonstrators have continued their protest against government-sponsored settlement demolitions in the West Bank.

Although a minority, the right-wing ultra orthodox Jews who support settlement construction in the disputed territories have gained much political leverage within the state of Israel by framing the removal of settlers from Palestinian territory as an affront to Israeli state security and to God. Now, it is politically unwise for Israeli politicians to pursue settlement demolition policies because it creates strong divisive tensions within the country

The Jewish and Palestinian territorial claim to the same area of land has resulted in one of the most protracted conflicts in recent history. Stemming from the Zionist demand for a Jewish homeland in the historic state of Israel, a homeland that would serve as a sanctuary for this persecuted and globally displaced people, large influxes of Jews into the former British mandate of Palestine have and continue to displace millions of Palestinian residents. This forceful removal of the Palestinian people from their land

has so intensified hostilities between these two groups that points of contention have often reached explosive levels. Six wars, two intifadas, and frequent rocket attacks and suicide bombings illustrate this tension, and have helped to foster much personal hatred between the groups.

Since its victory in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Israel has maintained military control over the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and has also encouraged the construction of Jewish settlements in these areas. With the help of government tax breaks and military protection, the settlements have expanded significantly and have ousted increasing numbers of Palestinians from their internationally recognized lands. The settlers constitute a minority among the Israeli population, a minority whose zealous religious beliefs have helped strengthen their resolve to expand Israel's borders.

In 2004, the Gaza Strip was home to 1.3 million Palestinians, but with the presence of 9,000 Israeli settlers, the Israeli government employed its military personnel to protect the settlements from potentially hostile Palestinian residents. But amid increasing international and national pressure to halt settlement construction, the Israeli government in June 2004 called for the withdrawal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza settlements and from four West Bank settlements. The settlers would be relocated within the state of Israel and monetarily compensated once the evacuation plan was carried out the following year in August. This "Disengagement Plan" was supported by the Israeli majority, and was also the government's attempt to reopen peace talks with the Palestinian Authority. In addition, the removal of settlers from Gaza and from the relatively smaller settlements in the West Bank would allow the Israeli government and military forces to focus more acutely on the settlements in Jerusalem, the highly contentious historic capital.

In response to the withdrawal plan, right-wing orthodox Jews and other pro-settlement advocates began demonstrating in Tel Aviv. They labeled Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a traitor to the Jewish State and people. Many young orthodox Jews who had grown up believing that the biblical land of Israel, which included the land encompassed by the Gaza Strip and West Bank, was divinely promised to them and thus theirs by birthright, found themselves at odds with the government policy. The potential evacuation of the state of Israel from the territories thus threatened many of their core ideological, national, and religious beliefs. Many of the demonstrators expressed their confusion and dismay by the fact that "Jews were expelling Jews" from their historic homeland.

Thus, throughout the twelve months preceding the August 2005 planned withdrawal, pro-settlement advocates protested almost daily to garner public support and prevent the forced evictions. The protesters adopted the color orange as a symbol of their resistance, wearing orange ribbons and orange shirts to emphasize the urgency of their cause and to remain in public consciousness. They displayed the Israeli flag at their rallies, shouting that the pullout was a betrayal to the state of Israel. Daily and nightly meetings were held at synagogues, where protesters would sing, chant, pray, and listen to the sermons of rabbis, who emphatically encouraged them to resist the withdrawal. The Yesha Council, which was led by chairman Benzi Lieberman and had played an active role in promoting Israeli settlement growth in the Palestinian Territories, also helped organize protest rallies and demonstrations in Tel Aviv and other cities in southern Israel.

The anti-withdrawal campaign received much national and international media attention as the withdrawal deadline drew nearer. Newspaper columns predicted the possible violence that could potentially break out during the pullout, and just one week prior to the evacuation deadline, the protesters gained the support of Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who resigned from his post on 7 August 2005 in protest of the Israeli settlement pullout.

With this media attention and support from Netanyahu, the anti-withdrawal campaign climaxed during the week prior to the evacuation deadline. As military personnel began rolling into the Gaza strip in preparation of the evictions, hundreds of protesters blocked their path by lying in the road and setting tires ablaze. The protesters also attempted to march to Gaza, but their way was impeded by a police barricade. Despite this obstacle, many youth illegally made their way into Gaza by bypassing the barricades and proceeded to help occupy the settlements. During the evenings, young Jews stayed in synagogues, where they continued to pray and sing, hoping that their resistance would shift public opinion and end the pullout. During the daylight hours, the protesters formed human chains around the settlements and occupied both homes and buildings. Altercations between the Israeli soldiers and protesters often broke out, as the protesters decried the soldiers for following the orders of the

government and evicting their fellow Jews. Some irate teenage protesters threw oil, flour, light bulbs filled with paint, and caustic soda at the soldiers, who then promptly arrested them.

Despite the campaigners' efforts, the Israeli military began forcibly evicting the settlers that had not yet relocated, and the protesters, on 17 August 2005. Protesters were dragged kicking, spitting, and screaming from synagogues, buildings, and homes as military vehicles demolished the settlements. The protesters were placed onto buses and driven out of Gaza, and the evacuation was completed in September 2005.

The evacuation of the Israeli settlers from the designated settlements had many repercussions for the Israeli government and the State of Israel. Although the United States and the United Nations commended Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for his Disengagement Plan, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Washington-based pro-Israel lobbying group, withdrew its support for him. In addition, it became even more politically nonviable for Israeli politicians to pursue settlement demolition policies for they created even stronger divisive tensions within the country. Many soldiers within the military were dismayed by the events that occurred in the settlement evacuations, believing that the role of the military was not to remove Israeli citizens from their homes.

Thus, despite their failure to prevent the evacuation, the protesters have gained much political leverage within the state. By continuing their protest against government-sponsored settlement demolitions in the West Bank, and by framing the removal of settlers from Palestinian territory as an affront to Israeli state security and to God, the pro-settlement demonstrators have impeded the Israeli government from carrying out further settlement demolitions.

Research Notes

Influences:

Not known.

Sources:

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Additional Notes:

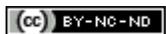
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