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«Price Tag» and Radical Settler Terrorism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
«Price tag» is a *modus operandi* that involves attacks on Palestinians, left-wing activists and/or state capacity in order to undermine Israel’s ability to carry through territorial concessions in the West Bank. The tactic is twofold; firstly it seeks to directly raise the cost of (even small-scale) evacuations, by carrying out coordinated and disproportionate violence simultaneously in different locations in the West Bank. By forcing IDF forces and police to disperse to these areas, «Price tag» challenges security forces' capacity to carry out state decisions to dismantle (even makeshift) structures or buildings. Secondly, by escalating inter-communal violence with neighboring Palestinians, «Price tag» also aims to destabilize the situation on the ground, thus raising the cost of political/diplomatic efforts that may yield territorial concessions. Emerging in mid-2009, in the years 2010-2013 the number of «Price tag» attacks escalated significantly, from some 7-8 attacks in 2010 to 56 recorded attacks in 2012.

«Price tag» also refers to a somewhat organized nucleus of perpetrators. These are typically linked to the Yitzhar-Elon Moreh-Har Bracha triangle (Jewish settlements in the Nablus area), and often to the Od Yosef Chai religious learning institutions in Yitzhar. In addition, a number of «copy cats», sympathizers or racist (but otherwise ideologically unconnected) vandals, perpetrate attacks under the «Price tag» moniker.

«Price tag» springs out of religious-Zionist ideals of retaining Jewish control over what it regards as the Promised Land. According to this world-view, the 1993 Oslo Agreement, where Israel partially transferred some 18 percent of the West Bank to Palestinian authority, was catastrophic. Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza-strip (2005) was however a watershed event. The unprecedented crisis it caused radicalized (parts of) the religious-Zionist population and increased the preparedness to use violence, also against the State.

Some 12 percent of Jewish Israelis can be categorized as religious-Zionists.¹ Characterized by their Messianic/religious zeal, combined with growing disillusionment that the Israeli/Palestinian conflict could be resolved politically, this segment gradually gained disproportional influence in key functions in Israeli society (particularly in the military and electoral politics).

¹ Estimates of the size of the religious-Zionist population however vary. A JCPA study from 1993 for instance indicated that 17 percent of Jewish Israelis were religious-Zionists, suggesting that also today's number could be higher than 12 percent. See: http://www.jcpa.org/dje/articles2/howrelisr.htm
Together religious-Zionists now form the most powerful cross-party interest group in the current government. A number of representatives have direct (or indirect) links to «Price tag».

In addition, structural factors also facilitate the implementation of «Price tag». Significant gaps in civil rights allow settlers to manipulate law-enforcement and the criminal justice system. As Israeli defense doctrine regards settlers as part of Israel’s front-line defense, the IDF supports and cooperates with paramilitary settlement squads, further empowering extremist settlers. However, commanding levels in the IDF, the Shin Bet (Israel’s internal security organization) and other security-oriented segments in the political echelon, have been in the forefront to increase law-enforcement capacities in order to handle «Price tag» (and other subversive Jewish extremist groups). This evolution has led to the establishment of a new police unit specifically designed to deal with «Price tag» and nationalistic criminal acts.

Moreover, it has led to the June 2013 security cabinet decision to label «Price tag» as an «illegal organization». Although not a full «Terrorism» designation, this will provide law-enforcement agencies and prosecutors with improved tools to deal with «Price tag» under Israel’s Defense (Emergency) Regulations. As Israeli citizens, «Price tag» suspects previously enjoyed expansive rights afforded by Israeli civil and criminal laws.

The new categorization also opens up for legal prosecution of ideological backers and financiers of «Price tag». Due to broad sympathies, at least to the stated objectives of «Price tag», in the political echelon, the practical implementation is however still unclear. An evident downside of the new categorization is that the extended powers that it grants to authorities are cause of concern from a civil and political rights perspective.
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INTRODUCTION
As most national (liberation) movements, modern Zionism has bred a number of violent and extremist groups. The most recent manifestation of operative Jewish extremism, «Price tag», is the focus of this report. «Price tag» attacks adhere to a set of distinct, and in many ways novel, mechanisms. Its perpetrators’ readiness to use violence to achieve political objectives has however emerged within a certain historical, political and theological space. To understand this expression of contemporary Jewish extremism, it can be useful to start off by going back a few years into the past.

The 1946 bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 91 people and injuring another 46, is probably the most spectacular terror attack perpetrated by a Jewish group in modern times. Targeting the then Central Offices of the British Mandatory Authorities of Palestine, the Zionist paramilitary group Irgun’s overarching objective was to secure Jewish independence. As this was achieved with the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, an array of pre-State militias, including the Irgun, was incorporated into the IDF (Israel Defense Forces).

As the British abandoned their Mandatory powers, the conflict between Israel and its Arab and Palestinian neighbors commenced. Albeit fought by Israel as a state actor, the perpetual conflict has bred a number of new extremist and violent groups, with a number of factions, sub-groups and loosely affiliated individuals. The most notable organizations over the years have been the Jewish Underground (1979-1984), and groups associated with the late Rabbi Meir Kahane; Kach, Jewish Defense League and Kahane Chai.

Although all the aforementioned groups were Zionists (as in: Jewish nationalists), they draw from separate ideological roots. While the Irgun was a national liberation organization that adhered to secular Revisionist Zionism, (as founded by Ze’ev Jabotinsky and the ideological roots of today’s Likud party), Kach was shaped by its origins as a terror organization that perpetrated a number of attacks against Soviet interests in the US, in its efforts to aid a suppressed Soviet Jewry. Its leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane, later established Kach as a political party in Israel. Although using some Jewish religious slogans, the group’s symbolism,

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2 The report has been funded through a grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). All views expressed are those of the author.
program, rhetoric and mode of operation mainly mirrors (secular) fascist militant right-wing groups.\(^3\)

The Jewish Underground, conversely emerged out of the religious settler movement. In 1980 the group successfully carried out a number of deadly attacks against notable Palestinians in the occupied territories. In 1984 Israeli security officials in the last minute averted an attempt to bomb six Arab busses in East Jerusalem. Consequent investigation also disclosed a plot to destroy the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Attesting to the religious-Zionist roots of the Jewish Underground, and the Messianism to which it adhered, the Dome of the Rock is probably the most symbolic site for opposition to what by some is regarded as Jewish occupation of Islamic holy land. Would the operation have been carried through, its destruction would certainly have caused uproar in Muslim communities worldwide, and possibly also have triggered regional war. The objectives of the Jewish Underground thus (at least partly) adhered to religious convictions of cosmic dimensions, rather than of «worldly», nationalist concerns.

The same accounts for «Price tag», which similarly emerged from the settler movement. As reflected in the nature of «Price tag» attacks, that mostly are limited to crude forms of violence, as graffiti and other forms of vandalism, the perpetrators of these attacks however emerge from the fringes of the settler movement, rather than the settler elite which bred the Jewish Underground.\(^4\) Another aspect that differentiates «Price tag» from all the above mentioned manifestations of nationalist operative Jewish extremism, including the Jewish Underground, is its expressed willingness (and objective) to directly attack the interests of the «worldly» State of Israel; according to the definition of «Price tag» adhered to in this report:

««Price tag» is a modus operandi where Jewish extremists perpetrate attacks on Palestinians, left-wing activists and/ or State capacity, with the objective to undermine Israel's ability to carry though territorial concessions in the West Bank. By carrying out coordinated and disproportionate violence simultaneously in different locations in the West Bank, the aim is to disperse IDF forces and the State's ability to carry out planned evacuations. Attacks on Palestinians and/ or IDF capacities revenging planned or already executed evacuations in settlements, furthermore seek to raise the cost of such actions by escalating intra-communal tensions and/ or destabilizing the security situation on the ground. The «Price tag» mechanism also encompasses attacks that seek to raise the cost of diplomatic efforts that may yield territorial concessions and left-wing activism propagating such concessions.»

\(^3\) Kach was excluded from Israeli politics in the 1980s for racism, and was, together with Kahane Chai, banned as terrorist organizations in 1994, after supporting Baruch Goldstein’s Hebron massacre.

\(^4\) Although arguably with moral and structural support from settler elites, and although the number of attacks have increased significantly.
As mechanisms are viewed as of more interest than separate attacks, this report does not contain a complete mapping of incidents. The focus is rather to understand the mechanisms, and lines into the Israeli establishment that has facilitated the emergence and continuation of «Price tag». This report thus seeks to highlight relevant developments within Israeli society, including political events that have affected the potential for violence on the ground.

Introductory-wise it should also be noted that history also is highly relevant; one should keep in mind that all layers of Israeli society are still affected by centuries of persecution that culminated in the Holocaust, with the mass murder of 6 million Jews resulting from the Nazi objective of the total extinction of Europe's Jewry. This inevitably contributes to the marked disillusionment among Israelis that the conflict with the Arabs and Palestinians can be resolved politically. The Second Intifada, with its wave of terror attacks; the increasing threat of Islamist extremism regionally; as well as Iran's development of nuclear capabilities, which widely is perceived as an existential threat in Israel, all factor in to what many outside observers regard as alarmism and exaggerated caution. This general sense of fear and disillusionment, in turn, expands the general space of Jewish extremism.

Demographic developments also represent a backdrop. Israel is a society that can be divided into a number of religious/demographic sectors. Secular Zionism was hegemonic up to the 1970s. Large-scale immigration of Jews from Arab countries and the former Soviet Union, a general democratization of society and higher birthrates in religious population segments have contributed to a gradual shift, both in Israeli electorate politics and other functions in society. This, in turn, has contributed to foment a platform of direct and indirect support network of «Price tag» in important functions in society, a phenomenon that will be explored in chapters 3 and 4.

It is also useful to keep in mind the ideological diversity of the settler population. The total settler population today stands at some 550,000. Of these 200,000 live in East Jerusalem and 350,000 in the West Bank. The majority of settlers residing in larger settlement blocks in East Jerusalem and close to the 1967-border mainly reside there for economic reasons (as cheaper real estate), of whom many are secular or Masorti (traditional). Some half of West Bank settlements are defined as religious. Estimates are that at least 40 per cent of West Bank

settlers are ultra-Orthodox and 30 per cent national-Religious. A common estimate is thus that some 100,000 of West Bank settlers are national-Religious.\(^6\)

As «Price tag» draws from the Messianic settler movement, theological interpretations within the different streams of Judaism and different developments in these, are also relevant, when exploring its support from leading rabbis and spiritual leaders. As often marginal and geographically spread minorities, Jewish religious authorities historically enjoyed significant independence. Contemporary Judaism thus consists of a large number of sects and sub-sects. Now gathered in Israel, they offer an array of possibilities for ideologues and activists to seek out theological support for their ideas. In constantly challenging each other, this plurality also creates a powerful dynamic that arguably has served to radicalize parts of Israel’s rabbinical community.

In some respects this radicalization resembles the growth of radical Islam throughout the Middle East. Possible commonalities are however something that would have to be further explored in a different context.

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\(^6\) International Crisis Group report «Israel's Religious Right and the Question of Settlements, Middle East Report N°89 – 20 July 2009, 2
A GENERAL MAPPING – EMERGENCE AND TRENDS

An overview of incidents
The UNESCO/Alternative Information Center (AIC) report «Outposts and Price Tag violence – A blow upon a bruise» (2012),7 recounts 62 documented incidents in the UNESCO «Price tag» database, from June 2008 – July 2012. Among these are 50 attacks (including large-scale attacks that targeted multiple communities) on Palestinian property, of which 25 featured religious slurs or desecration (including nine cases of mosque arson); 10 attacks on Israeli Army personnel and property; and 5 attacks on Israeli peace activists. Tag Meir, an Israeli grassroots organization involved in countering «Price tag» attacks, claims there were more than 100 events of «Price tag» between December 2009 and March 2013.8

The Israeli left-wing organization Peace Now, recounts 116 incidents between January 2011 and October 2013.9 Of these 22 incidents are religious slurs or desecration of religious places; 70 are coordinated attacks, vandalism or «Price tag» graffiti; four are attacks against the IDF or other State authorities; six are attacks on Israeli peace activists and 14 are miscellaneous attacks within Israel’s 1967 border.

There are several methodological challenges related to registering «Price tag» attacks. The most important one relates to deciphering the objective behind an attack. UNESCO/AIC state the criteria as follows:10 «...it is self-identified as such by graffiti left at the scene, its temporal and/or geographic proximity to a «threatened» outpost that settlers seek to protect or highlight, and that it has been claimed as a «price tag» attack based on statements made by settler movements or members of these». However, this example from the database illustrates the shortcomings of the definition:11

«14. April 2010 – Settlers torch three Palestinian vehicles in the Palestinian village Huwwara near Nablus and spray graffiti on a mosque that include religious insults. An Israeli military official

8 יוסי סיווד (Hebrew: Tag Meir, final report), June 2013. Report by Tag Meir Organization on «Price tag», received from the organizations spokesman, Yossi Saidof
10 «Outposts and Price Tag violence - A blow upon a bruise», UNESCO/AIC, September 2012, 32
11 Ibid, 69
reported that the arson was likely a "price tag" attack in response to the partial settlement construction moratorium initiated in December 2009.» (My emphasis in bold)

Here categorization is based on one official’s personal interpretation relating to a government decision made four months earlier. The objectives of specific attacks can be unclear in an area where settler violence is widespread.\(^\text{12}\)

«Price tag» is a new concept that is evolving, both from the perpetrator's perspective and in the general public. Perpetrators are often in the margins of society, something that blurs the motives behind specific incidents. Extensive media coverage has both yielded copy-cat attacks, in the line of what probably most correctly would be described as «proto» franchise terrorism, and also where perpetrators simply have adopted «Price tag» as a catch-phrase rather than adhering conceptually to its original meaning.

It is therefore worthwhile to search for general lines rather than to focus on specific attacks. A tactic where acts of violence or vandalism are perpetrated in order to raise the cost of State policies that aim to negate the objectives of ideological settlers to increase settlement numbers in the West Bank, has undoubtedly gained traction since late 2008. The numbers included in the UNESCO/AIC report, increasing from 7-8 attacks yearly in the period 2008 to 2010, 24 attacks in 2011, and 10 attacks recorded till July 2012, largely correspond with the «Tag Meir» numbers with 9 incidents in 2010, 28 in 2011 and 56 in 2012. Peace Now reported of 41 incidents in 2013. Each reported incident however often encompasses a number of separate attacks. These figures are also consistent with the increase in number of reported «Price tag» attacks in Israeli and international media.

The geography of «Price tag» attacks
Israeli police estimates indicate that in 2012 some 80 percent of «Price tag» attacks were perpetrated in the West Bank. Roughly 10 to 15 percent of «Price tag» attacks were reported in the Jerusalem district, and a few percent more were recorded elsewhere in Israel.\(^\text{13}\) In the

\(^{12}\) In 2011 alone, OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), recorded 411 incidents of settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties and property damage. UN OCHA, «West Bank - Settler Violence Incidents in 2011» (April 2012)

West Bank, attacks almost exclusively are committed in area C or its proximity, as the area, covering some 60 per cent of the West Bank, is home to all Israeli West Bank settlers.\textsuperscript{14}

The UNESCO/AIC report shows «Price tag» attacks generally occur close to major roadways in the West Bank. Some incidents have taken place in West Bank roads and junctions. Following an army dismantlement of outposts Nachalat Yosef and Shvut Ami (both outposts in the Nablus area) in June 2009, settlers blocked the nearby Road 55, and threw rocks at Palestinians. In addition, junctions were blocked for traffic by setting fire to tires on the road.\textsuperscript{15} In a different incidence, after Israeli authorities demolished two caravans and a goat pen in the Givat Ronen outpost (an extension of Har Bracha) in July 2010, hundreds of settlers rallied at about 15 major West Bank junctions, blocking some of them.\textsuperscript{16} Aside from the Tapuach and Rechalim Junctions, the road near Ramat Gilad outpost, north of Karnei Shomron, has also suffered from attacks linked to «Price tag». After demolitions in Mitzpe Yitzhar in December 2011, settlers had allegedly attempted to stop security forces by placing nails, spikes and stones on the road leading to the outpost.

A different «Price tag» strategy is to vandalize or perpetrate acts of violence inside Palestinian villages. A large proportion of such attacks have occurred in Nablus Governorate. The most targeted villages have been Burin, Asira al Qabliya, Yasuf, Huwwara, Jit, Urif, Qusra, Kafr Qaddum, Einabus, Tel Madama, Yatma, Qabalan, As-sawiya and Yatma. These are small villages usually with no more than a few thousand inhabitants, with agricultural land locked in between the Jewish settlements of Kedumim, Yizhar, Har Bracha, Kfar Tapuach, Eli, Shilo, Itamar and Elon Moreh. Burin, which is situated between Yitzhar and Har Bracha, stands out as a hotspot, with a number of recorded incidents. Although to a lesser extent, villages in Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate are also exposed, with attacks in Beit Ilu, Burqa (near Migron), Turmus'ayya, Al Mughayyir, Beitin and Al-Janiya. Hebron district is represented with

\textsuperscript{14} The Oslo II accords (1995), divided the West Bank into three administrative divisions; area A, with full civil and administrative control by the Palestinian Authority, area B, with Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control and area C, with full Israeli civil and security control. West Bank Areas in the Oslo II Accord, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank_Areas_in_the_Oslo_II_Accord}. See Appendix 1, p. 39 of this report, for a map of the area division.

\textsuperscript{15} According to Arutz 7 journalist Tzvi Ben Gedalyahu, this was possibly a tactic to divert security forces. He furthermore recounts that «Area residents have sent out emergency notices to civilians to arrive at Ramat Gilad and support the residents.» This makes this a classic example of early «Price tag» attacks. Tzvi Ben Gedalyahu, June 1, 2009, «Police Deploy for New Demolition; Rock Throwers Attack Arabs» \url{http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131643#.UjbgChZ0b58}

\textsuperscript{16} The incident is described thoroughly here: Aviel Magnezi, July 26, 2010, «Settlers block roads, clash with police», \url{http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3925522,00.html}
incidents in Beit Ummar, as well as in the Al Ras cemetery and Hebron itself, and Bani N’im and Jab’a. Comparably fewer attacks are registered in Qalqilya Governorate, although they have taken place (in Immatim and Nabi Elias). A similar evolution has taken place in Bethlehem Governorate (Al Fajjar / Beit Fajar Mosque) and South Hebron Hills (Suseya). However, being a traditional hotspot for general settler violence, an increasing number of attacks in Bat Ayin and the Hebron area have, since 2011 borne the «Price tag» signature. Starting from late 2009, East Jerusalem neighborhoods as Beit Safafa, Sharafa and Shuafat have also been targeted, as well as the mixed Jewish/Arab French Hill neighborhood. These attacks have mostly been in the shape of graffiti or other forms of vandalism, i.e. as slashing of car tires.

A significant proportion of «Price tag» attacks inside Israel’s 1967 borders have targeted religious or in other ways symbolic sites; these encompass the Mamilla cemetery, the Monastery of the Cross, Baptist Narkis Street Congregation Church and The Church of the Dormition in West Jerusalem, as well as the Beit Jamal Monastery some kilometers west of Jerusalem. Also the Jaffa cemetery and Neve Shalom, a cooperative village dedicated to Jewish-Arab co-existence, have been targets of «Price tag» attacks.

A different aspect of «Price tag» is attacks on Israeli left-wing activists. In September 2008 a pipe-bomb lightly wounding Professor Zeev Sternhell, an outspoken critic of settlements, was accompanied with «Price tag» graffiti spray painted on his house. In Sternhell’s neighborhood, investigators found pamphlets, signed the «Army of Librators», offering 1.1 million shekels (roughly $320,000) to anyone who kills a member of Peace Now. At least four attacks have been directed against Peace Now employee Hagit Ofran. She runs the organization’s Settlement Watch Project, which monitors settlement expansion and the construction of new buildings in the West Bank. In September and November 2011, her Jerusalem home’s stairway

17 These trends are confirmed by Israeli human rights group B’Tselem, Yehuda Shaul of Israeli left-wing soldiers’ protest organization Breaking the Silence and former head of the Civil Administration (West Bank and Gaza) Brig. Gen. (res.) Dov Sedaka. Yehuda Shaul mentions hotspots as Nablus (Itamar, Har Bracha, Yizhar), Hebron, South Hebron Hills, (Maon, Sasana, Mitze Yair, Lucifer Farm (Nof Nesh), and the area north-east of Ramallah (Shiło, Bat Ayin, Gush Etzion). SISA interview, Yehuda Shaul, Jerusalem, April, 2013. According to Dov Sedaka northern part of Samaria (Bracha, Itamar, Elon Moreh) and around Hebron are particularly exposed areas. SISA interview, Dov Sedaka, Tel Aviv, June 2013. According to Deema Darawshy, data coordinator dealing with settler violence in B’Tselem, violence is centered around Ramallah and Nablus. «Price tag» attacks also follow general seasonal trends of settler violence, like damage done to property during the olive harvest, and torching of dry crops in the summer. B’Tselem has eight field-workers working full-time in the West Bank. According to a field-worker stationed in South Hebron Hills, another perceived hotspot, there have not been too many cases there in later months. According to Darawshy this might be ascribed to the presence of (international) activists in the area, as well as a large number of video-recording cameras distributed to local Palestinian volunteers to document settler violence. SISA interview, Deema Darawshy, B’Tselem, Jerusalem, July, 2013.
was spray painted with graffiti. In November 2011 «Price tag» graffiti was found on the building after Peace Now’s Jerusalem offices had received a bomb threat. In February 2012 the office’s building was again painted with threatening graffiti.

Also the IDF and other Israeli security organizations have been targeted by «Price tag» attacks. There have been more than six separate incidents of physical assaults on IDF soldiers and police officers: At least five attacks on IDF bases, in addition to one incidence where a monument honoring Israeli soldiers was desecrated in the mainly ultra-Orthodox city of Bnei Brak. These attacks pinpoint the essence of «Price tag»; targeting the State’s ability to carry out political decisions that negate the settlement enterprise.

«Price tag» perpetrators
As of November 2013, only one person has been reported (in Israeli press) as convicted for committing a «Price tag» attack. In August 2013 religious-Zionist news outlet Arutz 7 reported the conviction of a «22 year old Israeli». A number of suspects have however regularly been reported as arrested. Jerusalem District crime figures for 2012 indicate police arrested suspects in 20 percent of the “Price tag” attacks that occurred in the Jerusalem region. This is however markedly lower than the average in the Jerusalem District Police, which stands at 37.2 percent. The lack of reported convictions may partly be a result of media gag orders that regularly are issued to the Israeli press, in cases that are considered to represent a threat to national security.

Both the Jerusalem and West Bank numbers however mirror a pattern of low clearance rates of settler violence in general. Although not directly pertaining to «Price tag», Israeli NGO Yesh Din reports that 91 percent of the 869 West Bank cases the organization monitored between

19 These encompass three attacks on an army base near Ramallah, two on one near Tulkarm, and one near the Tapuach junction.
22 SISA interview, former police officer in Jerusalem district, October 2013, Jerusalem
2005 and 2012 were closed without an indictment.\textsuperscript{23} This state of affairs has long been criticized by Israeli and international observers.

There has purportedly been an increase in indictments in the last year, due to recent changes in personnel in the Israeli police’s investigation department.\textsuperscript{24} Non-the-less; many observers liken the current situation to that of the early 1980s, as it was described in the Karp Report from 1984, an Israeli government inquiry into settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.\textsuperscript{25} This criticism was later reiterated by the Shamgar Commission (1994).\textsuperscript{26} The Sasson Report from 2005 also raised the issue of absence of law-enforcement on settlers.\textsuperscript{27} This echoes repeated criticism by UN agencies. In September 2012 the UN Secretary-General reiterated that «lack of accountability permeates all types of acts of violence committed by Israeli settlers against [Palestinian] property and persons.»\textsuperscript{28}

The main issue pertaining to lacking law-enforcement relates to the dual legal system imposed on non-citizen West Bank Palestinian and the Israeli settler population. Although the some 2.5 million Palestinians residing within the territory administered by the Palestinian National Authority (PA) (areas A and partly B) are subject to Palestinian criminal law, these, and the approximately 150,000 Palestinians residing in area C (under full Israeli civil and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} A/HRC/22/63 - Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, February 3, 2013
\item \textsuperscript{24} SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, Human Rights consultant, former research director at Yesh Din, Tel Aviv, November, 2013
\item \textsuperscript{26} The committee was established to investigate the 1994 massacre of 29 Palestinian worshippers by Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Commission for Inquiry: Massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, 26-Jun-94,
  \url{http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/commission%20of%20inquiry-%20massacre%20at%20the%20tomb%20of%20the.aspx}
\item \textsuperscript{27} The Sasson Report on Illegal outposts, Mars 10, 2005, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
  \url{http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20%20talalya%20sason%20adv.aspx}
\item \textsuperscript{28} A/HRC/22/63 - Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, February 3, 2013
  \url{http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A-HRC-22-63_en.pdf}. This was based on an international investigation on implications of Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people commissioned by the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2012. A/67/375 - UNISPAL, September 18, 2012, Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, 3, paragraph 39. \url{http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/A38CC9891ED4C23785257AAAF005052A}
\end{itemize}
security control), continue to be subject to a military court system in cases related to Israeli national security. 29

While the aforementioned military court system is subject to fewer restrictions, the 350,000 Israeli settlers (residing in area C) enjoy full civil rights and legal guarantees, as subjects to the ordinary Israeli judicial system. 30 This difference also pertains to offenders under the age of 18. While Israel upholds a separate law-enforcement system for minors, that is guided by a strong welfare orientation, 31 Palestinian minors (ages 12-18) under military jurisdiction have traditionally been tried and sentenced as adults. 32/33 As a number of suspected, known or arrested «Price tag» perpetrators have been under the age of 18, this purportedly contributes to the lack of convictions, as crimes are more likely to be handled by the social, rather than the legal apparatus. 34

A different explanation offered for the lack of arrests and convictions of Jewish extremists, is a general familiarity with the legal system (and its limitations). 35 In several instances Jewish

29 This is arbitrarily enforced. On occasions Palestinians residing in area C will be referred to Palestinian law-enforcement. SISA interview, Dror Etkes, consultant, formerly at Peace Now and Yesh Din, Jerusalem, October 2013
30 Dual system of law, B'tselem, http://www.btselem.org/settler_violence/dual_legal_system. The difference is manifested in wide gaps in the authority to arrest an individual, the maximum period of detention before being brought before a judge, the right to meet with an attorney, the protections available to defendants at trial, the maximum punishment allowed by law, and the release of prisoners before completion of their sentence.
34 JCPA briefing, June 18, 2013, Jerusalem. Major General Nitzan Alon, head of IDF Central Command, here related to the process around one «Price tag» attack where Jewish minors had hurled molotov cocktails onto a Palestinian taxi in August 2012, wounding six people; «...It eventually emerged that the perpetrators were minors, some of the even younger than 12. Under the same conditions a Palestinian child would be arrested and persecuted. There are however many limitations other than involving social services in such cases. We tried to put a lot of pressure on their parents and on the community, we tried to handle the issue by the people from the community of Gush Etzion, who are very normative people, to make them put pressure on the community of Bat Ayin. It actually helped, but it happens outside of the regular juridical system. Within the framework of Israeli civilian law there are many limitations to handle cases like this.»
35 JCPA briefing, June 18, 2013, Jerusalem. Major General Nitzan Alon, head of IDF Central Command: «The guys in Yitzhar and other places are familiar with the limitations we have, from a legal point of view». The same is reiterated by other senior members of Israel’s security establishment, former head of Civil Administration, Dov Sedaka (SISA interview, Dov Sedaka, Tel Aviv, June 2013), and Yitzhak Ilan, a former deputy head of the Shin Bet,
extremist have exposed and made public Shin Bet interrogation techniques and requiring practices. In the early 1990s, Hebronite and former member of the Kach Party, Noam Federman, published a pamphlet called «Know Your Rights». The «guidebook» – for those undergoing police or Shin Bet questioning, where Federman outlines advanced Shin Bet interrogation methods – is still circulated.36

A measure that can, and is used, to hinder «Price tag», is administrative distancing orders. Remaining from the British Mandate Era, it allows security forces to hold suspects or distance them from certain areas, without explanation and without trial.37 When employed against Jewish extremists, these are usually used to expel individuals from (all or parts of) the West Bank, usually for 6 months at the time. An administrative distancing order must be signed in person by the Head of Command of the Central Command (currently Major General Nitzan Alon). According to religious-Zionist news outlet Arutz 7, as of February 2013, some 16 youths were at the time subject to such distancing orders.38

Basis of organization
In September 2011 Shin Bet officials warned of increased organization of networks of radical settler youths that commit «Price tag» attacks.39 More evidence of increased coordination of «Price tag» styled attacks eventually emerged; in January 2012 five right-wing extremists were indicted for monitoring the movements of army forces in the West Bank, possession of classified military material, and for orchestrating an attack by activists on an IDF base; aiming to disrupt army operations geared at dismantling illegal West Bank outposts. Although never directly associated with «Price tag» in Israeli media, a document seized by security forces titled «Outposts Defense Program» states that «...activists should push for a situation in which the authorities cannot agree on the evacuation of outposts.» The document ordered activists

to arrange around «ten teams, each able to gather around 10-15 people, and arrange a march toward a [Palestinian] village or a [military] base.» Haaretz named the five arrested activists as Akiva Hacohen, Elchanan Gruner, Yedayia Shoham, Elad Meir, and Yaon Klab, all residents of settlements in the Nablus area; Yitzhar, Havat Gilad, Elon Moreh, and Ramat Migron.40

Later, in June 2012 Israeli journalist Itamar Fleishman exposed a booklet, allegedly distributed in the Bet El settlement in the central West Bank, which instructs right-wingers to block roads, infiltrate IDF bases and commit «Price tag» attacks in order to prevent imminent evacuation of five homes in the settlement.41 The authors urged activists to stand outside army bases and try to convince IDF soldiers to refuse the evacuation order. Activists willing to «risk being detained for one or two days» were asked to block roads and infiltrate IDF bases and Arab villages. The objective, the booklet stated, was to turn the area into «...one of the most turbulent in the West Bank».42

Describing this mechanism, the «Price tag» term was adopted by Israeli mainstream media in mid-2009. The term can however be tied to the term «Arvut Adadit» (Hebrew for "Mutual responsibility"), which first emerged in 2008 in Hakol HaYehudi (The Jewish Voice), a news site run from the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar.

Suspected «Price tag» perpetrators are typically young, religious settlers, and a significant number of them have been linked to the Od Yosef Chai religious learning institutions in Yitzhar.43 Although local Regional Councils generally distance themselves from «Price tag», in January 2011, Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronot however ran a story connecting «Price tag» attacks to a local Settler Committee in Shomron. This is a committee that was established and receives funding from the Samaria Regional Council, a State funded local government entity. The journalist here claimed to expose that the method of «punishing» the IDF and police, by putting an «enormous work load» on them with coordinating disturbances in multiple

41 Itamar Fleishman, June 18, 2012, «Extremists’ guide to 'struggle against Ulpana evacuation'» http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4243686,00.html
42 Ibid.
43 These are only a few examples: Adam Ross, September 9, 2013, «16 year old Arrested in Yitzhar for 'Price Tag' Crimes» http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/171720, Yair Altman, July 8, 2011, «2 Yitzhar yeshiva students suspected of 'price tag' activity», http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4105667,00.html, Yair Altman, November 17, 2010,«Teens from Yitzhar suspected of 'price tag' attacks,» http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/1,7340,L-3985789,00.html
locations answering to what they saw as quick and efficient outpost demolitions, originally emerged here. The article related to a June 28, 2008 committee announcement in internal settlement publications, purportedly disseminating this «idea». The article cited «...a senior figure that on July 26, 2010, personally had heard Benny Katzover, head of the settler committee, organize the blocking of about 15 intersections, in response to the demolition of a trailer in Givat Ronen». Settler leaders Benny Katzover and Gershon Mesika later rejected the story, and threatened to sue the newspaper.

Nucleus, peripheral organization and «copy cats»
Corresponding to Shin Bet assessments, journalist Chaim Levinson suggests there exists a «Price tag» nucleus consisting of some 20 to 30 individuals, which is based in Yitzhar and the surrounding area (the settlements of Yitzhar, Har Braha, Elon Moreh etc. are all situated within short drives from each other).

In 2009 a Shin Bet official furthermore was quoted as saying that there were «...hundreds more [«Price tag» activists] who can be called upon in the case of emergency.» This corresponds to the aforementioned Bet El-booklet, which recounts a system of ranking activists according to how much they are willing to sacrifice. According to Levinson, attacks perpetrated by «Price tag» nucleus extremists are usually signed with graffiti with reference to specific incidents they seek to revenge. The practice of administrative distancing orders is however, according to many observers, assumed to have exported «Price tag» to cities within Israel’s 1967-border; as extremists who have been expelled from the West Bank continue, and in some cases, introduce the «Price tag» practice to new recruits in cities as Jerusalem, Safed and Tel Aviv/Jaffo.

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45 David Avharam, January 5, 2012, ידיעות נגד המות nackte «אחרונות» (Hebrew: Settler leaders against Yediot Aharonot), http://b.walla.co.il/?w=1891514
46 SISA interview, Chaim Levinson, June 2013, Tel Aviv and Barak Ravid, February 3, 2012, ראש המטה של ארגון planet (Hebrew) http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.1632993 According to this article, Shin Bet head, Yoram Cohen, here suggested that; «...this group consists of several dozen activists, mainly from Yitzhar»
48 SISA interview, Chaim Levinson, Tel Aviv, June, 2013
49 SISA interview, Dror Etkes, October 2013, Jerusalem, SISA interview, Hagit Ofran, June 2013, Jerusalem and SISA interview, Gadi Gvaryahu, Jerusalem, July 2013
In addition to the Yitzhar-Elon Moreh-Har Bracha triangle-based «Price tag» nucleus, there are presumably also groups and individuals that subscribe to the «Price tag» ideology, and that are influenced via settler web-forums and media to perpetrate «Price tag» style attacks. Although there is a certain overlap, this may also encompass the so-called «Hill-top youth». These are typically youngsters residing in busses or caravans, usually in uninhabited hilltops surrounding Jewish settlements, and often in close proximity to Palestinian villages. They are commonly associated with violence against Palestinians and left-wing activists. As they often are marginalized youth that are not directly related to organized communities or learning institutions, they usually fall outside of more organized networks. In later years «Hill-top youth» have nevertheless, in some cases, been linked to «Price tag» attacks.

In a different category are individuals who employ «Price tag» symbolism (usually graffiti) without subscribing to the original «Price tag» ideology, and without sharing its objectives. Since 2011 «Price tag» attacks have been widely debated in Israel. It has become a catch phrase that attracts a great deal of attention in the Israeli press. It is thus easily adopted by youth and others who wish to attract attention when perpetrating racist or nationally oriented crimes. These crimes might however not be related to the «Price tag» objective of furthering the settlement enterprise per se.

Some of the increasing number of attacks on religious (and symbolic) targets in Israeli cities inside the 1967-border, may be ascribed to this category. The «Price tag» attacks vandalizing tombstones in a Christian Orthodox cemetery in Jaffa in June 2013 is for instance clearly nationally motivated, but it might not be a «Price tag» attack. The same accounts for the vandalism against a Christian cemetery in East-Jerusalem in October 2013 destroying 15 gravestones. Four ultra-Orthodox youth were caught and arrested for the crime. As religious animosities and rivalry towards Christian and Muslim Arabs are more prevalent than

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50 Shimi Friedman, (Hilltop youth: A hybrid of generational opposition). Unpublished Phd. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Ben Gurion University (Hebrew) Following 10 years of fieldwork, PhD. candidate Shimi Friedman however found that a number of these youth originate from cities within Israel’s 1967-border. SISA interview, Shimi Friedman, July 2013, Jerusalem. This is confirmed by several former IDF combat soldiers with experience from the West Bank.


52 Gil Ronen, July 2, 2013, «Three Jews Arrested for Monastery ‘Price Tag’» http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/169520#.UlfPERZQbS8 This is an example of an attack that clearly can be characterized as «Price tag».
objectives of settlement expansion in the ultra-Orthodox population, this incident might with high probability not be ascribed as a proper «Price tag» attack.

The same accounts for a case of vandalism against a Tel Aviv-apartment inhabited by Arabs in January 2013. Although it was perpetrated under the «Price tag» moniker, little else points to this as a «Price tag» attack. Albeit rare, there has also been at least one incident where police investigation has indicated that a mock «Price tag» attack has been staged. On some occasions journalists and other observers have also labeled attacks as «Price tag» without substantial evidence. With the increased coverage and attention, the number of unrelated «Price tag» attacks is growing.

However: Although there are clear pointers to «Price tag» emerging from the Yitzhar-Elon Moreh-Har Bracha triangle, the small geography of Israel (some 26,000km2 including West Bank areas under Israeli control), as well as increased connectivity represented by new media, make it hard to differentiate between the different groups. Estimates of the number of Jewish extremists who would be likely to emulate «Price tag» are uncertain, and range from around 1000 to 5000 individuals.55

The larger framework
Contours of a «Price tag» organization can thus be recognized by the exposed instructional booklets, documents and online settler discussion boards, as well as newspapers. Although linked to «Price tag», the Shomron Settler Committees involvement is purportedly on an ideational, rather than operational level (assuming that the Yedioth exposure otherwise would have led to indictments for slander). They are not always easily separated. But despite

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55 SISA interview, Benny Katzover, Head of the Shomron Settler Committee, July 2013, Elon Moreh. Although he makes a concerted effort to link them to criminal activity, rather than ideology, long time settler leader Benny Katzover estimates that there are about 5000 extremists. SISA interview, Hagit Ofran, Director of Peace Now’s Settlement Watch Program, June 2013, Jerusalem. Ofran estimates the number of people taking part in such activities at around 1000 to 2000 individuals.
56 SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, Human Rights consultant, former research director at Yesh Din, Tel Aviv, November, 2013. The fact that Hebron/South Hebron Hills does not have that many «Price tag» attacks, may indeed be ascribed to the fact that they do not have organized «settler committees» in the same way as they have in the Shomron area.
increased coordination and organization, «Price tag» is arguably still more of an idea or a mechanism, rather than an organization.\textsuperscript{57}

Albeit presumably not directly linked, there is a number of organizations that continually assist «Price tag»; mainly by providing free (or cheap) legal assistance, but also by petitioning for the interests of Jewish extremists, «Price tag» perpetrators included. The most prominent of these legal assistance organizations is Honenu.\textsuperscript{58} Honenu attorney Adi Kedar consistently appears as the legal defender in «Price tag» cases. The organization, which was founded in 2001 by Kiryat Arba resident Shmuel Meidad (in right-wing circles known as «Zangi»), works broadly to provide legal aid to Jewish extremists. In 2005 it was exposed that Honenu secretly was raising funds to assist Yigal Amir, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s assassin, and his wife.\textsuperscript{59} In July 2013 Honenu furthermore initiated a drive to release imprisoned convicts from the Jewish Underground, whose members were sentenced to 15 years for placing a bomb outside a girls’ school in East Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{60}

A number of members of the Israeli security – and press establishment regard Honenu, at least on a practical level, as part of «Price tag».\textsuperscript{61} The organization claims to receive most of its funding from (tax-deductible) donations. Indeed, their financial report from 2011 reveals they received donations of over 1.9 million shekels (approx 550,000 USD) that year. This is a significant increase from 2010, when the organization received some 1.3 million shekels in donations.\textsuperscript{62} (Comparably, it only received some 190,000 shekels in 2002.)\textsuperscript{63} Both Honenu's

\textsuperscript{57} According to Chaim Levinson: «...Although a hierarchy, they do not have a real centralized leadership. But it can develop into something more organized.» SISA interview, Chaim Levinson, June 2013, Tel Aviv
\textsuperscript{58} Honenu - Providing legal aid to Israeli soldiers and civilians in distress, \url{http://honenu.org}. According to their website this is an «Israeli Zionist legal aid organization working.../ ...to assist Soldiers and civilians who find themselves in legal entanglements due to defending themselves against Arab aggression, or due to their love for Israel.»
\textsuperscript{60} Ben Hartman, July 30, 2013, «Relatives of Jews jailed for terror attacks call for a 'mutual prisoner release'», \url{http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Relatives-of-Jews-jailed-for-terror-attacks-call-for-a-mutual-prisoner-release-321554}. Honenu then petitioned for their release under the pretense of a «prisoner exchange», as the Israeli cabinet authorized freeing 104 Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to the Palestinian Authority ahead of the renewed peace talks.
\textsuperscript{61} SISA interview, Dov Sedaka, Tel Aviv, June 2013. Talk with former Haaretz journalist Uri Blau, June 2013.
Israeli and US branches are registered as a charitable organizations, making donations tax deductible in both countries.64

Other organizations working to defend extremist settlers that may, although more peripherally, be linked to «Price tag» are The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel,65 and The Human Rights Organization of Judea and Samaria.66 The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel regularly petitions against the use of the administrative distancing orders, which is the main tool employed against «Price tag» perpetrators by law-enforcement agencies.67 The Human Rights Organization of Judea and Samaria, which has been idle in later years, formerly mainly protested alleged police violence against extremist settlers.

«Price tag» triggers
The main objective of «Price tag» attacks is to ensure the continuation of the settlement enterprise, by raising the cost of working against it. Main triggers are thus evacuations and demolitions of buildings and/ or other constructions in the West Bank. Demolition orders issued by the Civil Administration, the government or the Knesset, as well as High Court decisions, are detrimental to settlement expansion. Although this usually falls into a category of general settler violence, murder and other violent incidents perpetrated by Palestinians against settlers, may also trigger «Price tag» attacks. Other triggers are (drives to engage in) peace talks that imply (future) territorial concessions in the West Bank.

Diverging from ordinary settler violence, loosely estimated, some 10-15 percent of «Price tag» attacks have directly targeted Israeli individuals and groups involved in delegitimizing (parts of) the settlement enterprise. Both Professor Zeev Sternhell and Hagit Ofran of Peace Now's Settlement Watch Project are high-profile and long-time critics of the settlement enterprise in the Israeli discourse. A different example of this approach is the attack on a mosque in the

64 Honenu - Donate, http://honenu.org/donate/, Honenu is registered as an «amuta» (organization) in the Israeli registrar and is recognized by the Israeli Tax Authorities. In the US it appears under the name «Central Fund of Israel», with a unique IRS ID number, which makes donations tax deductible in the US. Aside from their Israeli offices located in Kiryat Arba, the organization also has a New York branch.
http://zechuyot.blogspot.no
Palestinian village of Salfit close to Ariel in December 2011.68 Although subject to a gag order in Israeli media, the text «Avi Arieli, The Man» appeared among the graffiti left by the perpetrators.69 This refers to Avigdor Arieli, the Shin Bet officer in charge of the investigation of Jewish extremism in the West Bank. His identity had previously been exposed in extremist right-wing forums.70

A majority of «Price tag» attacks can however been directly linked to demolitions of buildings and/ or other constructions in settlements. In some instances this has prompted settlers to respond by immediately vandalizing nearby Palestinian property. Other times «Price tag» attacks have alluded to former demolitions that are referred to in graffiti left at the scene.

Peace talks, territorial concessions and demolitions did however happen before «Price tag» emerged around 2008. So, what prompted the emergence of «Price tags? Ever since the 1967 occupation, all Israeli governments have participated in expanding Jewish settlement in the West Bank.71 Expansion has however over the years also been countered by a number of territorial concessions. These concessions always triggered radicalization and violent extremism. After Israel committed to withdraw from Sinai as part of the 1978 Camp David Agreement, the Jewish Underground terrorist organization emerged. It also fomented support for Rabbi Meir Kahane, and several Kach-affiliated groups who perpetrated several small-scale terrorist attacks against Palestinians.72 The 1993 Oslo Accords were followed by the 1994 attack in the Cave of the Patriarchs/ Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron by extremist settler Baruch Goldstein, killing 29 Palestinians; as well as the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by Yigal Amir, a young religious-Zionist law student in 1995.

While all these groups were somehow marginal, something changed in the 2000s. The decisive event was Israel's 2005 disengagement from the Gaza-strip. As will be seen, it prompted religious radicalization and support for the use of active force against the State in

71 And previously also in the Gaza-strip and although to a lesser extent, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan.
72 Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, Jewish Terrorism in Israel, (Cloth, 2009), p. 74
broader segments of the settler population. Behind were however a series of indications that the State was preparing for major territorial concessions. The 1993 Oslo Agreement, where Israel had partially transferred over 18 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinian authority, presumably laid the ground. So did the construction of the separation barrier (2000- ). Although not fully constructed, according to its plan it would leave some 80,000 settlers of the «wrong side» of the wall. It was, during its construction and planning, increasingly perceived as a demarcation of a future border, something that indeed has been expressed openly by government officials later.73

Authoritative rabbis’ interpretations, and their religious rulings responding to these events, furthermore presumably laid the ground for radicalization, and consequent (violent) extremism. Already prior to the disengagement the Council of Yesha Rabbis,74 an unofficial group of rabbis who generally are government appointed to serve as rabbis in West Bank settlements (cities and communities), had issued a religious ruling against «uprooting settlements».75 Condemnations were later accompanied, and expanded, by a number of appeals to exercise resistance against government policies, spanning from civil disobedience, to acts of violence directed against soldiers who partake in settlement evacuations.76 As will be expanded on later, the rabbis’ steadfastness in responding to events provided them with increased influence. West Bank rabbis’ condemnations and rulings were also echoed by authoritative rabbis within Israel’s 1967 borders.

An explanation for the particularly harsh reactions to the Gaza evacuation is that the Gaza strip (as is the West Bank) indisputably lies within the sanctified boundaries of Eretz Yisrael according to Talmudic interpretations. In contrast, the Sinai Peninsula, which caused far less

73 Al-Jazeera English, November 6, 2013, «Israel says Separation Wall will be border», http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/11/israel-says-separation-wall-will-be-border-201311514132609960.html. This was indeed proposed by the Israeli negotiating team in the November 2013 talks. 74 The Yesha Rabbinate is not an official body, but consists of rabbis who are government appointed to serve as rabbis in West Bank settlements (cities and communities), and who thus are government officials. The Yesha Rabbinate is generally considered to represent more extremist views that the settlement mainstream. SISA interview, Lior Yavne, October 2013, Tel Aviv and SISA interview, Kalman Neuman, researcher at Israel Democracy Institute’s Religion and State project, October 2013, Jerusalem. 75 Nadav Shragai, June 27, 2004, «Leading rabbi takes militant line on disengagement», http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/leading-rabbi-takes-militant-line-on-disengagement-1.1126480. According to the article the Council of Yesha Rabbis had issued a ruling saying that «...no man, citizen, police officer or soldier is authorized to help in uprooting settlements.» 76 In a radio interview cited in this article, Rabbi Shalom Dov Wolpo had allegedly called on West Bank settlers living in outposts and their supporters to use violence against soldiers and officers who use crowd dispersal means during evacuations. Kobi Nahshoni, August 3, 2011, «Rabbi Wolpo: Fire rubber bullets back at soldiers», http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4039076,00.html
controversy when it was evacuated in 1982, is comparably, to a lesser degree so; and returning the territory to Egypt was thus less controversial from a theological perspective.77

The Oslo Accords also prepared the ground for a different dynamic in the West Bank. Due to the obligations specified in the Oslo Accords, the approval rate of new (official) buildings in the West Bank (and Gaza) had decreased markedly under the Rabin government (1992-1995).78 One consequence was the occurrence and expansion of, according to Israeli law, unauthorized outposts in the mid-1990s. A number of these outposts were, moreover, built on privately owned Palestinian land. Following a number of Supreme Court petitions by Israeli left-wing organizations such as Peace Now and Yesh Din in the years 2005-2012, Israeli law-enforcement agencies were ordered to carry out demolitions. A total of 27 demolition operations of such often small-scale structures, including agricultural structures and other constructions that were not for housing, have since been carried through in the West Bank.79 A few dozen demolitions are currently in the pipeline, of which 4-8 are pressing incidents (generally as they refer to construction on privately owned Palestinian land).80

While often small-scale, these demolitions serve as a continuous reminder of the authorities’ willingness and capabilities to carry through settlement evacuations. These are usually referred to as a triggering factor for the emergence of «Price tag». Indeed, such a demolition was behind the first «Price tag» like event in the West Bank. As the Israeli government in February 2006 announced that it would demolish nine houses in Amona, one of the largest outposts in the West Bank, approximately 3,000 settlers gathered to resist.81 The number of protesters attested to increased coordination among the settlers. The level of violence was also unprecedented. While previous evacuations had been relatively manageable, now more than 200 settlers, police officers, and soldiers, including 80 security personnel and several

79 The Road to Dispossession. A Case Study - The Outpost of Adei Ad, Yesh Din, February 2013, 49. http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/20%22פסל%22ירם%20וסל%20%22MaslulHanishul_Eng_LR.pdf Based on information received from Second Lt. Bar Akoka, Civil Administration Public Inquiries Officer, July 25, 2012. The information was received in response to a Yesh Din request under the Freedom of Information Act to receive information about enforcement actions undertaken in the Adei Ad area.
80 SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, October 2013, Tel Aviv
settler MKs, sustained injuries.\textsuperscript{82} A widespread assertion is that this was a reaction to the failure of peaceful protest against the Gaza evacuations half a year previously.\textsuperscript{83} Thus, both the Gaza disengagement and subsequent evacuations of Jews from occupied territories have led to increased apprehension among the ideological settler population. These «retreats» increased the perception of a need to develop new and cunning initiatives to be able to withstand State actions that challenged the settlement enterprise.

Interrelated, fear of withdrawals and (levels of) violence usually correlates.\textsuperscript{84} The number of attacks, for instance, increased after Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu declared a 10-month settlement freeze «to restart peace talks» in November 2009. The spike in «Price tag» attacks in the summer of 2013 may similarly be viewed as a consequence of the renewed US initiated peace talks in August 2013, although other factors also play a role.

\textbf{Religious and ideological basis}
As seen above, authoritative rabbis have taken on a central role in opposing land concessions. Thus, to fully understand the emergence of «Price tag», a closer examination of the ideological foundation of the settler movement, religious-Zionism, is required. Although the settlement enterprise, from its inception, was pursued by Israeli governments of all colors, there were different rationales behind the expansion in different sectors. For security-minded secularists, the belief was rooted in the idea that ensuring Israeli control over all or (strategic) parts of the West Bank (and the Gaza strip), would create a territorial buffer in a hostile region and achieve increased security for Israel. The religious-Zionist segment's drive to settle the territories conversely relied on Biblical prophecies that God promised the Land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael) to the ancient Israelites. This is furthermore something that often is overlooked in a schism that consistently regards all construction beyond the 1967 borders as one: Although the distinction is not always consistent, the security-minded sector has largely pursued settlement in strategic parts of the area, such as the Jordan Valley and other locations.

\textsuperscript{82} Efrat Weiss, January 2, 2006, «Violent clashes in Amona; hundreds hurt», \url{http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3209115,00.html}
\textsuperscript{83} SISA interview, Kalman Neuman, October 2013, Jerusalem
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid. See also for instance Wikileaks document from October 21. 2009, «Olive Harvest kicks off, less violently than expected», \url{http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09JERUSALEM1925_a.html} «...Lior Yavne, (then in Yesh Din), said settlers appear less concerned that a settlement moratorium is imminent, and are therefore less prone to violent acts.»
with strategic value, often in close proximity to the 1967-border. The religious-Zionist sector has, conversely, pushed for settlement in all parts of the territory.  

An important point relating to the religious-Zionist ideology of «settling the land», is that this traditionally was disputed in Jewish tradition. Orthodox Judaism (the dominant stream of Judaism over the centuries) generally held that settlement of the land would have to be celestial initiated. This belief corresponded to Biblical prophecies that indicated that the arrival of the Jewish Messiah would mark the first step in the process towards redemption, that only later would be followed by an ingathering of world Jewry back to the Land of Israel. Within this tradition, Zionism, as an active effort to establish (a secular) Jewish state, was condemned as disbelief and a rebellion against God.

As the mainly secular Zionist movement advanced in the late 19th – and early 20th centuries, Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935), the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Mandate Palestine, however developed a theological model that would reconcile the two positions and provide a religious legitimation to secular Zionism. Kook propagated that Jewish settlement in the land of Israel would bring about salvation to Jews (and consequently to the entire world). Only after the re-foundation of the Jewish homeland, the Messiah would arrive. For this to happen, Jews would have to live according to the laws of the Torah and the Halakha (Jewish religious laws), and commit the «Mitzvot of Eretz Yisrael», religious commandments which can only be performed in the land of Israel. Central to such provision was the cultivation of the land of Israel.

Religious-Zionism was institutionalized in 1924, as Rabbi Kook founded the Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva. Rabbi Kook the elder died before the establishment of Israel in 1948, but his son, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, continued his legacy as head of the Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva, in 1951.

The Six-Day War in 1967 was fateful for religious-Zionism. In less than a week Israeli forces took control of the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East

85 SISA interview, Dror Etkes, Jerusalem, October 2013 and SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, October 2013, Tel Aviv
86 For deliberations on this, see i.e. Aviezer Ravitzky, Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism (University of Chicago Press, 1996), chapter 1
88 Ibid. «...Zionism was not merely a political movement by secular Jews. It was actually a tool of God to promote His divine scheme and to initiate the return of the Jews to their homeland - the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.»
Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. All areas could be interpreted to be included in the biblical land prophecies. The conquest also included holy Jewish sites as the Jerusalem Western Wall and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Disciples of the Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva, with Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook in the forefront, perceived the events as an initial stage on the way to redemption. Religious-Zionists soon reacted, by initiating drives to reestablish Jewish communities that had existed in the West Bank prior to its 1948 Jordanian conquest, and to settle new areas. What should not be overlooked, is that the events of the 1967 war also sent shockwaves through Israel’s secular and traditionalist (non-Orthodox) population. The military victory of the nascent Jewish state against neighboring Arab states was perceived (and received) as a miracle. It posed a compelling challenge to the understanding that Israel had been established solely as a refuge against persecution. Increasingly, a narrative relating the State to Biblical Prophesies, gained traction.

Despite the evidently un-democratic objective of a Jewish state ruled by Halakha, the interpretation that emerged from the tradition of Rabbi Kook, regarded the secular state as a «Holy» tool for redemption. Thus, the then (comparable to now) still relatively socially marginalized segment of religious-Zionist adherents set about to work to achieve its objectives through democratic means. This approach which in Hebrew is described as Mamlachi (in English: «Stately»), implies loyalty to the State in its current form, believing that it eventually will lead to the fulfillment of Biblical Prophecies. Its counterpart, a non-Mamlachi approach, disregards or is even hostile to the secular State of Israel, and views it as an obstacle to the fulfillment of prophecies.

Albeit democracy and the prevailing legal system is accepted by religious-Zionists on the condition that the government of Israel fulfills its «mandate» to settle all the land, relations between the State and Mamlachi religious-Zionists sector are, to some extent, fragile. Settlement of the land remains the most important objective. Should they be grave enough,

89 Michael Feige, Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories (Wayne State University Press, 2009), 29, Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, Jewish Terrorism in Israel, (Cloth, 2009), 42-43 and Ian S. Lustick, “Israel’s Dangerous Fundamentalists” Foreign Policy, 68 (Fall 1987): 119
90 SISA interview, Kalman Neuman, Jerusalem, October 2013. Neuman suggests the proportions are similar today. However; as both the character and demographic make-up of religions-Zionists has changed over time, demographic statistics may not provide a consistent understanding of the role of religions-Zionists in Israeli society. The increase in influence may, besides a general increased relevance, also be seen as a result of a break in the hegemony of Ashkenazi secular Zionism in the late 1970s.
disappointments of state actions and polity are bound, at some point, to trigger disobedience towards the State within the Mamlachti sector. «Within this ideology, Zionism takes precedence and extralegal action becomes legitimate, should a real conflict between democracy and Zionism erupt», warns Ehud Sprinzak, an Israeli counterterrorism specialist and expert in far-right Jewish groups.92 «Price tag» is a manifestation of religious-Zionism that opposes the Mamlachti approach, and that have decided to take operative action against the State, due to a perception that it poses an obstacle to the process of holy redemption.

Non-Mamlachti positions and radicalization within the religious-Zionist population is also somehow connected to Israel’s ultra-Orthodox population. Although fundamentalist, most streams of ultra-Orthodox Jewry never ascribed to the religious-Zionism of Rabbi Kook, but rather uphold the traditional Orthodox view that the process of redemption should be celestially initiated. Acceptance of the State of Israel varies, corresponding to the wide range of religious streams, ranging from rabid anti-Zionism, to a general acceptance of the secular State.93

As the ultra-Orthodox never adopted the view that the secular State was a Holy tool for redemption, ultra-Orthodox theological interpretations are increasingly attractive (and available) for religious-Zionists disenchanted with the State. Following a radicalization trend within religious-Zionism, several amalgam streams combining religious-Zionism and ultra-Orthodoxy have thus emerged throughout the 2000s, among these Hardal and Chabakook.94 These views are commonly associated with non-Mamlachti (non-Stately) religious-Zionism, radicalism and, in its most extremist and operative expression, «Price tag».95

92 Ibid.
93 Naturei Karta is one of the most anti-Zionist sects. Sephardi Shas Judaism is, on the other hand, quite accepting of the State of Israel.
94 Hardal is composed of the words «Haredi» (ultra-Orthodox) and «Dati Leumi» (national-religious). Chabakook is composed of the words «Chabbad» and «Kook», referring to the Chabbad stream of Judaism and to Rabbi Kook.
95 SISA interview, Mikael Manekin, June 2013, Jerusalem. Manekin describes this as a «ultra-Orthodoxation» with a drift towards measures as gender separation and opposition to female singing in some religious-Zionist communities, practices usually associated with ultra-Orthodox Judaism. This mix can be explained by a new dynamics in Judaism after the establishment of the State of Israel. By amassing a plurality of world-wide Jewish theological traditions, Jewish-Israeli individuals, groups and communities can increasingly mix traditions to fit their religious and political convictions. The last few years [ultra-Orthodox, non-adherents of Rabbi Kook] groups like Chabad, a Hasidic movement in Haredi Judaism, has increasingly been picked up by religious-Zionists who doubt the position of the State of Israel as a tool for redemption.
It should however be noted that the two positions to some extent overlap ideologically, and that the distinctions are fluid. It is thus difficult to assess the exact proportions of Mamlachti versus non-Mamlachti adherents. In 2005, following the disengagement, former intelligence chief Ami Ayalon estimated that some 8 percent of the West Bank’s then 250,000 settlers were militantly anti-State. This number has probably increased since. It is however important to distinguish between traditional ultra-Orthodox positions in themselves, and the amalgamated expressions, that often are shaped by selected parts of the theology.

(Non-)Institutionalization of the ideology
How does the distinction between Mamlachti and non-Mamlachti positions fit into the institutional dynamics within the religious-Zionist population? Going back to the 1970s, Gush Emunim (Bloc of the faithful) – committed to establishing Jewish settlements in the newly conquered areas – soon emerged as the most important movement for the religious-Zionist. This group formed the basis of most of the settler organizations that later emerged. In 1976 the movement founded the settlement-building arm Amana, which later became independent and evolved into the main building company in the West Bank. Gush Emunim soon transformed into the Yesha Council, an umbrella organization representing all cities, regional and local councils in the West Bank, and previously in the Gaza-strip.

The Gaza disengagement however decreased confidence in the Yesha Council in religious-Zionist circles. The general perception was that the Council had been too passive in its protests against the disengagement. A number of observers point to a mass-protest organized

96 SISA interview, Brig. Gen. (res.) Dov Sedaka, June 2013, Tel Aviv. SISA interview, Mikael Manekin, June 2013, Jerusalem. It is however worth mentioning that all this is happening within the same political party; the Jewish House (Bayit Yehudi) which in its current form is a coalition of two parties; the pre-merger Jewish House which is Mamlachti, and seeks to influence the State from within its institutions; and the National Union (Yihud Leumi) which is more non-Mamlachti and holds a position contrary to the State.
98 SISA interview, Kalman Neuman, October 2013, Jerusalem
101 Martin E. Marty, R. Scott Appleby (Eds.) Jewish Zionist Fundamentalism in Fundamentalisms Observed, Volume 1, (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 282
102 Michael Feige, Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories (Wayne State University Press, 2009). Yehe is the Hebrew word for «Salvation», is also an acronym for Yehuda Shomron, Az’a, (lit. «Judea Samaria and Gaza Council»)
103 The Yesha Council today is effectively representing some 220,000 settlers (Yesha Council Website 2013)
by the Yesha Council on July 19 2005, as a fatal incidence. The original plan of the protest, which had gathered tens of thousands of activists, was to march into the Gaza-strip in an attempt to physically hinder the evacuations. In a stand-off with security forces, the protesters were however locked inside Kfar Maimon, an Israeli town near the Gaza border. After a few days Yesha Council leaders signed an agreement declaring their defeat, and pledged to give up on their initial plan to march to Gaza. Many in the religions-Zionist sector later suspected that the Council intentionally, and in coordination with the State, had planned to trap and incapacitate the activists. «At least in Shomron [Samaria], the Yesha council is not looked upon as leaders [anymore],» relates a settler spokeswoman associated with the Mamlachti sector.

The Yesha Rabbinate nevertheless remained steadfast. Their condemnations were later followed by direct appeals to oppose all land concessions. While the Yesha Council is regarded as a politically pragmatic Mamlachti stronghold, the Yesha rabbis generally lead a more extremist, non-Mamlachti line. Although it is not a formal organ, the leverage of its rabbis now grew, at the cost of the Yesha Council.

It can be interesting to look geographically at this shift; while Mamlachti communities historically tended to emerge in the Etzion Block (in central Judea), characterized by its flat agricultural landscape and proximity to Jerusalem, non-Mamlachti (and ideologically «wilder») communities generally emerged in hilly and less accessible areas, as the Samarian hills northeast of Nablus and in the South Hebron Hills, as well as the Hebron area. The main (and most organized) non-Mamlachti centre in the West Bank is indeed in the Yitzhar-Elon Moreh-Har Bracha «Price tag» triangle.

104 Efrat Weiss and Hanan Greenberg, July 21, 2005, «'Only 1,500 remain'», http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3114698,00.html
105 SISA interview, Tamar Ashraf, spokesperson of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council, June 2013, Eli Ha Kduma settlement
107 SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, October 2013, Tel Aviv
108 SISA interview, Tamar Ashraf, spokesperson of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council, July 2013. According to her; «...Everyone are followers of Rabbi Kook but there were always two different groups [of ideological settlers]». She recounts a joke alluding to the regional and ideological differences: «In Shomron [Samaria] people will stand up and fight against a (controversial) government decision. In Eli they will send a fax».
«Price tag» and rabbis
To understand the approach of theological support of «Price tag» among Israeli rabbis, it might be helpful to take another step back in history, to the mid-1990s. Although their influence was broadened following the Gaza disengagement, it is not new that rabbis, in their capacity as spiritual leaders, advocate supporters to revenge State decisions that challenge the settlement enterprise. The 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin serves as a good example, and is probably also as a predecessor to «Price tag».

In mid-1995, a growing number of pamphlets appeared in settlement synagogues debating whether the Halakhic rules of Din Rodef and Din Moser could be applied to then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who had negotiated and signed the 1993 Oslo Accords. Din Rodef literally means «the case of the pursuer», although it might be more idiomatically translated into English as «the right of self-defense». The second concept, Din Moser, refers to a Jew who is willing to hand Jewish property over to gentiles. According to a rabbinic precept articulated by the medieval Jewish theologian Maimonides: «Every Jew is obligated to save a pursued person from his pursuer, even if this means killing the pursuer.» The claim was that the Oslo Accords would endanger Jewish lives, and that actions directed against Rabin might prevent that. According to the Halakha, the sentence for both transgressions is death. The call for Din Rodef had then been supported by then head of the Yesha Rabbinical Council and Chief Rabbi of Kiryat Arba, Rabbi Dov Lior, as well as Avigdor Neventzal, a rabbi in Jerusalem's Old City. In his testimony to the police, Rabin's assassin, Yigal Amir, a former yeshiva student, declared that he had perpetrated the assassination based on the rabbinical decree. According to criminal files, Yoel Ben-Nun, a prominent religious-Zionist rabbi, insisted that Amir had received (direct) authorization for the assassination. From this perspective «Price tag» attacks could be regarded as lesser means that would prevent the innocent’s murder, as a tactic that should be employed before the act of Din Rodef itself.

109 SISA interview, Mikael Manekin, June 2013, Jerusalem: «People started to question why it was taking so much time for the redemption to come. And whether the secular State run its course, and they should get more active in changing the situation."
110 Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, Jewish Terrorism in Israel, (Cloth, 2009), p. 100
112 Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, Jewish Terrorism in Israel, (Cloth, 2009), 100
114 Ami Pedahzur and AriePerliger, Jewish Terrorism in Israel, (Cloth, 2009), 106
115 Tel Aviv Regional Court, Criminal File 498/95, p. 28
Although «Price tag» generally is denounced by rabbis, the ideology behind it is still granted crucial theological backing and endorsement by a broad specter of Israeli rabbis. To make a distinction between different streams of Judaism (according to the Mamlachti/non-Mamlachti distinction), the Chabad Lubavitch movement is situated somewhere between ultra-Orthodoxy and «land» theology. Rabbis with the most radical approach to «Price tag» have thus been associated with Chabad. It should however be emphasized that Chabad Lubavitch is a large and diverse organization with a number of different approaches (or non-approaches) to political issues, spanning from patriotic nationalist to displaying various expressions of anti-Zionism. (Its world-wide operations are furthermore mainly characterized by activities as charity and proselytizing.)

As a few examples; Rabbis Yitzchak Ginsburg and Yitzhak Shapira of the Od Yosef Chai Yeshivah in Yitzhar, are closely related to Chabad, and are in fact described as «almost non-Zionist» in religious-Zionists circles. The rabbis in Yitzhar learning institutions include elements of Chabad theology in their teachings. In May 2012, Yitzhak Shapira, urged «fierce defense of hilltops» and claimed the IDF is to blame for «creating an atmosphere of «Price tag». In a radio interview in March 2011, Rabbi Shalom Dov Wolpo, another Chabad rabbi, suggested settlers should fire rubber bullets at soldiers who participated in evacuations. Besides condoning violence against soldiers partaking in evacuations, Rabbi Dov Wolpo urged a break with the State of Israel, and called for the establishment of a separate Jewish Entity in Judea and Samaria.

And indeed; soon after Prime Minister Netanyahu announced a 10-month moratorium in settlement construction in November 2009, an article written by Rabbi Yosef Elitzur of the Od Yosef Hai Yeshiva in Yitzhar, appeared in the Yitzhar based news site Hakol HaYehudi (The Jewish Voice), where he outlines the strategy of «extracting a price» from the government

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116 SISA interview, Benny Katzover, July 2013, Elon Moreh
120 הхожיילו הحكومי הממשלילתי הוא אתר של חדשות מעיל (Hebrew: Jewish Voice - News for Happy Jews), http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il
for decisions that negate the settlement project. (This corresponds to «Arvut Adadit», see above). Here are some excerpts to illustrate its connection to «Price tag»:121

«Mutual guarantee» [Arvut Adadit] — acts of mutual guarantee coordinated between members of all the settlements take the air out of the government’s dreams... / ...we decide on the timing and don’t wait for a large police force and inspectors to bash us in the head and arrest and beat us. We have power too and we will use it at the time and place of our choice.» .../ .....«we can use the power of the women, children and older people to block a certain access road, and at the same time take firmer action against hostile elements further down the same road; we can carry out quiet and deep operations simultaneously with widespread acts of disorder in the sector, and so on.»

Furthermore, on the success of the strategy:

«To this day administration inspectors have not managed to enter Yitzhar since the freeze decree. That is because the experience and the heat at Yitzhar make every entrance by hostile elements require large forces and end with much damage to IDF and police property, even more damage to Arab property and persons, and a sector burning on all sides for a few days./ ..When in every settlement a police patrol car becomes an unwanted presence, and administration inspectors understand they have 10 minutes to run away before their tires are punctured, the government’s ability to enforce its decrees will drop sharply.»

A number of «mainstream» rabbis within Israel’s 1967-borders, also adhere to the same line of thought; former Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Avraham Shapira, who later was head of the Rabbis Union for the Land of Israel, already in 2004 opinionated that the Gaza evacuation was opposed to the Halakha and had to be prevented and not assisted.122

In 2007, prominent religious-Zionist rabbi Shmuel Tal declared that Independence Day should no longer be observed, and that religious-Zionists should give up on their efforts to «influence [the State] from within».123 Then Chief Rabbi of Haifa, Shear-Yashuv Cohen, who otherwise is considered a moderate religious-Zionist, changed his traditional Independence Day prayer for the State, now indicating doubt that the establishment of the State represented «... the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.»124

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121 The article is reproduced in English here: http://coteret.com/2009/12/06/primary-document-settlers-prep-to-terrorize-west-bank/
124 Nadav Shragai, May 1, 2006, «For religious-Zionists, the first Independence Day after disengagement poses an ideological dilemma», http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/for-religious-zionists-the-first-independence-day-after-disengagement-poses-an-ideological-dilemma-1.186605. The prayer was changed from «Bless the State of Israel, the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.» to «Bless the State of Israel, so it will be the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.»
The fact that a number of rabbis associated with religious-Zionist extremism and «Price tag» participated in the 2013 election race for Israel’s Chief Rabbinate, indicates that the state institution also provides religious legitimacy to «Price tag». This encompasses the Chief Rabbinate Council of 14 members, which assists the two chief rabbis. In October 2013 new members were sworn into the Council. Former members of the council however include Shmuel Eliyahu, Chief Rabbi of Safed, who was the second front runner to the Sephardi rabbinate. In 2010 he wrote a letter that was signed by 150 rabbis, which called for refusing to rent houses to Arabs. Several observers associate the increasing number of «Price tag» attacks in Safed and the cities proximity since 2011 to Eliyahu’s reoccurring incitement against Arabs. This also pertains to the support network of «Price tag». Rabbis Mordechai Eliyahu and Dov Lior have issued a religious ruling that donations to Honenu are tithe donations, «Ma’aser Kesafim».

Such religious rulings have gained leverage in the Israeli public, as their assessment that territorial withdrawal will harm Jewish lives was deemed to be «confirmed» following the 2007 Hamas takeover in the Gaza-strip, and the consequent increase of rocket fire into Southern Israel.

In liberal democracies, racism and support (and incitement) to violence against left-wing activists, state officials and Palestinians, including «Price tag», should ideally be handled by the juridical system. The Din Rodef controversy in the 1990s, however, offers a precedence that explains the lack of prosecutions of extremist rabbis. Din Rodef was supported by leading rabbis, each of whom has large followings (within their demographic segments) in Israeli society. As Rabbi Dov Lior was taken in for questioning in the controversy, 150 rabbis went to Jerusalem to protest. Among these was former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Yona Metziger. These rabbis have the power to call for mass-protests that, in the furthest expression, could paralyze

125 Yair Ettinger and Jonathan Lis, July 24, 2013, «After tense and controversial candidacy period || Israel’s new chief rabbins are chosen: Sephardi Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef and Ashkenazi Rabbi David Lau», http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/premum-1.537765
129 SISA interview, Gadi Gvaryahu, leader of Tag Meir, July 2013, Jerusalem
the country. This represents a significant obstacle to the willingness to prosecute this type of religious incitement to violence, as prosecutions and possible indictments carry a disproportionately high cost.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{130} There is thus a clear preference to prosecute individual crimes, rather than incitement to violence by rabbis and spiritual leaders. SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, October 2013, Tel Aviv
«PRICE TAG», JURISDICTION AND THE SECURITY ECHELON

Israeli security organizations have repeatedly been targeted by «Price tag» attacks. Together with coordinated attacks on Palestinians that aim to diminish the IDF's capacities to confront illegal settlements, this reflects the main objectives of «Price tag»; to diminish the security organizations’ capabilities to act on political orders that challenge the settlement enterprise. Answering to this challenge to its authority, leaders of Israel’s security establishment have been in the forefront to condemn «Price tag» and to outlaw (association with) it as terrorism. A discriminatory legal system, lacking law-enforcement, and even assistance from IDF soldiers in the West Bank, however also serve to facilitate «Price tag». This forms the basis of a complex relationship between Israel’s security organizations and «Price tag».

Israel's West Bank law-enforcement and security forces

The West Bank is under an ongoing military occupation. The IDF's main mission, to protect Israel, however extends to the approximately 350,000 Israeli citizens living in the West Bank, and also includes residents of settlements that are illegal according to Israeli law. The IDF is moreover responsible for implementing political orders, including orders to halt or hinder, under Israeli law, illegal settlements. Although the IDF formally is the top authority in the territory, it has delegated some of its powers to other law-enforcement organizations. Following provisions in the Oslo Accords, the PA in 1996 took over non-national-security related law-enforcement over most of the around 2.5 million Palestinians living in the area.

131 This also encompasses ordinary settler violence. According to Yesh Din, an investigations officer from the SJ District Police estimates that half of the between 200 and 250 disturbance files that are opened for Israelis in the Samaria district, are for offenses against the security forces. «The Road to Dispossession. A Case Study • The Outpost of Adei Ad, Yesh Din», February 2013, p. 49. http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/מפתח%20לחלל%20הנישול%20לברק.pdf
135 Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, «Main Points of the Declaration of Principles», http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/Declaration%20of%20Principles%20-
Non-citizen Palestinians however continue to be subject to military court and law-enforcement by the IDF in issues relating to Israel's national security. Settlers answer to Israeli law, and are subject to law-enforcement by the Israel police.136

Side by side with regular law, Israel's legal system also features several overlapping emergency legal mechanisms.137 Of relevance here are the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, a set of martial law-like regulations that originally were implemented in the 1930s in order to handle the Arab revolt and Jewish insurgency against the British Mandate Authorities.138 After its independence in 1948, Israel incorporated mandatory regulations, along with the mandatory law in general, into its domestic legislation. Justified by a perpetual state of conflict, these emergency provisions are still in force, even though they have undergone a number of reforms over the years.139 Following the 1967 occupation of territories, the Defense (Emergency) Regulations were also adopted to form a key part of the legal framework applied (on non-citizen Palestinians) in the West Bank.140

In its parallel capacity to regular Israeli law, the Defense (Emergency) Regulations proscribe to issues related to national security. As Israel's legislative body never unified these various legal emergency procedures, this today forms a confusing and incoherent system, with a flexibility that is criticized for leaving significant space for the use of legislation to extend

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136 Israeli citizens are formally the responsibility of the IDF and they can still be subject to Military courts. This was in practice in the 1970s, but was abolished due to the bad reputation it gave the IDF (SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, October 2013, Tel Aviv). The last case where military law was imposed on a settler was in 1979 (case 1280/1979), in the Ramallah Military Court, against a settler in Yamit. The case related to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty that encompassed a consequent evacuation of all Jewish settlements in the Sinai Peninsula. For more on the history of Israel's law-enforcement in the territories, see «The Road to Dispossession. A Case Study - The Outpost of Adei Ad, Yesh Din», February 2013, 49, http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/יישד/ מסלולHanishul_Eng LR.pdf, Chapter 5. The Failure of Law Enforcement on Israeli Citizens who commit criminal offenses against Palestinians, p. 50.


139 One example of such reform is the Emergency Powers (Detention) Law, where the 1979 Knesset act eliminated the most controversial provisions of Defense Regulation by requiring judicial approval of any detention within forty-eight hours, as well as regular police arrests. It also provided for the full examination of the “objective reasons of state security” that apparently justify the detention, the full disclosure by the authorities of the grounds for detention, and humane treatment of the detainee. Abraham Ben-Zvi, The Limits of Israel’s Democracy in the Shadow of Security, Taiwan Journal of Democracy, Volume, No. 2: 1-23.

may be roughly twice their proportion of the Jewish male population as a whole.»

SISA interview, Brig. Gen. (res.)

religious Zionist soldiers, as defined by those who wear knitted skullcaps (kippah seruga)

University Professor Stuart Cohen estimates that during the Second Intifada (2000-2007) the overall number of religious Zionist soldiers, as defined by those who wear knitted skullcaps (kippah seruga), in the infantry units may be roughly twice their proportion of the Jewish male population as a whole.» SISA interview, Brig. Gen. (res.)

The IDF is a national conscript army, with high levels of service among Israel's Jewish population. Relations between the IDF and the religious-Zionist population have nonetheless undergone significant changes since the 1970s. Traditionally the secular kibbutz movement and the secular middle-class formed the backbone of the army, particularly of IDF elite and combat units. Recent IDF Manpower Directorate data however show that 42 percent of cadets in infantry officer training course now are religious. Other estimates show an over 50 percent representation of religious-Zionists in elite combat units.

This development is generally ascribed to a decrease of motivation among the Israeli secular middle-class, starting from the 1980s. This was largely a response to opposition to the highly unpopular deployment of IDF soldiers in Southern Lebanon (1982-2000). Answering to its manpower needs, the IDF has thus increasingly, over the years, facilitated options to include

142 A majority of Arab and ultra-Orthodox citizens are however exempted from service. Around 70 percent of Israeli Jewish men, and some 65 percent of Israeli Jewish women serve in the IDF. Women serve for two years and men for three. Men also perform reservist duty until the age of 40. The IDF currently has 176,500 active and 445,000 reserve personnel, making the IDF one of the country’s most prominent institutions. The Institute for National Security Studies, Military Balance Files, Israel, http://inss.web2.moonsite.co.il/uploadimages/SystemFiles/israel-2012.pdf
143 Amos Harel, November 18, 2011, «The ultra-Orthodox are changing the face of the IDF», http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/the-ultra-orthodox-are-changing-the-face-of-the-idf-1.396302
144 Meyrav Wurmser, December 14, 2007, The New Focal Point of Israel's Schisms (From the December 14, 2007 New York Sun) http://mes.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=publication_detail&lid=5338, «...Bar Ilan University Professor Stuart Cohen estimates that during the Second Intifada (2000-2002) the overall number of religious Zionist soldiers, as defined by those who wear knitted skullcaps (kippah seruga), in the infantry units may be roughly twice their proportion of the Jewish male population as a whole.» SISA interview, Brig. Gen. (res.)

Dov Sedaka, June 2013, Tel Aviv: Sedaka estimates that more than 50 percent (of special unit soldiers) today come from the national-religious sector.
the religious population into its ranks. Answering to the dominant Mamlachti view, which regards the IDF as a tool for safeguarding the Holy Land and the uniform as a «Holy Garb», the religious-Zionist sector soon became a main provider of highly motivated manpower.145

In addition to basic facilitation to maintain a religious lifestyle, like serving Kosher meals and ensuring Shabbat observance, the IDF also strengthened a number of alternative tracks that allow religious recruits to continue with religious studies while serving. The most important program is the Hesder yeshiva, which combines military service and religious study over five years.146 Some 42 approved Hesder yeshivas, today cater to 100 to 500 students each. A second option is the pre-army Torah college (mechina kdam tzvait yeshivati), which provides a year of religious studies before recruits start their regular military service. There are today 17 such religious Mechinot. Launched in 1999, the army also has an ultra-Orthodox unit, the Nahal Haredi, which now has over 1,000 recruits.147 Hesder recruits almost exclusively serve in combat units, and religious recruits are in general known for being highly motivated and increasingly gravitating towards the most prestigious combat units in the IDF. Religious education offered within the IDF framework is mainly religious-Zionist.148

**Militarization of settlers**

In addition, there is the general space in which settlers relate to the IDF. As they both mainly identify as part of the same side in the greater conflict with the Palestinians, the basis of the relationship is a high degree of sympathy between settlers and the IDF. This affiliation is also expressed on an operative level. Already in the 1970s there were issued military orders that specify the settlers’ role as part of the armed protection of Israel.149 Arming settlers was, in fact, largely a continuation of the pre-State doctrine that saw settlements as a first line of

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145 SISA interview, Yagil Levy, professor of Military Sociology at the Open University of Israel, July 2013, Raanana
146 הסדק (In English: Hesder), homepage for Hesder yeshiva students [http://hesder.org.il](http://hesder.org.il)
148 SISA interview, Yonathan Behar, July 2013, Har Bracha, «...lots of the teachings in our Hesder Yeshiva are based on the teachings of Rabbi Kook... It's very zionistic,» according to Behar, a resident of Har Bracha near Nablus.
149 צר enclave בישובים מצטיינים במעשים המגנה על ישראל, צר (In English: IDF military order 432, order concerning the regulation of protection of settlements), signed June 1. 1971, [http://www.slideshare.net/karinabraham/4321-1](http://www.slideshare.net/karinabraham/4321-1)
defense of the country. Accordingly, over the years settlers have increasingly been involved in IDF operations, a cooperation that today is formalized under the Home Front Command.150

Today most West Bank settlements have a Home Guard Officer (Ravshatz), who is an army officer paid by the State. The Ravshatz coordinates quasi-military squads of settler volunteers. The squads are equipped by the IDF with rifles, bullets and night-vision equipment. In addition to the equipment and military training they receive from the IDF, a number of volunteer organizations also contribute to increase the military capacity of the squads.151/152 Although these settlement squads have existed for several decades, their capacities grew markedly during the Second Intifada (2000 – 2005), as attacks on settlements by Palestinians increased. The Ravshatz is delegated with authority over a demarcated area surrounding the settlement, and works in coordination with regular IDF forces deployed in the area.153 As IDF brigades usually rotate between different locations in the West Bank, local knowledge often allows the Ravshatz to take command over regular soldiers.154

**The Gaza disengagement**

Changes on the ground following the Oslo Accords and the Gaza disengagement, and the corresponding ideological shifts within the religious-Zionist sector, have posed new dilemmas to religious soldiers, in a territory that they regard as «Holy Land». This has also affected the relationship between the IDF and the religions-Zionist sector in general. Correspondingly, a number of controversies have emerged following the Gaza disengagement.

150 The Home Front Command, Home front command throughout the years, [http://www.oref.org.il/1045-en/Pakar.aspx](http://www.oref.org.il/1045-en/Pakar.aspx). SISA interview, Dror Etkes, October 2013, Jerusalem. Following the 1967 war, the doctrine of giving HAGMAR status to settlements, particularly those located along confrontational lines. In 1977 the HAGMAR was formalized, and started operating within the framework of the Home Front Command, with the responsibility for the security of the settlements.

151 This is often done with the IDF’s blessing. SISA interview, Yisroel Danzinger, Head of Mishmeret Yesha, July 2013, Jerusalem, «We receive weapons from the IDF, and work to organize, equip and train Rapid Response Teams in threatened communities.» For footage of Mishmeret Yesha’s training program, see [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3mD329rKhw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3mD329rKhw). The organization claims to have trained over 4,000 squad members over the years. Mishmeret Yesha Brochure, [http://www.sdzoa.org/DANZIGER/Mishmeret_Yesha_brochure.pdf](http://www.sdzoa.org/DANZIGER/Mishmeret_Yesha_brochure.pdf). A different organization providing equipment and training to Settlement Protection Squads is Amit’z. Amit’z Rescue & Security - Israel - Yehuda and Shomron, [http://www.amitz.org](http://www.amitz.org).

152 In 2009 there reportedly were some 200 squads of approximately 10 volunteers each operating in settlements and outposts across the West Bank. International Crisis Group report «Israel’s Religious Right and the Question of Settlements, Middle East Report N°89 – 20 July 2009, p. 25 Crisis Group interview, Yesha Council security officer, Jerusalem, 8 July 2009.

153 SISA interview, Dror Etkes, October 2013, Jerusalem

154 Our Harsh Logic, Israeli Soldiers’ Testimonies from the Occupied Territories, 2000--2010, Breaking the Silence (Picador, 2013), p. 360. A soldier testimony to the Israeli IDF veteran organization Breaking the Silence attests to this; «Sometimes the settlement security coordinators would, how to say this, they thought they were our commanders... They’d try and give us orders, what to do, when and where.»
Several rabbis who have taught within the framework of IDF educational programs have been accused of disseminating extremist ideology. In a lecture in November 2011 Rabbi Eli Sadan, head of the Bnei David-Eli pre-military academy in Eli, was quoted as saying that the Oslo Accords were responsible for «...hundreds of dead Jews, thousands injured, bereaved families and permanent damage».155 As mentioned above, a number of authoritative rabbis were steadfast in their criticism of the Gaza disengagement. A different manifestation of opposition, also within IDF programs, has thus been of rabbis discouraging soldiers from partaking in settlement evacuations; Rabbi Elyakim Levanon, head of the Birkat Yosef Hesder Yeshiva in Elon Moreh, publicly evoked his followers to block IDF evacuations in the Gaza-strip and Amona (in 2004 and 2006).156 In 2009, the Head of the Har Bracha Hesder Yeshiva, Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, issued a religious ruling that urged soldiers to defy military orders to evacuate settlements.157 The fact that a number of authoritative rabbis also opposed (partaking in) the 2005 Gaza evacuations, further strained the relationship between the IDF leadership, religious-Zionist soldiers and the ideological settler population at large.

«Price tag» and the IDF
As mentioned above, the Gaza disengagement thrust religious-Zionist adherents in the direction of non-Mamlachi positions, and tended to strengthen the authority of rabbis over the more pragmatic settler leadership of the Yesha Council. As «Price tag» is a manifestation of this development, there are several aspects of settler/IDF relations that touch upon «Price tag». To gain a better understanding of this dynamics, it is first relevant to reiterate the general situation on the ground in the West Bank with regards to settler violence. The extended military powers granted to settlers to a large extent provide them with the authority to assess what constitutes security threats or provocations from neighboring Palestinian villages (on behalf of the IDF). The awareness that the IDF, according to their mission, will have to come to their rescue in case of clashes grants (extremist) settlers further operational

155 Elad Benari, 16. november, 2011, « ‘Rabin had Virtues but was a Poor Leader’ »,
http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/149789#.UmEuqG2ZQbS
http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/159305#.UmEnLBZQbS
space and encourages them to opt for violence against Palestinians in their efforts to assert control over more land.

The dual judicial system in the West Bank emphasizes this bias; a major factor relates to the fact that non-citizen Palestinians encounter comparatively larger obstacles in filing complaints against law enforcement officials than the settlers. A Yesh Din investigation from 2011 found that complaints about offenses by IDF soldiers against Palestinians filed to military law enforcement bodies have a 96.5 percent chance of being dismissed, without an indictment being filed against the suspected soldiers.\(^{158}\) As subjects to Israeli civilian law, settlers conversely relate to a system with significantly more accountability; it is difficult to find corresponding numbers to the Yesh Din investigations. Complaints against police officers are however managed externally, by the Department for the Investigation of Police Officers (known in Hebrew as Machash); an organ organized under the Ministry of Justice, by civilian attorneys, investigators and staff who work independently of the national police.\(^{159}\) As law-enforcement representatives naturally will show more caution in relating to settlers, the operational space of extremist settlers is further expanded.

A main objective of «Price tag» is to diminish the IDF’s ability to carry out political decisions that challenge the settlement enterprise. Aside from the aspect of «Price tag» that employs disproportional and coordinated violence and disruptions, the support network of different groups providing «Price tag» with judicial assistance is of relevance here; by taking on legal cases, (free or for a small charge), «Price tag»-associated organizations like Honenu, indirectly empower and encourage settlers to carry out acts of civil disobedience and violence. Although hitherto fully legitimate according to Israel’s legal system, the June 2013 categorization of «Price tag» as an illegal organization might however challenge this practice.

A different issue relates to the (changing) loyalties of religious-Zionist IDF soldiers. Following the Gaza disengagement, and with the emergence of «Price tag», a few incidents emerged of soldiers (suspected of) being linked to «Price tag». In October 2011 a non-commissioned officer serving at a military base in the West Bank was arrested on suspicion that he had

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provided suspected «Price tag» perpetrators with information that had allowed them to carry out «Price tag» attacks, which included disruption of IDF operations. This appears to be linked to «Price tag» nucleus members in the Yitzhar area. In a different case, in September 2011, a group of soldiers were suspected of having provided assistance to «Price tag» perpetrators who vandalized vehicles and structures inside the Binyamin Division Army Base near Bet El. In yet another incidence, an IDF soldier was suspected of participating in a «Price tag» attack in an Arab village close to Nablus.

Reactions within the IDF
What have the reactions to ideological or operational support for «Price tag» from within the IDF organization been? Despite challenging IDF authority, there have been surprisingly few sanctions implemented against «Price tag»-condoning rabbis from within the IDF system. The only known case where such extremism has had consequences was when the Har Bracha Yeshiva in December 2009 was excluded from the Hesder program. This happened following a series of public protests by Kfir Brigade soldiers against evacuations, a disenchantment that could be traced back to Rabbi Eliezer Melamed. (Kfir is an infantry unit operating in the West Bank.) The Yeshiva's Hesder status was however reinstated in July 2013, seemingly without any rectification.

Many outside observers find this peculiar, to the extent of viewing such practices as institutionally encouraged incitement, where religious animosities willingly are employed to mobilize soldiers. A Jewish religious paradigm does undoubtedly form an important basis for the organizational ethos of the IDF, as it does for most state institutions in Israel. Dr. Kalman Neuman, researcher at Israel Democracy Institute, however primarily regards this as an

167 SISA interview, Kalman Neuman, October 2013, Jerusalem

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expression of a general leniency to academic freedom within Jewish tradition. Should they lose their academic freedom, these yeshivas will also lose their credibility as religious learning institutions, he assesses. It should be added that these institutions are considered independent academic institutions, that only secondary are included in the IDF framework.\footnote{168}

Furthermore, there is the issue of the (increased) representation of religious-Zionist soldiers in important positions within the IDF. Following the Gaza disengagement, some claims and rumors emerged that the IDF had become increasingly hesitant to recruit deeply ideological soldiers, particularly to sensitive (combat) positions. Conversely and interestingly, a more prevalent trend however appears to be driven by the IDF’s wish to recruit radical youth «...to moderate them, as they will become more extreme if they fall outside the system».\footnote{169}

These factors are key to understanding developments in the relationship between the IDF and religious-Zionist soldiers. Within the framework of the larger conflict, it is considered more important to uphold an operational, fully manned and highly motivated army that can be mobilized against Palestinians and other regional enemies, than maintaining full authority in the West Bank.\footnote{170} The same rationale accounts for militarized settlers. Although there are elements that challenge IDF authority and stability, it is, at least thus far, regarded as preferable to maintain the larger defense capabilities of the IDF, rather to disarm settlers, with high degrees of motivation and will to self-sacrifice.

The main outcome in IDF-settler relations following the Gaza disengagement is thus purportedly an avoidance by the IDF leadership to enter into new controversies with the religious-Zionist population. One expression is the foot-dragging of pending outpost evacuations. Although this was also done previously, evacuations that are carried through are today increasingly outsourced to special Border Police units. As these are manned by

\footnote{168} Ibid.\footnote{169} SISA interview, Chaim Levinson, June 2013, Tel Aviv. SISA interview, Benny Katzover, July 2013, Elon Moreh. Settler leader Benny Katzover recounts a visit by then Chief Military Rabbi Brigadier General Avichai Rontski to Havat Gilad, an outpost settlement renown for its extremist residents, following the Gaza disengagement; «Rontski went there [to Havat Gilad] to recruit youth. Due to great hostility after Gaza, there were discussions for four hours. But in the end most of the kids asked to be recruited to Kravi (combat units) in the army.». SISA interview, Yagil Levy, Others however emphasize the range of limitations to screening people according to political/ideological backgrounds in Israeli security organizations. SISA interview, Chaim Levinson, Similarly to Yagil Levy he underlines that: «...except if a person has a criminal record, Israel’s civil rights limit the exclusion of individuals on a basis of their ideological beliefs».\footnote{170} SISA interview, Yagil Levy, July 2013, Raanana. «If you ask the General Chief of Staff, what is more important, to evacuate Migron, or to conduct ambushes in the Dov Mountains close to the Golan Heights, vis-à-vis Syria or Lebanon, his preferences are very clear.»
professionals rather than conscripts, they are regarded as more "trustworthy", leaving less space for controversies. A second (and interrelated) way of managing this trend, are changes in how sensitive operational information is disseminated within the IDF. For instance, contrasting to previous practices, only higher ranking officers now get prior notice to pending evacuations.\textsuperscript{171}

A number of other cases that have emerged in later years substantiate the notion of increased awareness of the organizational challenges posed by religious radicalization within commanding echelons in the IDF.\textsuperscript{172} The prevailing trend however appears to be a preference to deal with radicalization and extremism indirectly, and through legislative means. Attesting to this, commanding levels in the IDF have been in the forefront to outlaw (association with) «Price tag» by actively advocating for a government decision that categorized such activities as terrorism. Indeed, head of IDF Central Command Nitzan Alon has been one of the most prominent lobbyists for this position in the Israeli discourse. It should be regarded as a way of attempting to regain authority through formal means, by providing the security echelon additional legal tools to deal with Jewish extremism.

\textbf{Israeli police, extremist settlers and «Price tag»}

As mentioned previously, some 80 percent of «Price tag» attacks are perpetrated in the West Bank. While the remaining 15 to 20 percent of the attacks reported elsewhere in Israel are dealt with by the regular police forces (in addition to the Shin Bet).\textsuperscript{173} the judicial situation in the West Bank is more complex.

Israelis in these territories are subject to law-enforcement by the Israeli Police, including when offenses are perpetrated against non-citizen Palestinians. The SJ (Judea-Samaria) District Police operates police stations in larger settlements as Maale Adumim, Ariel and Kiryat Arba, as well as a large number of community police centers in settlements throughout

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{172} Amos Harel, November 18, 2011, «The Ultra-Orthodox are changing the face of the IDF», http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/the-ultra-orthodox-are-changing-the-face-of-the-idf-1.396302. In November 2011, 19 reservist major generals signed a letter to Chief of Staff Benny Gantz, warning of what they described as «extremist religious trends» in the IDF. A different example attesting to this; In 2012 then Chief of General Staff Gabi Ashkenazi responded to a report that indicated that the Military Rabbinate’s educational programs overran the IDF Education Corps’ programs, said that the nature of religious education in the military is «harmful to the IDF.» Lilach Shoval, Hezi Sternlicht and Yehuda Shlezinger, May 2, 2012, «Military rabbis, secular education officers battle over IDF’s soul», http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=4168
the West Bank. As briefly mentioned above, Israel's Border Police (Magav), the gendarmerie and border security branch of the Israel Police, is often deployed to assist the IDF, particularly in settlement evacuations. As in the IDF, there are fundamental loyalties between the Israeli Police and settlers within the framework of the greater conflict. However, due to its comparatively lower status in religious-Zionist circles, religious-Zionists exercise considerably less influence on the Israeli Police than in the IDF. The fact that all police officers are professional government employees (and not conscripts) further reduces the space for ideologically based controversy in the Police forces.

The Israeli Police is occasionally the target of (often brutal) settler violence. The Oslo Accords and the Gaza disengagement were furthermore major stressors for settler-police relations. Similarly as with the IDF, there are however concerted efforts by the Israeli Police to uphold good relations with settlers. Moreover, and attesting to the complex situation in the West Bank, a number of operational obstacles challenge the police in fulfilling its mandate of upholding law and order in the area, aside from settler violence. When called for, police officers often have to request, and wait for, military escort to provide them security.

175 The Saxon Report on Illegal outposts, Mars 10, 2005, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talva%20saxon%20adv.aspx. The result is a large increase in law violations (see details in sec. 10.5 of the opinion). The report recounts «a suspicious attitude» towards the SJ Police District among settlers, its investigation also found «...the attitude towards law breaking settlers is mostly forgiving.»
176 This is confirmed by settler leader Benny Katzover and Davidi, a yeshiva student in Elon Moreh and an IDF reservist officer. SISA interview, Benny Katzover, July 2013, Elon Moreh, and SISA interview, Davidi, student at Birkat Yosef Yeshiva, July 2013, Elon Moreh
177 I.e. The following is an account given to Yesh Din staff in 2008 «...They blocked the entrance to the police station with tables and chairs, cursed and shouted at the police. They shouted obscenities, like "Police scum, resign!" They sprayed water with water guns through the building’s openings. We also saw a burned barrel of an inflammatory substance with which they tried to burn down the station. The police said that they sang, laughed and drank alcohol. It lasted until 5 a.m. [Policeman] R.A. and another policeman who went out to the demonstrators were attacked by them. R.A. was hurt in his ribs and evacuated to hospital. » The Road to Dispossession, A Case Study - The Outpost of Adei Ad, Yesh Din, February 2013, http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/MaslulHanishul_Eng_LR.pdf
178 SISA interview, David Wilder, Head of the Jewish community in Hebron, June 2013, Hebron: «...relations now are excellent. The head [of the station] is a good friend of mine. It was not always like that. After [the] Oslo [Accords] they prevented people expressing their feelings and opinions. We were oppressed rather than protected. About seven or eight years ago, there was however some sort of strategic decision made to stop the oppression. They put in people who we could discuss with.» According to Wilder new officers were then recruited from special units in the border police (Magav). «They started to realize that they could start new relations.» According to Wilder this has been to the extent of appointing police officials on the basis of their friendlier attitude to settlers.
179 The Road to Dispossession, A Case Study - The Outpost of Adei Ad, Yesh Din, February 2013, http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/MaslulHanishul_Eng_LR.pdf
180 SISA interview, Dov Sedaka, June 2013, Tel Aviv, This is an obstacle, that in many cases hinders the police in «Machoz Shai (The SJ District police) is very weak, They have no way of collecting evidence.» Sedaka is former Head of the Civil Administration in Gaza and the West Bank.
against possible attacks by local Palestinians. A different issue is the complex legal situation pertaining to land disputes in the area, which further serves to diffuse the police's law-enforcement authority.  

The result is exceptionally low clearance rates of crimes reported/committed in the area. As noted above, according to Yesh Din, 84 percent of files monitored by the organization were closed due to a failure to carry out investigations. Only 9 percent of the cases resulted in indictments. The low risk of being indicted and punished further encourages settler violence, including «Price tag» attacks.

There has, furthermore, been at least one incidence where a group of suspected «Price tag» perpetrators have violently opposed arrest. As briefly mentioned above, settlers, as subject to the Israeli legal system, enjoy a range of options to issue complains against the police. Although this evidently is positive from a civil rights perspective, it might, at least to some degree, further encourage provocation, particularly among the most ideological settlers, who are willing to sacrifice much to reach their objectives. Legal cases are regularly pursued, and are often assisted by legal aid organizations that are heavily subsidized by settlement supporters and activists. Honenu, which is closest associated with «Price tag», claim to provide legal assistance to some 1000 arrestees yearly. Their work also encompasses filing appeals against court decisions to detain suspects of «Price tag» attacks. One recent example is the case of Boaz Albert, a right-wing extremist, Yitzhar resident and presumably part of «Price tag» nucleus. Throughout 2013 Honenu provided him with extensive aid, both challenging police methods and the number of administrative distancing orders that were

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181 The Sasson Report on Illegal outposts, Mars 10, 2005, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20Talya%20Sason%20adv.aspx](http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20Talya%20Sason%20adv.aspx). «In order to accuse of trespassing, it [the police] needs to prove who holds the land, and sometimes who owns it. Most of the lands in Judea, Samaria and Gaza were not regularized, and therefore it is difficult to show ownership. Proving possession is also problematic. Another difficulty is land law in the territories. It is based on Ottoman, Jordanian, and sometimes Mandatory sources, and on security legislation in the territories. This complexity is very difficult for JS police. In fact, its ability to handle it is minimal. This is part of the reason why legal proceedings were almost never taken against trespassers who unlawfully took over Palestinian property.»


183 Yair Altman, December 14, 2011, «Jerusalem: Rightists clash with police», [http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4161670_00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4161670_00.html)

184 Honenu - Providing legal aid to Israeli soldiers and civilians in distress, [http://honenu.org](http://honenu.org)

185 The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel, August 24, 2013, [http://www.haforum.org.il/newsite/econtent_id.asp?id=183](http://www.haforum.org.il/newsite/econtent_id.asp?id=183). Boaz Albert had formerly violated an administrative restraining order issued against him by the IDF, was later arrested on suspicion of a «Price tag» attack.
issued against him. Also The Legal Forum for the Land regularly files petitions against administrative restraining orders, including those issued against «Price tag» suspects.\textsuperscript{186}

**Israel's General Security Services (the Shin Bet)**

As Israel's General Security Agency, the Shin Bet’s duties encompass identifying and exposing threats to national security, interrogating terror suspects and providing intelligence for counter-terrorism operations. The agency’s «Jewish division» deals with subversive/violent extremism emerging from the Jewish sector. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in 1995 increased the awareness of security threats posed by Jewish extremism. The agency thus started to conduct «preventative talks» with Jewish extremists in the 1990s,\textsuperscript{187} and the organization’s Jewish division has received increased allocations in later years.\textsuperscript{188} Their efforts further expanded following the Gaza disengagement, something that, in turn, has led to growing apprehension and animosity towards the Shin Bet among Jewish extremists.\textsuperscript{189} «There's a real sense of Shin Bet-phobia nowadays», Noam Federman, a Hebronite and former Kach Party leader, related in an interview to Reuters in 2008.\textsuperscript{190}

Due to their secretive nature, the Shin Bet in most instances will weigh the consequences of exposing their intelligence sources and work techniques, against maintaining the capacity to hinder future attacks.\textsuperscript{191} The fact that Jewish extremists often draw from tight-knit (and translucent) societies, purportedly contributes to a propensity by the Shin Bet to request the IDF to issue administrative distancing orders against individuals, rather than to file indictments in the regular legal system. While efforts to issue an administrative distancing order are limited to convincing Head of Central Command of the (potential) danger the individual extremist poses, proper criminal investigations necessitate a more high profile...

\textsuperscript{188} SISA interview, Brig. Gen. Dov Sedaka, June 2013, Tel Aviv. According to Sedaka; «...the assassination of Rabin left a wound, and serious loss of prestige for the Shin Bet. It made them more aware of violence from the extremist right.»
\textsuperscript{189} Elhanan Gruner, May 15, «הสะดב המחלקה וחקירת (Hebrew: The Jewish Department in Shin Bet continues its recruitment attempts), http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=9303
\textsuperscript{190} Dan Williams, December 9, 2008, "Spying on Jews challenges Israel's secret service", http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/12/09/us-israel-security-idUSTRE4883320081209?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews
\textsuperscript{191} Major General Nitzan Alon, JCPA briefing, June 18, 2013, Jerusalem.
approach, for instance by requiring witness statements and interrogations based on obtained intelligence.

This is purportedly related to a number of juridical limitations that the Shin Bet faces in dealing with Jewish extremists, as opposed to non-citizen Palestinians, and in many cases also Israeli Arabs (Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship). To understand this, it is important to keep in mind the particularity of the Israeli legal system, and its emergency legal mechanisms that overlap the regular legal system in security-related issues. Organizations are designated as illegal or as terror organizations under the Defense (Emergency) Regulations. In the West Bank, head of IDF Central Command, also has the power to outlaw such organizations (or associations). Such a categorization activates a set of regulations which grants law-enforcement agencies wider powers in dealing with suspects, such as the right to hold suspects for longer periods of time, sometimes until the end of proceedings, to prevent them from meeting their lawyers during questioning and to confiscate property. Contrasting to a large number of Palestinian and Islamic organizations, less than a handful of organizations drawing from Jewish segments of society are categorized as illegal - or terrorist organizations.

A number of persons associated with the Shin Bet, have indeed over the past years pinpointed the juridical limitations as a significant obstacle in dealing with «Price tag» (as well as Jewish extremism in general). In May 2013, Yitzhak Ilan, the former deputy head of the Shin Bet – who also served in the «Jewish Division» – said the legal tools Israel wields against right-wing Jewish extremists are not suitable any more. In an interview with Army Radio in June 2013 Menachem Landau, former head of the Jewish Division, reiterated the same view: «For now the Shin Bet have to deal with «Price tag» perpetrators according to their actual actions. Unless it’s explicitly categorized as a terror group, drawing graffiti on a wall amounts to a delinquency that may be punished with a 200 shekel fine».

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192 B’tselem, EMERGENCY POWERS (DETENTION) LAW, 5739-1979, [http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/1979_emergency_powers_law_detention_0.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/1979_emergency_powers_law_detention_0.pdf)
195 Israel Army Radio, Ma Boer Show, June 19, 2013, Interview with Menachem Landau, former head of the Jewish Division, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVkKWh6u7Bl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVkKWh6u7Bl)
Increased law-enforcement
As regular settler violence largely is regarded as part of an ongoing and reciprocal conflict with the Palestinians, it usually raises little interest in a conflict-wary and disillusioned Israeli public. As the main objective of «Price tag» is to challenge state authority, failure by the Israeli Police (and other security organizations) to deal with such perpetrators has caused alarm. In June 2013 Israel’s security cabinet decided to categorize «Price tag» as an illegal organization. The implications of this decision will be elaborated in chapter 5. Efforts to deal with «Price tag» has however also been followed up by consorted pressure to improve the capabilities of law-enforcement agencies.

In September 2012, Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch introduced the establishment of a new police unit, which specifically will focus on «Price tag» attacks and nationally oriented crimes. The unit was scheduled to be fully operational by the end of 2013. When fully manned, it is projected to employ 80 individuals, including 40 policemen, 15 investigators and 25 intelligence officers. These steps reportedly include a 24 Million NIS ($6.3) budget increase. In June 2013 it was however announced that the unit, which is organized under the Judea and Samaria branch of the Israel Police’s Central Investigative Unit (YAMAR), would only operate in the West Bank, although it would share intelligence with other police districts. In June 2013 Israeli television Channel 10 furthermore exposed a special (and previously unknown) committee, the «Others Committee», whose function is to compensate Palestinian victims of «Price tag» attacks.

197 SISA interview, Chaim Levinson, June 2013, Tel Aviv
198 The police unit has filled 70 of the 80 scheduled positions per March 2014. Correspondence with Chaim Levinson, March 2014.
199 This according to a draft report on «Israeli Law Enforcement in the West Bank, by the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists («the IAJJ»)», http://www.scribd.com/doc/203642545/Law-Enforcement-in-the-West-Bank-Irit-2?secret_password=2g0ehicaxgdjjg2wvn6i. The figures have not been independently verified.
201 Main News broadcast on Israeli Channel 10, June 6, 2013, report on a special committee to financially compensate Palestinian «Price tag» victims. http://news.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleID=981710, http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/premium-1.528273. According to the report the committee consists of eight delegates representing among others the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance, and its function is to compensate Palestinians who have been wounded or had their property or possessions damaged in «Price tag» attacks. According to journalist Royee Sharon: «It is important to specify that this committee compensates Palestinians in cases where the Israeli juridical system does not have an answer. As an example; where there is no evidence, but there exists intelligence (to back it). As in the family in the area of Bat Ayit who was hit by a molotov cocktail. The Shin Bet knows from intelligence who the perpetrator is, but no indictment was made. The family received compensation from the committee.», More examples presented in the news report were; a) A palestinian who had trees belonging to him uprooted, received a compensation of 20 000
This may be related to efforts to hinder Palestinian reprisals that may escalate the situation on the ground. These efforts are considered to be significant across the political spectrum in Israel.

...
«PRICE TAG» ATTACKS IN ISRAELI POLITICS

No Israeli politician has voiced direct support for «Price tag» attacks, although some actively lobby to downplay its significance. Religious-Zionist candidates however openly challenge government decisions that negate the settlement enterprise, not only through political means, but also by partaking in and condoning civil disobedience. An underlying dimension is furthermore support for extremist rabbis and organizations that (directly or indirectly) condone «Price tag» attacks. Religious-Zionist politicians exercise consorted influence as ministers in the current government. Internal changes in the governing Likud party the last decade, contribute significantly to the increased influence.

The Jewish Home is the main self-identified religious-Zionist party in Israel today. In the 2013 elections it won 12 of 120 Knesset seats. It later joined Binyamin Netanyahu’s government coalition with right-wing nationalist Likud/Beiteinu, secularist-centrist Yesh Atid, and centrist Hatnua (Tzipi Livni Party), each holding respectively 31, 19 and 6 seats in the Knesset. Although the Likud and secular ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu ran on a joint list, religious-Zionism is increasingly a defining ideology within the Likud party.

The former Netanyahu government (2009-2013) was characterized as the most right-wing, nationalistic and religious government in Israel’s history, consisting of ultra-Orthodox Shas (11) and United Torah Judaism (5) as coalition partners to the Likud (27), Yisrael Beiteinu (15), the Jewish Home (3) and the Labor Party (13). As ultra-Orthodox parties mainly are concerned with sectorial gains as social benefits and autonomy in education, their exclusion from the current government has granted right-wing and centrist secularists, as well as religious-Zionists, increased leverage.

Historical background
To understand their current form, and aspects of support for «Price tag», it can be useful to look at the parties’ origins. The National Religious Party (NRP), the predecessor of today’s The Jewish Home, was historically the main party representing the religious-Zionist movement. Traditionally, the NRP was considered moderate in their view of the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian

conflict. Responding to events in the 1967 war, it however quickly became a proponent of settlement activities, in its capacity as an associate of the Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva and the Gush Emunim Movement.

The NRP has later been associated with both radical and moderate segments within the religious-Zionist sector. Territorial concessions have repeatedly caused rupture within the party, which has had a capricious history. Following the Oslo Accords (1993) the party fragmented into several fractions. It however reemerged in 1999 as the the National Union. After Ariel Sharon declined to hold a national referendum on his 2004/2005 Gaza disengagement plan, the NU/NPR resigned from government. The party thrust rightwards, and in the 2006 elections it campaigned on a joint ticket with extreme right-wing parties (Tekuma, HaTikvah, Moledet and Eretz Yisrael Shelanu). The party again split ahead of the 2009 elections, into the National Union, an amalgam of far-right, pro-settler groups, and the Jewish Home/New NRP, a more moderate lay faction. The Jewish Home in its current form is a November 2008 merger of the comparably moderate NRP, and more extremist Tkuma and Moledet. A Strong Israel (Otzman L'Yisrael), which did not pass the 2 percent voting threshold in the 2013 elections, is a break-away fraction of the conglomerate of parties. Due to its radical party program and leadership, it was dubbed a «New Kach party» by observers in the Israeli press.

Conversely, the 2013 elections were a great success for The Jewish Home. The party went from 3 seats in the 18th Knesset to win 12 seats in the 19th, making it kingmaker in the ensuing coalition negotiations. Its success was ascribed to the 2012 inception of Naftali Bennett, a former combat soldier and successful high-tech entrepreneur, as head of the party. Revitalizing the party’s image, Bennet’s appeal also won it support outside its core settler constituency. The inclusion of Ayelet Shaked, a non-religious female right-wing Israel-activist as number five on the party list, further broadened its appeal.211

Far-right extremist factions are however still represented in the party; Orit Strook, a newcomer to politics and number 13 on the party list, is a long-time settler activist and a resident of Hebron’s controversial Avraham Avinu neighborhood. Albeit not a Knesset representative, number 19 on the list, Uri Bank, was previously head of Moledet, a former far-right extremist party that advocated mass expulsion of Palestinians.212 The Jewish Home also continues to be closely associated with (mainstream) settler institutions.213

**A changing Likud**
The Likud emerged in the 1970s as a liberalist right-wing party based on the secular Zionist tradition of Zeev Jabotinsky. Religious-Zionism has however in later years grown into a significant ideological force in the party.214 Although Jabotinsky's revisionist Zionism had propagated territorial maximalism in the pre-State Mandate Palestine, both pragmatism and idealism formed the traditional Likud’s approach to settlement activities over the years.

Likud’s victory in the 1977 Knesset elections marked a major shift in Israeli politics, ending almost 30 years of hegemonic rule by left-wing socialist parties. The newly incepted Prime Minister Menachem Begin soon diverged from Labour governments’ policies, by announcing support for Gush Emunim efforts to establish civilian settlement in central parts of the West Bank that were not included in the Alon-plan. Introduced by then Minister of Defence, Yigal Alon, shortly after the 1967 War, it proposed to annex most of the Jordan Valley from the river to the eastern slopes of the West Bank hill ridge, East Jerusalem, and the Etzion bloc to Israel.

211 Joshua Mitnick, January 17, 2013, «Israeli voters flock to 'brother' Naftali Bennett - but not all his policies», http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2013/0117/Israeli-voters-flock-to-brother-Naftali-Bennett-but-not-all-his-policies
213 I.e. Bennett served as the Director General of the Yesha Council from 2010-2012. Number 2 on the party list and serving Minister of Housing and Construction, Uri Ariel is a former secretary general of both the Amana settlement movement and the Yesha Council.
214 SISA interview, Gil Liebersohn, Likud activist, July 2013, Herzliya
while offering the heavily populated areas of the West Bank hill country, together with a corridor that included Jericho, to Jordan. Attesting to his pragmatism, Begin however responded to US government pressure and somewhat withdrew his support to Gush Emunim, as he commenced peace talks with Egypt. Begin also headed the subsequent 1982 withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, after successfully reaching an agreement in the 1978 Camp David Accords.

Yitzhak Shamir, a hard-liner that had opposed the Egypt peace treaty, served as Prime Minister for Likud from 1986 until 1992. Binyamin Netanyahu headed the Likud government in 1996–1999, and Ariel Sharon headed the 2001–2006 Likud government. At least half of Likud's party members rejected Sharon's Gaza Disengagement Plan, which materialized in the September 2005 unilateral withdrawal. The opposition led Sharon to leave the party and to form the centrist/liberal Kadima party with like-minded Likud and Labor Knesset members. After three years in opposition, the Likud returned to power in March 2009, under Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Although Netanyahu had headed efforts opposing the Oslo Accords and the Gaza disengagement, in 1997 he signed the Hebron-agreement, which transferred control over major parts of the city to Palestinian authorities.

As he entered office in early 2009, US President Barack Obama announced his intention to exert increased pressure on Israel in his Middle East policy. In his Cairo speech in June 2009 he emphasized the need for Palestinian statehood. In a Middle East policy address a week later, Netanyahu responded by reiterating a final objective of a two-state solution and Palestinian independence, although also outlining a number of conditions.

same year, he announced a 10-month West Bank building moratorium as a gesture to restart peace talks with the PA.\textsuperscript{220}

Netanyahu has nevertheless maintained a hard-line position towards the Palestinians. He continues to assert Israeli sovereignty in the West Bank, by issuing new building tenders. In 2012 he appointed what appeared to be a noticeably politicized committee to investigate the legal status of unauthorized West Bank settlements. The resulting Levy report concluded that «Israel’s presence in the West Bank is not occupation, that the Israeli settlements are legal under international law». It furthermore recommended State approval for unauthorized Jewish settlement outposts, and provided proposals for new guidelines for settlement construction.\textsuperscript{221}

According to Israeli left-wing newspaper Haaretz, the panel's members had been meticulously chosen for their pro-settlement positions. Behind was pressure from religious-Zionist Likud members and ministers. The panel had trespassed their original mandate, when also investigating the legal status of the occupation, the newspaper further asserted. By completely disregarding diplomatic agreements such as the Oslo Accords, and previous Supreme Court rulings, laws and regulations, the report evidently placed Netanyahu in an awkward position.\textsuperscript{222} Leaning on Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein's opposition, Netanyahu withstood pressure from right-wing politicians to bring the report before the Ministerial Committee on Settlement in government for approval, a move that would have caused extensive diplomatic damage to Israel, as well as to Netanyahu's international reputation.\textsuperscript{223}

This often evades the international press, but continuous, and often high profile challenges to Netanyahu's authority reflect a shift within the Likud, where religious-Zionists, following years of consorted efforts, have succeeded in gaining significant leverage in the party. The

\textsuperscript{222} Chaim Levinson, July 9, 2012, «While Israeli settlers celebrate Levy report, Netanyahu will have to deal with semantics of occupation», \url{http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/while-israeli-settlers-celebrate-levy-report-netanyahu-will-have-to-deal-with-semantics-of-occupation-1.449942}
origins of this change can be traced some 20 years back in time, to the «Oslo years», as settlement proponents and right-wing activists Moshe Feiglin, Motti Karpel and Shmuel Sackett founded the Manhigut Yehudit (Jewish Leadership) movement in 1995.\textsuperscript{224} They originally planned to run independently. But after failing to do so in the 1999 elections, the movement joined the Likud in 2000.\textsuperscript{225} The power vacuum that emerged following Ariel Sharon’s 2005 split from the party, gave Moshe Feiglin a boost, something that helped turning the Manhigut Yehudit into the largest faction within the Likud Central Committee; the body that decides Likud Party policy.\textsuperscript{226/227} Although Feiglin is not a MK, Israeli political scientist Abraham Diskin, in 2012, estimated that he controlled over one-fifth of the votes on Likud party committees that select candidates for the Knesset.\textsuperscript{228}

While not drawing directly from these ideological roots, Moshe Feiglin propagates similar objectives as traditional "Kook-ist" religious-Zionists; in 2012 he declared his platform as to «keep the entire Land of Israel, build throughout the land, expel enemies and infiltrators, and go up to the Temple Mount to sacrifice the Paschal Lamb.»\textsuperscript{229} He previously declared his intention to restore full Israeli sovereignty on the Temple Mount, to fight secularism and socialism, to restore Jewish values, to end all foreign aid to Israel and to cancel the Oslo Accords.\textsuperscript{230} Besides his success with the Manhigut Yehudit faction, Feiglin also continues to challenge Netanyahu’s leadership. In December 2005 he won 12.5 percent of the votes in the Likud leadership elections, and in 2012, 23 percent.\textsuperscript{231} More significantly is however the Manhigut Yehudit's success in changing the makeup of the Likud. In the 2012 party primaries,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{224} Motti Inbari, \textit{Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises}, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 86
\item \textsuperscript{225} Ibid, p. 96-100
\item \textsuperscript{226} Ibid, p. 100
\item \textsuperscript{227} Gil Ronen, January 17, 2012, «Poll Shows High Support for Feiglin in Likud», \url{http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/151820#UpyMyRbPTS8}
\item \textsuperscript{228} Nathan Jeffay, August 5, 2012, «Moshe Feiglin Seeks To Keep Bibi Right, Little-Known Insider Keeps Likud From Moving to Center», \url{http://forward.com/articles/160462/moshe-feiglin-seeks-to-keep-bibi-right/?p=all#ixzz2svvXnnwQ}
\item \textsuperscript{229} Gil Hoffman, January 4, 2012, «Feiglin followers get orders for Likud race», \url{http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Feiglin-followers-get-orders-for-Likud-race}
\item \textsuperscript{230} David Lev, December 29, 2011, «Feiglin to PM: Likud Primaries? Bring it On!», \url{http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/151209f.UiXy6xZ0bS9}
\item \textsuperscript{231} Wikipedia, Likud leadership election, 2012, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud_leadership_election_2012}
\end{itemize}
secularist candidate Benny Begin and moderate Dan Meridor were ousted, while hardline candidates like Feiglin, Danny Danon and Zeev Elkin gained top-ranking positions.\(^{232}\)

The methods employed to achieve this success have however been subject to certain controversy. In the 2003 Likud primaries, observers noted a mass mobilization, also from activists who were not Likud voters in general elections.\(^{233}\) Following the 2012 primaries elections, emails circulated by religious-Zionist organization Achdut V'Emunah (Unity and Belief) emerged online; they instructed religious-Zionist Likud-members on how to vote in order to maximize their influence.\(^{234}\) The suggestions were based on a performance ranking by the right-wing, religious-Zionist NGO Mattot Arim, that evaluated MKs and ministers in the 18th Knesset according to «...standing strong against Oslo, Disengagement, Palestinian State and other pro-Arab anti-Israel paradigm»\(^{235}\) Signatories of the letter, as it was reproduced on online blogs, were both Likud-members. Fred Moncharsh is a member of the Likud Central Committee,\(^{236}\) while Danny Gottlieb, is a political activist formerly associated with the National Union and now a member of the Likud.\(^{237}\) Analyzes of the January 2013 general elections indeed later disclosed that many Likud party members, particularly in West Bank settlements, had voted in the Likud primaries and not for the party in the general elections, where they had voted for the Jewish Home.\(^{238}\) Today four out of the top 14 candidates on the

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\(^{238}\) 238 Mati Tuchfeld, January 24, 2013, «Results show many settler Likud members voted for Bennett», [http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=7158](http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=7158). «Figures obtained by The Jerusalem Post show that Shilo in Samaria has 303 Likud members, but only 127 people voted for the Likud-Yisrael Beytenu coalition there. Yitzhar in northern Samaria, which has 93 Likud members, had only 21 Likud-Beytenu votes.»
formerley secular Likud’s list are deeply religious, of whom three are settlers.239 This marks a significant shift of power, also on a broader, parliamentary level.

Reflecting on this development, the Caucus for Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) is the largest and most active Knesset lobbying group today. The Caucus’ stated objective is to promote legislation to strengthen the settlements, to lobby for direct financial and military resources to this end, as well as to carry out PR and lobbying efforts for settlements.240 Attesting to its popularity, it is one of the few caucuses in the Knesset that maintains paid employees and volunteers working toward the advancement of its goals. Headed by Likud MK Yariv Levin and MK Orit Struck (the Jewish Home), and with membership by more than 40 MKs, it today serves as a prominent platform for cross-party religious-Zionist activism in the Knesset.

The Caucus also represents a platform for challenging Netanyahu’s authority; despite Netanyahu’s fierce and outspoken opposition of Likud ministers attending its meetings, Likud Deputy Ministers Tzipi Hotovely and Ofir Akunis, and Likud Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein attended the Caucus’ inauguration for the Knesset fall session in June 2013.241 Gideon Sa’ar, Limor Livnat and Yisrael Katz sent letters welcoming its establishment. Other ministers that attended were Jewish Home’s Naftali Bennett, Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor in the current government, and Housing Minister Uri Ariel, as well as Tourism Minister Uzi Landau of Yisrael Beiteinu.

As a central aspect of its activism, the Caucus also spearheads, coordinates and thus also strengthens efforts against international peace initiatives. As U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry officially renewed the peace process in June 2013, 17 MKs from the Likud and the Jewish Home associated with the Caucus, spoke out against any territorial concessions in the framework of a possible Israeli/Palestinian agreement.242 Efforts have been accompanied by repeated threats to leave the government, should the talks yield concessions.243 In addition,

242 Raphael Ahren, September 17, 2013, «17 coalition MKs warn PM: We oppose a Palestinian state», http://www.timesofisrael.com/coalition-mks-warn-pm-we-oppose-a-palestinian-state/
the Caucus has worked to extract compensatory measures from Netanyahu. In the deal to release 104 long-term Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to resume the August 2013 peace talks, Israeli newspaper Maariv reported that Netanyahu had struck a secret deal to advance construction of some 5,000 housing units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, lest opposing religious-Zionist representatives would have resigned and left the government.\textsuperscript{244}

\textbf{«Price tag» in Israeli politics}
While no Israeli politician has voiced direct support for «Price tag» attacks, a number of politicians regularly downplay its significance. Although a legitimate part of the political discourse, this provides space for the continuation of «Price tag». A different dimension relates to activities that actively promote groups or individuals associated with «Price tag».

Secular Likud MKs largely oppose and condemn «Price tag», as do most politicians across the political spectrum. Moshe Feiglin, who today also serves as the Deputy Speaker of Knesset, does however not shy away from belittling its significance. In a debate broadcasted on Israeli television Channel 2 in December 2011, he claimed «Price tag» attacks targeting mosques represent a miniscule issue compared to Arab vandalism against Jewish Holy places in Israel.\textsuperscript{245} The Manhigut fraction also uses «Price tag» (and settler violence) to criticize the IDF leadership and their ability to protect settlers in the West Bank. By claiming that the IDF is not fulfilling its mandate, they go far to justify settler violence and «Price tag» attacks as a mode of «self-protection» or «self-justice».\textsuperscript{246}

Although not directly related to «Price tag», Moshe Feiglin several times has proposed a transformation of the IDF to a professional corps that only would attract highly motivated recruits to serve in the army.\textsuperscript{247} Under the pretense of (economic) liberalism, and with the certain support of the ultra-Orthodox population who seek to avoid reforms that will force them to serve in the military, such a move would further dissolve IDF authority in the West Bank, and strengthen the IDF as a religions-Zionist stronghold.

\textsuperscript{244} Globes’ correspondent, July 31, 2013, «PM appeases right with territories construction», \url{http://www.globes.co.il/serveen/globes/docview.asp?id=1000866836&fid=942}
\textsuperscript{245} Friday evening main news broadcast, Channel 2, Debate on «Price tag» between MKs Moshe Feiglin and Ahmad Tibi, \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VicKF4hBLs}
\textsuperscript{246} Tuvia Brodie in The Jewish Leadership Blog, July 7, 2013, «IDF Chief of Staff Gantz: I can’t protect Jews in Judea/Samaria», \url{http://jewishleadership.blogspot.no/2013/07/idf-chief-of-staff-gantz-i-cant-protect.html}
Again, although not directly connected to «Price tag», but nonetheless relevant; Moshe Feiglin spearheads the increasingly organized efforts of religious-Zionist MKs to assert Jewish presence on the Temple Mount, with monthly prayer sessions the 19th of every Hebrew month. While such a drive can be based on legitimate (non-political) theological considerations, a different motivation relates to a wish to provoke violent clashes with Muslim Palestinians. The mechanism is as follows: Increased violence justifies stronger security measures imposed on Palestinians. These, in turn, also grant more operational and territorial space for settlers to consolidate their presence in the occupied territories. (Reactions and increased threats from the Arab and Muslim World would follow a similar mechanism, although on a broader level.)

Attesting to the apprehension – both locally and internationally –that Feiglin is willing to provoke violence, is the fact that he today is banned from entering the United Kingdom; UK authorities fear that his presence would foment or justify terrorist or inter-community violence in the country. Feiglin was indeed, in 1997, sentenced to six months in prison for partaking in a «Price tag» like attack of blocking 80 intersections throughout the country as a protest to the Oslo process on August, 1995. The sentence was however later changed to community service.

Feiglin and the Manhigut Yehudit (and its leniency to provoke) can better be understood by looking into the movement’s ideological roots: Its international director, Shmuel Sackett, is a former member of the Jewish Defense League and Kach movement, and a former leader of the Kahane Chai group. All three organizations are classified as terrorist organizations in Israel and a number of Western countries. Moshe Feiglin is not directly associated with these groups, but when asked, he is not willing to distance himself from Rabbi Meir Kahane.

As seen, Moshe Feiglin mostly works to legitimize and capitalize politically on «Price tag». There are however also other Likud MKs who have been directly associated with «Price

tag». In January 2012, Haaretz exposed that Likud MK and then coalition chairman Ze’ev Elkin had given information to activists charged with tracking army movements amid uncertainty on a planned outpost evacuation. Also Housing and Construction Minister Uri Ariel has admitted to having provided settlers with information on IDF movements. The particular case, which emerged in Israeli media in January 2012, appears to be directly related to the activities of Yitzhar-based «Price tag» nucleus. Attesting to a clear tendency of double-talk, Ariel has previously condemned «Price tag» attacks, by denouncing it as «un-Jewish». It is however doubtful if the two MKs were in possession of information that would be of much use to the extremists. No efforts to penalize the MKs have, furthermore, yielded any results. Their willingness to publicly admit to having passed along information non-the-less attests to both their sympathies and personal connections.

Orit Strock (The Jewish Home), as a resident of the Jewish community of Hebron, is the MK that is closest associated with extremist settlers. In 2007, Strock’s son was convicted and sentenced to 18 months in prison for kidnapping and violently abusing a 15-year-old Palestinian boy. As former head of the Judea and Samaria Human Rights Organization, Strock was for several years deeply involved in defending settlers against what the organization alleged constituted «widespread police violence and injustice» against settlers. The NGO took on a number of cases that involved settlers who were accused of perpetrating violence against Palestinians or security officers. As the organization has been idle in later years, it has however presumably not defended any suspected «Price tag» perpetrators, although it might have contributed to foment its emergence.

Strock has however continued her activism to defend extremist settlers, including «Price tag» suspects, in her capacity as MK. In July 2013 she protested the extension of an administrative distancing order from the West Bank of «Price tag» suspect and Yitzhar resident, Boaz Albert,

254 Uri Ariel, October 4, 2011, «‘Price-tag’ terror is not the Jewish way» http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_opinion.php?id=591
256 (Hebrew, The Human Rights Organization of Judea and Samaria) http://zechuyot.blogspot.no
after he, a number of times, had been expelled from the West Bank. He is purportedly a «Price tag» nucleus member. Strock challenged the Minister of Defense, by suggesting that the restraining order was «issued in order to silence Albert’s political opinions».257 In a Knesset hearing on «Price tag» attacks on May 8, 2013, Strock suggested «Price tag» was a result of the lack of welfare allocations to settler youth at risk.258 In a different hearing on July 10, 2013, she used a discussion on a «Price tag» attack against the The Church of the Dormition in West Jerusalem to pinpoint what she perceived as a lacking law-enforcement by the Hebron police, after Palestinians allegedly had stolen a number of sheep from a Jewish farm in the South Hebron Hills.259

Related is the subject of legitimization of religiously based support for «Price tag». In June 2013 the Israeli newspaper Maariv exposed that Strock consults Rabbi Dov Lior, who associated with «Price tag», before any Knesset vote. Strock later admitted to this.260 As mentioned previously, Dov Lior, was involved in the Din Rodef controversy, as the Chief Rabbi of Kiryat Arba. He has furthermore issued a religious ruling that supports giving donations to Honenu. In 2001, Dov Lior was detained by the police for his endorsement of the controversial book «Torat Hamelech,» by Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira.261 Attesting to the deeper and ongoing links between extremist rabbis and the Jewish Home/NU/NRP, former Chairman of the National Union, MK Yaakov Katz, threatened to «take revenge» against those responsible for the arrest.262

Further pertaining to the association with rabbis, but also attesting to the extent extremist rabbis are entrenched into the Israeli mainstream, is a practice by some political parties to receive rabbinical endorsements: Prior to the 2009 elections, the National Union received

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257 Hakol Hayehudi, July 23, 2013, «הפגנה תמיכה בכון אלברט פורת לאלות המשמט», (Hebrew: Protest in support of Boaz Albert outside the court house), http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/articles/1.370379
258 RELATED IS THE SUBJECT OF LEGITIMIZATION OF RELIGIOUSLY BASED SUPPORT FOR «PRICE TAG»
259 The Knesset, July 10, 2013, «הstrupבה המפרסים שלחנינו-items של הועדות会议 שבעה,» (Hebrew: The 52th seating of the 19th Knesset)
endorsement from Mordechai Eliyahu, who was a friend of Rabbi Meir Kahane and who himself, in the 1950s, was member an ultra-Orthodox underground group that, by violent means sought to impose Halakha in the nascent Israel. The Jewish Home continued to support his son, Shmuel Eliyahu, in the 2013 race for (Sephardi) Chief Rabbi, also after the Attorney General recommended that he withdrew his candidacy, due to his history of racism and incitement against Arabs.

The Jewish Home thus has a dual approach to «Price tag». To its widest extent, this is also exemplified by the very top leadership in the party. Although party leader Naftali Bennett consistently denounces «Price tag» attacks, in an interview to Israeli Channel 2 in December 2012, he however supported insubordination to army orders, asserting that he would have opted for conscientious objection had he, as a soldier, been commanded to participate in settlements evacuations in the West Bank. Much in line with the «Price tag» ethos, this legitimizes a conditionality, which acknowledges IDF authority only when it does not challenge the settlement enterprise.

EFFORTS TO HANDLE «PRICE TAG» AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

A general assessment
When exploring efforts to handle «Price tag», it can first be useful to make a concluding assessment of what «Price tag» actually is. As opposed to former high profile expressions of violent Jewish extremism – as for example the Jewish Underground with its well-planned attacks; or groups related to Rabbi Meir Kahane that drew on a clear and centralized organizational structure that would incite to, and back violent attacks on Palestinians – it remains unclear whether «Price tag» can be said to constitute an organized group. It furthermore remains unclear whether all «Price tag» attacks, consistently, fall into an academic definition of terrorism.268

At least to date, the most accurate assessment is that «Price tag» perpetrators do not adhere to a defined hierarchy, and that «Price tag» is not a formal organization. Although some actions associated with «Price tag» could qualify as acts of terrorism (according to academic definitions), most are acts of vandalism and violence that, apart from the particularities of the «Price tag» mechanism, are hard to distinguish from general settler violence. Settler violence, in the context of such a definition, is structural violence facilitated by the lack of law-enforcement, but partly also reciprocal violence between local settlers and Palestinians. In this context it is worth reiterating that settlers evidently enjoy higher levels of legal and physical protection, than their non-citizen Palestinian counterparts.

The comparably harsh condemnations in the Israeli public can thus, to a large degree, be explained by the «Price tag» mechanism’s stated objectives of directly targeting state capacities, combined with the particularly challenging security situation in Israel; and the potential that even low-scale inter-communal confrontation could unleash unmanageable violence, not only locally, but potentially also regionally. Diplomatic harm caused to Israel by «Price tag», also represents a concern. This however mainly relates to attacks on Holy Places, something that directly challenges Israel’s efforts to promote itself as a staunch protector of religious pluralism.

268 SISA interview, Boaz Ganor, Israeli terrorism expert and leader of the Institute for Counter-Terrorism with the Interdisciplinary-Center in Herzliya, July 2013, Herzliyah
Thus, though falling short of terror categorization, both in June 2013 and later in January 2014,269 Israel’s security cabinet in June 2013 decided to categorize planning, funding and carrying out «Price tag» attacks as «illegal organizing». The practical implications of this will be discussed in the following paragraphs. For a more complete understanding of the mechanisms behind the consorted drives for a terrorism designation of «Price tag», it is however important to reiterate that this, to a large extent, is a response by the security oriented echelon and the secularist center-left to a general loss of authority; challenging their historically hegemonic positions within Israeli society.

The religious and historical-political developments that were highlighted in chapters 2, 3 and 4 are the most important factors in having the most immediate effects on the emergence and continuation of «Price tag». Some may assume that these developments chiefly were part of a premeditated drive by the national-Zionists movement to boost its influence in Israeli society. It should however be clear that these changes, to a large extent, also were the inevitable outcome of events in the cross-roads of Jewish history with its many idiosyncrasies, and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Ultra-Orthodox communities, that were hardest hit, almost to the point of extinction in the Holocaust, have gradually grown from the margins due to birthrates some three times higher than the Israeli average, to re-establish themselves as a significant force in Israeli society. The religiously observant strata’s ardent adherence to religious authorities and communal isolationism could possibly be traced back to the central position rabbis and spiritual leaders enjoyed as community leaders in the European Diaspora over the centuries, where revisionism and secularization that the majority societies were exposed to, were less influential.

Therefore, the increased leverage of the religious-Zionist and the ultra-Orthodox segments are indisputable; cumulatively, they have accelerated and cemented a shift in what constitutes the political «mainstream» in Israel, in which rabbis and religious authorities enjoy increased leverage in significant areas as politics and in the IDF. In spite of the large number of different religious streams within Judaism that do not

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necessarily fully adhere to similar political/religious objectives, they however do share a basic religious (as opposed to a secular) world-view. Increased importance of religion has, in turn, also boosted the legitimacy/acceptance of actions that openly challenge secular law and/or morality, with an emphasis on liberalism and religious pluralism.

Also, changes in the make-up of Israel’s non-religious and traditional (masorti) populations have contributed to cement Israel’s shift towards a less liberal society. This relates to the gradual integration of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries, who arrived in the 1950s – and 1960s and who today constitute more than 50 percent of Israeli Jews. The influence of the some 1 million Jews who immigrated to Israel during the 1990s from the former Soviet Union – also a region where democratic culture is in deficiency – should likewise not be underestimated in identifying the societal forces challenging the traditional, liberal Ashkenazi hegemony of Israel’s early days.

One example of how this democratization (not to be confused with liberalization) has facilitated increased space of religious-Zionists (and «Price tag») is within Israel’s Supreme Court. While commonly regarded as a secular and liberal stronghold, it has also been broadly criticized for the hegemonic position of left-leaning, liberal judges, mostly of Ashkenazi origins. When new judges were to be appointed in January 2012, there was thus pressure to ensure that at least two of the four newly appointed judges would be of Mizrahi origins. Similarly, Jerusalem District Court Judge Noam Sohliberg, a settler living in Alon Shvut, was appointed, in an effort to correct the under-representation of Israel’s religious-Zionist segment. The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel, one of the NGOs indirectly associated with «Price tag», publicly applauded this appointment. This will inevitably affect the sympathies in favor of settlers within the Supreme Court. Even if the decision has been decried by the left-wing as a threat to Israeli democracy, it is however, in an Israeli context, a necessary and democratizing step for the credibility of the Supreme Court to remain a representative state institution. All these factors contribute

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270 According to a 2010 report by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 8% of Israel’s Jewish population defines itself as ultra-Orthodox, 12% as Orthodox (religious-Zionist), 13% as traditional-religious (masorti-religious), 25% as traditional (masorti), and 42% as secular. Ynet, May 18, 2010, «Israel 2010: 42% of Jews are secular», [http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3890330,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3890330,00.html)

to an ongoing struggle for the power of influence, in an Israel that has undergone, and still is undergoing radical changes.

The increased demand of law-enforcement agencies to more autonomously preserve security and stability on the ground relates to this reduction of morally, and to some extent, legally founded opposition to «vigilante» settler activism, such as «Price tag»; the designation of «Price tag» as an illegal organization should also be viewed in this context. Conversely, it is not certain whether groups or mechanisms of violence or vandalism with a similar gravity or intensity would have been assigned as such in other Western (oriented) states.

**Practical implications**
Lastly, to the implications of the security cabinet’s June 2013 designation of «Price tag» attacks as an «illegal organization or association». The wording of the cabinet edict that was signed by Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon in June 2013, says that «...anyone who participates in «Price tag» activities, or uses the name or another name with similar meaning, and acts to advance a violent struggle or carries out violent activities against people or their property, whether within the area of Judea and Samaria or whether outside it, is an illegal organization under the Defense Emergency Regulations.»

As outlined in chapter 3, the Defense Emergency Regulations provide Israel’s security organizations with broad space when dealing with suspects. Especially important are the widened powers granted to law-enforcement agencies, which more specifically encompass a statute that empowers the Minister of Defense. Israeli authorities can now administratively detain a person for up to six months, with a possibility to extend the detention indefinitely. (The most controversial provisions of the Defense Regulation were however abolished following a 1979 reform. Judicial approval of any detention is for instance now required within forty-eight hours, as with regular police arrests.) The Defense Emergency Regulations also expand the legal space to carry out surveillance of suspects, which mainly is relevant for the Shin Bet. Due to the lack of

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273 B’tselem, The legal basis for administrative detention in Israeli and the Occupied Territories, [http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/israeli_law](http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/israeli_law)
transparency of the organization’s operational practices, it is difficult to ascertain the accurate implications of the upgrade. It however appears safe to assume that the new categorization will serve as an encouragement to the Shin Bet (and other law-enforcement agencies) to prosecute «Price tag» suspects, rather than to issue administrative distancing orders, as it will facilitate access to crucial evidence that is needed to obtain successful convictions. Interrelated, it may be assumed that the new categorization will make it easier to prosecute/ halt financing to «Price tag» associated organizations like Honenu. It is yet unclear how this will work in its practical implementation.\textsuperscript{275} It has not been possible to obtain any clear cut assessments on this by central Israeli human rights organizations.\textsuperscript{276} A full terror designation would, on the other hand, purportedly have activated Israel’s «Prohibition on Terrorist Financing Law»,\textsuperscript{277} which would have opened up for a more direct and aggressive approach against support and financing activities.

It should be reiterated that the Defense Emergency Regulations have been sparingly used within Israel’s 1967-borders since 1979,\textsuperscript{278} and that this categorization thus marks a significant upgrade of efforts to deal with «Price tag» and Jewish extremism in general. Given the broad sympathies, at least to the stated objectives of the «Price tag» mechanism – facilitated by an inherent flexibility in the Israeli legal system, which is criticized for admitting excessive space for the use of legislation to extend political agendas\textsuperscript{279} – one should nonetheless assume that political considerations will affect (and limit) the applicability and operative efficiency of these new-found powers. This furthermore relates to fundamental and principal deliberations on where the boundary should be drawn between legitimate efforts to challenge the juridical system and providing illegal support for «Price tag», particularly concerning the number of legal aid organizations that form a support network for the movement.

\textsuperscript{275} Correspondence with Chaim Levinson, March 2014
\textsuperscript{276} Assessments were requested from Yesh Din, No Legal Frontiers and the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel
Furthermore, it is hard to see that the new categorization will have any impact on law-enforcement against rabbis and spiritual leaders, who often provide decisive moral support for «Price tag» attacks. One intricacy relates to the boundaries between legitimate freedom of religious expression, and incitement to violence. Going back to the Status Quo agreement of 1947, a compromise between secular Zionists and the ultra-Orthodox which set out to define the role Judaism would have in the future State of Israel, religious expressions are granted particularly high degrees of protection in the country. Another issue relates to rabbis and spiritual leaders’ ability to mass-mobilize support within religious-Zionist and ultra-Orthodox communities. Although unfortunate, and attesting to an inherent illiberalism in growing segments of Israeli society, state officials will often shy away from prosecuting members of the religious leadership in the Jewish sector for incitement, due to the disproportional political costs it entails.

Following the security cabinet’s declaration, the IDF, as the top authority in the West Bank, also issued an edict that formally outlawed «Price tag» rings in the area under their administration. The announcement by the Military Advocate General’s Office stated that: «...a group of people, whether it is organized or not, including any group, cell, social cooperative or association, which calls itself «Price tag» is a forbidden association.» The IDF thus added «Price tag» to the list of some 87 organizations that have been outlawed in the West Bank. Reflecting on the particular status of the West Bank as a territory under military occupation, there are purportedly some differences in the implications of the categorization of «Price tag» there, as opposed to within Israel’s 1967-borders: Within Israel’s 1967-borders, the edict extends the powers granted to law-enforcement agencies; concerning the area formally is under military occupation.

280 Wikipedia, Religion in Israel, Secular-religious status quo http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Status_Quo_Agreement#Secular_E2.80.93religious_status_quo
281 Israel in the Middle East: Status Quo Agreement#Secular E2.80.93religious status quo http://books.google.no/books?hl=no&id=iVJR9UzTVAC&pg=SA242&dq=status quo+agreement#v=snippet&q=status quo%20agreement&f=false
282 SISA interview, Lior Yavneh, October 2013, Tel Aviv
284 Besides «Price tag», Kach/Kahane Chai movement is the only non-Palestinian/Islamic group on the list. Kach/Kahane Chai movement was declared illegal in the West Bank in 1997. For a list of Organizations Declared as Unlawful Associations and terror organizations per end of 2011, see http://nolegalfrontiers.org/military-orders/mil08?lang=en
administration, the categorization will however purportedly yield a greater role to the IDF in the West Bank.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the use of the Defense Emergency Regulations (as do other related regulations) goes into a long public and legal debate concerning the appropriate balance between security considerations and democratic premises in Israeli society. The extended powers granted to law-enforcement agencies under these regulations pose considerable challenges to individuals’ civil liberties and political rights, which already are broadly decried by local and international human rights organizations working in the area. As such, the evolution of, and the reaction to, the «Price tag» movement attest to the complexities of preserving security and stability within a liberal democratic framework, in societies that experience security threats, be it from outside or within.
Appendix 1. Map of West Bank areas A, B and C, with planned route of the security barrier (Wikimedia Commons)
Appendix 2. Map of Nablus area, Jewish settlements and Palestinian villages (B'tselem)
Appendix 3. Map of Israel and the West Bank (CIA World Factbook)