# Italian Carabinieri Forced to Kneel in the West Bank: The Impunity of Settlers

Published on 26/01/2026

**Two Carabinieri from the Consulate General of Italy in Jerusalem**— passports and diplomatic badges in their pockets, car with diplomatic plates — stopped, threatened, made to kneel, and “interrogated” by an armed civilian in the West Bank. Not by a regular checkpoint, not by an identifiable unit, not in a formally restricted area: according to the Farnesina's reconstruction, the man allegedly pointed the weapon at the soldiers, claiming via phone (with an unidentified interlocutor) that they were in a military area. But verification with the Israeli COGAT would have excluded the existence of any military area there.

Here it is, the political point — even before the diplomatic one: **in the West Bank, power is often not what is written**. It is what an armed man decides at the moment, with the swagger of an unpunished sheriff. And when the sheriff is not the State, but a settler in civilian clothes, the question becomes inevitable: where has the authority gone? And above all: who is

delegating it, for convenience or ideology, to those who should not have it?

## The “Rule of Law” on and off: it applies to some, not to all

This episode is not a folkloric incident, nor a “split second” that got out of hand. It is a symptom. Because the script is always the same: a gray area of competencies, an occupation disguised as bureaucracy, and in the middle a piece of territory where arbitrariness becomes practice.

**If even two Italian soldiers on a preparatory mission for a visit by EU ambassadors can be treated like hostages by an armed civilian**, what happens every day to those who do not have diplomatic badges, nor a European flag as a shield?

And here the controversy cannot stop at the single “violent settler.” The real responsibility — political, administrative, command — lies with those who create the context in which certain behaviors become possible, frequent, and, worse, convenient.

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## The message from above: legalize, reward, normalize

Just a few days ago, the Associated Press reported on the inauguration of Yatziv: an outpost turned into a “legalized” settlement within a month, as part of a wave of outpost recognitions and political accelerations on colonization.
When the Israeli administration turns the exception into a system — when the occupation is managed like a zoning plan and expansion as an ordinary practice — the signal that arrives on the ground is brutal and clear: “push, occupy, resist, and sooner or later the stamp will come.”

Within this logic, the “sheriff” is not a foreign body: he is the vanguard. He is the man who does, with the rifle, what politics then makes irreversible with a signature.

## International conventions are not an opinion

The international community, in its most formal venues, is not at all ambiguous: UN Resolution 2334 reiterates that the settlements in the territories occupied since 1967 “have no legal validity” and constitute a flagrant violation of international law.
And the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of the occupying power's civilian population into the occupied territory (art. 49, par. 6).
On the general framework, even the International Court of Justice (opinion on the “wall”, 2004) has recalled the applicability of international humanitarian law in the Occupied Territories.

One does not need to be a jurist: if a State demands respect for its own security, for its own borders, for its own rules, it cannot simultaneously tolerate (or worse, encourage) a de facto regime where armed civilians manage portions of territory as personal fiefdoms.

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## Italy is right to protest. But protest is not enough

**Antonio Tajani has summoned the Israeli ambassador** and announced formal steps of protest: it is the bare minimum.
However, let's say it without hypocrisy: with “verbal notes” alone, the ground does not change.
If the episode of the Carabinieri ends up being filed as an “unpleasant misunderstanding” or

“error on the perimeter of an area,” then the message to the next sheriff will be: it can be done.

If we truly want to prevent **the West Bank from becoming an institutionalized Wild West**, clear and verifiable demands are needed:

- identification of the perpetrator, ascertainment of the facts, and real criminal consequences;
- clear operational guarantees for diplomatic missions and EU inspections;
- measurable commitments against impunity, not press releases;
- and a political acknowledgment: the expansion and “normalization” of outposts fuel a climate where abuse becomes routine.

Because the most uncomfortable truth is this: **when an armed settler can make two foreign soldiers kneel, it is not “the settler” who has gained too much power. It is the State that has left too much lying around.**

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**News link:** https://it.euronews.com/2026/01/26/cisgiordania-carabinieri-del-consolato-a-gerusalemme-minacciati-da-un-colono-armato