

# REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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## GRAB AND SETTLE: THE STORY OF MA'ALE ADUMIM

By Geoffrey Aronson

Ma'ale Adumim stands out as one of the most important achievements of Israel's settlement campaign. In the century-old battle between Arab and Jew, this town has amassed two of the conflict's winning ingredients, land and population. Today, with close to 30,000 inhabitants and control of an area of 60 km<sup>2</sup>, it is the most populous of all settlements other than those located in East Jerusalem, with a land reserve that promises continued population growth. The five neighboring Palestinian villages currently have more residents, but expropriations favoring Ma'ale Adumim have left them with an area of only 4.6 km<sup>2</sup>. These facts have won Ma'ale Adumim a much-coveted designation, not only as part of Israel's "national consensus," enjoying as a result the support of all major Israeli parties, but also recognition from the Bush administra-

tion as one of the "new realities on the ground" that an Israeli-Palestinian agreement must accommodate.

Ma'ale Adumim exemplifies Israel's use of civilian settlement as an instrument of national-strategic policy. The mission of settlement in the occupied territories was proclaimed by then defense minister Ariel Sharon upon his return from the summit at Wye Plantation in October 1998, where a stillborn deal was struck for Israel's redeployment in the West Bank.

Sharon exhorted settlers to "move, run, [and] grab more hills, expand the territory. Everything that is grabbed will remain in our hands. Everything we don't grab will be in their hands."

Like the "outpost" phenomena that Sharon's remarks sparked, the creation and settlement of Ma'ale Adumim was born in a fog of deliberate obfuscation and little regard not only for international conventions prohibiting settlement but also of Israeli laws enacted to regulate it.

Ma'ale Adumim represents one of the first settlement achievements of Gush Emunim, and it enjoyed the critical patronage of then-defense minister Shimon Peres at its birth. Originally a "work camp" of 22 families, the outpost was established in 1975 without formal government authorization but with Peres' active support. Once in place, Ma'ale Adumim's patrons argued against its evacuation, establishing a rationale that has now been used for more than three decades with great success. Along with Elon Moreh, the

"laundering" of its status as a now "legal" civilian settlement was one of the first acts of the government of Menachem Begin in 1977. The lands of the E-1 area nearby that have recently come to public and international attention were originally expropriated during this period. In the 1980s, Israel classified the area as "state land" and thus available for Israeli settlement.

Ma'ale Adumim's location on a hill-top commanding the road between Jerusalem and the Allenby Bridge to Jordan was no accident. Rather its placement there was the product of an emerging settlement strategy promoting the creation of numerous settlement "blocs" throughout the West Bank as the principal means for preventing Palestinian self-determination.

Settlement expansion was, and remains, at the heart of Israel's zero-sum contest against Palestinians for control of the occupied territories and its political destiny. In September 1980, head of the Settlement Department of the World Zionist Organization Matityahu Drobless, wrote in a report outlining the program of settlement expansion, "State land and lands that lie fallow in Judea and Samaria must be taken immediately, in order to settle the areas that are between centers of minority [i.e., Palestinian] population and around them as well, in an effort to minimize as far as possible the danger of the development of another Arab state in these areas. If divided by Jewish

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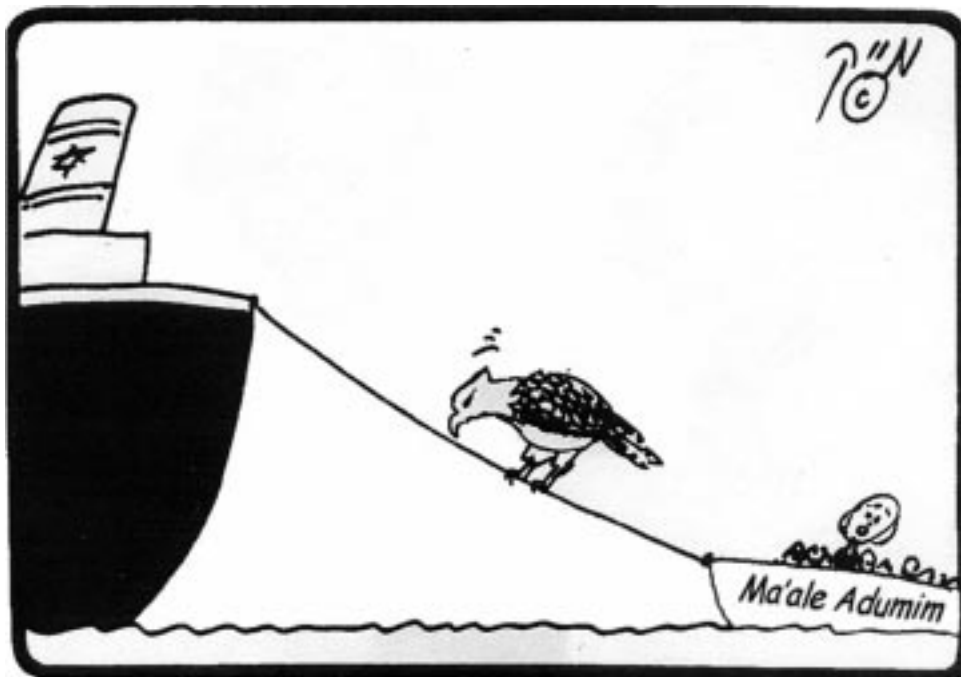
The traditional foundation of American policy toward Israel has been a commitment to its security and welfare as a Jewish, democratic state. This commitment has been based on Americans' well-founded sense of moral debt for centuries of Christian anti-Semitism and its culmination in the Holocaust. Ironically, Washington's continuing neglect over the years of the threat of settlements has undermined this policy.

After Israel's victory in 1967, a fusion of messianic Judaism, ultra-nationalism, and misguided military strategy, created the settlement movement in the occupied territories. Its extraordinary success now threatens to corrupt, and even destroy, Israel's democratic character and its security. Settlements also deny Palestinians—who have also suffered a cruel history—justice and freedom in a viable, contiguous state of their own. Unless most settlements are evacuated, they create an unsustainable burden for Israel that virtually ensures violent Palestinian rebellion, violence, insecurity and international opprobrium.

For a generation, the U.S. has indulged Israel in a policy of settlement expansion. Having abandoned support in the early 1980s for international law outlawing settlements, U.S. policy became progressively weaker. With brief exceptions, Washington has looked the other way. By deferring to Israel and focusing almost entirely on security, we have done very little to halt the march of settlements, ignoring the linkage between settlements and insecurity.

Despite growing predictions of "irreversibility" and the inevitability of a "one state solution"—which means chronic conflict—it is not too late for a two-state peace. This option will not be realized, however, unless the U.S. takes more seriously its commitments to Israel's welfare and security, and to the Palestinians' quest for statehood. To do so requires Washington to adopt a coherent policy opposing settlements in the context of a broad American peace plan.

*Philip C. Wilcox Jr.*



*Yehudit Abaronot, April 7, 2005*

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## STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT SETTLEMENTS

By Geoffrey Aronson

The expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories is often misunderstood by its opponents, who are frequently unfamiliar with the extent to which this policy has become routinized throughout Israel's national institutions during the last 28 years. Its proponents, in contrast, have mastered the intricacies of this system to their advantage.

Settlement expansion during the last 15 years has proceeded at a pace remarkable in its regularity and predictability.

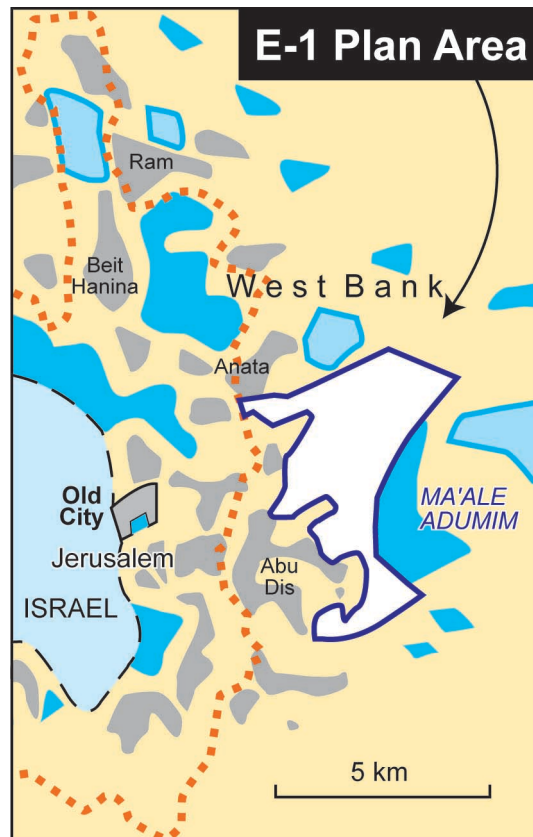
There is little correlation between the party in power and the rate of expansion, if only because the settlement process routinely spans years and the frequent changes in national political leadership Israel has experienced during the last two decades. The story of Ma'ale Adumim outlined in this issue is a typical example of this fact of Israeli political life. As regular readers of the *Settlement Report* may have noticed, many indices of settlement growth have been greater during periods of Labor rule—those of prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak—than under Likud leadership.

Settlers have always claimed that the government in power, no matter the party, is starving them of resources. This attitude reflects smart bureaucratic politics if nothing else, particularly in the Israeli system, which rewards tempestuous protest and activism with increased budgets.

From the inauguration of the Oslo era on the White House lawn in September 1993 to June 2001, Israel completed construction on 20,371 settlement units, a number equal to 62 percent of all settlement housing built from 1967 to 1993. According to a survey conducted by Peace Now in May 1999, two months before the end of Benjamin Netanyahu's term in office, there were 6,500 dwelling units under construction in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip, a 14 percent increase over the previous year. By February 2000, one year before the end of Ehud Barak's tenure, there were more than 7,120 units in various stages of construction in these same areas. Barak left a legacy of more than 6,500 dwelling units under construction. At the end of 2003, in the middle of Ariel Sharon's tenure, there were 3,648 dwellings under construction, a number which

increased to almost 4,000 by early 2005.

This legacy is no accident. Israel's settlement expansion is first and foremost a national enterprise, promoted and supported in everyday practice by all major political parties and political leaders. Yitzhak Herzog, the current Labor minister of housing and construction, for example, supports establishing territorial continuity between the Etzion bloc and Ma'ale Adumim along a corridor to the east of Bethlehem. Plans for the E-1 area (see article on page 1) are also proceeding apace in his ministry.



Settlers complain that no new tenders for settlement construction have been issued for many months. (See chart page 8.) This observation is important less as an indicator of the continuing vitality of the settlement expansion enterprise than as an example of the constant tug of war for resources and attention conducted by settlement activists.

Among settlement opponents, the intuitive response to settlement expansion has long been support for a settlement freeze. The Carter administration first raised this concept at Camp David in September 1977. More recently it has featured as a key requirement of the Mitchell Plan and road map.

The idea is attractive in its simplicity. After all, if you oppose settlement expansion, it seems logical to freeze it. Yet what appears logical ignores the reality in which such an effort, no matter how well-intentioned, would be all but impossible to implement, let alone monitor and enforce.

Promoters of a settlement freeze do not actually want Israel to freeze settlements as much as they want Israel to evacuate them. If nothing else, the freeze idea places Israel on the receiving end of an international popular demand. This fact alone may account for the idea's continuing resonance. As for the prospect that Israel will implement the freeze, however, the commitment of political capital and resources required to effectively end the provision of state and private resources for settlement growth will only be undertaken by an Israeli leader in the context of a decision to evacuate settlements. And in the event that such a decision is made—witness the disengagement plan—a freeze becomes irrelevant. ♦

## SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

**February 1** Israeli attorney general Menachem Mazuz overturns a cabinet decision to enact the Absentee Property Law in East Jerusalem, reversing a decision that would have enabled Israel to confiscate all property owned by West Bank residents in East Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

**February 2** A government-owned insurance company announces that it will compensate settlement-based exporters no longer able to benefit from Israel's free trade agreement with the EU. (*Ma'ariv*)

**February 3** The Israeli High Court approves plans by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to build a bypass road for Israelis that connects Jerusalem with Rachel's Tomb, on the outskirts of Bethlehem. The court rejected petitions by the municipalities of Bethlehem and Beit Jala claiming that the road would restrict their freedom of movement and signify Israel's annexation of Rachel's Tomb to Jerusalem. (Arutz 7)

*Ha'aretz* reports that the path of the separation barrier around Jerusalem includes two plots totaling 10 dunams near Rachel's Tomb owned by Jews from abroad who plan to construct 100 dwelling units on the land.

**February 4** Residents of Jerusalem's Sur Bahir "south" contest an Israeli administrative decision to withdraw their eligibility to receive national insurance because they constructed homes on village lands outside the city's municipal borders. (*Kol Ha'Ir*)

**February 8** *Yediot Aharonot* reports that Israeli government transfers to settlement councils equal \$382 per capita while those in Israel receive \$103 per capita.

**February 10** Palestinians fire 36 mortar shells and Qassam rockets at Katif bloc settlements. Electricity is cut to most of the Katif bloc for several hours. (Arutz 7)

**February 14** *Ha'aretz* reports that the Jewish National Fund, a quasi-governmental institution operating through its Himnuta subsidiary, has purchased tens of thousands of dunams near the Green Line in the West Bank since June 1967, using government and the World Zionist Organization funds. The organization's bylaws prohibit such purchases because of its eligibility to receive tax-deductible contributions from foreigners.

Some 15,000 demonstrators in the Katif bloc protest the disengagement plan. Similar

demonstrations in Israel spark the first violent confrontations between opponents of the plan and police, resulting in 60 arrests and injuries to 11 police. (*Ha'aretz*)

**February 15** The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the IDF has begun installing a new fence around the southern border of the Morag settlement.

**February 16** The Knesset approves the "evacuation and compensation" law by a margin of 59 to 40, with 16 abstentions.

*Ha'aretz* reports that in the previous three months 238 people have changed their address to the Katif bloc or the northern West Bank settlements slated for evacuation, increasing to 500 those who have done so. While some have actually moved, a large number have not.

Two mortar shells are fired in the direction of the Morag settlement. No injuries or damage are reported. (OCHA)

OCHA reports Israeli settlers from Ma'on attacking foreigners accompanying a group of Palestinian shepherds grazing their animals in the hills around al-Tuwani, south of Hebron. One of the foreigners is severely injured.

**February 17** Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz orders an end to the policy of demolishing the homes of Palestinian suicide bombers and gunmen after an internal army review concludes that it has not deterred attackers but has inflamed hatred. According to the Israeli human rights group B'tselem, Israel has razed more than 2,400 Palestinian dwellings as punishment or deterrence since 1967, including 675 in the past four years. It has destroyed more than 4,000 Palestinian dwellings in the current conflict. (Associated Press)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency reports that 2,991 homes in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged beyond repair by Israel in the last four years, leaving some 28,483 people homeless.

The Israeli police add 40 officers to the current 100-man force devoted to protecting the mosques at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount out of concern that Jewish militants might be targeting the mosques to disrupt the Gaza disengagement plan and promote the construction of a Third Temple. (Mideast Mirror)

The IDF issues 16 evacuation orders to Palestinians from Wadi Fukin, west of Bethlehem, affecting more than 780 dunams of land. (OCHA)

**February 20** The Israeli cabinet votes 17–5 in favor of evacuating all the Gaza settlements and four in the northern West Bank beginning July 20. (Arutz 7)

The Israeli cabinet votes 20–1, with 1 abstention, to approve a revised route for the separation barrier in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinians clash with IDF soldiers during demonstrations in Bil'in village near an area where new land leveling has begun for the construction of the separation barrier. The IDF fires tear gas and rubber-coated metal bullets into the crowd, injuring several people. (OCHA)

**February 21** The World Council of Churches asks its 342 members to consider divesting from companies that profit from the occupation. (*Newsday*)

**February 22** For the first time since the inauguration in the 1980s of programs to encourage settlement in peripheral areas, West Bank and Gaza settlements are denied incentive packages aimed at couples purchasing first homes. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

**February 23** The Israeli High Court issues an interim order suspending construction of the separation barrier in Bil'in and Saffa villages, west of Ramallah. (OCHA)

Access to agricultural areas for Palestinian farmers in Husan is reestablished. It had been hampered by contractors working on the expansion of the entrance to the Israeli settlement of Betar Illit. (OCHA)

**February 24** The IDF closes the main entrance from Road 317 for Palestinians living in the south Hebron community of Saadet Tha'lah, severely reducing their access to and from this area. The alternative route is in poor condition and runs through a construction site on the edge of the Israeli settlement of Karmel. (OCHA)

**February 25** During the two year period 2003–2004, the mayor of Jerusalem approved 93.8 percent of the 291 demolition orders for unauthorized construction in Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem. In West Jerusalem, in contrast, only 68 percent of 57 demolition orders were approved. (*Kol Ha'Ir*)



## SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

**February 27** Israel's state attorney approves the return of residents of the south Mount Hebron village of Jayyus, located near the Susiya settlement, two and a half years after being expelled by settlers. (*Ha'aretz*)

**February 28** The IDF has begun providing settler vehicles with identifying stickers in order to distinguish them from the vehicles of Palestinian Israelis who also travel in the West Bank. The stickers enable settlers to pass quickly through checkpoints. The IDF hopes in this fashion to avoid judicial challenge to the practice of identifying the cars of Palestinian Israelis for scrutiny.

*Ha'aretz* reports that a 470-meter long "military road not requiring the permission of the minister of defense" has been paved on expropriated land, including a Muslim cemetery, by the IDF to the settlement of Tel Rumeida across land under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and the municipality of Hebron. Six families live at the site, constructed atop an archaeological dig.

**March 1** *Ha'aretz* reports plans for a "virtual fence" to separate the area scheduled for redeployment in the northern West Bank and remaining nearby settlements. The project will be completed by year's end at a cost of between \$23 and \$46 million.

**March 2** Palestinians throw two firebombs at a vehicle traveling on bypass Road 60 near the Ofra settlement injuring two Israelis. (OCHA)

Sixteen people are injured when the IDF fire plastic-coated metal bullets and tear gas at Palestinians demonstrating against the construction of the separation barrier and leveling of agricultural land. (OCHA)

**March 3** OCHA reports that Bedouins living near Al Zawiya, Salfit, leave the area after a 24-hour verbal warning to leave as the area is considered "state land".

The IDF hands a demolition order for a house belonging to Palestinian family in Wadi Fukin, Bethlehem Governorate, giving the owner one month to carry out the demolition. The house is built on "state land," according to the IDF. The owner must carry out the demolition or bear the costs incurred by the IDF for doing it. (OCHA)

**March 4** The B. Ya'ir development company begins marketing 150 dwelling units in

the pre-construction phase in the settlement of Givat Ze'ev. Tenders for the project were initially won in 1999, but construction was delayed because of reduced demand caused by the intifada. (*Kol Ha'ir*)

**March 6** Settlers from Susiya, south of Hebron, fence in and plant on 40 dunums of agricultural land on the eastern side of the settlement. The land belongs to two Palestinian Bedouin families from Yatta who have been prevented from accessing their lands for the past two months.

The Israel Lands Authority plans to issue tenders for 500 dwelling units in Har Homa during 2005. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

**March 7** Settlers stone and beat two Palestinian women and one man in south Hebron near the Ma'on settlement in an attempt to remove them from the area where they were grazing their flock. (OCHA)

Less than a week after their return to their homes, residents of Jayyus are once again banished from the village. According to *Ha'aretz*, on March 5 "fifty settlers, most of them teenagers from the outposts and settlements in the area, came to the village and began dancing, singing, and disturbing efforts of the villagers to refurbish their homes. Military and police forces refused to remove the settlers. Instead the commander declared the area a closed military zone. As a result, the Palestinian residents and peace activists assisting them were banished from the area."

Thirteen Palestinians are injured when the IDF fire tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protestors demonstrating against construction of the separation barrier in the Bil'in village area, west of Ramallah. (OCHA)

**March 8** Settlers from Kiryat Arba, in Hebron, continue working on a new road connecting a secondary entrance of the settlement to "Prayers Road." No military order has been issued to confiscate the land on which the road is being built. (OCHA)

Israel is considering raising its supply of water to the Gaza Strip from 5 million cubic meters to 20 million cubic meters annually. The Oslo accords commit Israel to supply 3.5mc<sup>3</sup> annually from reservoirs and another 5mc<sup>3</sup> of desalinated water from a facility that is soon to be completed. The shortage

of water in Gaza has increased prices to five times the cost in Israel. (*Ha'aretz*)

**March 9** Settlers from Asfar uproot more than fifty-five olive trees near Wadi Ibrahim belonging to Palestinians from Sa'ir and Ash Shuyukh, in the Hebron Governorate. (OCHA)

**March 10** The Israeli Interior Ministry instructs all regional councils to immediately stop all funds and allocations to the Yesha Council for the next two weeks while it investigates allegations that five local councils transferred about \$2.8 million in funds received over the last two years from the municipalities to campaigns against the disengagement plan. (Arutz 7 and *Ha'aretz*)

**March 11** Palestinians and peace activists protest the construction of the separation barrier in Bil'in and Badrus villages, west of Ramallah. The IDF uses tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters. (OCHA)

*Kol Ha'ir* reports the successful marketing of tenders for 40 dwelling units in Har Homa.

**March 12** *Ha'aretz* reports that the evacuation of settlements in the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank will last for three to four weeks, and not the eight weeks previously planned, following a request by Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz.

**March 13** Israel's cabinet decides that the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, its industrial zone, and most of East Jerusalem will be on the Israeli side of the separation barrier, as will Rachel's Tomb, which is in the Palestinian town of Bethlehem. A new road will be built to connect Bethlehem with Ramallah since the barrier will sever the territorial contiguity of the two regions. Eleven crossings will also be built to allow access to East Jerusalem from the West Bank. Construction should be completed by the end of the year. (Americans for Peace Now Middle East Peace Report, Associated Press)

Israel's cabinet ratifies the conclusions of the Sasson report and forms a ministerial committee to deal with the issue of settlement outposts. The committee will recommend organizational changes and an overhaul of procedures needed to obtain permission to establish new outposts but will not order the dismantlement of any outposts. The cabinet has no timetable for evacuating outposts,

TIME LINE, continued on page 6

## SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

**TIME LINE**, continued from page 5

and Prime Minister Sharon tells UN secretary general Kofi Annan that Israel will only evacuate 24 outposts built since March 2001, not the 100 to 150 new outposts that the report cites. (Arutz 7, *Ma'ariv*)

*Ma'ariv* reports that Israeli banks are refusing to finance residential construction projects in settlements because of concerns raised by the Sasson report. Until now, banks have required developers to self-finance the purchase of land and have agreed to finance residential construction only upon the pre-construction sale of 60 percent of the units.

About two hundred Palestinian women with support from foreign and Israeli peace activists hold a demonstration in Bil'in village against the construction of the separation barrier. The IDF fires tear gas to disperse the crowd. (OCHA)

Palestinian shepherds from the village of Jawayah are attacked by Israeli settlers from Ma'on while grazing their animals in an agricultural area north of Road 317, close to the settlement. (OCHA)

*Ha'aretz* reports that Israel will issue an indictment against the head of the civil administration's infrastructure department, Lieutenant Colonel Yair Blumenthal, on charges of taking hundreds of thousands of shekels in bribes as part of a ring that stole lands from absentee Palestinians and sold them to the Himnuta subsidiary of the Jewish National Fund.

**March 16** Palestinian and Israeli peace activists demonstrate in Bil'in and Saffa villages (west Ramallah district) against the construction of the separation barrier. The IDF uses tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters. Four Palestinians and one Israeli are injured. Palestinians and Israelis continue to demonstrate over the next three days. Three schoolchildren are injured when the IDF fire tear gas and rubber bullets in response to stoning. (OCHA)

In the industrial area of Atarot, abandoned by many Israeli concerns during the intifada, 15–20 percent of the 140 businesses operating at the site are now owned by Palestinians. The Israeli head of the regional industrialists union told *Ha'aretz* that, "It is important to stop this trend and to return

Israeli businesses by increasing security at Atarot."

**March 17** Some 40 yeshiva students from a West Bank settlement in the Ramallah district attack with stones and clubs eight Palestinians working in the Nahliel settlement. Five are injured, one seriously. (*Ha'aretz*, OCHA)

40 settlers attack a Palestinian house in Hebron with hammers until the roof collapses. The Sharabati family was banished from the house by settlers two years ago, but a decision by the Israeli High Court recently authorized their return. The settlers also throw stones, eggs, and water bombs at police and IDF troops guarding the site, lightly wounding a police officer. A police vehicle is also damaged in the incident. (*Ha'aretz*, *Yediot Aharonot*)

**March 18** *Yerushalim* reports that there are 20,000 illegally constructed dwellings in Palestinian East Jerusalem, a number that increases by 1,000 annually.

*Yerushalim* reports that the settlement committee of the civil administration approved in February the "E-1 plan" for the development of an area between the eastern settlement communities of East Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim. *Yediot Aharonot* reports that on March 13, the committee approved one phase of the project—construction of 1,250 dwelling units and a police complex. Construction of 3,500 dwelling units, hotels, and commercial concerns are included in the plan, which has been winding its way through the Israeli bureaucracy for a decade. Two years ago, approval was given for the creation of an industrial area southeast of Anata and Issawiyya. A police complex has already been constructed at the site overlooking the road from Jerusalem to Ma'ale Adumim.

The IDF issues a military order prohibiting Israelis from changing their home address to Gaza Strip settlements. (Arutz 7)

**March 23** At an Arab League summit in Algiers, leaders state that peace is the "strategic option" of Arab countries to settle the conflict with Israel. According to a communiqué, the League "affirms in this context the Arab peace initiative approved by the Arab summit in Beirut in 2002," which offered Israel normal relations in return for withdrawal to 1967 borders, which Israel has

repeatedly rejected. (Reuters)

**March 24** *Ha'aretz* reports Palestinian charges that settlers in the south Hebron region are poisoning sheep and other animals.

**March 27** *Yediot Aharonot* reports settlers from Yitzhar throwing stones at houses and breaking windows at the nearby village of Asira Akabilya. When IDF and police arrive, they too are attacked by a group of 50 settlers, many of them drunk in celebration of the Purim holiday.

**March 28** The Knesset rejects a bill calling for a referendum on the disengagement plan. Pinchas Wallerstein, head of the West Bank Binyamin Regional Council, states, "The parliamentary battle has ended, and the struggle now goes to the street." (Arutz 7)

**April 1** *Kol Ha'Ir* reports that a local Jerusalem court has given Palestinian tenants 45 days to evacuate 6 apartments claimed to be owned by a Jewish benevolent organization in East Jerusalem's Shayk Jarrah neighborhood.

*Yerushalim* reports the Israel Lands Administration's issuance of a tender to construct 40 dwelling units at Har Homa. High bidders are expected to pay \$43,000 to \$56,000 per unit.

**April 4** *Ha'aretz* reports a plan to turn the largest quarry in the West Bank into a dump for Israeli refuse. The government has yet to approve the plan, which estimates dumping 10,000 tons of refuse a month.

*Ma'ariv* reports that, according to the government, 250 settler families (out of approximately 1,500) to be evacuated have filed for compensation.

communities, it will be difficult for the minority population to create territorial and political unity and continuity.”

The Begin government marked Ma’ale Adumim as a magnet for population growth in 1978. In 1992, when its population reached 15,000, it was designated as the first Israeli “city” in the West Bank.

The inclusion of an adjacent 12,000 dunams known as E-1 as part of Ma’ale Adumim and the plan for its settlement was begun by Yitzhak Rabin, who on February 2, 1994 approved the application of an Israeli developer to construct a hotel in the area. This decision was soon expanded into a planning process for the entire area. In August 1994, the IDF commander declared that the entire area would be included within Ma’ale Adumim’s boundaries. All subsequent prime ministers supported the plan as it made its way through Israel’s serpentine planning bureaucracy. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai approved the plan in 1997, after which it was endorsed by Israel’s High Court in a decision rejecting a petition against it filed by Palestinians. The Netanyahu government, however, decided to freeze the process at a time when the plans for settlement at Har Homa and Ras al-Amud were moving forward. But a more detailed plan, now including new roads and buildings, was filed in mid-1999. This decision too survived a court challenge by Palestinians. The environmental aspects of the scheme were approved in June 2002, the last stage before approval by the minister of defense. In early 2005, prime minister Sharon and defense minister Shaul Mofaz authorized a land survey, after which the plan will be ready for final approval by Israel’s Supreme Planning Council. The mayor of Ma’ale Adumim, Benjamim Kashriel, claims that large-scale construction will commence in 2007. But there is already a complex of buildings recently constructed there for Israel’s Border Police, who currently occupy a site eyed by settlers in Ras al-Amud.

Harnessing this territory to the settlement enterprise accomplishes two complementary objectives. First, by linking Ma’ale Adumim through E-1 to the settlement areas of East Jerusalem, Israel, in the words of Meron Benvenisti, “creates Jewish territorial continuity from the approaches of Jericho to the coastal plain.” Second, it “irrevocably splits the northern part of the West Bank from the south, strangling 50,000 Palestinians residing in its environs” and denies them critical reserves of land for development and housing.

Jan de Jong, the *Report’s* cartographer, has noted that “far more than construction at Har Homa, Israel’s implementation of the E-1 plan will confront Palestinians with a dramatic narrowing of options for Arab Jerusalem. If not challenged effectively, Arab Jerusalem’s current condition as a disconnected sprawl of predominantly squalid neighborhoods will become permanent, rendering it an essentially symbolic remnant of an Arab community.”

Palestinian opposition to the plan has been less decisive in delaying the plan’s implementation than reservations voiced

by Washington. A series of American enquiries over the years, most recently at the Crawford summit between Sharon and Bush, elicited the standard Israeli refrain: “The plan is an old one, still far from execution, and no final decision has been made.”

Sharon observed that the E-1 plan poses a dilemma not for Israel, but for Washington, which has to rationalize its opposition to settlement expansion with Bush’s April 2004 letter supporting border changes to accommodate “major Israeli population centers” in the West Bank. In any case, Israel long ago discounted U.S. opposition to settlement expansion. As former State Department official Aaron Miller noted in a recent Washington appearance, during his almost 25 years in government there never was “an honest conversation about what the Israelis were actually doing on the ground. Nor were we prepared to impose, at least in the last seven or eight years, a cost on the Israelis for their actions.”

In an April 22 interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, Sharon explained,

The E-1 building plan is an old plan, close to 10 years old. As I recall, it was begun when Labor was heading the government. It’s true that the announcement of the plan recently created a storm all over the world, and in my opinion, let’s say, put the president in a far from simple position. But it’s a plan that still needs to be worked on for many years. I am sure we will speak about it with the Americans.

The United States has always, let’s say since 1968, opposed Jewish settlement. The United States was opposed to Jewish settlement in the Golan Heights. It opposed Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria and in the Gaza Strip. And it has never changed that position.

Israel, during those years, saw great importance in taking hold of strategically important portions of Judea and Samaria. But even on those subjects of nonunderstanding, I think that the relationship—certainly the relationship that I have created—has enabled us to find ways to deal with all issues.

Aluf Benn reported in *Ha’aretz* on March 25 that, “there has been no evident attempt by the American administration to stop the project. On the Israeli side they are saying that the building of E-1 is essential for the future existence of the Ma’ale Adumim bloc, and this is also understood in Washington. The main thing is that it be done quietly.”

Sharon has explained that Israel cannot “expect to receive explicit American agreement to build freely in settlements.” He also understands that Israel has no need of such an endorsement, and can well live with the long-ineffective U.S. policy.

As the *Baltimore Sun* editorialized so cogently, “If the Bush administration wants to stop settlement expansion, it will have to do more than complain about it.” ♦

## Government Tenders Issued for Settlement Construction, January 1998–April 2005

<i>Location</i>	<i>Settlement</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>Total</i>
East Jerusalem	Har Homa	--	1,498	1,214	--	--	401	682	40	3,835
	Pisgat Ze'ev	--	--	415	131	48	64	--	--	658
	Ramat Shlomo	--	--	--	--	--	68	--	--	68
Gaza Strip	Neve Dekalim	--	--	--	--	--	22	--	--	22
	Nisanit	4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4
	Rafiah Yam	--	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	10
Golan Heights	Ein Zivan	--	--	18	--	--	--	--	--	18
	Katzrin	--	--	86	--	--	--	32	--	118
West Bank	Alfe Menache	136	--	--	212	--	--	--	--	348
	Ariel	320	--	--	--	--	24*	214	--	558
	Beitar Ilit	--	1,089	--	--	244	530	604	--	2,467
	Efrat	--	20	17	--	359	155	--	--	551
	Elkana	--	--	76	39	--	28	--	50	193
	Giva Benjamin	--	--	--	--	76	--	--	--	76
	Givat Ze'ev	--	594	--	--	--	360	--	63	1,017
	Har Adar	--	--	80	--	74	143	--	--	297
	Karnei Shomron	--	57	--	--	--	153	42	--	252
	Kiryat Arba	--	12	--	--	--	--	--	--	12
	Kochav Ya'acov	--	--	--	696	--	--	--	--	696
	Ma'ale Adumim	--	461	174	734	286	577	147	--	2,379
	Ofarim 400	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0
	Rachelim	--	--	14	--	--	--	--	--	14
	Talmon A	--	--	29	--	--	--	--	--	29
Annual Total		460	3,741	2,123	1,812	1,087	2,525	1,721	153	13,622

\*Tenders withdrawn.

Source: *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories*, January 1999–May 2005.

**We place great importance on Jewish life in areas which are important for Israel. The Americans have always answered by saying: “We have been opposed in this matter since the Six Day War. It is problematic for the Arabs. It is problematic for the Europeans. So what do you think? That we’ll get up today and announce today that we support Jewish settlement? We’ve been opposing it for all these years.” At the same time they have said: “But you’re building. It’s not that you’re not building. . . . Did we say anything to you about it? You know that we are opposed, but at the end of the day, these are the facts that are unfolding on the ground.”**

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2005

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