

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

A Bimonthly Publication of the Foundation for Middle East Peace

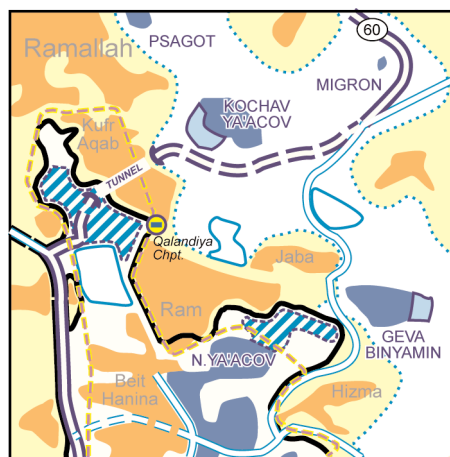
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A NEW ERA OF SETTLEMENT EXPANSION IN JERUSALEM AND ENVIRONS BEGINS

Israel is stepping up its effort to enclose Jerusalem with a ring of barriers and settlements designed to sever Palestinian East Jerusalem from the West Bank. Recent announcements of significant settlement expansion in the areas in and around Neve Ya'acov and the former site of the airport at Atarot signify a major push by Israel to link East Jerusalem-area settlements on both sides of the separation barrier, to establish an unbroken belt of settlement along East Jerusalem's northern perimeter, and perhaps of most significance, to tie Road 60 settlements—from Ma'ale Adumim north to Shilo and Eli—to the Tel Aviv metropolis and the coastal plain. (See map, page 3)

Within the next two months, ground may be broken for a just-approved project of 1,200 units—accommodating a population of 7,000—on land under the jurisdiction of the West Bank settlement of Giva Binyamin/ Adam. The planned expansion is located west of the separation barrier while the settlement itself sits to its east (see inset map and map on page 3). No plan exists to connect the two areas across the barrier. Rather,



the new development will be linked with the East Jerusalem settlement of Neve Ya'acov.

In addition, a new settlement of 11,000 to 13,000 units—enough to house more than 60,000 people—is in the initial planning stages for the site of the shuttered Atarot airport, abutting the separation barrier and the Qalandiya checkpoint. The idea has yet to be vetted by all relevant planning authorities, so construction is not imminent. If approved, however, the project will be the largest settlement undertaking in East Jerusalem since June 1967.

Like the nearby West Bank settlement of Kochav Ya'acov, east of the barrier, the Atarot settlement would be aimed at the exploding population of large ultra-Orthodox families in search of affordable housing. Settlements that target this market are already among the largest and fastest growing communities in the West Bank.

A tunnel linking Road 443—a main artery west to the coastal plain—and

Route 60—the main West Bank settlement artery—is a key element of the Atarot plan, providing settlers residing east of the separation barrier fast transport linkage to the Israeli coast. Completion of this connection would further signify Israel's intention to remain permanently in settlements in the heart of the West Bank.

Kochav Ya'acov, also known as Tel Zion, is an exploding community closing in on the Palestinian area of Kufir Aqab just to its west. Only a few hundred meters separate the outermost houses of the two locales. Kufir Aqab, although part of annexed East Jerusalem, is on the "Palestinian" side of the separation barrier, requiring residents to pass through checkpoints in order to gain entry to the city center.

Kufir Aqab is growing, with multi-story apartment buildings, almost all constructed without municipal permits, choking the once-quiet village. The municipality has constructed new schools and health services, in part to maintain a continuing presence in the area despite Kufir Aqab's physical separation from the city.

Kufir Aqab residents hope that the new road connecting the yet-to-be-approved Atarot settlement to Kochav Ya'acov and Route 60 will include an access road for the village, mitigating the impact of their location north of the separation barrier and linking them once again with Jerusalem via a road network that Israel is unlikely to surrender in any political arrangement, thereby assuring their now-threatened status as residents of the city. ♦

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TO OUR READERS

Supporters of an early return to Israeli-Palestinian peace talks were encouraged by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's announcement before her recent trip in March to the region that a "political horizon" was needed to break the seven-year stalemate.

Rice's proposal seemed to acknowledge the failure of previous efforts to create peace through a step-by-step "process" and "confidence-building." It also suggested the need for a credible and attractive "horizon"—defining a final status peace that meets the basic needs of both sides—to restore hope and to build political support for negotiations.

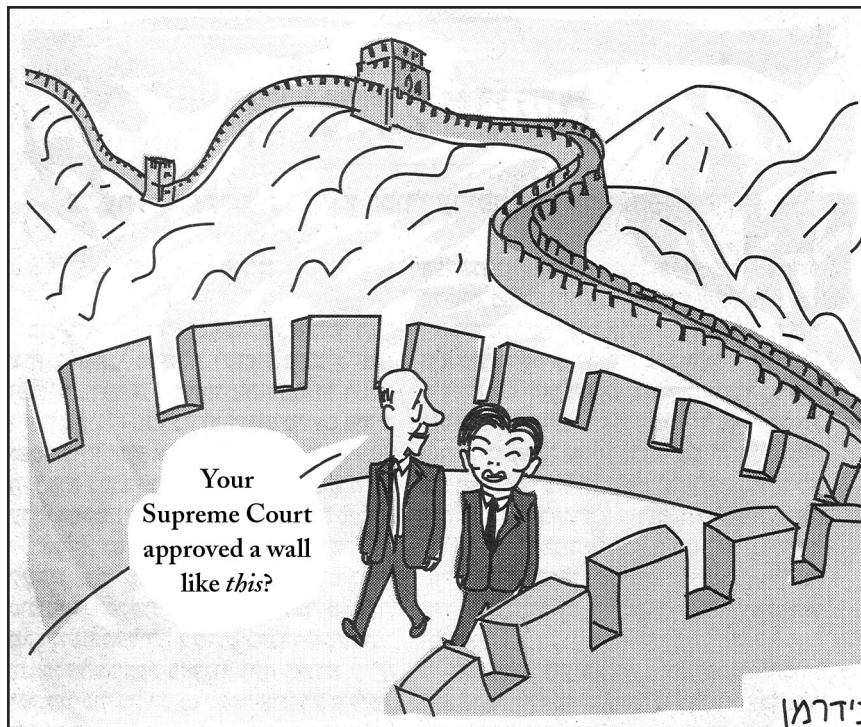
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, however, told Secretary Rice that he would meet regularly, but not negotiate, with PLO chairman Abbas, and would not discuss borders, Jerusalem, and refugees—three critical issues that must be part of any final status "horizon." Olmert's position should come as no surprise. Israel's continuing construction of barriers, roads, and

settlements in the West Bank, including those around Jerusalem described in this Report, create "facts on the ground" mostly unrelated to Israel's security. The purpose is almost certainly to resolve the issues of borders and Jerusalem unilaterally, without regard to Palestinian needs and aspirations. No one believes that any Palestinian leadership would accept as the basis for peace and a Palestinian state Israel's current design for domination and control of the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Given this reality, the real "political horizon" for Israelis and Palestinians looks bleak, promising only further conflict. If the United States is serious about peace making, it will have to propose, and pursue vigorously, its own policies on final status issues to create a more promising "horizon" for Israelis and Palestinians and to also reflect American values and interests.

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

Olmert Visits the Great Wall of China



Ha'aretz, January 8, 2007

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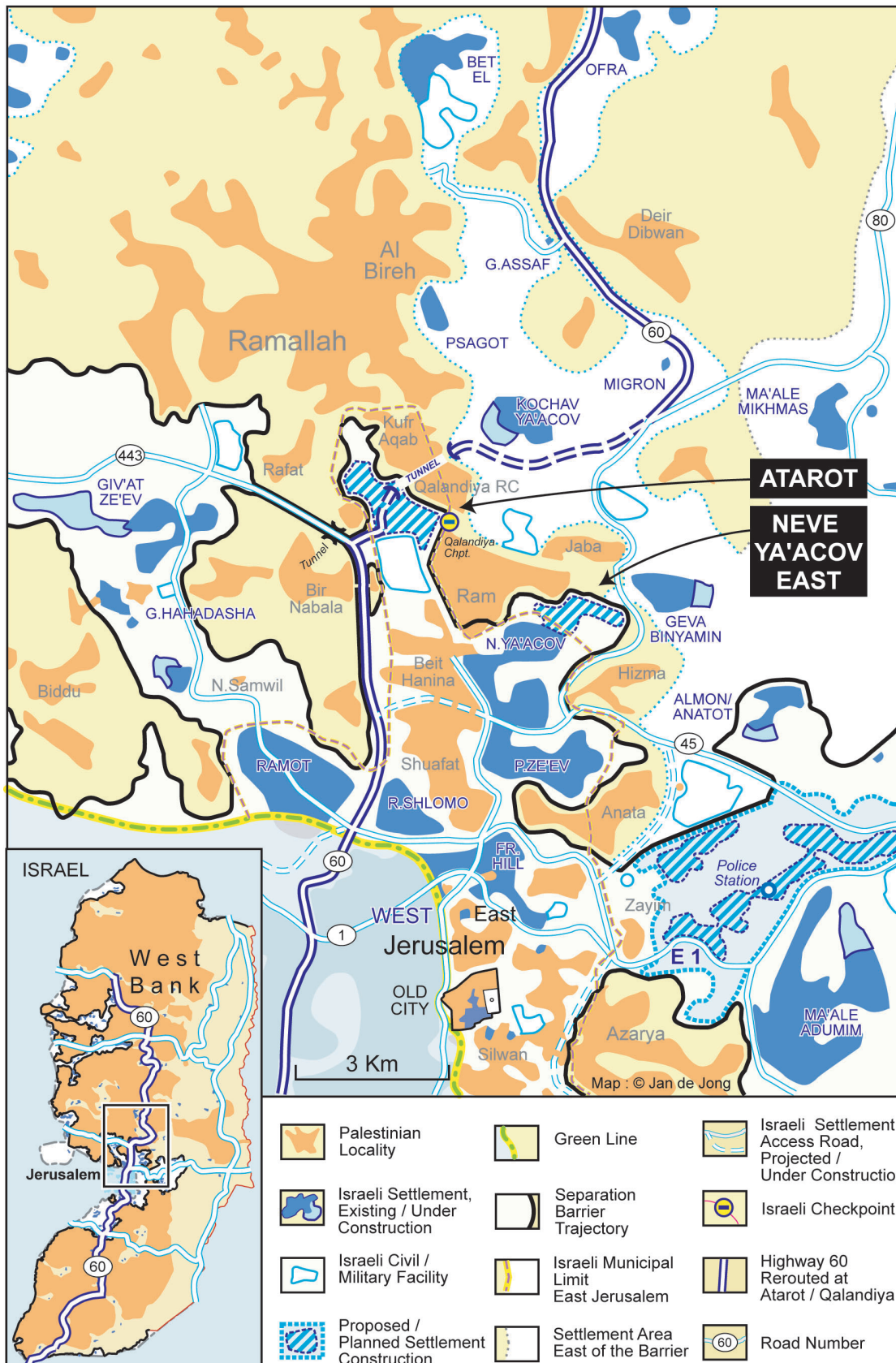
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Expanding Jerusalem and the Route 60 Corridor - March 2007



SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

West Bank Settler Population, December 2006	268,379
West Bank Settler Population Rate of Increase, 2006	5.8 percent
Unauthorized Settlement Dwellings Demolished, 1997–2006	150
West Bank Palestinian Dwellings Demolished, 1997–2006	1,519
Apartment Sales in West Bank Settlements, January–November 2006	433
New Approval for Housing at Har Homa	983 units
Number of Physical Obstacles to Palestinian Movement in the West Bank	540
Tenders Issued for Expansion of Ma'ale Adumim	44 units

November 26 Israel's High Court of Justice rules in favor of the planned separation barrier route near Bir Nabala north of Jerusalem. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

November 29 Barrier contractors begin leveling land belonging to the village of Artas near the Efrata settlement. (OCHA)

Palestinians stone a settler car passing through the village of Deir Istiya, injuring two. (OHCA)

December 1 A Hebron settler recently caught on film harassing the Abu Aysha family is charged with the assault of a Palestinian boy in 2005. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 2 A six-year-old Palestinian boy is shot by settlers while crossing Road 60 near the settlement of Haggai. (OCHA)

December 4 Settlers from Haggai settlement in Hebron uproot 100 olive trees belonging to villagers in Qalqas. (OCHA)

December 5 Israel's education minister Yuli Tamir orders that new geography textbook maps include the Green Line (the June 1967 border between the West Bank and Israel). (*Ha'aretz*)

December 11 Arutz 7 reports on a new hi-tech personal ID security system for use at West Bank checkpoints. Eligible residents register their cars with the army, and as they arrive at a checkpoint, they dial a toll-free number, enter a secret code, and assuming the system recognizes them, drive directly through the checkpoint.

December 13 An Israeli security guard is stabbed by a Palestinian at the Qalandiya checkpoint. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

Ha'aretz reports on a letter from Israeli

attorney general Meni Mazuz to Defense Minister Amir Peretz criticizing the minister's inaction on unauthorized, illegal settlements. In it, Mazuz notes that between January and September 2006, 168 illegal buildings were identified in settlements and outposts and that the Civil Administration had demolished 10 times as many illegal Palestinian houses as illegal Israeli dwellings in West Bank settlements. From 1997 to 2006, 1,519 illegal Palestinian buildings were demolished, compared with 150 in settlements.

Israel's High Court of Justice rejects an appeal issued by Palestinian residents of al-Ram and Dahiyat al-Barid regarding the construction of the security barrier around their north Jerusalem neighborhoods. The disruption caused to the residents by the barrier is deemed "proportionate" to the security afforded Israelis. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

Settlers from Tene level and mark with large stones 13 dunums of agricultural land belonging to Palestinian farmers from al-Dahariya. The owners file a complaint with Israeli authorities. (OCHA)

December 14 Israeli's High Court of Justice rules that the IDF must dismantle the concrete road barrier along Roads 317 and 60 in south Hebron within six months. The 82-centimeter high and 41-kilometer long barricade runs from the Tene settlement in the west to the Karmel settlement in the east. (OCHA)

Settlers from Susiya attempt to deny access to a Palestinian farmer from Samoa and a group of international volunteers who were planting the trees. (OCHA)

December 15 Settlers from Susiya uproot

70 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Samoa. (OCHA)

December 16 Settlers enter Madama village, Nablus, firing in the air and clashing with Palestinian residents. Israeli soldiers later evacuate the settlers. (OCHA)

Armed settlers from the Avigil outpost raid the village of Am Fagarah, Hebron. (OCHA)

December 17 Settlers from Pnei Hever burn 200 olive and almond trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from Bani Na'im. (OCHA)

December 18 A dozen settlers who had been evacuated from the Homesh settlement in the northern West Bank in September 2005 return to the site for Hanukkah. The IDF and police take no action to prevent settlers from reaching the area. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

December 20 Israeli settlers from Immanuel begin leveling land belonging to Palestinians from Jinsafut (Qalqilya) for the expansion of the settlement. (OCHA)

December 24 Palestinians throw stones at a settler's car passing through the Huwwara village, Nablus, injuring the settler. (OCHA)

December 25 The Israeli Defense Ministry approves building a new settlement in Maskiot in the northern Jordan Valley, where a few settlers already live. It is to house 20 families from the former Gaza settlement of Shirat Hayam and another 10 families from other Gaza settlements. The plans include the construction of 30 dwellings. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports on a petition to the High Court of Justice in which the IDF offers to "voluntarily transfer" the residents of two villages in the West Bank located within the territorial perimeter claimed by the adjacent settlement of Alfei Menashe in order to avoid disruption over the route of the separation barrier. The offer came after the court (more than a year prior) demanded a change on the existing barrier route.

December 26 Orders are given to settlers in Hebron to evacuate four illegally built homes. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 29 *Ha'aretz* reports that the Civil Administration has identified some 200 mobile homes placed at West Bank out-

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

posts and settlements without permits since the war with Hizballah in July. The figure represents a substantial increase over the few dozen trailers set up in the first half of the year.

Ma'ariv reports that apartment sales for the period of January to November 2006 dropped by 0.7 percent in West Bank settlements. Of all the apartments sold during this period, 3.6 percent (433 apartments) were sold in the West Bank.

December 30 The IDF closes the gate at the entrance of Jamma'in village, Nablus, and at the eastern entrance of Madra village for five hours after a Molotov cocktail is thrown at a settler's car on Road 505. (OCHA)

January 2 IDF and police forces remove electricity lines laid on private Palestinian lands in Thulth by residents of the Elmatan outpost following a petition to the High Court of Justice. (*Ma'ariv*)

January 3 The Israeli High Court of Justice issues an eviction order for residents of al-Hadidiya in the Jordan Valley after ruling that the village's population of about 80 people constituted a threat to the security of residents of the Roi settlement. (OCHA)

January 9 Israel's Interior Ministry reports that the West Bank settler population grew by 5.8 percent in 2006, more than quadruple the 1.4 percent in 2005. There were 268,379 Israelis living in the West Bank at the end of 2006, compared with 253,748 in 2005. (*Ha'aretz*)

Defense Minister Peretz orders a halt to construction of the separation barrier in the southern West Bank in order to review claims by members of the Knesset that the barrier is harmful to the landscape and to wildlife. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

January 10–16 IDF soldiers and settlers from Beit Hadassah in Hebron prevent Palestinians and internationals on multiple occasions from walking on Shuhada Street, despite a December 25, 2006, declaration confirming the right of Palestinian pedestrian access to it. (OCHA)

January 10 A few dozen Peace Now activists protest against new roads being paved and foundations being laid for permanent structures in the Jordan Valley settlement of Maskiot. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

The IDF issues five eviction orders to Palestinians from Khirbet Tana in Nablus, declaring the area state land. The IDF also issues two demolition orders for Palestinian homes built without permits in al-Aqaba (Tubas). (OCHA)

January 11 Israel's High Court of Justice fines three construction firms about \$23,000 for building a road to the site of unauthorized West Bank settlement construction. (*Ha'aretz*)

January 12 *Kol Ha'Ir* reports the approval by the Jerusalem municipality commission for planning and construction of a plan to build 983 housing units in the Har Homa settlement in a new area between Tzur Bahir and Bethlehem.

January 13 Settlers puncture the tires on more than 20 cars belonging to Palestinian residents of Ras al-Amud, Jerusalem. (*Ma'an News*)

Palestinians throw Molotov cocktails at an Israeli bus traveling west of Ramallah. No injuries or damages are reported. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

Settlers from Hebron's Beit Hadassah settlement beat and injure a 13-year-old Palestinian boy. (OCHA)

January 14 OCHA reports 540 physical closure obstacles restricting Palestinian movement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as of August 1, 2006, up from 376 during the same time in 2005.

January 15 The Israeli Construction and Housing Ministry publishes tenders for the construction of 44 new housing units in the Ma'ale Adumim settlement. (*Ha'aretz*)

Settlers damage a water pipeline in the village of Duma, Nablus. The IDF evacuates the settlers. (OCHA)

IDF soldiers begin leveling eight dunams of land belonging to Palestinians from Burin village near the Huwwara checkpoint to expand the checkpoint. In a separate incident, the IDF imposes a curfew on Huwwara village, Nablus, for 13 hours after settler vehicles are stoned on Road 60. (OCHA)

January 16 *Yediot Aharonot* reports that the IDF has removed 44 gravel barriers in the West Bank in preceding weeks to ease restrictions on the Palestinian population.

The IDF and border police demolish a

Palestinian home built without a permit in Silwan, Jerusalem. (OCHA)

January 17 *Yediot Aharonot* reports on clashes between Palestinians and settlers near Kedumim after the settlers tried to lay a water pipe connecting the settlement to the nearby Havat Gilad outpost on land belonging to the village of Jit.

The Israeli army freezes a November 19 order prohibiting Israelis and foreign nationals from transporting Palestinians in the West Bank in their vehicles without special permission. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli authorities demolish a dwelling reportedly being built without a permit in al-Tur, Jerusalem. (OCHA)

January 18 Defense Minister Peretz freezes all building plans in the Jordan Valley settlement of Maskiot. (Arutz 7)

Ma'ariv reports that amid tensions between settlers and IDF West Bank commander Yair Naveh, radical rabbis from the religious court for nation and state affairs cast a death sentence on Naveh.

January 19 Approximately 50 settlers set up an encampment in Yad Yair, next to the West Bank settlement of Dolev, on the site of a burnt synagogue trailer to protest of the torching of the structure. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

January 21 The IDF issues an amendment to military orders requisitioning an additional 19 square meters of land from the villages of Azmut and Dayr al-Hatab to install observation equipment around the settlement of Elon Moreh. (OCHA)

January 22 Israeli authorities and border police demolish an eight-unit apartment building in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Sur Bahir. (OCHA)

January 23 Two Palestinian dwellings are demolished in Sawahreh Sharqiyya, Jerusalem, for being built without permits. The IDF demolishes five houses in al-Jiftlik, Jericho, for reportedly being built without a permit. (OCHA)

January 30 *Ha'aretz* reports that Prime Minister Olmert has approved moving the separation barrier at least five kilometers eastward from the Green Line in the area of Modi'in Ilit to include the settlements of Nili and Na'aleh and create two Palestinian enclaves containing about 20,000 people.

CREATING FACTS—AN UPDATE

During 2006, settlement expansion occurred throughout the occupied territories and on both sides of the separation barrier. Israel's Interior Ministry reports that during 2006 the settler population in the West Bank increased by 5.8 percent, from 253,371 to 268,163. The fastest growing settlements (according to percentage increase) were Avnat, Givat Benjamin (near Jerusalem), Neguhot, Rosh Zurim, Rotem, and Tene (where settlers from Gaza relocated). Even Immanuel, a long-troubled settlement comprised of poorer, ultra-Orthodox settlers, grew by 4 percent, to 2,700. The population of Ma'ale Adumim increased by 1,644, to 31,615. During 2007 Modi'in Ilit, which grew by 4,000—more than 11 percent—to 30,425, may well emerge as the largest West Bank settlement (outside East Jerusalem). In contrast Ariel, which is noted for its large community of emigrants (Jewish and Christian) from the Commonwealth Independent States and in which expansion is ongoing, saw its population decline by 50.

New Settlement Outposts Expand

The more than 100 new settlement locales established since 1996 have a population of 2,000. *Ha'aretz* reported the Civil Administration announcing that during the last six months of 2006, “since the outbreak of the war in Lebanon and under the cover of the IDF's increased activities in the north,” settlers placed more than 200 mobile homes in authorized and unauthorized settlements, far more than the figure for 2005. In November, settlers installed 69 mobile homes, followed by 83 in December, all without proper authorization.

Construction Update

In 2006, tenders were issued for 952 housing units, compared to 1,184 in 2005. During the first nine months of 2006, construction began on 1,272 units, compared to 1,727 in all of 2005 and 1,926 in 2004. There are currently 3,000 units under construction, enough to house an additional 12,000 people. Sales in West Bank settlements during 2006 represented approximately 7 percent of the national market. More than eight of ten purchasers in the West Bank and Golan Heights were new settlers, moving from locations within Israel. In contrast, in Jerusalem and Haifa only three in ten were newcomers. About one-half of all sales occurred in Modi'in Ilit. Most construction continued to be associated with the largest settlements, such as Beitar Ilit (which grew by almost 7 percent last year to 28,400), Modi'in Ilit, Givat Ze'ev and Ma'ale Adumim. In addition to this program focusing on larger settlements, vibrant expansion continued in some smaller settlements, including Anatot, Givat Benjamin, Har Adar, Kochav Ya'acov, Oranit and the now-veteran hill-top settlements founded by Gush Emunim—Itamar (whose population of 600 grew by 50), Yitzhar (which grew by 83),

and Elon Moreh (which grew by 92).

According to the YESHA Council, “These numbers prove that the common sense of settlers was not injured even after the expulsion from the Katif Bloc [Gaza] and the north Shomron [West Bank].” Some settlements, particularly those east of the separation barrier, enjoy “Special Security Areas”—secure, fenced perimeters at least 100 meters from the outermost construction. Many other settlements have established a more informal claim to a similar perimeter.

In East Jerusalem, the settler population has been stagnant for a decade, holding at around 200,000. During 2006, sales of new apartments throughout the city—east and west—declined by 30 percent. For most of this period, construction of the settlement of Har Homa on the city's southeast perimeter was the centerpiece of settlement expansion efforts. About one-half of the 5,000 dwellings authorized for the site have been built. During the first week of 2007, an additional 1,000 units were authorized, some of them in buildings of 18 to 24 storeys. However, the local weekly *Yerushalim* notes that “up until now [Israeli authorities] have not made good on commitments to the nearby Arab communities to enable meaningful construction growth.”



Ma'ariv, January 9, 2007

Americans for Peace Now Report, February 26, 2007

Ha'aretz, December 28, 2006

Ha'aretz, December 29, 2006

Yerushalim, January 12, 2007

Ma'ariv, January 18, 2007

Settlement Subsidies in the 2007 Budget

As a result of the refusal of the EU to exempt exports from Israeli settlements from tax, the state will grant compensation of \$6.2 million to industries and farms in the West Bank, Golan Heights, Jordan Valley, and East Jerusalem settlements.

Ma'ariv, January 1, 2007

Six settler families have lived in Hebron IDF camp for a decade

Six settler families have been living in mobile homes inside a military camp in Hebron for more than a decade, and the IDF has no plans to put an end to this situation even though it is extraordinary and of questionable legality. The settlers have been residing in a company-sized camp situated in Shehadeh Street in Hebron, close to the compound of settlers in Beit Hadassah and Beit Romano.

According to the IDF spokesman, the "area was occupied for military purposes in 1983 [after the unauthorized settlement in nearby Beit Hadassah]. A petition against the occupation was filed with the High Court, and it was rejected. In 1992 another petition was filed, which was withdrawn following an agreement with the petitioners [Palestinians] that they could bring their case to the district court within 30 days [which they failed to do]. During the 1990s, Israeli settlers were authorized to live at the site. Because it was an area occupied for military purposes, the structures were built according to military specifications.

Ha'aretz, February 8, 2007

Condoleezza Rice on the Road Map

Question: You spoke about commitments under the first stage of the roadmap. There's been, say, a lax [sic] in the American pressure that used to be on Israel governing the outposts and settlement construction. We haven't heard much about it recently.

Secretary Rice: Well, sometimes we don't talk about things in public, but I think the Israeli Government is quite aware that—of American policy and of our expectations that that policy—or that the obligations under the roadmap are going to be carried out.

Interview with Aluf Benn, *Ha'aretz*,
State Department, February 18, 2007

The Golan Prospers

The nation is returning to the Golan, and in a big way! Despite the war in the north, recent months have seen a

meaningful increase in those expressing interest in purchasing homes in the region.

"In an average year, 250 families move to the Golan, but this year, after a short seasonal campaign, thousands have expressed an interest. Of these, 270 seem serious and 160 families are already in the process of moving," explained a local council official. . . .

[In the event of the Golan's return to Syria, prospective purchasers are advised] owners will be entitled to compensation, to be determined according to seniority. Therefore it is advisable to be sure that registration [of the purchase] is done as soon as possible—this could be worth a lot of money.

Ma'ariv, January 30, 2007

The Separation Barrier Grows

[As a result of] pressure from the two settlements [Na'ale and Nili], security and settlement sources report that Prime Minister [Ehud] Olmert has ordered the two settlements to be included west of the separation barrier. The 1,500 residents of both communities will be included west of the barrier, necessitating a 12 kilometer, \$30 million addition to the barrier approved by the government in April 2006. Twenty thousand Palestinians will be directly affected by the new construction, which will create two Palestinian pockets accessible to areas east of the barrier only by planned underground tunnels.

Ha'aretz, January 3, 2007

Peretz: Investigate Settler Violence against Hebron Arabs

Defense Minister Amir Peretz ordered the GOC Central Commander Yair Naveh to investigate harassment by settlers of the Abu Aysha family. Peretz expressed disgust at the recent video filmed by a family member that was aired on Israeli TV, in which one of the settler women is shown cursing and attacking the family members.

Next to the Abu Aysha family home in Hebron's Tel Rumeida neighborhood, a new settlement, Admot Yishay, has been built in recent years. Many Palestinians deserted their houses in the area following a rise in incidents of settler violence against the quarter's residents. To protect themselves from stone throwers, window smashing, garbage dumping, and daily attacks, the Abu Aysha family built a fence around their house. The fourteen family members currently live in a house resembling a cage.

Amos Harel, *Ha'aretz*, January 11, 2007

Systematic Harassment in Hebron

Settler harassment of Palestinians in Hebron is a continuing and systematic problem. Not only does the army not stop this phenomenon—they also contribute to it. . . .

Since the city was divided in 1997 under the framework of the Hebron agreement, the fate of 35,000 Palestinians living in the area of the city slated for Israeli control was sacrificed. They are suffering from unending incidents of violence at the hands of 500. . . . Over 40 percent of Palestinians that once lived in that area of the city acquiesced in face of the mounting settler violence and left their homes without compensation. Approximately 2,500 Palestinians who own shops and businesses were forced to close their gates since the outbreak of the intifada. Entire areas adjacent to the Hebron Casbah have been deserted and settlers are trying to take over the deserted buildings and shops.

Yariv Oppenheimer, Peace Now spokesman,
Ma'ariv, January 15, 2007

Settlers Have Returned Covertly to the Hebron Market

Four months have passed since the Bar Kochba family returned to the deserted store in Hebron after leaving it voluntarily at the beginning of the year [2006]. When the authorities discovered this last week, they immediately issued an evacuation notice. The Jerusalem court conceded the family's request and the evacuation orders were postponed until a proper hearing on their case.

In January 2006, nine families that had broken into the Hebron market agreed to voluntarily leave the area in a last-minute deal negotiated in face of a pending forceful evacuation. According to the agreement, the families would be able to return to their homes immediately after the government's legal advisor resolved the legal status of the shops, which had been owned by Palestinians but were purchased by Jews.

Guy Meital, *Yediot Aharonot*,
December 21, 2006

The government affirms that the key to security and stability in the region depends on ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and recognizing the right to self determination of the Palestinian people; the government will work with the international community for the sake of ending the occupation and regaining the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people so that we can build a solid basis for peace, security and prosperity in the region. . . .

The government affirms that peace and stability in the region depends on ending all forms of occupation of the Palestinian territories and removing the apartheid wall and settlements and halt of the Judaization of Jerusalem and policies of annexation and restore the rights to their owners.

The government affirms that resistance is a legitimate right of the Palestinian people as granted by the international norms and charters; our Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves in face of any Israeli aggression and believes that halting resistance depends on ending the occupation and achieving freedom, return and independence.

Despite this, the government, through national conciliation, will work on consolidating the calm and expanding it to become a comprehensive reciprocal truce happening at the same time between both sides and this should be in return for Israel halting its occupation measures on the ground in terms of assassinations, arrests, incursions and home demolition and leveling of lands and the digging works in Jerusalem and it should work on removing the check[points] and reopening the crossings and lifting all the restrictions on movement and the release of prisoners.

Excerpts from the program of the Palestinian unity government noted by Prime Minister-designate
Ismail Haniyeh in an address to the Palestinian Legislative Council, March 17, 2007.
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