

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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BARBED WIRE, STONE, AND ASPHALT FORGE A NEW WEST BANK

Israel has just elected Ariel Sharon for a second term, an expression of public support not bestowed on an Israeli prime minister since Menachem Begin. International efforts to fill the diplomatic vacuum created by the destruction of the Oslo process continue to proceed in fits and starts, without much confidence of success. While most international attention is focused on these two features of the political and diplomatic landscape of the conflict, the best barometer of relations between Israelis and Palestinians is, and remains, the state of affairs on the contested lands themselves.

A recent visit to the region south of Jerusalem highlights two prominent aspects of this continuing and unequal battle for control of the land. In virtually every Israeli settlement, colonization efforts are proceeding apace. These measures include new housing construc-

tion, contiguous to existing development and in new outposts along adjoining mountain ridges, and extensive site preparation for future development. Revolutionary changes in patterns of transportation and access are also in the works. There are new roads for Israeli settlers, aimed at facilitating safe travel to Israel and encouraging economic development. In contrast, the dynamic for Palestinians is just the opposite—an ever-increasing network of barricades, obstacles, patrol roads, and prohibitions that isolate them from settlements, each other, and from places of work, compromising their ability to lead normal lives and impoverishing an entire national community.

These elements of everyday life are at once contradictory and complementary. They illustrate the contrast between the unequal fortunes of settlers and their Palestinian neighbors while sustaining the overall impression of an Israeli policy that by design and execution aims at consolidating Israel's ability to secure a permanent hold over these lands.

The Palestinian village of al-Azariya offers no better metaphor for this extraordinary state of affairs. The village is defined by the road that passes through it from Jerusalem to Jericho. Today, the road is impassable. Israel has constructed a concrete wall across the road at the eastern perimeter of Jerusalem's municipal boundary, splitting the village in two.

Hardly five kilometers distant, a new road has opened to connect Jerusalem with the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim,

itself built in part on al-Azariya's patrimony.

This road features a tunnel under Mt. Scopus, not unlike the Tunnel Road that links the East Jerusalem settlement of Gilo with the Etzion bloc of settlements to the south. For a time, Palestinian snipers had all but closed this route to settlers—since the outbreak of the intifada they are the only Israelis who travel the West Bank—but today the route is lined with concrete barriers.

The road is meant to serve residents of the settlement of Betar Ilit, home to almost 20,000 members of the ultra-orthodox Haredi community. After transiting the tunnels, the road continues past the Palestinian village of al-Khadar. The road linking the village to this main thoroughfare has been blockaded. As a consequence, villagers walk to a nearby lot where buses await. Such blockades, which have grown more extensive and impermeable over the months of rebellion mean that Palestinian vehicles, with their distinctive green and white license plates, have all but disappeared from the principle West Bank roadways.

The road to Betar Ilit continues past the Palestinian village of Husan. Ten meters from the road a wire fence at least five meters tall—to keep settlers safe from stones—surrounds the village's southern perimeter. High intensity lights shine directly into homes.

Betar Ilit serves an expanding community of Orthodox Jews. Affordable

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TO OUR READERS

Jeff Aronson's account in this issue of settlement expansion south of Jerusalem and the accompanying map vividly illustrate Ariel Sharon's drive to cement Israel's domination of the occupied territories. Sharon is exploiting the diplomatic vacuum in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict created by Washington's retreat from this issue and its preoccupation with Iraq to accelerate changes in the political geography of the West Bank. He is also moving aggressively to isolate East Jerusalem from the West Bank. The scale of the latter effort is startling. It includes roads, trenches, walls, tunnels and settlements designed to preclude a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, a bottom line element for any peace deal.

Over the years this Foundation and others have monitored settlement growth and warned of the threat to peace. U.S. diplomats and intelligence analysts have also provided accurate reports on settlements. But texts and maps, without on-the-ground observation, do not fully convey the stark reality. Too few senior U.S. officials have

witnessed the massive scale and velocity of the settlements project, one reason, perhaps why Washington has never fully grasped the danger of settlements and the urgent need to confront the issue.

Many hope that after the war in Iraq, the U.S. will reengage more vigorously in Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy. President Bush supports a "viable, credible, Palestinian state" and a secure Israel. But settlements absolutely block both goals. The "Road Map", which defines current U.S. policy, calls for a settlement freeze. But, like the failed Oslo process, it lacks a clear destination that defines a final status agreement with the essential elements for peace, security, and a viable Palestinian state. These must include, not just an immediate halt to settlement growth, but evacuation of most of the settlements.

Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

Settlement Localities and Population, 2001

<i>Settlement Type</i>	<i>Number of Settlements (West Bank and Gaza Strip)</i>	<i>Population</i>
Rural	10	9,700
Rural Communal	69	41,700
Rural Kibbutzim	9	1,800
Rural Moshavim	32	8,800
Total Rural Population	120	62,000
Urban 2,000–9,999	14	57,500
Urban 10,000–19,999	4	63,000
Urban 20,000–49,999	1	25,800
Total Urban Population	19	146,300
Grand Total	139	208,300

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2002, Table 2.9.

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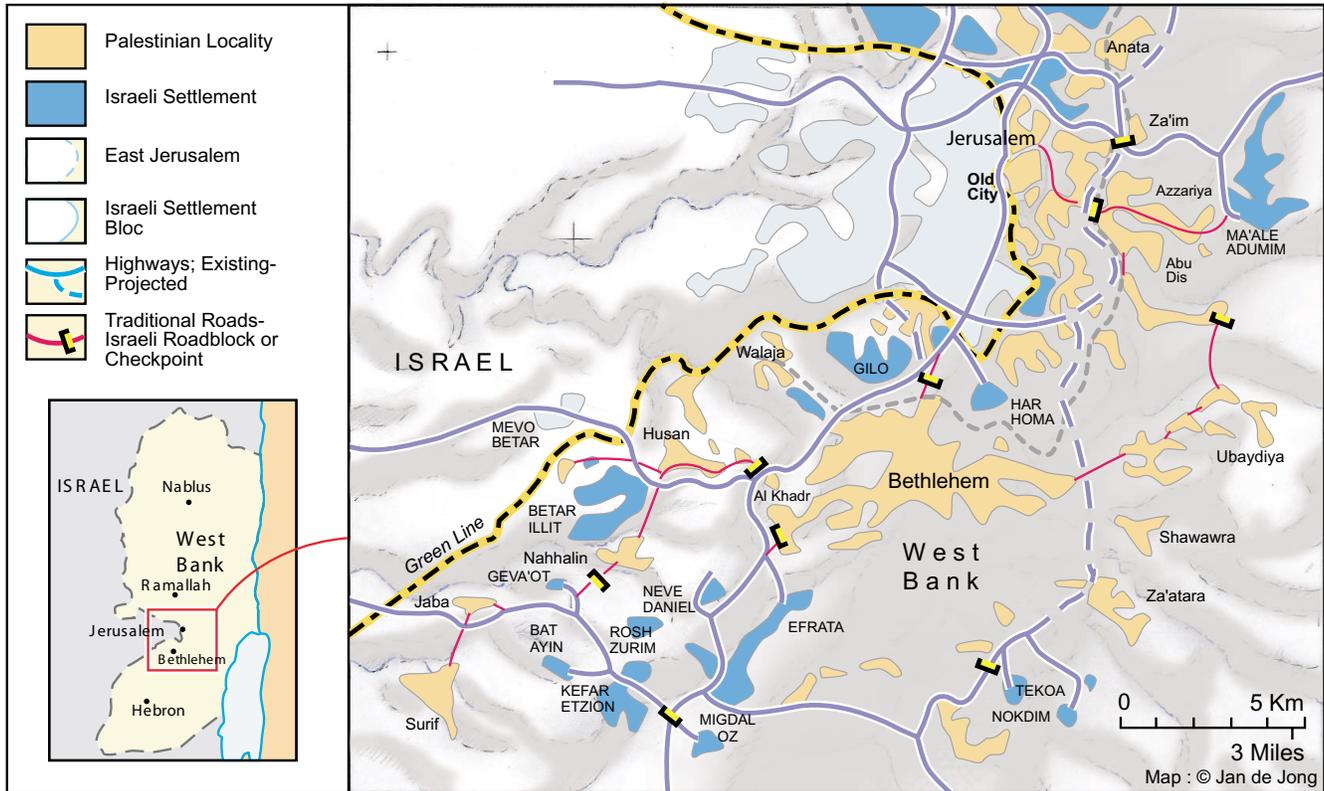
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housing in the recently incorporated municipality has catapulted Betar Ilit to the top of the list of fastest growing settlements. Panoramic views from the nearby Palestinian village of Nahalin bring Israel's patented methods of settlement expansion into view. The settlement is growing along the hilltops and down into the wadis that just separate the settlement from Nahalin. Nahalin is growing too, also in the direction of the wadi, but the limited resources that villagers can bring to bear do not compare with the transformation of Betar Ilit into a sea of red-roofed apartment houses.

The view from the heights of Nahalin looking west shows the haphazard growth of the village below, almost to the current limits of Betar Ilit, whose neat rows of apartments give way to extensive land preparation for future development. Within easy sight is the Israeli village of Mevo Betar to the west, just across the Green Line.

Nahalin's predicament offers a vivid testament to that faced by many villages today. It is confronted by the growing terri-

There is such a thing as International Law. There are rules and obligations which it imposes on an occupying power. Certain minimal obligations towards letting an occupied population enjoy a certain minimal standard of living. There was a time when Israeli rule was more or less within this framework. Now it is totally broken. The only consideration, overriding everything else, is maintenance of the settlements, which are inherently a violation of International Law.

Avigdor Feldman, prominent Israeli attorney, at a Tel Aviv symposium, March 12, 2003

torial footprint of Betar Ilit to the west. On a hilltop to the southeast is Rosh Zurim, part of the Etzion bloc of settlements. To the northeast is the settlement of Neve Daniel, expanding across the hilltops. The old road leading from Nahalin past the settlement and to the main thoroughfare to Bethlehem is now blocked by stones. There is no need for an Israeli checkpoint. Further to the south lie the settlements of Bet Ayin and, to the southwest, Giva'ot. The latter is today a small outpost on a hilltop. If all proceeds according to plan it will someday be a town of many thousands, part of Ariel Sharon's effort to establish a series of towns along the old Green Line border.

A quick reading of the compass, and a bird's eye view across this striking landscape establishes that Nahalin has been encircled by expanding Israeli settlements. Ariel Sharon has planned it this way, and his territorial vision is being realized. In contrast, local and international efforts to confront, let alone roll back the new reality being fashioned every day out of soil, stone, and barbed wire, appear hopelessly inadequate. ♦

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

October 1 After signing a State Department spending bill, U.S. president George W. Bush claims that his administration is not legally bound to follow a provision in it that requires Jerusalem be identified as Israel's capital. "We have always opposed legislative action that hinders the president's prerogatives on advancing our interests in the region and promoting a just and lasting peace," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, adding, "the State Department made consistently clear that it was opposed to those provisions."

October 2 The trial begins of four men accused of being members of a Jewish cell responsible for planting a bomb in an East Jerusalem girls' school in April. (*Israel Line*)

October 3 *Ha'aretz* reports that Jewish settlers from Hebron have taken control of a Palestinian-owned house close to the Jewish enclave of Beit Romano.

October 4 The Israel Defense Forces attack al-Zahraa, south of Gaza City, after a missile hit Netzarim settlement, injuring no one. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 5 Jewish settlers confiscate the well that provides al-Laban al-Sharqiya village with drinking water and confiscate a home in the village. The action falls within a wider plan that aims at confiscating more than 400 dunums of Palestinian agricultural land in the area. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 6 After Palestinians fire a rocket at a settlement near Khan Yunis, causing no casualties, Israel raids the Gaza Strip, leaving 12 Palestinians dead and 80 wounded. (*Mideast Mirror*)

The Khan Yunis hospital is hit by IDF assault rifle fire after the military traces three mortar shells fired at nearby settlements to the hospital. The gunfire killed one man and wounded three others. (*Associated Press*)

Ha'aretz reports settlers from Gidonim and Itamar killing a Palestinian and wounding two others during an attack on olive harvesters from the village of Aqraba, near Nablus, the latest in a series of such attacks.

October 7 The IDF bulldozes at least five houses in the village of Yabad, west of Jenin, because their owners did not have building permits. (*Agence France Presse*)

Ha'aretz reports that the Jordan Valley Road will be named after slain Israeli tourism

minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

October 8 *Ha'aretz* reports that Israeli defense minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer has ordered the army to begin evacuating 20 to 30 illegal settlement outposts in the West Bank.

October 9 Dozens of soldiers sign a petition to be sent to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon demanding the evacuation of all illegal settlement outposts in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Danish security services firm *Group 4 Falk* announces plans to shut down operations in West Bank settlements after learning that its security group subsidiary *Hashmira Corp* patrols areas in and around settlements. (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports the IDF's dismantling of two illegal settlement outposts in the West Bank.

October 10 Israel continues to demolish agricultural land and uproot olive trees in Tura al-Gharbiya village, Jenin, for the purposes of the "seamline" wall. (*Hear Palestine*)

The IDF demolishes 11 homes and a farm in Qalqas and al-Sha'aba areas, southeast of Hebron, for lack of proper construction permits. (*Hear Palestine*)

Settlers kill a Palestinian from the Aqraba village.

October 11 Construction of the "seamline" wall has affected 6000 dunums of Qiffin's land, located north of Tulkarem, with another 5,000 dunums expected to be bulldozed. By the time the wall is finished, the IDF will have confiscated 40 percent of Qiffin's agricultural land. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 12 Settlers open fire on Palestinian olive pickers in Beit Furik, near Nablus, and set fire to olive trees in Silwad and al-Mizra'a al-Sharqiya, east of Ramallah.

October 13 While heading to their land to harvest olives, farmers in the town of Tqu, southeast of Bethlehem, become the target of random machine-gun fire from settlers. (*Hear Palestine*)

Hear Palestine reports Israeli settlers setting fire to land cultivated with olive trees in Dura al-Qaria, north of Ramallah.

October 14 *Ha'aretz* reports Palestinian complaints that Hebron settlers are forcibly

preventing the muezzin at the Tomb of the Patriarchs from calling the faithful to prayer; that settlers have invaded waqf offices and vandalized equipment; and that settlers have broken into a local school. When Israeli police arrived at the Jewish enclave in the heart of the city's old quarter, settlers assaulted them with paint.

October 15 More than 5,000 buildings have been destroyed by Israeli incursions into Palestinian territory since October 2000, including the destruction of whole neighborhoods, schools, shops, factories, and farmland. According to PA labor minister Ghassan al-Khatib, some 500,000 people are unemployed in the territories, 150,000 of whom once worked in Israel as laborers and 350,000 of whom worked in the territories but cannot get to their jobs because of closures and curfews. The hardest hit have been the 30,000 who live near settlers in Hebron and have been under curfew for 385 days in the last two years. (*Ha'aretz*)

The Council of Jewish Settlement Rabbis calls on IDF soldiers to ask their commanding officers to release them from duties evacuating the settlements, citing religious reasons and reasons of conscience. The council also calls on all Zionist parties to leave the government coalition if it continues its policy of removing outposts. (*Mideast Mirror*)

Israeli settlers east of Jenin continue to prevent the residents of Deir Abu Da'if from harvesting olives on land situated near the settlements. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 16 *Hear Palestine* reports settlers attacking Palestinian farmers near Yassuf, north of Salfit, forcing them to evacuate their land.

October 18 Settlers from Efrat cut down 50 olive trees to the west of al-Khader village. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 19 Two hundred peace activists go to several West Bank locations to protect Palestinians from settler harassment during the olive harvest. (*Ha'aretz and Gush Shalom*)

Hear Palestine reports settlers throwing stones and garbage at students of the Qartaba School for Girls in the center of Hebron, forcing students to avoid the main road.

Settlers prevent residents of the West Bank villages of Aqraba and Inabus, near Nablus,

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and Jewish and Arab Israeli left-wing activists from picking olives by firing shots in the air. (*Jerusalem Post*)

Ha'aretz reports twelve police officers and ten settlers wounded when security forces begin the evacuation of Havat Gilad, near Nablus.

October 20 Settlers return to the dismantled Havat Gilad outpost to rebuild a temporary structure. (*Ha'aretz*)

Hear Palestine reports confrontations between residents of Jayous, supported by foreign volunteers, and the IDF when Israeli bulldozers begin demolishing the village's agricultural land, including more than 150 olive trees.

The IDF bulldozes dozens of dunums of land between Izbat Salman and Izbat Jalud to make room for the construction of the "seamline" wall. Israeli officials declare the confiscation of a further 2,600 dunums of land from Izbat Salman. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 21 Settlers from Shvut Rahel fire weapons, throw stones, and set cars on fire at a Palestinian-owned orchard in Turmus A'ya as residents harvest olives. (*Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*)

Kol Yisrael reports the IDF killing two Palestinians attempting to infiltrate the settlement of Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip.

Settlers erect two temporary structures at the dismantled outpost of Havat Gilad, west of Nablus. The IDF announces it will not attempt to remove the structures at this time. (*Ha'aretz*)

October 22 The European Union agrees to continue favorable treatment of Israeli exports from the territories as part of its free trade agreement with Israel. (*Ha'aretz*)

October 23 Israeli authorities issue three house demolition orders in al-Khader village, Bethlehem, in order to construct a road for a nearby settlement.

Ha'aretz reports that Israeli national infrastructure minister Effie Eitam has ordered a stop to all drilling for water by Palestinians in the West Bank, as well as a freeze on permits for further drilling.

The IDF prohibits Palestinians from picking olives in the West Bank after announcing that troops cannot protect harvesters from settler attacks. The order is later retracted

because of protests by human rights groups and Israeli politicians. (*Ha'aretz*)

October 24 After abandoning their village because of settler attacks, four families from Yanun return after an Israeli army officer promises that the residents will be protected as they harvest their olives. Mayor Abdel Latif Sabih declares, "We will not let go of our village and land. We left to seek a safe haven for our wives and children, but we men will come here everyday." (*al-Ayyam*)

October 25 *Hear Palestine* reports 160 homes partially demolished and more than 1,750 damaged, most in the Block 'O' refugee camp in Rafah, as a result of random IDF shelling. Approximately 2,200 residents from the camp were without refuge as a result. During the al-Aqsa intifada, 190 civilians, including 60 children have been killed in Rafah and 2,300 residents wounded.

Settlers arrested for involvement in the disturbance at Havat Gilad are released and the evacuation of more West Bank illegal outposts is postponed for a week. (*Ha'aretz*)

October 27 A Palestinian detonates explosives at a gas station near the Ariel settlement in the West Bank, killing three people and injuring nineteen. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

Ha'aretz reports five people injured when settlers from Itamar attack peace activists and Palestinian olive harvesters from the nearby village of Yanun.

Hear Palestine reports that the IDF has started construction of a wall 10 meters high along the border strip between Rafah and Egypt.

October 29 *Ha'aretz* reports three settlers killed and five wounded when a Palestinian infiltrates the settlement of Hermesh, near Jenin.

Canadian authorities announce their decision to revoke tax exemptions on donations made to the Magen David Adom organization after noting that money for the emergency medical services supports ambulances operating in the territories. (*Ha'aretz*)

IDF and police return to Havat Gilad for the third time to evacuate a group of settlers from the illegal outpost. (*Ha'aretz*)

October 30 The Palestinian Agriculture Ministry in Rafah reports that the IDF has

destroyed 1,435 dunums of trees, 122 dunums of greenhouses, 5 water wells, and more than 7,000 dunums of cultivated land since October 2000. (*Palestine Report*)

Israeli bulldozers level land north of al-Ram in preparation for construction of the separation zone around Jerusalem. (*Hear Palestine*)

October 31 Three commanders who live in religious settlements are expelled from their brigade for refusing to evacuate the illegal outpost of Mitzpeh Assaf, near Beit El. The commanders say they cannot take part in an operation that means "evacuating Jews from the Land of Israel." (*Ha'aretz*)

November 3 Israeli soldiers continue to prevent farmers from Salfit from harvesting olives. (*Hear Palestine*)

November 4 Settlers attack residents of Kfar Qalil village during which a large amount of harvested olives are stolen. (*Hear Palestine*)

November 6 Hamas claims responsibility for an attack on the Katif bloc in Gaza where two settlers were killed and one wounded. (*Hear Palestine*)

November 9 *Al-Ayyam* reports moves in the Mawasi area of Khan Yunis for the confiscation of the fishing port and its transfer to a new settlement bloc.

A report by the General Committee for the Defense of Land claims that settlers in more than 84 settlements in the West Bank have carried out more than 1,000 attacks against Palestinian farmers and their property in the past year. The attacks have resulted in civilian casualties and the destruction of more than 12,200 dunums of cultivated land, the source of income for 1,414 Palestinian families, with the Nablus area suffering the greatest damage. (*al-Quds*)

Kol Ha'ir reports that 45 Palestinian homes will be demolished and 1,250 dunums of land confiscated for Jerusalem's eastern ring road. (*Hear Palestine*)

November 11 The General Information Center in Hebron releases a report announcing that in the two years of the al-Aqsa intifada, 160 Palestinian residents have been killed and more than 8,256 wounded. The report reveals that the Old City of Hebron has been under curfew for 318 days during

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this period and that the IDF has demolished 34 homes under “security” pretexts and 20 under the pretext of “no construction permit.” More than 3,250 dunums around Hebron has been seized for settlement expansion. (*al-Quds*)

November 12 Israeli authorities prevent residents of Nablus from harvesting olives. Settlers confiscate olives from Yanun, and the IDF prevents residents from Awarta from harvesting olives. In Beit Furik, harvesters are unable to reach their land to pick olives because of movement restrictions imposed by the IDF. (*Wafa*)

November 13 Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz tells the Knesset that in the preceding month, the IDF has dismantled 23 illegal outposts and evacuated 60 others. (*Kol Yisra'el*)

November 14 Israeli bulldozers supported by the IDF clear 10 dunums of land and demolish water networks and the main water well in the Palestinian area around the settlement of Kfar Darom. (*Hear Palestine*)

November 15 Three settler families set up camp in a clearing alongside a road to Hebron after Islamic Jihad members ambushed Israeli soldiers. Visiting Likud member Eli Cohen says, “If you come here in three years, you will see this neighborhood connected to historic Hebron. This is a historic moment.” (*Ha'aretz*)

November 17 Kiryat Arba settlers set up an outpost at the site of an attack against armed Israelis who were providing security for worshippers on their way to the Tomb of the Patriarchs. The IDF begins uprooting trees and destroying houses. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 18 A U.S. State Department spokeswoman declares, “We believe that, consistent with the Mitchell committee recommendations, Israeli settlement activity should halt. We understand Israel’s right to defend itself against the perpetrators of the [Hebron] attack but continue to urge both sides to refrain from unilateral actions which aggravate an already dangerous situation.” (*Reuters*)

An Israeli woman is killed and another injured in an ambush near the West Bank settlement of Rimonim, northeast of Ramallah. (*Ha'aretz*)

November 26 Police arrest three settlers

near the Elkana settlement in the West Bank. They were found with uprooted olive trees and claimed to have had permission from the Palestinian owner of the orchard to remove the trees. (*New York Times*)

The IDF has demolished some 80 Palestinian homes in Gaza since August. (*News Asia*)

November 27 The IDF kills three Palestinians attempting to infiltrate the Gaza settlement of Rafiach Yam and Atzmona. (*Hear Palestine*)

Palestine Report announces that since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee has built 211 agricultural roads to serve more than 300 residential areas in the West Bank and Gaza. The construction has provided work for 5,000 laborers who have been unable to work inside the Green Line, and 2,200 families have benefitted directly from the roads, which help farmers reach their cultivated lands.

November 29 A Palestinian youth is killed and three Israelis wounded in armed confrontations inside the Bedolah settlement, in Rafah. (*Hear Palestine*)

December 1 The Knesset Finance Committee approves the allocation of \$10 million for building bypass roads in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 2 The IDF posts notices ordering property seizures and house demolitions along the length of a street in Hebron that will be used to link the Hebron and Kiryat Arba settlements. Sixty buildings and pieces of land will be seized on al-Haram St. for “military necessity.” About 15 buildings are abandoned or falling down, but 30 or so families still occupy about half the street. (*The Guardian*)

An IDF soldier sustains light injuries when an armed Palestinian attempts to infiltrate Netzarim in the Gaza Strip. (*Israel Line*)

December 3 *Yediot Aharonot* reports that more than 1,000 Palestinian olive trees have been sold to nursery owners in Israel. “By cautious estimate, at least 2,000 olive trees have been uprooted in recent months. Some are destroyed in the process.” It was noted that some trees are returned to their Palestinian owners to be replanted, but most are sold. (*Boston Globe*)

December 9 The IDF arrests Tanzim operative Mahmud Muhammad Mahmud Amro, a resident of Hebron, for the death of 10-month-old Shalhevet Pass. (*Israel Line*)

December 10 The Israeli High Court issues an order instructing the IDF not to demolish Palestinian buildings adjacent to the areas planned for a new road to link the Kiryat Arba and Hebron. (*Ha'aretz*)

December 12 Palestinian gunmen kill two Israeli soldiers at a guard post between Hebron and Kiryat Arba. (*Arutz 7*)

A spokesman for the Hebron Jewish Community states, “Blood is cheap in [Jewish] Hebron. It has been a month since 12 men were killed by terrorist gunfire [very close] to tonight’s attack. What did the government do? No buildings were destroyed, the incitement continues, the inciters have not been apprehended, and the terrorists’ arms have not been confiscated. The new neighborhood linking Hebron and Kiryat Arba has not yet been approved. Such negligence only encourages terrorists to murder, again and again.” (*Arutz 7*)

Hear Palestine reports Israel demolishing seven homes in Hebron’s al-Rajabi quarter, near the Ibrahim mosque.

A Palestinian from al-Maghazi refugee camp is killed near the Netzer Hazani settlement in the Katif bloc while trying to infiltrate it. (*Hear Palestine*)

December 13 *Hear Palestine* reports, “Israeli bulldozers leveled over 20 dunums of agricultural land southwest Deir al-Balah today as well as destroyed water and electricity networks in the area. Two tanks and a bulldozer took off from Tel Katif settlement under intense fire and headed towards al-Baraka area where vast areas of agricultural land were destroyed. Bulldozing activities also took place on land northeast of al-Qarara. Over 300 fruitful olive, palm and fig trees were destroyed, around 400 meters away from Kisofim settlement road. Over 60 dunums of agricultural land were demolished.”

Residents of Bethlehem are placed under curfew for the thirtieth consecutive day. In Hebron, a curfew continues for the thirty-fourth day. (*Hear Palestine*)

December 15 “At the weekly Israeli cabinet meeting, Chief of Staff Ya’alon reported

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that since Operation “Defensive Shield,” more than 4,700 Palestinians involved in terrorism have been arrested and 109 homes have been demolished in Judea and Samaria. Approximately 200 terrorists, who attempted to infiltrate communities and cross the fence into Israel, have been killed in defensive actions in the Gaza Strip.” (*Cabinet Communique*)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency reports that by the end of October 2002, 639 shelters accommodating 888 families had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israeli military activity: 519 shelters for 739 refugee families and 120 shelters for 149 non-refugee families.

December 16 The General Committee for the Defense of Land reports that bulldozers have cut a road 4 kilometers long and 25 meters wide on hills and agricultural fields in the area south of al-Bireh and in al-Jadira, northwest of Jerusalem. (*Hear Palestine*)

December 17 *Ha’aretz* reports that the IDF has halted plans to demolish five houses in Bethlehem after learning that the owners are peace activists who enjoy the patronage of the U.S. embassy and Senator Hillary Clinton.

December 19 Israeli defense minister Mofaz orders the evacuation of an illegal

outpost in the middle of Hebron, established after the November 15 ambush that killed nine Israeli soldiers and three security volunteers from nearby Kiryat Arba. Zvi Katzover, mayor of Kiryat Arba, said to *Army Radio*, “The evacuation was pointless. We plan to return and settle there and soon.” (*Mideast Mirror*)

December 21 A Palestinian is killed during an attack on an Israeli settler convoy near Morag, in Rafah. (*Hear Palestine*)

December 23 *Arutz 7* reports the IDF recommending that YESHA residents not hitchhike after learning that abductions may be made in order to swap settlers in exchange for detained Palestinians.

The Gush Etzion bloc has grown by 117 families in two years. Bat Ayn has grown by 17 families, Tekoa by 14, and Karnei Tzur by 13. (*Arutz-7*)

December 24 A report issued by the municipality of Bethlehem claims that 7,223 buildings have been damaged and 78 completely demolished by Israeli incursions this year. (*WAFI*)

December 25 Two Palestinians are killed by IDF tank fire while attempting to approach Netzarim. (*Arutz 7*)

December 27 Four settlers are killed and ten wounded by two Palestinians in a restau-

rant in the Otniel settlement, south of Hebron. Both Palestinians are killed by the IDF. Sary al-Quds, a faction of Islamic Jihad, claims responsibility. (*Hear Palestine* and *Ha’aretz*)

December 28 *Al-Ayyam* reports IDF confiscating 20 dunums of land belonging to the al-Rawashi family, near Kfar Darom.

The IDF imposes a curfew on Dura and blow up two homes. Five residents are wounded. (*Hear Palestine*)

An Israeli tank opens fire and kills a Palestinian youth attempting to approach a military post near Netzarim. The youth, a Hamas member, was killed near the settlement. (*Hear Palestine*)

Central Command Maj.-Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky announces that special security zones have been established around the settlements of Otniel and Beit Haggai, south of Hebron. The decision means that no “foreign elements” will be allowed within 400 meters of the towns.

December 29 The IDF announces that it has foiled 21 infiltration attempts into settlements in the preceding month. (*Ha’aretz*)

Ha’aretz reports that since September, 78 houses have been demolished in the West Bank.

Population in Settlements with More Than 5,000 Inhabitants, 2001*

<i>Settlement</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1983</i>	<i>1980</i>
Ariel	16,000	15,600	15,100	13,200	12,800	11,800	10,400	8,000	1,200	700
Giv’at Ze’ev	10,500	10,300	10,000	7,100	6,700	6,400	6,100	4,800		
Ma’ale Adumim	25,800	24,900	23,800	18,000	18,400	16,900	15,200	13,500	3,500	300
Katzrin (Golan Heights)	6,100	6,200		5,000	5,000	4,400	4,200	3,700	1,900	1,000
Kiryat Arba	6,400	6,400	6,240	5,700	5,100	5,100	4,900	4,300	2,900	3,000
Population Total	64,800	63,400	55,140	49,000	48,000	44,600	40,800	34,300	9,500	5,000

*Excluding East Jerusalem.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2002, Table 2.14.

SETTLEMENTS EXPAND SECURITY PERIMETERS

Israel's attorney general Elyakim Rubinstein has determined that "existing security circumstances leave no choice but to permit in principle the establishment of security zones around settlements.

Rubinstein has asked elected officials in each settlement in the West Bank to sign a statement promising that they will not expand construction into the new security zones being created around every settlement. Some leaders are refusing to make such a commitment. They argue that in many cases, the land inside the new perimeter is within the master plan boundaries for the settlement, and by signing such an agreement, settlements might compromise their ability to expand into territory for which they have statutory planning authority.

Palestinians who find that their lands or travel routes are affected by the new "special security zones" are to be assured use of these lands "after they pass a security check," according to Rubinstein. Israel is prepared to pay compensation to landowners whose property is expropriated for construction of security fences.

Initial plans are to construct security perimeters 300 meters distant from the existing perimeter, defined by interior and exterior electronic fences, around 30 settlements. There will be "special open fire regulations" in the zones. The length of an average perimeter is 6-7 kilometers. The construction cost for the more than 150 settlements in the West Bank is estimated at \$200 million. This expansion of settlement-

controlled areas is being taken because of the increased incidence of Palestinian attacks on settlements. Extensive land-clearing operations around Gaza settlements have been underway for some time.

In order to confront the growing phenomena of Palestinian infiltration raids on settlements, the IDF has also moved many company and regimental outposts inside the settlements themselves.

Budgetary restraints promise to stretch completion of the project over many months. In the meantime such settlements as Karmeit Tsur, where two settlers were killed by a Palestinian intruder, have decided to improve the existing security perimeter by deploying concussion grenades connected by trip wires along its length. Residents of the Jordan Valley settlement of Ma'ale Ephraim suggested to Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz that they plant illumination mines around the existing fence. The IDF remains opposed to such "non-selective" measures and the casualties that they might produce.

There are also calls to create "sterile areas" along highways where attacks on settlers have occurred. The Ofra-Shilo-Ma'ale Levona area east of Ramallah is one such location. Binyamin Regional Council head Pinchas Wallerstein supports the creation of such a zone 100 to 150 meters wide on both sides of the main highway. "Whoever enters that zone must be considered suspicious," Wallerstein explained. "The Arab residents will simply have to pay the price of not traveling in this area." ♦

"The prolonged Israeli-Palestine conflict is furthering anti-American sentiment, increasing the likelihood of terrorism directed at United States interests, increasing the pressure on moderate Middle East regimes and carries with it the potential for wider regional conflict. With each side determined to break the other's will, I see no end to the current violence. It seems to me that this is our greatest omission, of putting that crisis on the back burner and not moving it forward to resolution."

Testimony of Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, Director Defense Intelligence Agency, before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, February 11, 2003

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