

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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OLMERT'S "CONVERGENCE" PLAN OFF TO A SLOW START

The election campaign waged by Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert was billed as a referendum on his idea for settling the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians over control of lands under Israeli occupation. In its most expansive version Olmert proposed that Israel annex approximately 10 percent of the West Bank, including settlements and historic areas in East Jerusalem, along a perimeter defined more or less by the separation barrier now being constructed in the West Bank. Israel would expand settlements west of the barrier and withdraw its settlers from the remaining areas—72 settlements with a current population of close to 60,000 (see listing beginning on page 3), maintaining exclusive security control over these territories as well as over the border crossing points to Jordan. Palestinians in general, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in particular, are excluded from this process, inspired as it is by former prime minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral (and far more com-

prehensive) disengagement from the Gaza Strip in September 2005. Yet Olmert will be unable to proceed without Hamas' continuation of the "calm" that facilitated the Gaza withdrawal.

Olmert and the Kadima Party he leads won the elections, but without a parliamentary majority large enough to be considered a mandate to fully implement his concept. Olmert, unlike Sharon, need not be in any hurry. The new prime minister lacks Sharon's stature and the sense of urgency that enabled the former prime minister, against the expectations of many, to execute Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in September 2005. It is unlikely that he will be able to mobilize support in the current Knesset for more than a token West Bank withdrawal of less than 15 small settlements. Such a modest redeployment would not create a territorial opportunity for the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty and normal life, nor would it provide significant security benefits for Israel.

The planning necessary to turn Olmert's idea for an Israeli redeployment in the West Bank, no matter how circumscribed, into a plan, has yet to begin. Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Dan Halutz, noted in a May 5 interview that "There is no convergence program. There certainly has been no order to the army to prepare a concrete and specific plan. We heard like the rest of the Israeli people the declaration of the prime minister and when a plan is received we'll prepare for it."

PA president Mahmoud Abbas and

his political opponents alike are united in opposition to Israel's latest effort to impose a territorial solution.

"In Gaza they evacuated the settlements and left Gaza," the president noted in an April 8, 2006, interview in the *Guardian*. But in the West Bank they will demarcate the borders and say: 'This is your state.' And they want our state within the wall without negotiations. . . . Nobody will accept it. The struggle will continue."

During Olmert's May 2006 visit to Washington, he was once again reminded that Washington would not formally recognize a border created without Palestinian agreement. U.S. president George W. Bush, however, praised Olmert's "bold ideas . . . [that] could lead to a two-state solution if a pathway to progress on the road map is not open in the period ahead." This remark represents a marked improvement on the initial, more skeptical reaction from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who noted on March 30, 2006, "I wouldn't on the face of it just say absolutely we don't think there's any value in what the Israelis are talking about."

Until the Israeli plan includes a definite territorial dimension, U.S. views will be of little import. Olmert, in his first Washington visit as prime minister, was not in any position to ask the president to endorse a plan that has yet to take shape and which is likely to be of a scale that warrants a policy endorsement from Washington of the kind Olmert originally intended. ♦

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Also in this issue:

Settlement Population	3
Settlement Time Line	4-5
Price of Apartments	7

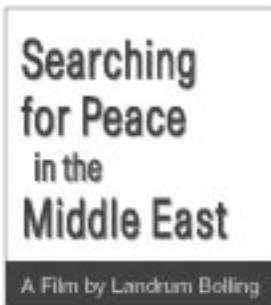
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The Bush administration is avoiding all contacts with the new, democratically elected Hamas led government, and has suspended aid to the Palestinian Authority, hoping that this will persuade Hamas to recognize Israel, forswear violence, and accept all past agreements. Some U.S. officials may even hope that these sanctions will turn the Palestinian public against Hamas in favor of a revived Fatah or other more moderate Palestinian leadership.

There is little reason to believe these policies will succeed. The Palestinian public already blames the U.S., not Hamas, for the cut off of aid, and hopes for early emergence of a strong alternative leadership are unrealistic. The boycott of Hamas has deepened skepticism about the new U.S. commitment to democracy in the region. And Hamas, viewing the wreckage of the Oslo peace process under Arafat, will likely seek a more substantial quid pro quo than the former Palestinian leader did before meeting the required conditions. In the

meantime, the boycott of all contacts with Hamas encourages Israeli unilateralism, like Olmert's grandiose "convergence" plan, which is a formula for continued conflict, and the comparable illusion, among Hamas hard liners, that resistance, not negotiations, serves Palestinian interests.

Traditionally, parties in conflict have talked to their enemies, usually without conditions, to determine if there is—or is not—common ground that might be enlarged. Such contacts with Hamas are needed to bring greater realism to their thinking, to understand better their views, and to discover whether differences might be bridged. The U.S. has engaged diplomatically with other hostile entities and regimes in the past. For example, dialogue with Libya led to its removal from the U.S. terrorist list and restoration of diplomatic relations. Why not engage with Hamas? There is nothing to lose, and perhaps, much to gain.



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SETTLEMENT POPULATION EAST OF THE SEPARATION BARRIER

	Population Growth											
	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1994	1994–2000		1994–2004		2000–2004	
							No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Adora	186	191	205	253	271	184	87	47.28	2	1.09	-85	-31.37
2 Almog	142	141	155	159	167	102	65	63.73	40	39.22	-25	-14.97
3 Argaman	166	169	167	160	164	165	-1	-0.61	1	0.61	2	1.22
4 Asfar	275	232	218	308	361	299	62	20.74	-24	-8.03	-86	-23.82
5 Ateret	350	349	320	307	302	230	72	31.3	120	52.17	48	15.89
6 Avnei Hefez	1,038	964	891	838	785	214	571	266.82	824	385.05	253	32.23
7 Bat Ayin	796	767	685	665	610	319	291	91.22	477	149.53	186	30.49
8 Beqa'ot	152	145	147	153	144	180	-36	-20	-28	-15.56	8	5.56
9 Bet El	4,763	4,627	4,410	4,240	4,120	1,230	2890	234.96	3533	287.24	14	25.45
10 Bet HaArava	69	54	52	59	55	26*	29	111.54	43	165.38	218	28.99
11 Bracha	970	880	817	783	752	319	433	135.74	651	204.08	643	15.61
12 Dolev	963	973	909	907	880	471	409	86.84	492	104.46	83	9.43
13 Eli	2,308	2,058	1,960	1,830	1,900	647	1253	193.66	1661	256.72	408	21.47
14 Elon Moreh	1,152	1,097	1,060	1,030	1,060	1,120	-60	-5.36	32	2.86	92	8.68
15 Enav	468	473	492	498	500	345	155	44.93	123	35.65	-32	-6.4
16 Gilgal	164	162	161	171	180	169	11	6.51	-5	-2.96	-16	-8.89
17 Gittit	161	119	95	102	100	138	-38	-27.54	23	16.67	61	61
18 Giva Binyamin	2,032	1,801	1,570	1,300	1,020	361	659	182.55	1671	462.88	1012	99.22
19 Hagai	429	388	374	396	406	224	182	81.25	205	91.52	23	5.67
20 Haramish	931	915	895	894	922	874	48	5.49	57	6.52	9	0.98
21 Hamra	125	131	136	143	147	168	-21	-12.5	-43	-25.6	-22	-14.97
22 Hemdat	120	107	92	74								
23 Hermesh	229	229	246	256	279	142	137	96.48	87	61.27	-50	-17.92
24 Itamar	600	557	534	562	541	273	268	98.17	327	119.78	59	10.91
25 Kalya	260	260	257	264	260	247	13	5.26	13	5.26	0	
26 Karmeit Zur	665	623	579	504	481	237	244	102.95	428	180.59	184	38.25
27 Karmel	319	321	301	280	246	231	15	6.49	88	38.1	73	29.67
28 Kfar Tapuah	593	523	446	387	347	261	86	32.95	332	127.2	246	70.89
29 Kiryat Arba	6,651	6,605	6,580	6,400	6,380	5,120	1260	24.61	1531	29.9	271	4.25
30 Kokhav HaShahar	1,365	1,367	1,300	1,250	1,150	805	345	42.86	560	69.57	215	18.7
31 Kokhav Ya'akov	4,389	3,819	3,250	2,410	1,640	663	977	147.36	3726	561.99	2749	167.62
32 Ma'ale Amos	319	299	258	300	336	388	-52	-13.4	-69	-17.78	-17	-5.06
33 Ma'ale Efraim	1,456	1,443	1,430	1,390	1,480	1,470	10	0.68	-14	-0.95	-24	-1.62
34 Ma'ale Levona	514	497	462	442	445	301	144	47.84	213	70.76	69	15.51
35 Ma'ale Mikhmas	1,055	980	945	905	826	539	287	53.25	516	95.73	229	27.72
36 Ma'on	308	327	320	300	283	158	125	79.11	150	94.94	25	8.83
37 Massu'a	140	145	142	143	148	210	-62	-29.52	-70	-33.33	-8	-5.41
38 Mehola	360	327	311	342	306	268	38	14.18	92	34.33	54	17.65
39 Mekhora	119	125	119	119	113	135	-22	-16.3	-16	-11.85	6	5.31
40 Mevo Dotan	287	289	279	295	310	271	39	14.39	16	5.9	-23	-7.42
41 Migdalim	151	152	143	153	154	118*	36	30.51	33	27.97	-3	-1.95
42 Mizpe Shalem	192	193	191	207	210	200	10	5	-8	-4	-18	-8.57
43 Mizpe Yeriho	1,469	1,430	1,370	1,310	1,210	678	532	78.47	791	116.67	259	21.4
44 Na'aleh	600	556	492	334	137	149	-12	-8.05	451	302.68	463	337.96
45 Nahali'el	282	248	231	221	244	214	30	14.02	68	31.78	38	15.57
46 Negohot	135	134	85									
47 Netiv HaGedud	132	120	132	133	139	201	-62	-31.85	-69	-34.33	-7	-5.04

SETTLEMENT POPULATION, continued on page 7

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

February 1 Israeli security and police forces demolish nine permanent dwellings in the West Bank settlement outpost of Amona. At least 200 soldiers and settlers, including three Knesset members, are injured in clashes. The inhabited caravans in the outpost remain. (*Ha'aretz, Ma'ariv*)

February 2 The YESHA Council offers a compromise to the Israeli government whereby settlers themselves dismantle a few settlement outposts. (*Ma'ariv*)

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Central Command decides to withdraw all soldiers from the Yitzhar settlement following settlers' abuse of the soldiers protecting them. (*Yediot Abaronot*)

A settler injures two Palestinians with the butt of his gun on a Palestinian bus near the al-Arrub refugee camp. (OCHA)

Palestinians throwing rocks injure a settler near Madama village, Nablus. Rock throwers injure another settler near the settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev. (OCHA)

February 3 Palestinians throwing rocks injure a settler near the Karnei Shomron settlement. (OCHA)

A guard from the Pnei Hever settlement beats a Palestinian shepherd from Yatta. (OCHA)

February 4 Four settlers from Hebron attack a group of 15 Palestinian children and the Israeli troops protecting them on their way to school. (*Yediot Abaronot*)

February 5 The YESHA Council organizes a protest of tens of thousands in Jerusalem, performing scenes from the Amona evacuation and displaying the slogan "Olmert is bad for the Jews. Olmert wants a civil war." (*Ha'aretz*)

Ha'aretz reports that the Israeli High Court has ordered the state to explain within three weeks why the route of the separation barrier will not be moved westward to the settlement of Modi'in Illit instead of through the farming land of the Palestinian village of Bil'in, whose residents petitioned the court.

February 6 The Anglican Church decides to divest from companies, including from Caterpillar, with a presence in the occupied territories. (*Ha'aretz*)

February 7 *Yediot Abaronot* reports on the unprecedented decision by the Defense

Ministry to grant thousands of shekels in compensation to the families of two Palestinian victims murdered by Israelis on the basis of their ethnicity.

February 8 The Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) evacuates its offices in the city following an attack by Palestinians angered by publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. (*Ha'aretz*)

February 9 *Ha'aretz* reports that the evacuation and demolition of dwellings in the settlement outpost of Amona cost \$1.5 million. Settlers uproot 15 trees belonging to Palestinian farmers from the town of Yatta, near the settlement of Ma'on.

February 10 *Ma'ariv* reports IDF commander Yair Neveh and his two children receiving threats following the evacuation of the Amona outpost.

February 12 Israeli border police begin uprooting olive trees belonging to Beit Sira village, Ramallah, for the construction of the separation barrier. Eleven Palestinian protesters are injured by tear gas and rubber bullets. (OCHA)

February 13 *Ha'aretz* reports that despite the Israeli disengagement, in 2004 settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan continued to receive the most government funding for infrastructure and development. The Interior Ministry supplied settlements with \$430 per settler, twice the amount granted to Israelis living in Israel and two and a half times as much as allocated to Arab citizens of Israel.

Israeli settlers from Susiya plow and plant olive trees on eight dunams of Palestinian land. (OCHA)

February 14 The IDF continues to install three-meter-high concrete slabs along West Bank Road 60 from the Shavei Shomron checkpoint to the Deir Sharaf junction as part of the security zone constructed around the settlement. (OCHA)

New housing construction continues in the settlements of Karmeit Zur, Karmel, Kiryat Arba, and Susiya. Land leveling continues for a new security fence around the settlements of Adora and Pnei Hever. (OCHA)

February 17 *Ha'aretz* reports on a new military order barring West Bank Palestinians from entering Israel via the same roads

that Israelis use, even if they are transported by Israelis. There are 11 crossing points designated for Palestinian use.

IDF soldiers injure five Palestinians when they fire rubber-coated metal bullets at stone throwers demonstrating in Azzun, Qalqilya, against Israeli settlers responsible for anti-Islamic graffiti on a nearby mosque. (OCHA)

February 19 Settlers from the settlement of Susiya uproot 20 olive groves that had been planted by Israeli peace activists on Palestinian-owned land near the settlement. (OCHA)

The IDF starts leveling land for a new section of the "road protection barrier" along Road 60 near the Palestinian community of Zanuta. (OCHA)

Ma'ariv reports Eli Yishai, head of the Shas Party, as stating that preserving all the West Bank settlements is not realistic.

February 20 Israeli settlers from the El Matan outpost near Kfar Thulth, Qalqilya, uproot two olive trees belonging to Palestinians. (OCHA)

The IDF continues to level land around the Ateret settlement for a buffer zone. (OCHA)

February 21 The IDF demolishes an uninhabited 300-square-meter house in the al-Shaabe neighborhood in the H2 part of Hebron. It was built without a permit. (OCHA)

Israeli security forces demolish three deserted settlement outposts in the West Bank and Jordan Valley that settler youths had built during December. One of the outposts was located outside the West Bank settlement of Beit El, another near the settlement outpost of Adei Ad in the Shilo area, and the other outside Kokhav HaShachar in the western Jordan Valley. (Arutz 7)

February 22 Arutz 7 reports that 12 to 14 families from Gaza's Netzer Hazani settlement and others from Katif, Kfar Darom, Morag, and Neve Dekalim will be moving to the Golan settlement of Avnei Eitan. (Arutz 7)

February 24 *Kol Ha'Zeman* reports that the Israel Land Administration is working on a plan to expand the settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev, which currently has 40,000 residents. It proposes 1,100 new housing units in a

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

development of 18 five-to-nine storey buildings.

February 28 A Palestinian stabs two settlers at the Etzion bloc intersection in the West Bank. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

March 1 One settler is killed and another wounded in two drive-by shootings at the West Bank settlements of Migdalim and Karnei Shomron, respectively. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claim responsibility. (*Ha'aretz*)

March 2 *Ma'ariv* reports a 31% growth in private home sales in Jerusalem and a 23% decrease in home sales in the West Bank. Of 12,372 private housing units sold in Israel and the settlements in 2005, 9.5%, or 1,180, of those were in Jerusalem and 3.5%, or 436, in the West Bank. Israel's housing inventory plummeted to 11,900 in 2005, with Jerusalem's housing inventory decreasing by 52% and West Bank housing inventory decreasing by 15.6%.

March 3 *IMEMC & Agencies* reports that settlers from the Ariel settlement continue to pump sewage water onto Palestinian farmlands belonging to residents of Burkin and Kfer al-Diq.

Following a petition by residents of Abu Dis, Israel's High Court issues a 14-day interim decision to suspend the construction of the separation barrier around Ma'ale Adumim. (OCHA)

March 8 Israeli settlers attack and injure a Palestinian man near the Ibrahim mosque in Hebron's H2 area. (OCHA)

The IDF replants 700 of 1,200 olive trees that were uprooted for the construction of the separation barrier in Beit Sira, Ramallah. (OCHA)

March 9 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the number of unmanned structures, such as concrete barriers, earth mounds, and temporary checkpoints, along West Bank roads rose from 376 in August 2005 to 471 in January 2006.

March 10 IDF soldiers fire tear gas and rubber bullets at Palestinians and Israelis demonstrating against the separation barrier in Beit Sira, injuring eight Palestinians. Six border police are also hurt. (OCHA)

March 11 *Ma'ariv* reports that security officials are considering granting Israeli citi-

zenship to Palestinian residents of Kfar Brata and Wadi 'Ara, two villages inside the separation barrier.

March 13 Channel 2 reports the start of construction on a police station in the E1 area between Ma'ale Adumim and Jerusalem.

Masked settlers from Susiya attack and injure three Palestinians, including a 65-year-old woman, planting trees with the help of an Israeli group in a Palestinian field near the settlement. (OCHA)

March 14 *Ha'aretz* reports the civil administration as confirming the existence of a list with the names of 2,000 Palestinians banned from returning to the Jordan Valley in an effort to keep them from claiming their land. Thousands of dunams of land in the area have been transferred to settlements and army bases.

Kadima prime ministerial candidate Ehud Olmert pledges to annex settlements deep in the West Bank if he is elected. "The Ariel bloc will be an integral part of Israel, whatever happens," Olmert said. "Ariel is Israel." Olmert also declares his intention to make Ariel College a university. (*Ma'ariv*)

Yediot Aharonot reports that settlers from Ma'ale Mikdash in the West Bank are trying to collect enough votes to expel Otniel Shendler, ranked twenty-sixth on the Kadima Party Knesset list, from the settlement.

March 15 Israeli Border Police fire tear gas and rubber bullets at Palestinians throwing stones in the Shuafat refugee camp in East Jerusalem during a protest against the construction of the separation barrier. Border Police firing live ammunition kill a 20-year-old Palestinian man. (OCHA)

Israeli settlers fire on Awarta village near Nablus, wounding two Palestinians. (OCHA)

The Israeli DCL office in Hebron begins issuing magnetic cards for Palestinians. (OCHA)

All primary entrances to Hebron from Roads 35 and 60 are closed, but alternative entrances remain via Halhul and Dura through IDF-staffed positions. (OCHA)

The IDF issues a military order seizing seven dunams of Palestinian land from the village of al-Ramadin to expand the settle-

ment of Eshkolot. The IDF amends a military order issued May 9, 2005, seizing 766 dunams of Palestinian land in Battir, Husan, al-Qubu, Surif, Wadi Fukin, and al-Walaja, for the construction of the separation barrier. (OCHA)

March 19 *Yediot Aharonot* reports that Rabbi Alikim Levnon has instructed his students in the Elon Moreh yeshiva to refuse mandatory military service in the army to avoid participating in future withdrawals.

March 21 In a response to a petition by Peace Now, Israel's High Court orders the state to explain within thirty days why houses in the Matityahu East settlement constructed in violation of Israeli law should not be demolished. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF issues a military order to seize 81.6 dunams of Palestinian land in the West Bank village of Beituniya for construction of the separation barrier. (OCHA)

OCHA reports that a general closure imposed on the occupied territories on March 11 as a result of the Jewish Purim holiday was not lifted after the holiday.

March 23 *Ha'aretz* reports that following a petition from 700 Palestinian residents of the Sheikh Sa'ad neighborhood, an Israeli court cancels the planned route of the separation barrier around the West Bank neighborhood and calls for further investigation.

March 25 Settlers throw stones and beat a 35-year-old international volunteer working near the Beit Hadassah settlement in Hebron. (OCHA)

Settlers from the Susiya settlement uproot trees belonging to the Palestinian community of Susiya. (OCHA)

March 27 Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz authorizes the appointment of Lt. Col. Rabbi Avi Ronsky, one of the founding members of the Itamar settlement, as chief rabbi of the IDF. Ronsky taught in Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City and still lives in Itamar. (Arutz 7)

Settlers use sticks and knives to attack and wound two Palestinian men in their tent near the settlement outpost of Havat Yair, south of the Susiya settlement. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israel begins operating the Qalandia checkpoint, north of Jerusalem, as an international

TIME LINE, continued on page 6

During the 2001–2004 intifada, the settler population growth rate (23 percent) remained almost three times the national Israeli rate (7.9 percent), representing only a slight decrease from the Oslo era.

There was virtually no difference between growth rates east of the separation barrier and in the West Bank as a whole during the intifada. Settlements west of the barrier, however, enjoyed a far higher rate of growth during the boom years of the Oslo era.

In absolute terms, the annual numerical population increase in settlements east of the separation barrier was remarkably consistent throughout the Oslo and intifada periods, although those settlements east of the barrier that lost population grew by 50 percent during the intifada.

TIME LINE, continued from page 5

border crossing. The crossing serves as the main means by which Palestinians travel between Ramallah and Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

The IDF imposes a curfew on al-Funduq village, Qalqilya, for ten hours after Palestinians beat a settler and steal his vehicle. (OCHA)

March 29 Israel bans West Bank Palestinians from crossing the Qalandia checkpoint on the main road connecting Ramallah to the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. (AFP)

The Elad organization takes control of two large, populated compounds in the East Jerusalem neighborhoods of Silwan and al-Tur with the intent of settling between 15 and 20 Jewish families there. (*Ha'aretz*)

Palestinians injure a female settler while stoning vehicles with Israeli license plates passing on Road 55 near the village of Azzun. (OCHA)

New housing construction continues in the West Bank settle-

ments of Karmeit Zur, Karmel, Kiryat Arba, Pnei Hever, and Susiya. (OCHA)

March 30 A Palestinian from al-Burj, Hebron, kills four settlers in their vehicle in a suicide bombing near the Kedumim settlement. (OCHA)

A group of settlers assault and injure a 16-year-old Palestinian shepherd from Beit Furik, Nablus, and kill 15 of his sheep. Settlers also attack three Palestinians and damage their vehicles near Beit Dajan, Nablus. (OCHA)

March 31 A group of 30 armed settlers from the West Bank settlement of Elon Moreh attack Palestinian farmers from the village of Kfar Salam and the Israelis assisting them in their fields. (*Yediot Abarot*)

Yerushalim reports an increase in demand for apartments in the East Jerusalem settlement of Har Homa, causing an increase of 15% in prices. As a result, construction companies have expanded their efforts. ◆

Settler Population Growth

Outside (East of) the Separation Barrier

Period	Number of Settlements*	
	with an Increase in Population	with a Decrease in Population
Oslo, 1994–2000	48	16
Intifada, 2000–2004	47	23
Overall, 1994–2004	49	15

Inside (West of) the Separation Barrier (including East Jerusalem)

Period	Number of Settlements*	
	with an Increase in Population	with a Decrease in Population
Oslo, 1994–2000	51	5
Intifada, 2000–2004	50	7
Overall, 1994–2004	57	1

*Settlements with population data unavailable were not included, so although there are 72 settlements outside the barrier, not all are represented by these numbers.

	Oslo 1994–2000	Intifada 2000–2004	Overall 1994–2004
Settler population increase outside the barrier	15,913 (33.7%)	10,381 (22.6%)	26,294 (46.2%)
Yearly average settler population increase outside the barrier	2,652	2,595	2,629
Population increase in the West Bank inside the barrier	53,191 (22%)	61,762 (21%)	114,953 (47%)
Yearly average population increase in the West Bank inside the barrier	8,865	15,440	11,495
Settler population increase in the West Bank	67,504 (54%)	44,544 (23%)	112,048 (89.3%)
Yearly average settler population increase in the West Bank	11,251	11,136	11,205
Population increase in Israel	897,800 (16.4%)	500,200 (7.9%)	1,398,000 (25.6%)

Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics.

SETTLEMENT POPULATION EAST OF THE SEPARATION BARRIER *(from page 3)*

	Population Growth											
							1994–2000		1994–2004		2000–2004	
	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1994	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
48 Nili	829	806	769	754	721	440	281	63.86	389	88.41	108	14.98
49 Niran	53	52	56	58	56	67*	-11	-16.42	-14	-20.9	-3	-5.36
50 Nokdim	674	646	615	618	611	316	295	93.35	358	113.29	6	4.96
51 No'omi	127	123	129	133	121	122	-1	-0.82	5	4.1	63	10.31
52 Ofra	2,264	2,214	2,060	2,020	1,880	1,270	610	48.03	994	78.07	384	20.43
53 Otni'el	692	698	619	571	560	230	330	143.48	462	200.87	132	23.57
54 Pesagot	1,388	1,278	1,180	1,070	1,090	778	312	40.1	610	78.41	-9	-4.02
55 Peza'el	215	213	216	220	224	311	-87	-27.97	-96	-30.87	73	24.01
56 Pnei Hever	377	376	355	339	304	98	206	210.2	279	284.69	298	27.34
57 Rimmonim	536	512	509	510	499	406	93	22.91	130	32.02	37	7.41
58 Ro'i	115	118	122	131	141	158	-17	-10.76	-43	-27.22	-26	-18.44
59 Sadmot Mehola	517	507	487	449	399	258	141	54.65	259	100.39	118	29.57
60 Shavei Shomron	539	604	563	525	573	606	-33	-5.45	-67	-11.06	-34	-5.93
61 Shilo	1,825	1,810	1,710	1,620	1,580	915	665	72.68	910	99.45	245	15.51
62 Shim'a	344	357	340	336	298	221*	77	34.84	123	55.66	46	15.44
63 Susiya	663	643	585	525	482	269	213	79.18	394	146.47	181	37.55
64 Talmon	1,760	1,618	1,510	1,350	1,250	439	811	184.74	1321	300.91	510	40.8
65 Telem	141	127	76	93	97	80	17	21.25	61	76.25	199	20.31
66 Tekoa	1,179	1,116	1,040	998	980	776	204	26.29	403	51.93	-23	-4.1
67 Tene	538	563	523	534	561	347	214	61.67	191	55.04	44	45.36
68 Tomer	296	298	303	303	308	290	18	6.21	6	2.07	-12	-3.9
69 Vered Yeriho	161	161	157	157	164	202	-38	-18.81	-41	-20.3	-3	-1.83
70 Yafit	101	95	102	122	125	124	1	0.81	-23	-18.55	-24	-19.2
71 Yitav	141	136	139	133	114	78*	36	46.15	63	80.77	27	23.68
72 Yizhar	534	440	398	342	329	200	129	64.5	334	167	205	62.31
Totals	56,359	53,823	50,777	48,088	45,978	30,065	15,913	53%	26,039	87%	10,126	23%

*1996.

Sources: *List of Localities: Their Population and Codes*. Jerusalem: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 1999–2004; *Israel in Number, 2004*, <http://www.cbs.gov.il/population/localities/localbycode2004.xls>; Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, *Population in Localities, 1994: Demographic Characteristics, by Geographical Divisions* (S.P.1026).

The Separation Barrier Lowered the Price of Apartments in the Territories by 10–15 Percent

A February 2006 investigation by the Israeli business daily the *Marker* revealed that dwellings in settlements located east of the separation barrier have lost 10–15 percent of their value. In contrast, prices have remained stable in those settlements located west of the barrier and “far from a Palestinian village considered hostile.”

In Ariel, one of the biggest settlements in the territories with more than 16,500 settlers, there has been an average decline of 15% in the price of housing units. Ariel is currently located outside of the separation barrier, but work is progressing to enclose it. At Har Bracha, near Nablus, a three-room apartment can be purchased for \$28,000. Conversely, apartment prices in the settlement bloc of Ma'ale Adumim, considered by Israel's public as already part of Israel, remain high, at \$35,000–45,000 per room, 40 percent higher than prices in Ariel. In Oranit, just east of the barrier, a small cottage can

cost \$300,000.

The investigation noted that price declines have not occurred in settlements like Oranit that are just outside the separation barrier; those slated to be within the barrier but where construction has not been completed; those that are not located near a “hostile” Palestinian village; and those located along the central heights of the West Bank whose residents are there for ideological reasons.

For example, in Efrat prices declined by 20 to 30 percent during the 2000–2004 intifada. The settlement of 8,000, in the Etzion bloc, is slated for inclusion on the Israeli side of the barrier. According to a local real estate agent, “Most of the new settlers are new immigrants from the United States. The idea of residing on the Israeli side of the fence actually bothers them. This is the ‘Land of Our Fathers’ they say. In contrast, Israelis prefer the fence.” ♦

A COVENANT FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

On May 10, 2006, the Palestinian news agency Wafa published a "National Accord" issued by a wide political coalition of Palestinian prisoners and endorsed by PA president Mahmoud Abbas.

1. The Palestinian people in the homeland and in exile are seeking to liberate their land and gain their rights to freedom, return, independence, and self-determination. These include their right to establish an independent state with holy Jerusalem as its capital on all the territories occupied in 1967, the right of the refugees to return, and the liberation of all prisoners and detainees. This is based on our people's historical right to the land of the fathers and forefathers, the UN Charter, international law, and internal legitimacy guarantees. . . .

3. [Underlining] the right of the Palestinian people to resistance; adhering to the option of resistance through various means, and concentrating resistance in the territories occupied in 1967, in addition to the political, negotiating, and diplomatic action; continuing the popular resistance to all forms and policies of the occupation; and expanding the participation of all groups, sides, sectors, and the masses of our people in this popular resistance. . . .

7. Running the negotiations is the responsibility of the PLO and the National Authority president based on adhering

to and achieving the Palestinian national goals. Any crucial agreement should be presented to the new Palestine National Council to be ratified or to hold a referendum on it wherever possible. . . .

10. Working to form a unified resistance front called "the National Resistance Front" to lead and engage in resistance to the occupation, unify resistance acts, and create a unified political authority for the resistance. . . .

15. The national interest requires looking for the best means for our people and their political forces in the Gaza Strip to continue, under the current circumstances, the battle for freedom, return, independence, and the liberation of the West Bank and Jerusalem. This is in order to make the steadfast Gaza Strip a real source of power for the steadfastness and resistance of our people in the West Bank and Jerusalem. The national interest requires a reevaluation of the methods and [finding] the best means of struggle against the occupation. ♦

"The withdrawal from Gaza was almost full with regards to the removal of occupation forces, evacuation of all the settlers, and razing of the settlements. However, the situation in the West Bank and in Jerusalem is different, and that's where the danger inherent in this [Israeli disengagement] plan stems from. This plan attempts to eliminate the intention to establish an independent Palestinian state. In the West Bank, the withdrawal is the exception, with the essence being the continuation and deepening of the occupation. I'm clearly saying that every agreement or plan, whatever its origin, won't end the occupation and the settlement in the 1967 borders fully, including in Jerusalem, and would push the Palestinians to continue their resistance. . . . [I]t is impossible to achieve trust before the occupation ends and we establish an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, the refugees will return, all prisoners will be released, and our people will enjoy freedom and independence."

Marwan Barghouti, jailed Fatah leader, remarks originally published in *al-Ayyam* and reported in *Yediot Aharonot*, April 15, 2006

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