

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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THE OCCUPATION RETURNS TO CENTER STAGE

By Geoffrey Aronson

Military and diplomatic confrontation between Israel and Palestinians in the waning days of 2012 have drawn renewed international attention to the conflict. Israel's limited assault on the Gaza Strip and the UN General Assembly's overwhelming November 29 vote supporting Palestine's admission as a non-member observer state catapulted the issue to the international center stage and prompted calls for a renewed diplomatic effort led by the United States.

"This is what I have been calling for," noted British foreign minister William Hague in a November 25 BBC interview, "particularly calling for the United States now after their election to show the necessary leadership on this over the coming months, because they have crucial leverage with Israel and no other country has." He added, "We're coming to the final chance maybe for a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Hague's call for US leadership reflects the widespread belief that American disengagement has contributed to the

Israel rules the West Bank like an obedient province, while it views the Gaza Strip as a hostile state. The result, as Barack Obama administration embarks on the second term, is not the contest framed by Obama's predecessor between a strong, successful model of nation-building in Ramallah and a weak one confined to Gaza, but rather the divide and conquer model established by Israel, defined by a besieged mini-state under Hamas' rule in Gaza and an even more fragile Palestinian Authority in Ramallah.

destabilization and radicalization of the conflict.

During the Gaza assault, U.S. involvement was symbolically important. All parties, including Egypt and Israel, were interested in handing the newly re-elected Obama administration "ownership" of the ceasefire that Egyptian mediators crafted and the U.S. supported. A well informed diplomat reports that the deal was closed before Secretary of State Clinton landed in Cairo and that announcement of the agreement was postponed for a day in order to highlight a U.S. role.

In contrast to U.S. support for the shared interest of Israel and Hamas in a ceasefire, the Palestine Liberation Organization's UN initiative was openly

and actively opposed by Washington and Israel.

In the days before the November 30 vote the US State Department spokesperson reiterated,

"We've obviously been very clear that we do not think that this step is going to bring the Palestinian people any closer to a state, that we think it is a mistake, that we oppose it, that we will oppose it. The Secretary was very clear with President Abbas when she was in Ramallah last week that our position on this has not changed, and we are continuing to make that clear, not only directly to President Abbas and the Palestinians, but also to all of our UN partners as well."

The Obama administration has been consistent in its view that the PLO should not be permitted to offer a diplomatic alternative to U.S.-supported efforts, at the United Nations or elsewhere, even when they mirror publicly endorsed U.S. policy objectives. So, for example, the Obama administration vetoed a February 2011 Security Council resolution declaring settlements illegal, and last year scuttled a Council vote on Palestine's full admission to the UN as a member state. U.S. disengagement in the wake of its failed effort to condition talks on a settlement freeze prompted the PLO to pursue its initiative at the UN; even though it's newly won status is far short of the statehood and sover-

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TO OUR READERS

It is now clear that the Oslo peace process is bankrupt. The agreement signed in 1995 was meant to create a two-state peace through direct negotiations. But it has foundered under the weight of Israel's massive settlement program, backed by military occupation and designed to prevent a Palestinian state. It also failed because of the huge disparity in power between occupying Israel and occupied Palestine, and America's deference to Israel.

The overwhelming defeat of recent U.S. efforts at the UN to oppose Palestinian President Abbas' bid for "non member state observer" status dramatized the failure of America's policy and its growing isolation. Amidst rising demands in the Arab world for justice, Washington is seen as opposing justice and self-determination for Palestinians. The U.S. claim that the Palestinian resolution was a "unilateral" end run to

avoid negotiations lacks rings hollow, given Israel's unilateral settlement building, the main reason for the failure of past negotiations. Moreover, the resolution explicitly supports resumption of negotiations.

Simple inertia and lack of time to consider a new policy may explain the U.S. vote in the UN. It is too early to predict whether President Obama, who is now preoccupied with the U.S. fiscal crisis, his highest priority, has begun to consider a new Israel-Palestine approach. But without a bold new policy based on strong American and international diplomacy to reverse the status quo, there is little hope for a two-state peace and redemption of U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East.

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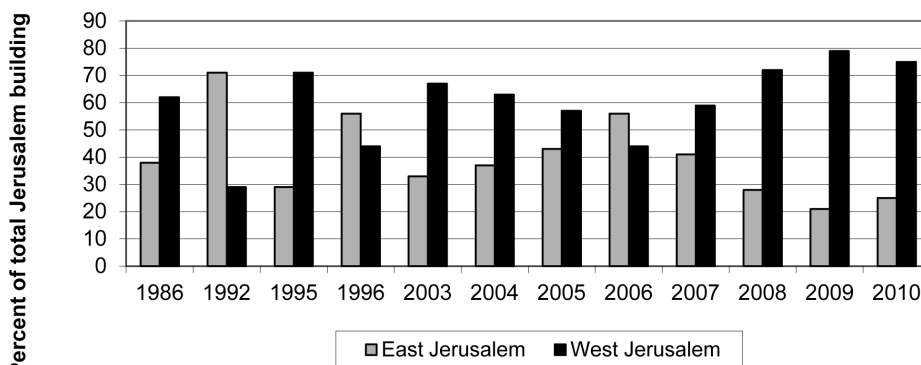
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The Foundation for Middle East Peace has prepared a presentation of maps illustrating the evolution of the conflict from the UN Partition Plan in 1947, and depicting the growth of Israel's occupation and settlement project from the 1967 War to the present. To download the presentation visit: <http://www.fmep.org/resources/publications-1/map-progression-1948-1967>.

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Residential Construction in Jerusalem, 1986-2010



Source: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem, 2005-2012*.

THOUSANDS SETTLE IN THE GOLAN

“Free Land” screams the large headline in the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot*. “Thousands flock to the Golan.”

The newspaper report crowed, “Where else in the country can you receive land for free?” Diplomatic efforts to reach a peace agreement between Israel and Syria are moribund. Efforts by the Barack Obama administration had been limited to preliminary consultations, and then the civil war in Syria took the issue off the agenda entirely.

While reports speak of “unprecedented” development that has attracted 1,600 new families to 32 Golan Heights settlements in the last five years, the reality is more sober. Since 2005 the settler population has increased by 3,100, or approximately 15%.

Golan regional council leader Eli Malka explained, “This massive influx has also created a real economic engine.” He noted, “Hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses have

opened,” including firms producing plastics, foodstuffs, and cosmetics. Companies locating to the Golan receive a cascade of tax breaks and incentives. Unemployment in the area is 4 percent, less than the national average. During the last decade, the Golan economy has diversified away from a largely agricultural economy to one increasingly based on industrial employment and services, including a thriving tourism sector drawing Israeli as well as international visitors.

Most of the 32 settlements in the region are experiencing population growth and economic expansion. Housing is typically of the “build your own house” variety rather than large-scale corporate or government construction. Individual residential plots—provided by the state for free—range from half a dunam to a single dunam (quarter of an acre). While land is provided at no cost, traditionally structured housing programs and incentives are also offered to newcomers. ♦



Settlements in the Golan Heights — 2012

Name	Population (2011)
Afiq	256
Allone Habashan	313
Avne Eitan	533
Ani'Am	502
Bene Yehuda	965
Eli Al (Eli Ad)	254
El Rom	309
En Ziwan	211
Geshur	223
Giv'at Yo'av	560
Had Nes	685
Haspin	1,475
Kanaf	371
Katzrin (Qazrin)	6,619
Kfar Haruv	313
Ma'ale Gamla	400
Merom Golan	633
Mevo Hamma	302
Mezar	113
Ne'ot Golan	430
Natur	266
Neve Ativ	112
Nov	664
Odem	92
Ortal	285
Qela	179
Qeshet	671
Qidmat Zevi	336
Ramat Magshimim	582
Ramot	457
Senir	507
Sha'al	201
Yonatan	528
Total:	20,347

Source: List of Localities: Their Population and Codes, Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1999–2011.

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

June 18 Under the supervision of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), settlers transport 45 caravans to expand three settler outposts near Nablus. (Ma'an News)

July 1 Israel's High Court of Justice delays until November 15 the demolition of the Ulpana settlement outpost in the West Bank, where 30 families are squatting in five apartment buildings. The outpost was built on private Palestinian land. (*Ha'aretz*)

July 19 Settlers uproot 25 olive and almond trees on Palestinian land near Hebron. (al-Wafa)

July 23 Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak orders the demolition of 1,500 homes in eight West Bank Palestinian villages in Area C, claiming the land is needed for military training. (*Ha'aretz*)

July 27 *Kol Ha'ir* reports on the beginning of a construction project for 66 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Neve Ya'akov.

August 2 *Ha'aretz* reports on the Israeli government's plans to fund between 10 and 20 percent of a number of ad campaigns promoting tourism in the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim and the Etzion bloc.

August 3 *Kol Ha'ir* reports on the publication of a tender for 25 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Har Homa.

August 7 Israel's Finance Committee approves the transfer of \$2 million to relocate houses from the Migron outpost to another site, three kilometers away. An additional \$600,000 will be spent on developing infrastructure at a later date. (Army Radio)

Israeli forces close a road linking two Palestinian villages in the Hebron hills, as part of a plan to demolish eight villages in the area and use the land for military training. (Ma'an News)

August 9 Israel's High Court of Justice rejects a petition against the removal of Palestinian villagers from the south Hebron hills. They were ordered to evacuate to create a military training zone. (*Ha'aretz*)

August 13 Maj. Gen. Nitzan Alon, GOC Central Command, signs an order "legalizing" the West Bank settlement outpost of Bruchin, where about 100 families reside. (*Ha'aretz*)

August 14 The European Union publishes a list of Israeli settlements whose manufac-

tured products will not be granted duty-free entrance into EU countries, despite a formal protest from the Israeli government. (Israel Radio)

August 15 A committee of Israeli government ministers urges the army to transfer ownership of Palestinian stores in Hebron to Israeli settlers squatting there. (*Ha'aretz*)

August 16 The United Church of Canada, the largest Protestant denomination in the country, votes in favor of boycotting products made in West Bank and East Jerusalem settlements. (*Globe and Mail*)

August 17 A group of Jewish youths attack three Palestinians in West Jerusalem, injuring one of them. (Ma'an News)

Settlers hurl a firebomb at a Palestinian taxi near Bethlehem, leaving five Palestinians with first-degree burns. (Ma'an News)

August 22 Settlers from the Havat Gilad outpost set fire to a Palestinian home near Nablus. (Ma'an News)

August 23 Settlers from Itamar attempt to set fire to two Palestinian cars in a village near Nablus and write racist slogans on a number of walls. (Ma'an News)

August 27 Israeli police arrest three youths from the West Bank settlement of Bat Ayin on suspicion that they were behind the August 17 attack on a taxi that severely injured five Palestinians. (Arutz 7)

August 28 Settlers break into the Jalazoun refugee camp, near Ramallah, set a car on fire, and spray paint "Price Tag Migron" on nearby walls. (Army Radio)

August 29 The Jerusalem District Court rules favorably on a petition submitted by the organization Ir Amim to annul an agreement between the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and the Jewish settlement group City of David Foundation (Elad). Under the agreement, Elad would have been responsible for the operation of the City of David Archeology Park. (*Jerusalem Post*)

August 30 Israel's High Court of Justice rules that Israel must evacuate the Migron outpost by September 4, rejecting a petition by the families of the settlement to remain on the premises. (*Ha'aretz*)

September 1 Settlers attack a taxi and its passengers near the West Bank town of Dura. The vehicle manages to make a get-

away. (Ma'an News)

An official of the Ministry of Defense, accuses the Housing and Construction Ministry and the police of illegally expropriating privately owned Palestinian land to build a road to a new neighborhood in the Givat Ze'ev settlement. The land on which the road was constructed had purportedly been seized for "security reasons," but was instead being used by settlers. The police did not enforce a previous stop-work order issued by the civil administration. (*Ha'aretz*)

September 2 A Palestinian worker dies of a suspected heart attack while fleeing from Israeli soldiers pursuing him for attempting to surreptitiously cross the separation barrier. (Ma'an News)

Israeli settlers move into a home in the Palestinian neighborhood of Ras al-Amud, in East Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*)

Fifty settler families are evicted from the Migron settlement outpost by court order. (*Ha'aretz*)

Settlers stone Palestinian residents and houses in the Shoafat refugee camp, near Jerusalem. Settlers stone Palestinian vehicles near Hebron. (*Yediot Abaronot*)

September 3 A report by the Palestinian human rights organization al-Haq claims that Israeli companies are in violation of international humanitarian law for exploiting Palestinian natural resources in their extraction of Dead Sea mud for consumer products. (al-Haq)

Settlers stone vehicles near the village of Huwwara. (PMG-NAD)

September 4 Settlers set fire to the Latrun monastery and write slogans against Christians on the church walls. Other settlers prevent a Palestinian farmer from reaching his land to harvest grapes. (Reuters, PMG-NAD)

Yediot Abaronot reports that structures in the settlement of Beit El that had been demolished by Israeli authorities in June have been rebuilt. The buildings were reportedly located on private Palestinian land.

September 5 Settlers stone vehicles and destroy olive trees near Nablus. (PMG-NAD, Ma'an News)

September 6 A settler torches 37 bales of wheat and alfalfa at a Palestinian-owned

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

farm north of Jericho. (Ma'an News)

A group of settlers, including Likud leader Moshe Feiglin, visit the al-Aqsa compound and perform ritual prayers under IDF protection. (Ma'an News)

Israeli authorities approve the construction of 960 housing units in East Jerusalem. (PMG-NAD)

September 7 Settlers set 130 olive trees on fire in a West Bank village and torch an orchard in Qaryit. (Ma'an News)

September 8 Settlers set 380 olive trees on fire near Qalqilya. (PMG-NAD)

September 9 Fifteen Palestinians are injured in clashes with Israeli forces in the northern West Bank village of Qusra. (Ma'an News)

An Israeli security guard for the Oranit settlement is killed by a Palestinian in a hit-and-run incident. The head of security for the Sha'arei Tikva settlement is killed in a similar incident. (*Ha'aretz*)

An Israeli woman is injured when Palestinians stone a bus traveling to the Western Wall. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

The Israeli government passes a resolution in favor of recognizing the Ariel University Center in the West Bank as an accredited university. The college's contested change in status is before the High Court of Justice. (*Ha'aretz*)

September 10 Clashes erupt between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian villagers in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh after the soldiers blocked the main entrance to the village. (Ma'an News)

Farmers in the village of Beit Furik, near Nablus, tend their land for the first time in ten years, after winning a court appeal against the settlement of Itamar. The farmers were also awarded \$1,800 in damages. (Ma'an News)

September 12 A nine-year-old Palestinian girl is injured after being hit by a settler car near Bethlehem. (Ma'an News)

A mosque in Hebron is vandalized by settlers in a revenge attack. The perpetrators also attempt to set fire to several cars in the area. (Ma'an News, *Yediot Aharonot*, *Ha'aretz*)

Israeli authorities issue orders to confiscate 1,475 dunums of land near Nablus to build a

bypass road for settlers. (Ma'an News)

September 13 The Israeli government retroactively approves existing structures built on private Palestinian land in 44 settlements, contravening the High Court's 1979 Elon Moreh ruling that private land expropriated for military purposes cannot be used for building settlements. (*Ha'aretz*)

Settlers assault a young Palestinian boy in Nablus, who is hospitalized with contusions. (PMG-NAD)

September 14 Israel's Nature and Parks Authority opposes the construction of the separation wall around the village of Battir, southwest of Bethlehem, claiming that the route will separate the villagers from their agricultural land. (Ma'an News)

An Israeli court rules that settlers who had taken over an apartment building in the center of Hebron in 2007 had purchased it legally from Palestinians, reversing a previous 2008 ruling. (*Ma'ariv*, Ma'an News)

A pregnant Palestinian woman and two male relatives are injured in Nablus when settlers stone their vehicle. (PMG-NAD)

September 15 A Palestinian man is hospitalized after being attacked by settlers in the village of Qusra, near Nablus. (Ma'an News)

Settlers stone vehicles near the Ma'ale Adu-mim settlement, injuring a Palestinian driver. (PMG-NAD)

September 16 Israel's Civil Administration orders a halt to the construction of a park near the village of Shivtin that was partially built on private Palestinian land. (*Ha'aretz*)

Israeli officials issue stop-work orders for two Palestinian homes and a well near Hebron that are under construction. (Ma'an News)

Settlers stone vehicles in a refugee camp near Ramallah, and damage 15 olive trees in Hebron. (PMG-NAD)

September 17 A Palestinian man is beaten and hospitalized and his vehicle damaged after Israeli soldiers pull him over south of Hebron. Israeli authorities claimed he was an "infiltrator" and that he had fallen and injured himself while fleeing from the soldiers. (Ma'an News)

Settlers storm a Palestinian house in the old city of Hebron, ordering its inhabitants to evacuate the premises. (PMG-NAD)

September 18 Israeli settlers raid three different locations in villages near Nablus, wounding three Palestinians. At least one raid was conducted under protection of the Israeli army, which fired tear gas and stun grenades at residents. Settlers also opened fire at a Palestinian shepherd near Ramallah. (PMG-NAD)

September 19 Two local farmers from Bethlehem receive evacuation orders from Israeli authorities for 60 dunums of cultivated land. (Ma'an News)

Israeli soldiers stationed at the entrance of the Bat Ayin settlement near Bethlehem are reportedly ordered by the Israeli army to disallow all non-Jews, including Israeli Arabs, entry to the settlement. (*Ha'aretz*, Ma'an)

The Israeli Defense Ministry permanently seals off the Ras Khamis crossing that services the Shoafat refugee camp in Jerusalem. The move is in contravention of a 2008 Israeli Supreme Court ruling. (*Ha'aretz*)

September 20 In the old city of Hebron, Israeli settlers loose dogs on schoolchildren and storm a house, injuring two children and destroying furniture and a water tank. (PMG-NAD)

September 24 Israeli bulldozers level land near Bethlehem that had been confiscated in 2000. (Ma'an News)

September 25 Settlers dig up 200 dunams of agricultural land near Nablus. (Ma'an News)

September 26 Thirty settlers ambush and beat a Palestinian farmer on his way to inspect 150 olive trees that had been destroyed by settlers north of Jerusalem. (Ma'an, PMG-NAD)

Israeli forces level 200 dunums of land near Nablus, as well as 500 dunams of land near Bethlehem, for the expansion of the Efrat settlement. (PMG-NAD)

September 27 In two separate events, settlers level agricultural land near Jericho and assault two Palestinians near Nablus, who were later arrested by Israeli security. (PMG-NAD)

September 28 Settlers uproot 60 olive trees near Qalqilya. Israeli authorities also issue confiscation orders for 274 dunums of land in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Qalqilya and Nablus. (PMG-NAD)

eighty that US policy has promised for more than a decade.

PLO chairman Mahmoud Abbas' effort to court Washington's favor has failed to win for Palestinians effective American support for the prize they both seek—a non-violent end to Israel's occupation, the evacuation of Israeli settlements and armed forces, and the creation of a Palestinian state at peace with Israel.

It was President George W. Bush who first established the statehood agenda for Palestinians. In his "vision" speech in 2002, he declared,

"When the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state whose borders and certain aspects of its sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement in the Middle East."

In the wake of the PLO's debacle and Hamas' military triumph in Gaza in June 2007 Bush explained,

"This is a moment of clarity for all Palestinians and now comes a moment of choice. The alternatives before the Palestinian people are stark. There is the vision of Hamas, which the world saw in Gaza—with murderers in black masks, and summary executions, and men thrown to their death from rooftops. By following this path, the Palestinian people would guarantee chaos, and suffering, and the endless perpetuation of grievance. They would surrender their future to Hamas's foreign sponsors in Syria and Iran. And they would crush the possibility of any—of a Palestinian state. There's another option, and that's a hopeful option. It is the vision of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad; it's the vision of their government; it's the vision of a peaceful state called Palestine as a homeland for the Palestinian people. To realize this vision, these leaders are striving to build the institutions of a modern democracy. They're working to strengthen the Palestinian security services, so they can confront the terrorists and protect the innocent. They're acting to set up competent ministries that deliver services without corruption. They're taking steps to improve the economy and unleash the natural enterprise of the Palestinian people. And they're ensuring that Palestinian society operates under the rule of law. By following this path, Palestinians can reclaim their dignity and their future—and establish a state of their own."

For almost a decade Abbas has led the West Bank rump of the Palestinian state he hopes to establish according to Bush's exacting agenda. He has proven a moderate alternative to Yasser Arafat who had lost Washington's and Israel's favor in his last years. On security and governance the Palestinian Authority has performed beyond expectations.

"The whole world realizes that the Palestinian Authority with all its political, security, services and administrative bodies has been ready to upgrade its status for six years," Abbas told reporters the day of the UN vote.

In the jaundiced eye of the Netanyahu government, however, the free hand given to Israeli settlement expansion and Abbas' rehabilitation of the Palestinian Authority has eliminated any compelling incentive for Israel to end the occupation. Despite Abbas' commitment to lead the PA along a peaceful path to statehood and independence in a manner prescribed by Washington and the Quartet, and perhaps even because he has been so accommodating, the Palestinian leader has failed to convince or coerce Israel or the United States to realize his essential objective—statehood and independence.

The Obama administration's retreat from its settlement freeze initiative, strenuous U.S. opposition to the PA's UN strategy, and repeated U.S. pre-election statements in Israel's favor appear to have persuaded Netanyahu that he can continue to act in the West Bank without fear of effective U.S. opposition. How else to explain his decision to construct 3,000 new settlement units throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem, packaged as one element of an appropriate "Zionist response" to the PLO's UN victory? Some of the new construction was announced previously. In contrast, residential and commercial construction in the strategic E-1 corridor, just east of Jerusalem, has long been postponed because of US opposition. Large-scale development in E-1 would further isolate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and eliminate one of the only remaining locations for large-scale Palestinian growth in the city. A decision to build in the area is a frontal challenge to Washington.

The boost given by the UN to Palestinians fortunes was meant to provide Palestinian's a much-needed, if insufficient, diplomatic shot in the arm. Palestine, however, is sorely in need of more than symbolic victories. Washington's continuing impotence in the face of Israel's success in creating facts on the ground has weakened Abbas and strengthened his Islamist rivals. The overwhelming General Assembly vote, particularly by European nations that broke with the Obama administration, owed much to the fear that Hamas' power and popularity is growing at the PLO's expense. As Bush himself noted, there is a Palestinian alternative. It is the example of Hamas' continued rule in Gaza, its election victory over Fateh in the last "national" election, held in January 2006, and its continuing "armed struggle" against Israel.

Israel rules the West Bank like an obedient province, while it views the Gaza Strip as a hostile state. The result, as Barack Obama administration embarks on the second term, is not the contest framed by Obama's predecessor between a strong, successful model of nation-building in Ramallah and a weak one confined to Gaza, but rather the divide and conquer model established by Israel, defined by a besieged mini-state under Hamas' rule in Gaza and an even more fragile Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. ♦

RULE BY LAW: ISRAEL SEEKS COURT PERMISSION TO EXPAND 40 WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has retroactively approved existing construction on private Palestinian land in more than 40 settlements based on old expropriation orders issued for military purposes.

The efforts were revealed in the state's response to a High Court of Justice petition filed by Yesh Din—Volunteers for Human Rights regarding the non-enforcement of demolition orders issued for structures built on private land by the West Bank settlement of Beit El.

The response submitted by the state to the High Court relates to a 2010 petition by a resident of the village of Dura al-Kara. The petition demands the enforcement of demolition orders for a number of buildings whose construction had begun on his land. It also includes a demand to cancel the military expropriation order from the 1970s that blocks his access to the area.

In January 2011, the High Court issued a temporary restraining order that obligated the state to enforce the stop work orders, which the state itself had issued for these buildings, and to prevent their connection to basic infrastructure. The latest official response was received after numerous requests for delays, which led to the state twice having to pay the expenses of the petitioners.

In its submission to the court, the state prosecution acknowledged that some 40 civilian settlements in the West Bank had been erected on privately owned Palestinian land on the basis of expropriation orders issued for military purposes.

It also admitted that construction had continued in these communities even after the 1979 Elon Moreh ruling, which advised that the army was authorized to confiscate Palestinian land for military purposes only, not for civilian settlement. The state argued, however, that the ruling “does not prevent exploiting the potential of these communities.”

Following the Elon Moreh ruling, Prime Minister Menachem Begin had ordered a stop to the issuing of military expropriation orders to confiscate private lands for settlements. In a cabinet decision, the government then decided to expand settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights by “adding population to existing communities and by erecting additional communities on government-owned land.” The state defended its intention to use the expropriation orders, issued more than 30 years ago, to expand civilian settlements today, citing the need “to preserve the interest that was the basis of [the settlements’] founding and to prevent their atrophy.”

It also wants “to exploit the potential” of the military expropriation orders in the area of Beit El to house families evacuated in June from the settlement’s Ulpana Hill after a legal battle of 6 years. The court ordered the evacuation earlier this year when it determined that the buildings were constructed on land owned by a resident of Dura al-Kara that is outside the settlement’s planning boundary and was also not covered by previous confiscation orders.

The document states that the readiness to explore “regularizing the compound” that is the subject of the petition actually stemmed from a desire to encourage the process of evacuating privately owned lands.

The state is asking for the court’s permission to use its judgment in planning construction on private Palestinian land so long as it exploits the potential of the Beit El “to preserve the interest that was the basis of its founding.”

The state noted that the defense minister “is prepared to pay the Palestinian owners of the land suitable usage fees.”

According to an internal document from the military prosecution’s legal adviser for the West Bank, 44 settlements have been built wholly, mostly, or partially on lands that were expropriated before 1979 for military purposes. The document lists among them Ariel, Beit El, Efrat, Kiryat Arba, and settlements in the Jordan Valley. According to data obtained by Yesh Din, Elazar and Mevo Horon also partially occupy private land

expropriated for military purposes.

The settlement report issued in July by the committee headed by retired supreme court justice Edmond Levy acknowledged widespread violations of Palestinian private property, calling on the government to prohibit additional construction on private land in contravention of the law. The report states, “This phenomenon that was revealed to us regarding settlement in Judea and Samaria constitutes inappropriate conduct for a state that champions the rule of law. If all that emerges from this report is that the ‘tower and stockade’ days that were fine for a period when a foreign government ruled the land are now over—it would be enough. It must be clear to settlement supporters that from now on, they are required to operate solely within the framework of the law.”

Akiva Eldar, *Ha’aretz*, September 13, 2012
Amira Haas, *Ha’aretz*, September 21, 2012

According to an internal document from the military prosecution’s legal adviser for the West Bank, 44 settlements have been built wholly, mostly, or partially on lands that were expropriated before 1979 for military purposes. The document lists among them Ariel, Beit El, Efrat, Kiryat Arba, and settlements in the Jordan Valley. According to data obtained by Yesh Din, Elazar and Mevo Horon also partially occupy private land expropriated for military purposes.

Housing Starts in Israel, West Bank* and Gaza** (2000–2011)

Year	Israel (Units)†			Settlements (Units)**			Settlement Construction as % of Total		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
2000	14,694	31,063	45,757	2,773	1,969	4,742	19	6	10
2001	7,331	24,465	31,796	826	809	1,635	11	3	5
2002	7,714	24,711	32,425	807	562	1,369	10	2	4
2003	7,659	23,862	31,521	1,285	772	2,057	17	3	7
2004	5,397	23,612	29,009	1,023	898	1,921	19	4	7
2005	5,841	25,917	31,758	890	999	1,889	15	4	6
2006	4,709	25,815	30,524	573	943	1,516	12	4	5
2007	4,294	26,449	30,743	608	863	1,471	14	3	5
2008	4,110	28,271	32,381	798	1,309	2,107	19	5	7
2009	4,150	30,728	34,878	602	1,360	1,962	15	4	6
2010	4,844	35,260	40,104	119	608	727	2	2	2
2011	7,275	37,734	45,009	90	948	1,038	1	3	2

*Excluding East Jerusalem.

**Gaza Strip settlements were evacuated in September 2005.

† Including settlements.

The population of Israel and the settlements in 2011 was 7.83 million including 328,423 West Bank Settlers (or 4%).

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006–2012*.

Palestine comes today to this prestigious international forum, representative and protector of international legitimacy, reaffirming our conviction that the international community now stands before the last chance to save the two-state solution. . . .

We have not heard one word from any Israeli official expressing any sincere concern to save the peace process. On the contrary, our people have witnessed and continued to witness an unprecedented intensification of military assaults, the blockade, settlement activities, and ethnic cleansing, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem and Nazareth attacked by settlers and other practices by which this Israeli occupation is becoming synonymous with an Apartheid system of colonial occupation, which institutionalizes the plague of racism and entrenches hatred and incitement. . . .

We will accept no less than the independence of the state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital and all

the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 to live in peace and security alongside the state of Israel and a solution for the refugee issue on the Resolution 194 as part of the Arab Peace Initiative. I don't think that's terrorism that we are pursuing in the United Nations.

Yet, we must repeat once again our warning: The window of opportunity is narrowing and time is quickly running out. The rope of peace is shortening and hope is withering. . . .

The General Assembly—the United Nations General Assembly—is called upon today to issue a birth certificate of the reality of the state of Palestine. This is why we are here today. It's our hope, ladies and gentlemen, it's our hope in God and in you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you and peace be upon you.

Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and president of the Palestinian Authority, in a speech before the UN General Assembly, November 29, 2012

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