

REPORT ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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OBSERVATIONS ON ISRAEL'S SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

By Geoffrey Aronson

Secretary of State John Kerry has revived U.S. interest in a diplomatic solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestinians. The government of Benjamin Netanyahu, for its part, has temporarily reduced certain elements of its settlement expansion program, suspending tenders for a number of weeks for new construction in some of the largest settlements.

More broadly, however, the main components of the program proceed unhindered. As the U.S. effort continues, Israel's program of settlement expansion continues to be defined by the following characteristics:

Construction

■ The growth of the settler population in the West Bank is the most telling indicator of the stable growth and continuing success of the settlement enterprise. The settler population increases annually at a steady pace, notwithstanding occasionally dramatic swings in new building tenders and construction. This stability reflects the contribution to population growth provided by the natural increase of existing settler families, particularly in the large settlements, notwithstanding continuing migration from Israel to settlements.

■ Israeli housing policy favors construction in the largest settlements, where demand for new construction is being met to a far greater degree than in Israel itself. For example, the number of dwelling units constructed between

"And I think the urgency is that the longer you do not move towards peace, the more you have the possibility of conflict and even war. So President Obama has made it clear to all the parties, he wants to know if people are serious. And I think there are ways to prove whether or not people are serious. That's what I'm seeking on his behalf . . . and my hope is that parties will come together in a serious way."

**U.S. Secretary of State
John Kerry, May 9, 2013**

1996 and 2010 in Ariel, Betar Ilit, Givat Ze'ev, Modi'in Ilit and Ma'ale Adu-mim—the largest West Bank settlements—was almost equal to the demand for new housing in these areas. During this period, these settlements grew by 18,500 households, with 17,800 new units constructed. In contrast, in Israel, new housing construction accommodated only 55 percent of new households during a similar period. Between 1996 and 2008, 20,000 dwelling units were constructed throughout the West Bank in order to satisfy comparable demand; whereas in Tel Aviv, the most populous and popular region in Israel, the number of new dwelling units matched construction in the settlements, satisfying only about 50 percent of demand for new housing.

■ The tendering process for new settlement dwellings in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is characterized by striking annual fluctuations, seemingly without overriding political reference or policy coherence. A prominent exception to this trend may have occurred during 2009–2012, when initial concerns about the Barack Obama administration's call for a freeze on new settlement construction resulted in a record low number of tenders in 2009. The numbers of tenders increased, however, as U.S. policy faltered, growing to an unprecedented 3,133 in 2012.

■ Although there has been a notable decline in recent years in the West Bank's comparative share of housing starts vis-à-vis Israel's, down from 7 percent in 2008 to 2 percent during 2010–2012, the large number of new tenders for settlement construction announced in late 2012 will reverse this trend. This development is not unprecedented. A large number of tenders were issued in 2005 and 2006 and later reflected in an increase in housing starts in 2008. Despite short-term variations in the pace of new construction in the settlements, the number of housing units completed annually has been generally stable over the long-term.

■ In general, the three Israeli governments over the last decade, from November 2002 to February 2012, have maintained a consistent overall pace of tendering for new settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusa-

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TO OUR READERS

Many Americans do not grasp the massive scale of Israel's 46-year project of settlement of the West Bank and its increasingly apparent goal of permanent control over the area and its Palestinian populace. Israeli officials claim they are driven by security needs based on alleged Palestinian hostility to peace, that Israel's claim to the land is historically and biblically justified, and that Israel is the main victim in the conflict.

But this narrative is slowly unraveling. Historians and journalists, especially Israeli, have begun to expose the reality that Israel's post-1967 settlement policy has not been an aberration, but the main tool for permanent conquest and control that all Israeli governments have pursued, with the possible exception of Rabin, who was assassinated by a settler fanatic.

This reality would be more widely understood if more Americans could visit the West Bank and observe the "facts on the

ground" that Israel has created. First time visitors would see the enormous investment in concrete, steel, and asphalt, for 150 settlements occupied by about 550,000 settlers (including 200,000 in East Jerusalem), and settler-only roads. They would also observe a grimly intrusive military and security infrastructure of walls, checkpoints, and Israeli armed forces, all there exclusively for Israeli purposes without regard for Palestinian rights and equities.

Witnessing these realities is often transformational for visiting Americans and others. Perhaps that is why Israel's Ministry of Defense has recently decreed, without explanation, that foreigners visiting Israel must obtain permits from the Ministry to visit the West Bank.

This *Report* and the map on page 3 describe the current dismal reality.

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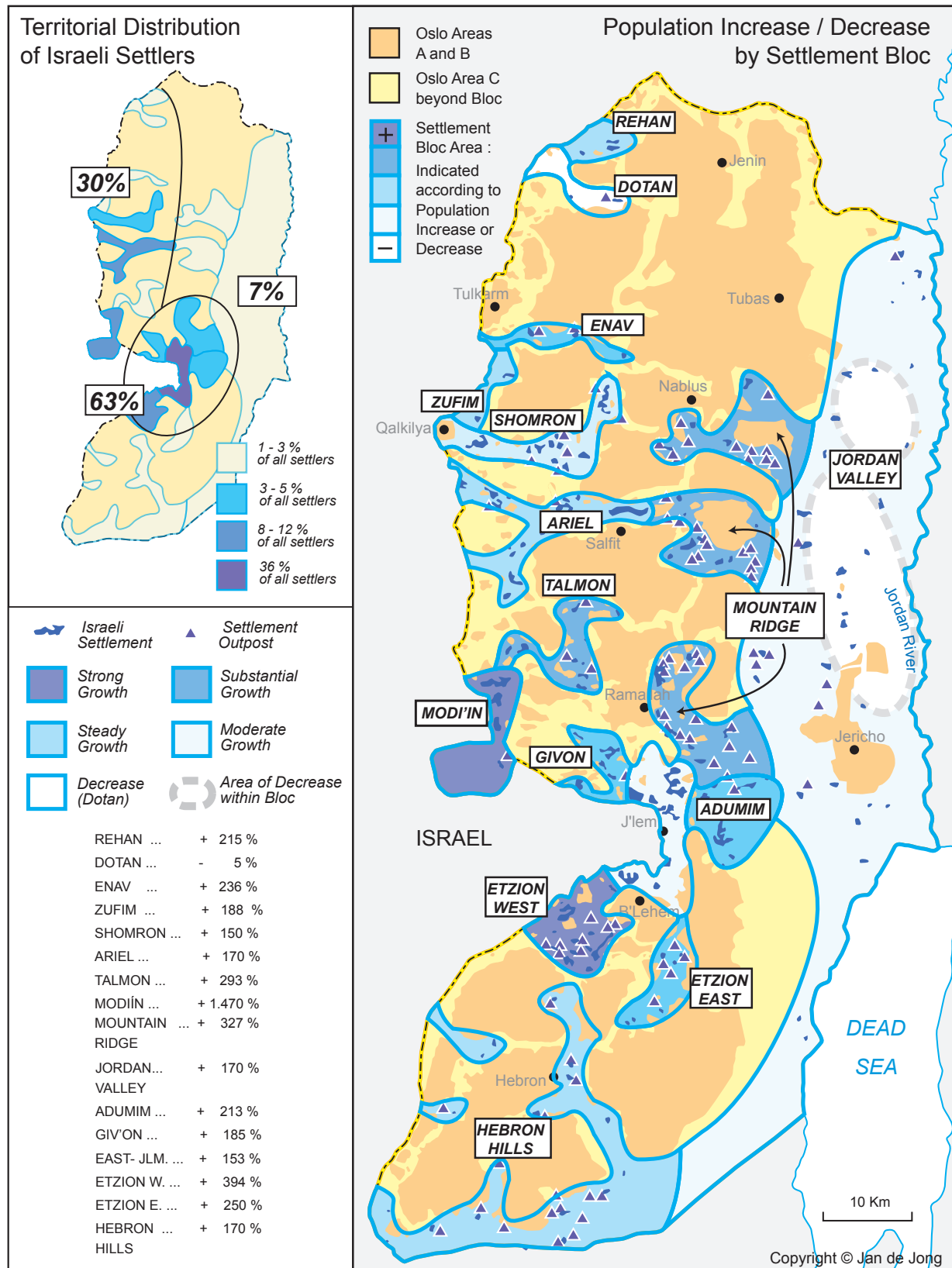
Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.

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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Israeli Settlements: Population Growth and Concentration - 1995 -2011



SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

February 1 Settlers under the protection of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) enter the al-Aqsa mosque compound, in East Jerusalem, provoking worshippers and setting fire to olive trees. (Palestinian Monitoring Group—Negotiating Affairs Division, PMG-NAD)

February 2 Palestinian activists pitch a tent in Burin village, south of Nablus, to protest land confiscations by a neighboring settlement. Settlers fire at Palestinians, shooting one youth in the leg. IDF soldiers forcibly remove the protesters, detain five Palestinians, and injure 20. (Ma'an News)

The Israeli government approves construction for 200 units in the West Bank settlement of Tekoa and 146 units in Nokdim, near Bethlehem. (PMG-NAD)

February 3 Israel reopens roads closed to Palestinians since 2000. The roads allow Palestinians access to more than 13,000 dunams of land near Nablus. (Ma'an News)

In Hebron, settlers stone several Palestinian residents and their homes. (PMG-NAD)

February 4 The Jerusalem municipality issues demolition orders for 16 apartments in a residential building in the Sawwanah neighborhood in East Jerusalem, including one belonging to Ekrema Sabri, former grand mufti of Jerusalem. (*Yediot Yerushalaim*)

The IDF raids the Palestinian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Center for Charity in Tulkarem, confiscating several computers and files and detaining two employees. (PMG-NAD)

February 5 *Ha'aretz* reports that Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection has instructed the West Bank settlement of Betar Ilit to stop contaminating the fields of a nearby Palestinian village with sewage.

Settlers ignite two vehicles and write racist graffiti on the walls of a home near Ramallah. A settler opens fire on workers paving a road between the Palestinian villages of Awarta and Yanun, near Nablus. (PMG-NAD)

February 6 Israeli authorities demolish a two-story home in East Jerusalem, leaving 30 homeless, due to its construction without a permit. (Ma'an News)

Settlers from the Havat Gilad outpost attack a Palestinian shepherd near Nablus when he attempts to stop them from stealing his sheep. (Ma'an News)

A settler runs over and injures a Palestinian with his vehicle in Nablus. Settlers uproot 30 olive trees in Salfit. (PMG-NAD)

February 7 IDF soldiers throw a stun grenade while riding through the village of Nurif, near Nablus, with their sirens on and shouting "Good morning, Nurif." They are subsequently reprimanded for violating military protocols. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

The IDF demolishes a well and a Palestinian home under construction in Hebron. (PMG-NAD)

Settlers pump sewage onto Palestinian agricultural land near Nablus. (PMG-NAD)

February 8 Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office denies that Israel is considering a settlement freeze after National Security Advisor Yaakov Amidror says that "construction in the settlements has become a diplomatic problem and is causing Israel to lose support even among its friends in the West." (*Ha'aretz*)

Yediot Yerushalaim reports that a recent tender for 92 housing units in the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, near Jerusalem, did not produce a winning bid.

The IDF demolishes a home in the Bethlehem neighborhood of Beit Sahur for being constructed without proper licensing. (PMG-NAD)

February 9 IDF troops confiscate the equipment of 20 to 30 activists and tear down a tent they erected in attempting to build a Palestinian outpost south of Mount Hebron. Five Palestinians and five Israelis are arrested for entering the territory after it is declared a closed military zone. (*Yediot Aharonot*, Ma'an News)

IDF forces declare Susiya, in the southern Hebron hills, a closed military zone and stop some 150 farmers and activists from reaching their land. (Ma'an News)

February 10 *Ma'ariv* reports on a decision to halt state subsidies for the protection of settler vehicles against stone throwing, a policy in place since 1987, when the first intifada began. The subsidy, \$2.5 million annually at its height, ended as a result of a disagreement between the Ministries of Defense and the Treasury.

Settlers install four caravans in an attempt to establish an outpost near Qalqilya. (PMG-NAD)

Settlers uproot olive trees, flowers, and crops in the Tel al-Rumeida neighborhood in Hebron. (PMG-NAD)

February 11 Palestinian MK Ahmad Tibi joins hundreds of activists in protesting the construction of a highway in East Jerusalem that would divide the Beit Safafa neighborhood. Israeli police arrest three protesters. (Ma'an News)

Settlers vandalize the Challenge and Steadfastness Center, a Palestinian community project run by Youth Against Settlements. The IDF arrests the center's director. (Ma'an News)

IDF forces demolish a trailer in Idhna, west of Hebron, home to a Palestinian family of eight. (Ma'an News)

In Qalqilya, settlers enter Azzun village, raising the Israeli flag and provoking residents. Israeli forces fire tear gas grenades at residents attempting to stop the attack. (PMG-NAD)

The Israeli government approves plans to construct 90 new housing units in the West Bank settlement of Beit El, near Ramallah. No tenders are required, and construction can begin at any time. (*Ha'aretz*)

February 12 A settler runs over a Palestinian child near Hebron's Old City. (PMG-NAD)

February 13 The IDF demolishes six dwellings in the Ma'ale Rehavam outpost, in the Etzion settlement bloc. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

Settlers from Yitzhar throw rocks at Palestinian cars near Nablus, damaging several. (Ma'an News)

An Israeli court orders 20 families from the al-Arara Bedouin tribe to leave their homes in Jaba, northeast of Jerusalem, within three days. The inhabitants claim that they are being evicted to make way for expansion of the nearby Adam settlement. Their lawyer is able to delay the order by 15 days. (Ma'an News)

February 14 The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Public Works is reported to be short on funds for road repairs, with access to only \$10 million of the \$100 million needed annually. (Ma'an News)

February 16 Settlers stone vehicles passing along a main road on the way to the Jalazun refugee camp. (PMG-NAD)

February 17 Settlers with attack dogs

SETTLEMENT TIME LINE

enter the al-Auja neighborhood, in Jericho, assaulting several Palestinian shepherds. (PMG-NAD)

Settlers prevent the al-Abadia family from accessing their land in Bethlehem. The IDF arrests five journalists documenting the incident. (PMG-NAD)

February 18 *Ha'aretz* reports on the decision by the Israel Lands Administration to return 1,200 dunams (300 acres) of farmland in the northern Jordan Valley to its Palestinian owners after admitting that more than 30 years ago it had mistakenly assigned the land to Kibbutz Merav.

A settler runs over a 16-year-old Palestinian boy in Bethlehem. (PMG-NAD)

Settlers vandalize three Palestinian vehicles in Salfit and spray racist slogans on a Palestinian home. (PMG-NAD)

February 19 Settlers block a road by setting fire to tires in Ramallah. (PMG-NAD)

February 20 Settlers stone several Palestinian homes in Burin village, near Nablus, and assault nearby shepherds. (PMG-NAD)

February 21 Six cars in the Palestinian village of Qusra, south of Nablus, are torched by settlers from the Esh Kodesh outpost. Settlers and residents clash until security forces arrive and disperse the crowd. The settlers deny involvement in the incident. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

February 22 *Kol Ha'ir* reports the sale of 25 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev for \$7.5 million.

February 23 An estimated 200 Palestinians and 25 settlers throw rocks at each other after settlers from the Esh Kodesh outpost uproot olive trees and throw stones at

Palestinian homes in Qusra. Nine people are wounded, including two by a settler opening fire on Palestinians. (*Ha'aretz*)

February 27 *Ha'aretz* reports on recommendations by European Union diplomats in Jerusalem to impose economic sanctions against companies and organizations involved with West Bank and East Jerusalem settlements as part of a non-binding 2012 heads of mission report.

Palestinians throughout the West Bank gather to protest the death of Arafat Jaradat, a Palestinian prisoner who died while incarcerated by the Israeli military. Dozens of protesters throw stones at Israeli military checkpoints in Hebron, and others throw Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles near Nablus. (*Yediot Aharonot*)

OBSERVATIONS, continued from page 1

lem settlements.

Population

■ Settlements in the middle range in terms of size—between 100 and 250 units (populations of 500 to 1,000)—enjoyed the highest rate of population growth during the period 1995–2011, while those at the ends of the spectrum—the smallest and the largest settlements—enjoyed considerable (approximately 100 percent) but markedly slower population increases. Mid-range settlements appear to offer a solid foundation of social and housing infrastructures for sustainability and growth.

■ The smallest settlements—those with populations of less than 200—appear to have the most marginal prospects. These settlements are overwhelmingly located in the Jordan Valley, the region most distant from Israel and its metropolitan resources.

■ Approximately 100 new settlements (“outposts”) have been established since 1996, with a current population of around 3,000.

■ The 14 largest settlements, with the exception of Ariel, which is linked to the coastal metropolis of Tel Aviv by a modern highway, share a geographical proximity close to the Green Line and metropolitan Jerusalem or Tel Aviv.

■ In geographical terms, the fastest-growing settlements—the Modi'in bloc and Greater Jerusalem and Etzion bloc settlements—are located close to Israel's major metropolitan centers. The tremendous investments made to link the Ariel bloc to the Tel Aviv region to compensate for its location in

the heart of the West Bank have been far less successful as an engine of population growth. The isolated settlements of the Hebron region, for example, have grown faster than those in the Ariel bloc and the associated Shomron bloc settlements. An important exception to these trends is the increase by 177 percent during 1995–2011 of the Highway 60 settlements, located well east of the separation barrier. This area is also at the heart of the explosive increase in new settlement “outposts.”

■ The settlements growing at the fastest rate are distributed throughout the West Bank, except for the Jordan Valley and Shomron bloc settlements. They are noted for their geographical variety not only east and west of the separation barrier, but also close to and distant from metropolitan Israel, as well as in terms of population.

■ There are a score of settlements with populations between 2,500 and 10,000. The settlements along Highway 60 are well represented in this category as are many others east of the separation barrier. The vast majority of settlements, numbering close to 100, have populations less than 1,000. Most of these are located east of the separation barrier.

These observations highlight Israel's continuing program of strengthening existing settlements and building new ones without regard to the ill-defined concept of settlement “blocs” or the separation barrier constructed in the last decade. These settlement “facts” have always been meant to define the diplomatic landscape and limit the prospect of withdrawal and the associated creation of a Palestinian state. If Secretary of State John Kerry is to be successful he must reverse this equation, and establish diplomatic limits to the settlement enterprise consistent with the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state. ♦

**Tenders for Residential Settlement Construction (units),
by Government and Settlement, November 2002 to February 2013***

Government	West Bank	East Jerusalem	Total
Sharon 1 (Mar '01-Feb '03)	689	0	689
Sharon 2 (Feb '03-Jan '06)	3,040	1,643	4,683
Olmert (Jan '06-Mar '09)	1,556	2,065	3,621
Netanyahu (Mar '09-Feb '13)	1,922	3,288	5,210
Total**	7,207	6,996	14,203

*Tenders are issued for some large settlements only.

**Discrepancy between totals is due to a tender published for 22 units in the Gaza Strip prior to Israel evacuation from Gaza.

Settlement	Tenders (units)	Pop. (2011)	Pop. +/- (%), 1995-2011
Har Homa*	3,642	9,811	Founded 1996
Beitar Illit	2,114	39,710	646
Ma'ale Adumim	1,602	36,089	100
Pisgat Ze'ev*†	1,443	44,512	53
Ramot*	898	41,410	4
Efrata	765	7,685	52
Ariel	689	17,849	29
Givat Ze'ev	487	12,632	77
Har Adar	474	3,622	153
East Talpiyot*	440	13,984	-99
Neve Ya'acov*†	377	19,703	9
Elkana	269	3,746	44
Karnei Shomron	255	6,449	28
Immanu'el	232	2,952	-2
Alfei Menashe	112	7,423	85
Gilo*	111	29,559	-2
Geva Binyamin - Adam	102	4,487	946
Ramat Shlomo*	85	14,554	Founded 1995
Kiryat Arba	84	7,433	42
Total**	14,181	323,610	

†Percent change calculated with 1993 figures

*Located in East Jerusalem

**Discrepancy between totals is due to a tender published for 22 units in the Gaza Strip prior to Israel evacuation from Gaza.

Source: CBS Israel, "List of Localities", 2005, 2003, 2001; List of Localities: Selected years 1948–1995; "Settlement Watch," Peace Now.

WEST BANK SETTLEMENT POPULATION

Population Growth (%), 1995–2011

Top 20 Settlements

	Settlement	Population Growth (%)	East/West of Separation Barrier
1	Geva Binyamin	946	East
2	Revava	862	West
3	Eshkolot	793	West
4	Kokhav Ya'acov	772	East
5	Na'ale	660	East
6	Betar Illit	646	West
7	Avne Hefez	472	East
8	Talmon	441	East
9	Nokdim	426	East
10	El'azar	399	West
11	Yizhar	379	East
12	Brakha	376	East
13	Kiryat Netafim	374	West
14	Bet Ha'arava	352	East
15	Kedar	341	West
16	Eli	324	East
17	Kefar Tappuah	304	East
18	Mevo Horon	290	West
19	Neve Daniel	280	West
20	Itamar	258	East

Bottom 20 Settlements

	Settlement	Population Growth (%)	East/West of Separation Barrier
1	Hamra	-44	East
2	No'omi	-40	East
3	Pezael	-34	East
4	Ma'ale Amos	-25	East
5	Yafit	-20	East
6	Tomer	-19	East
7	Massua	-19	East
8	Gilgal	-9	East
9	Niran	-8	East
10	Ma'ale Efraim	-8	East
11	Mevo Dotan	-7	East
12	Mizpe Shalem	-7	East
13	Roi	-6	East
14	Beqa'ot	-5	East
15	Argaman	-4	East
16	Immanu'el	-2	West
17	Vered Jericho	-1	East
18	Hermesh	-1	East
19	Mekhora	4	East
20	Mezadot Yehuda	12	West

Settlement Population Increase, 1995–2011

Top 20 Settlements

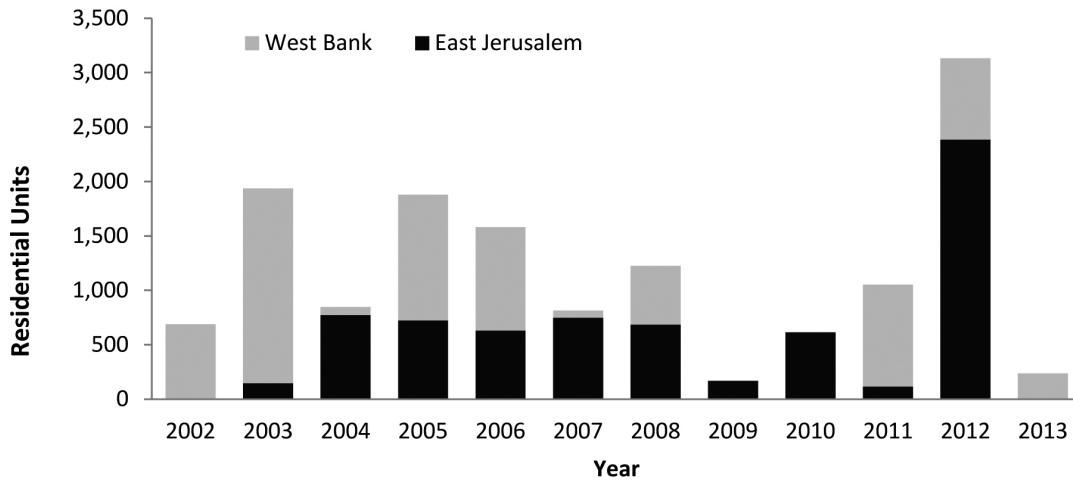
	Settlement	Population Increase	East/West of Separation Barrier
1	Modi'In Illit	52,060	West
2	Betar Illit	34,384	West
3	Ma'ale Adumim	18,398	West
4	Kokhav Ya'acov	5,613	East
5	Giv'at Ze'ev	5,512	West
6	Geva Binyamin	4,058	East
7	Ari'el	4,049	West
8	Alfe Menashe	3,413	West
9	Oranit	2,848	West
10	Sha'are Tiqua	2,670	West
11	Efrata	2,620	West
12	Menora (Kfar Haoranim)	2,542	West
13	Lapid	2,529	West
14	Talmon	2,505	East
15	Bet El	2,468	East
16	Eli	2,461	East
17	Kefar Adummim	2,349	West
18	Kiryat Arba	2,213	East
19	Har Adar	2,192	West
20	Ofra	2,070	East

Bottom 20 Settlements

	Settlement	Population +/-	East/West of Separation Barrier
1	Pezael	-106	East
2	Ma'ale Efraim	-99	East
3	Ma'ale Amos	-88	East
4	Hamra	-75	East
5	Immanu'el	-68	West
6	No'omi	-63	East
7	Tomer	-55	East
8	Massua	-37	East
9	Yafit	-26	East
10	Mevo Dotan	-22	East
11	Gilgal	-17	East
12	Mizpe Shalem	-12	East
13	Roi	-10	East
14	Beqa'ot	-9	East
15	Argaman	-6	East
16	Niran	-5	East
17	Vered Jericho	-2	East
18	Hermesh	-1	East
19	Mekhora	4	East
20	Netiv Hagedud	27	East

Source: CBS Israel, "List of Localities", 2005, 2003, 2001.
"List of Localities: Selected years 1948–1995"

Tenders for Residential Settlement Construction (Units), November 2002–February 2013*



*Tenders are issued for some large settlements only.

Source: "Settlement Watch", Peace Now, February 2013.

“With the onset of occupation in 1967, Israeli authorities began to pursue a policy of physical, political and economic segregation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), which continues apace today. . . . The weight of the economy of East Jerusalem has been steadily diminishing relative to that of the rest of [Occupied Palestinian Territories] since the signing of the 1993 . . . Oslo Accords. This decline, in large part, has been the result of an array of Israeli policies that have hindered development of the East Jerusalem economy as an integral part of the larger Palestinian economy and labour market. The deterioration in socioeconomic conditions has had a significant im-

pact on Palestinian Jerusalemites in their standards of living, housing, health care and education. Israeli policies have entailed a partial and distorted “integration” of the East Jerusalem Palestinian economy into Israel and its regulatory framework. Meanwhile East Jerusalem has been gradually detached from the rest of the Palestinian economy despite the city’s historic position as the commercial, transport, tourism, cultural and spiritual centre for Palestinians throughout the occupied territory.”

“The Palestinian Economy in East Jerusalem:
Enduring annexation, isolation and disintegration.”
United Nations Committee on Trade and
Development: New York and Geneva, April 2013

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