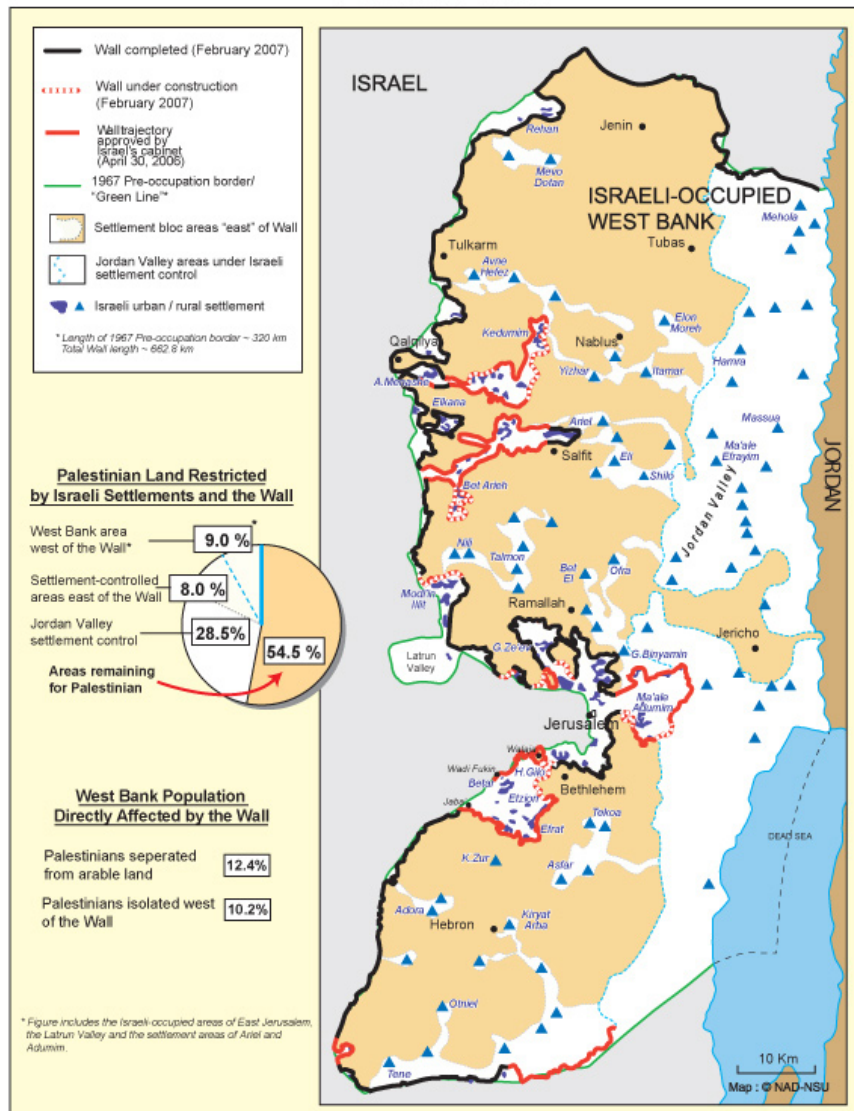


# Israeli Settlements

FACTSHEET

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## ISRAEL'S WALL AND SETTLEMENTS (COLONIES) FEBRUARY 2007



*Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development [... and] have been established in breach of international law.*

*-International Court of Justice Ruling, July 9, 2004*

### quick facts on settlements

- There are currently 135 Israeli settlements and 102 Israeli outposts built illegally in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, Palestinian land occupied by Israel in 1967.
- All of these settlements and outposts are illegal under international law and numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions. Israeli outposts are also illegal under Israeli law
- These settlements and outposts are inhabited by a population of some 460,000 Israeli settlers.

- While settlements are built on less than 3 percent of the area of the West Bank, the area that they officially dominate amounts to over 40 percent.

- The route of Israel's Apartheid Wall has been designed to annex 56 settlements to Israel, incorporating 76 percent of the settler population living in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem).

- Together, the Apartheid Wall and Israel's matrix of settlements will sever the West Bank into 4 cantons, fracturing the West Bank's geographic, political, economic, and social cohesion, and irreversibly changing the facts on the ground to undercut the possibility of a future, contiguous, independent Palestinian state.

### what are settlements and outposts?

- Originally used to describe any new Jewish development in Israel, the term 'settlements' now refers to Jewish-only housing units built in strategic areas of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, land occupied by Israel in 1967.



One of many Israeli Settlements in the West Bank. Photo: IMEMC

- Since 1967, consecutive Israeli governments have established settlements in violation of international law to colonize the Palestinian territories in order to consolidate and secure Israeli control over these areas and prevent the emergence of a Palestinian state.

- Most settlements begin as 'out-posts'. They are often composed of a few families living in caravans while they await for infrastructure and financial support from the state and other sympathetic communities inside Israel and abroad.

### **what are bypass roads?**

- Settlements are linked to each other and to Israel by an extensive network of "bypass roads". For each 100 km of by-pass road, about 2,500 acres of land is confiscated. All the roads have a 50–75m buffer zone on each side of the road in which no construction is allowed. This has led to a great loss of agricultural and privately-owned Palestinian land.

- Whilst illegally built on confiscated Palestinian land, these roads are forbidden for use by Palestinians, consolidating Israel's creation of a system of Apartheid in the West Bank and dividing Palestinian areas.

- Since 1967, consecutive Israeli governments have established settlements in violation of international law to colonize the Palestinian territories in order to consolidate and secure Israeli control of these areas and prevent the emergence of a Palestinian state.

### **settlements and international law**

- Israeli settlements are illegal under every basic reading of international law and United Nations resolutions:

- Article 49, paragraph 6 of the Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly stipulates that "the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies".

- Article 46 of the Hague Convention prohibits the confiscation of private property in occupied territory.

- Article 55 of the Hague Convention stipulates that "the occupying state shall be regarded only as administrator and usufructuary of public buildings, real estate, forests, and agricultural estates belonging to the hostile State, and situated in the occupied country. It must safeguard the capital of these properties, and administer them in accordance with the rules of usufruct."

- UN Security Council Resolution 465 (1980), which was unanimously adopted, made it clear that "Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants" in the occupied territories constitutes "a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East". The Security Council called upon Israel to "dismantle the existing settlements and in particular to cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction or planning of settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem."

- The 2004 ruling of the International Court of Justice in The Hague declared that "Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development."

### **settlements and the myth of the 'disengagement'**

- Israel evacuated all of its 21 settlements in Gaza with a total population of 8,692, and 4 West Bank settlements with a population of 674 as part of its 'disengagement' plan, completed in September 2005.

- Since this time, the settler population in the West Bank has grown by 5.3 percent (14,000 people); 3.5 percent (9,300) was from natural population growth within the settlements, while the other 1.8 percent (4,700 people) moved from the Gaza Strip or from Israel, undermining Israeli claims that the disengagement represented an unprecedented compromise and a move towards peace on its part.

### **settlements and negotiations**

- Settlements are one of the most important outstanding issues in negotiations for a “final status” agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organisation/Palestinian Authority and Israel. The Palestinians maintain the decades-old position that the complete removal of settlements must precede the creation of any future Palestinian state if it is to be contiguous and viable.

- Despite this, Israel is changing facts on the ground in such a way through the building of its Apartheid Wall designed primarily to annex major settlement blocs to Israel, that the outcomes of any such final status negotiations are being irreversibly prejudiced in Israel’s favour.

### **settlements and natural resources**

- Settlements are the cause of great inequalities in access to natural resources between Israelis and Palestinians in that many of them are built on prime agricultural land confiscated from Palestinians, and over key water resources such as the Western Aquifer basin, springs and wells. This sees Israeli West Bank settlers allocated 2400 m<sup>3</sup> of water per year compared to just 50 m<sup>3</sup> for Palestinians. Such inequalities are being consolidated by the Apartheid Wall which will annex swathes of Palestinian agricultural land as well as major water resources to Israel.

### **settler violence**

- Settlers have killed at least 54 Palestinians since September 2000. On 25 March 2007, a 52 year-old Palestinian shepherd from Aqraba near Nablus was stabbed to death by Israeli settlers from the nearby Itamar settlement.

- Attacks on Palestinian property and vandalism such as the burning of fields and destruction of agricultural land are among other settler violations. Again, Israeli soldiers often protect settlers and legal proceedings are rarely brought against them.

- Settlers also routinely attack Palestinians with complete immunity from the Israeli authorities and with inaction on the part of the Israeli military to protect Palestinians civilians from such attacks.

- On 8 April 2007 for example, 2 Palestinian girls aged 11 and 12 years and a 10- year-old Palestinian boy from the village of Tuba in the Hebron district were injured when a group of Israeli settlers from the settlement of Ma’on beat them and took their schoolbags while en route to their school. The Israeli military and police were present at the time but did nothing to prevent or stop the attack.



Swedish human rights worker after being attacked by Jewish settlers in Hebron in the presence of Israeli soldiers and police. Photo: ISM