Settlements Factsheet

Overview
Settlement activity refers to the transfer of a civilian population by the occupying power into territory it occupies.¹ Israeli government characterises settlements as localities that consist of more than 20 inhabitants, are self-rulled, are not included in the formal borders of another locality and are formally recognised.² The government of Israel commenced in the establishment and expansion of settlements since the occupation of the West Bank (WB), including east Jerusalem (EJ), and the Gaza Strip (GS). The first settlement, Kfar Etzion, was established in 1967 and is located between Jerusalem and Hebron.³

Despite their illegality under international law and the continuous reiterations by the international community that settlements pose an obstacle to peace within the framework of the two-state solution, as of 2016, there are 636,452 settlers⁴ residing in 257 settlements and outposts in the WB, including in EJ,⁵ compared to 238,060 settlers in 1991 on the outset of the Peace Process.⁶

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th># of Settlers</th>
<th>%</th>
<th># of Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenin</td>
<td>2,861</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubas</td>
<td>2,156</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulkarem</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nablus</td>
<td>17,741</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qalqiliya</td>
<td>37,769</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salit</td>
<td>41,143</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramallalah&amp; Bireh</td>
<td>125,061</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jericho and Jordan Valley</td>
<td>6,479</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>302,188</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem</td>
<td>78,365</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebron</td>
<td>19,363</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>636,452</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (adopted 12 August 1949) 75 UNTS 287 article 49.
⁶ PCBS (n 5)
⁷ This distribution includes only that of settlements and not outposts. Data on the distribution of outposts/governorate is not available.
Settlement expansion in the WB including EJ is directly related to land expropriation. Within this framework, 40% of the WB is under the control of settlements. Additionally; with the construction of the Expansion and Annexation Wall, 12% of the land of the WB lies between the Wall and Green Line. On another level, a total of 200 km of bypass roads are constructed in the WB; additionally, the road infrastructure supporting the settlement enterprise take approximately 2.3% of the area of the WB.

In EJ, settlement expansion is, additionally, directly linked to the evacuation of Palestinians from their homes and their forced displacement. The point of divergence between settlement expansion in EJ and the remainder of the WB lies in that settlements are located in the heart of EJ as opposed to being on the outskirts of cities in the remainder of the WB, with the exception of the Old City of Hebron. Settlement construction and expansion in EJ commenced in 1968. As of 2016, there are 220,000 settlers in 12 settlements inside the Wall.

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8 Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories- B’Tselem, Settlements (B’Tselem 2018) <https://www.btselem.org/settlements>

9 PCBS (n 5)

10 Negotiations Support Unit (NSU), Bypass Roads (NSU 2018).

11 Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), Arab East Jerusalem: A Reader (PASSIA 2013) 65.

12 NSU, Number of Israeli Settlers by Year (NSU 2017).

13 PASSIA (n 10).

14 Ibid.
In addition to land expropriation, settlement expansion is directly linked to settler violence. For example, according to the Applied Research Institute- Jerusalem and Land Research Centre- Jerusalem, during 2017, over 5,000 dunums of land were confiscated, with another 1,338 dunums under threat of confiscation. During the same period, 8,139 trees were uprooted and 527 settler attacks were documented. With respect to water, more than 70% of the Palestinian communities in area “C” are not connected to the water network and rely on tinkered water. Despite the recommendation of the World Health Organisation of water consumption of 100 litters/ capita/ day, the average consumption in area “C” stands as low as 20 litters/ capita/ day, and 73 litters/ capita/ day across the remainder of the WB, compared to an average consumption of 369 litters/ capita/ day for settlers. This infringes in multiple manners on enjoyment of human rights, including the reverberations of denial of access to resources/services, as well as rights to human security, bodily integrity, work, education and healthcare, among others.

This factsheet seeks to lay out the legal framework illegalising and criminalising settlement activity as well as provide an overview of the historical development of the settlement enterprise in Palestine and tracks the increase in the number of settlements and settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Illegality of Settlement Activity under International Law**

- The Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, commonly known as the Fourth Geneva Convention (GCIV), explicitly and irrevocably prohibits settlement construction and expansion. Article 49(6) of the convention states:
  
  “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupied”.18

- While Israel disputes the applicability of the Geneva Conventions (including GCIV), claiming that neither the WB nor the GS were the territory of a High Contracting Party at the time of their occupation, the international community has rejected these claims and affirmed the applicability of the convention 126 times.19

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18 Geneva Convention (n 1).  
The gravity of settlement construction and expansion was acknowledged in its codification as a War Crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Statute states:

“The transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory”.

The illegality of settlement construction and expansion is not only prohibited under the GCIV, but also under the Charter of the United Nations and under customary international law.

- Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations and the Statute of the International Court of Justice states the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory through force, as emphasised in Security Council Resolutions 446, 452, 476 and 2234. This is further reinforced by the ruling of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Wall, which states that settlements are the main reference against which the planning of the Wall is taking place. Additionally, the Advisory Opinion states that in certain areas the Wall deviates more than 7.5 km eastwards from the Green Line and encircles a number of settlements, which vindicates that the primary purpose of the construction of the Wall is the annexation of large settlement blocks.

- Settlement expansion directly and flagrantly violates the prohibition on changing the physical character, demographic composition and institutional structure or status of occupied territory. This has been reiterated and emphasised continuously by the United Nations, including the Security Council in Resolutions 465, 471, 476 and 2334. Within this framework, Resolution 2334 states “Condemning all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions”.

22 Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall (Advisory Opinion) 2004 accessed 8 August 2018, paragraph 81.
23 Ibid paragraph 83.
**Historical Development of the Settlement Enterprise**

This section will provide an overview of the development of the settlement enterprise, since 1967 to date. The section will reflect the number of settlers; location of settlements; settlement concentration; and major events relevant to settlement expansion.

**1967-1977**

- 20 settlements were established during this period, concentrated in Gush Etzion, Jordan Valley, Jewish Quarter in Old City of Jerusalem, French Hill, Neve Ya’cov, Talpiot, Gilo, Ramot Eshkol and Ma’lot Dafina. The number of settlers in this period reached 2,876.24

- **Allon Plan**: refers to the plan of Labour Minister Yigal Allon, which was drawn up after the 1967 war and ensuing conquest of the WB, including EJ, GS, Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights. The plan intended to develop and reinforce control over the WB and GS once the decision was made to retain their control through the systematic transfer and installation of settlers.25

- **Rent Law**: on 19 October 1972, the Tenants Protection Law was amended, effectively lifting tenancy protection after the death of the third generation of tenants, in contravention with the previously applied Ottoman law. Additional grounds for lifting tenancy protection included leaving the property; delays or non-payment of the rent; and violations of the terms of the rent contract.26, 27

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26 Interview with Dr. Munir Nusseibeh, Professor of International Law in Al-Quds University (25 August 2018).

27 Please refer to the time period 2010-NOW below for a clarification on the repercussions of these amendments.
1978-1993

- 108 settlements were established during this period, concentrated in Gush Etzion, Jordan Valley, Ramallah, Nablus, Jerusalem, Gaza and Hebron.\(^\text{28}\) The number of settlers in this period reached 268,756 (146,436 were in EJ and 122,320 in the remainder of the WB and GS).\(^\text{29}\) By 1991, more than 150 settlements were established in the WB, including EJ and the GS, with Palestinian building barred in 68% of the land.\(^\text{30}\)

- **Withdrawal from Sinai:** settlement expansion in the Sinai Peninsula commenced immediately after the 1967 war, but was incorporated into the extended Allon Plan in the early 1970s. The Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin governments (1968-1977) intended for the creation of a “buffer” between the GS and Egypt through construction of settlements in a small strip along the eastern Sinai reaching to Sharm Al-Sheikh.\(^\text{31}\)

- Evacuation of the 5000-6000 settlers in the 17 settlements in Sinai was agreed to take place over the period of 3 years, to be completed by 25 April 1982 as part of the Camp David Accords of 1979. Evacuations were met with struggle and protest –sometimes violent- from inside the government and by settler groups. The last settlement to be evacuated, Yammit "urban centre" was dismantled by 22 April 1982.\(^\text{32}\)

- Evacuation of settlers from Sinai led to increased settlement expansion in the WB and particularly the GS. For example, some of the evacuated settlers went on to settle in Elei Sinai and Dugit, which were established in Gaza in 1983 and 1984, respectively.\(^\text{33}\)

- Each family evacuated from Sinai received a compensation of 500,000 USD, which when adjusted to inflation exceeds 1,000,000 USD in 2005.\(^\text{34}\)

\(^\text{28}\) MIFTAH (n 21) 159-161.


\(^\text{30}\) PASSIA (n 22) 62.

\(^\text{31}\) Ibid 56.

\(^\text{32}\) Ibid.


\(^\text{34}\) Ibid, 2.
1994-1999

- According to the Negotiations Support Unit (NSU) of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the total number of settlers in the WB, including EJ, and GS reached 355,065 settlers by 1999, divided as follows: 165,069 in EJ, 183,569 in the remainder of the WB and 6,427 in GS.\textsuperscript{35}

- The E-1 Development Plan: The E-1 area refers to a narrow undeveloped land corridor that runs east of Jerusalem and is part of the WB area “C”. The E-1 area is bordered by the settlements of French Hill (west), Kedar (south), Ma’ale Adumim (east) and Almon (north) and Palestinian town of Abu-Dis to the south west. In 1994, the borders of Ma’ale Adumim were expanded to include the E-1 area. The E-1 development plan plays an instrumental role in facilitating the realisation of Israel’s vision of a ‘united’ Jerusalem on both the territorial and demographic levels. Within this framework, the E-1 plan envisions a new Israeli neighbourhood Mevasseret Adumim over an area of 12,000 dunums.\textsuperscript{36}

- The E-1 development plan, if implemented would connect the WB’s largest settlement with its EJ ‘inner ring’ sites, foreseeing 3,500-15,000 housing units, the already completed police headquarters, a large industrial zone as well as tourism infrastructure. If the plan was completed, the WB would be severed in half, and the last area of open land available for Palestinian development grabbed, making territorial contiguity of the WB and agreement of permanent borders impossible.\textsuperscript{37}

2000-2009

- By 2009, the total number of settlers in the WB, including EJ reached 491,630 divided as follows: 188,251 in EJ and 303,379 in the remainder of the WB.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} Negotiations Support Unit, Settler Population 1994-2016 (NSU 2017).
\textsuperscript{36} PASSIA (n 22) 166.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
• **Jerusalem Master Plan** is the first planning framework that treats east and west Jerusalem as one urban unit, and serves as a mandatory map for land use and a blueprint for other municipal planning purposes. The plan is demographically motivated and contemplates a Jewish majority by 70% to 30% Arabs in Jerusalem by 2030.\(^{39}\) Within this framework, 35% of the land has been confiscated for “public purposes,” 22% were designated as “green land,” and another 30% remains unplanned, thus leaving only 13% of the land for Palestinian construction,\(^{40}\) much of which is already built up.\(^{41}\) Additionally, the plan designates housing for Palestinians to the northern and southern areas of EJ, while restricting development in and around the Old City, where Israeli development is accelerated.

\(^{39}\) PASSIA (n 22) 169.


• **The Separation Wall**: is a physical barrier whose construction was approved on 14 April 2002 during the 2nd Intifada under the government of Ariel Sharon. On 22 June the Cabinet, through decision number 2077, approved a plan for the construction east of the Green line.\(^{42}\) The total length of the Wall is 708 km, approximately twice the length of the 1949 Green Line. Additionally, 9.4% of the WB including EJ and no man’s land lies between the Wall and the Green Line. Furthermore, it is estimated that, when completed, 85% of the Wall will have been built within the WB and not along the Green Line.\(^{43}\)

Within the framework of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory through the use of force, the United Nations General Assembly issued Resolution ES-10/14 on 12 December 2003,\(^{44}\) requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of the Wall. On 9 July 2004, the ICJ issued its ruling on the Wall, condemning it as an illegal measure under international law.\(^{45}\)

• **Disengagement from Gaza**: the unilateral disengagement from Gaza (as well as four small settlements in the northern WB) was adopted by the Cabinet in June 2004 and approved by the Knesset in October 2004.\(^{46}\) This entailed the evacuation of 8,692 settlers from 21 settlements, as follows: Atzmona, Bedolah, Dugit, Elei Sinai, Gadid, Gan Or, Ganei Tal, Kfar Darom, Kfar Yam, Katif, Morag, Netzar Hazani, Netzarm, Neve Dekalim, Nisanit, Pe’at Sade, Rafiah Yam, Keren Atzmona, Shirat Hayam, Slav and Tel Katifa.\(^{47}\) The average compensation/settler exceeded 200,000 USD, with many of the evacuated settlers who refused to receive compensation relocating to illegal settlements in the WB.\(^{48}\)

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45. PASSIA (n 22) 116.
By 2016, the total number of settlers in the WB, including EJ reached 636,452 divided as follows: 302,188 in EJ (of which 222,325 in the J1 area) and 334,264 in the remainder of the WB in 150 settlements (12 of which within the annexed area of EJ) and 107 outposts. For the first time since 1992, the construction of 4 new settlements (1 in South Nablus and 3 in the Jordan Valley) was commissioned. These include Amihai in South Nablus, whose construction was approved in March 2017.

The Judea and Samaria Settlement Regulation Law is a legislation passed by the Israeli Knesset in February 2017 and that seeks to retroactively legalise settlement outposts in the WB, which are considered illegal under Israeli law. A number of human rights organisations, including Adalah, Yesh Din, Peace Now and Association for Civil Rights in Israel shortly petitioned the Supreme Court following the passage of the law. Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit opposed the law and refused to defend it, forcing the Justice Ministry to appoint a private attorney to defend the law. This, coupled with the freezing of the law by the Court, suggests that it is highly unlikely that the Court will uphold the law.

The consideration of the legality of the Regularisation law should not be overstated. This comes within the context of the enactment of the “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People” in July 2018, as a basic law that enjoys constitutional value, and which states in paragraph 7 "The state views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation.” In the absence of the identification of the scope of application of the Nation-State Law, the state's attorney on the Regularisation Law stated that the Nation State Law will be utilised to retroactively legalise settlement outposts in the WB.

Settlement expansion has witnessed a steep increase since the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States. In the 22 months before Trump’s election, the number of housing units approved for construction reached 4,476; this increased to

50 Ibid.
13,987 housing units in the 21 months since his election.\textsuperscript{55}

- On the demographic level, for every 100 Palestinians in the WB there are 21.4 settlers. This increases to 70 settlers to 100 Palestinians in the Jerusalem Governorate.\textsuperscript{56}

- The policies and legal amendments put in place since the occupation of the WB and the annexation of EJ in the late 1960s and early 1970s are currently yielding results. Israeli settler-religious organisations, such as Eteret Cohanim and Ela’ad have been utilising the amendment to the Rent Law to evict Palestinians from their houses in the Holy Basin area and particularly in the Old City of Jerusalem and Sheikh Jarrah under claims that they previously belonged to Jews before 1948. This has rendered the displacement of 296 Palestinians with an additional 42 Palestinians at risk.\textsuperscript{57} According to a 2016 survey by the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 180 Palestinian households in EJ had eviction cases filed against them, placing 818 Palestinians at risk of displacement, including 372 children.\textsuperscript{58}

- The case of the Bedouin community in Al-Khan Al-Ahmar has witnessed a protracted legal process that has been on-going since 2009. Located in area “C” and in a pivotal location for the completion of the E-1 project, the Israeli military has issued demolition orders against the community, which led to petitioning the Israeli Supreme Court. Recently, on 09/05/2018, the Supreme Court rejected the last submitted petition numbered (18/5193) and issued its verdict to evacuate the area and demolish the houses one week after the verdict.\textsuperscript{59} Despite the temporary freezing of the decision of implementation on 6 July 2018,\textsuperscript{60} the Court upheld its original verdict on 5 September 2018 to demolish the community.\textsuperscript{61} On 23 September 2018, Israeli occupation authorities handed in orders to the residents of Al-Khan Al-Ahmar to voluntarily demolish their constructions by 1 October; otherwise, Israeli authorities would enforce the demolition.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{55} MEE (n 48).
\textsuperscript{56} PCBS (n 46).
\textsuperscript{57} Khalil Tufakji, Third Generation Law: Altering Jerusalem’s Palestinian Demographics (Palestinian Vision Organisation, 2015) 34.
\textsuperscript{58} OCHA, Humanitarian Impact of Settlements in Palestinian Neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem: Evictions and Displacements (OCHA 2018) <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-impact-settlements-palestinian-neighbourhoods-east-jerusalem-evictions-and>
\textsuperscript{60} Ma’an News Agency, Israel’s High Court Freezes Planned Demolition of Khan al-Ahmar (Ma’an News Agency, 6 July 2018) <https://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=780354>
Annex One: Number of Settlers by Year:
The following graph reflects the total number of settlers in a selected number of years:

Annex Two: Settlements in east Jerusalem:
The following table reflects the year of establishment of each settlement in east Jerusalem, land established on and area established on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Settlement</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area (Dunums)</th>
<th>Land Established On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramot Eshkol/ Gibat HaMivtar</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1,357</td>
<td>Lifta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Scopus</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>Shu’fat, Issawiya, At-Tur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Givat Shapira (French Hill)</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>Shu’fat, Issawiya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atarot</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>3,373</td>
<td>Qalandiya, Beit Hanina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilo</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>3,003</td>
<td>Sharafat, Beit Jala, Malha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neve Ya’acov</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1,773</td>
<td>Hizma, Beit Hanina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramot Allon</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>8,085</td>
<td>Beit Iksa, Beit Hanina, Lifta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Talpiot</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Sur Baher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisgat Ze’ev</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>5,417</td>
<td>Beit Hanina, Hizma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Givat HaMatos</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Beit Safafa, Beit Jala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Har Homa</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3,917</td>
<td>Um Tuba, Sur Baher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramat Shlomo</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>Shu’fat</td>
</tr>
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</table>