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Settlement Monitor

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# SETTLEMENT MONITOR

EDITED BY GEOFFREY ARONSON

*This section covers items—reprinted articles, statistics, and maps—pertaining to Israeli settlement activities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Unless otherwise stated, the items in this section have been written by Geoffrey Aronson directly for this section or drawn from material written by him for Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories (hereinafter Settlement Report), a Washington-based bimonthly newsletter published by the Foundation for Middle East Peace. JPS is grateful to the Foundation for permission to draw on its material. Major documents relating to settlements appear in the Documents and Source Material section.*

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## SETTLEMENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF SETTLEMENTS ON LAND, WATER, AND THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY

*This special report by Geoffrey Aronson was prepared for the July–August 1998 issue of Settlement Report.*

The impact of Israeli settlement and settlers on Palestinian land and water resources is one element in a broad relationship of inequality and dependency established and promoted by the occupation during the last quarter century. While there have been anecdotal inquiries into specific examples of this phenomena—for example, Palestinian construction labor at an Israeli settlement or the effects on an adjacent Palestinian community of sewage produced by a settlement—there have been no studies that focus on the overall economic effects of settlements themselves, singly or collectively, on Palestinians. Nevertheless, some data are available that offer a broad insight into the nature and scale of the impact of settlements on Palestinian land and water resources.

Settlements have long represented Israel's intention to remain permanently on the land and to control its destiny, necessarily at the expense of Palestinians. Without settlements, as Israelis have long acknowledged, they would be merely an occupying army. The implantation of civilian Israeli colonies is the primary obstacle to Palestinian self-determination.

All Israeli settlements in the West Bank are currently located in area C, which is under exclusive Israeli control and which comprises 72 percent of the West Bank. Israel similarly controls approximately 20 percent of the Gaza Strip. In the Golan Heights, the Syrian population of 17,000 is clustered into five small villages abutting the Syrian-Lebanese border. The thirty-two Israeli settlements control 80 percent of the plateau. One-quarter of the entire Golan—315,000 dunams—is grazing land controlled by settlers.

Assessing the precise effect of the loss and reallocation of Palestinian lands to Israeli settlements is difficult. The World Bank, in a draft of its September 1993 study, "Developing the Occupied Territories—An Investment in Peace," notes:

Confiscation of Palestinian land has enabled Israel to proceed with the construction of settlements and related structures in various areas of the West Bank that were traditionally considered to be wilderness zones. Most important among these are the eastern slopes and the central part of the West Bank which once housed a variety of wildlife and provided a winter grazing ground for livestock and recreation for the local population. . . .

Similarly, building agricultural settlements in the Jordan Valley has gradually deprived the Palestinian inhabitants of these areas of their richest soils and water wells. A similar situation has developed in the Gaza Strip where settlements have encroached upon fertile inland and coastal areas. The Israeli settlement program was not accompanied by adequate and proper environmental considerations. None of the set-

tlements have developed sewage treatment plants. Sewage is often allowed to run into valleys even if a neighboring [Palestinian] village is threatened. The sewage system of the settlements on the eastern hills and slopes north of Jerusalem has contaminated fresh water supplies for drinking and irrigation of Palestinian areas up to Jericho.

### ***Agricultural Land***

In 1967, 2,300 sq. km. of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under Palestinian cultivation. In 1989, that figure had been reduced to 1,945 sq. km., or 31.5 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Agriculture comprised 24 percent of gross domestic product in 1966, the same percentage as in the period 1980–85 (pre-intifada). By 1994, the percentage had decreased to less than 15 percent. In 1966, the agricultural sector provided employment for 55,000 Palestinians, or 43 percent of total employment, whereas in the period 1980–85, 40,000 people were employed in the agricultural sector, or only 24 percent of total Palestinian employment. In 1993, the percentage of employed persons working in agriculture was 22 percent.

These gross indicators do not lead to specific conclusions regarding the effect of settlements on agricultural employment or production or land under cultivation, because settlements are only one of a number of variables that must be considered when assessing these trends. However, there are specific regions, such as the Jordan Valley, where a direct link can be established between the loss of Palestinians' agricultural opportunities and Israeli settlements. The confiscation of agricultural lands and their transfer to settlements result in the loss of agricultural income and employment, although this has never been quantified beyond anecdotal reporting. Contamination by sewage also directly affects Palestinian agriculture in the region around Kiryat Arba and elsewhere. There are also unquantified economic and environmental costs associated with Israeli-owned industries in the occupied territories, such as a recycling plant for used motor oil, stone quarries, and other industrial plants producing harmful and toxic by-products.

### ***Water***

Access to water, more than a scarcity of land, remains the greatest obstacle to Palestinian agricultural development. For Israel, water has been a vital precondition for achieving its fundamental challenges—the creation of a vibrant economy to sustain an

increasing Jewish community. Without an adequate supply of water, the concept of massive Jewish immigration and settlement would be imperiled, and without immigration and settlement Israel's leadership fears for its future. Water, settlement, and security have thus become complementary pieces of Israel's security outlook.

According to a 1992 report for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences by Miriam Lowi, "almost the entire increase in Israeli water use since 1967 derives from the waters of the West Bank and the Upper Jordan River."

Israel, however, is in the midst of a water emergency. Even with the resources conquered in 1967, it is pumping more water from the aquifers than nature can replace, even as it limits Palestinian water usage to barely 20 percent more than they used in 1967, and only for personal use, not for agricultural and economic development. Indeed, of the water produced by the West Bank aquifers, 56.6 percent is earmarked for Israeli citizens, 23.8 percent for the 170,000 settlers in the West Bank, and 19.6 percent for the 1.2 million Palestinians.

At a time when settlers constituted barely 10 percent of the population in the West Bank (1987), Palestinian consumption totaled 115 million cubic meters (mcm), while settler consumption equaled 97 mcm. A 1993 report by Peace Now noted that "the Jewish settlers' per capita irrigated areas are seven and thirteen times larger than the areas accorded to Palestinians for irrigation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank respectively."

A November 1992 report by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center, "Israeli Obstacles to Economic Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories," notes that lack of water has forced Palestinian farmers to remove tracts from cultivation and that the digging of new, deep wells for settlements, particularly in the Jordan Valley, has caused subsequent shortages for Palestinian farmers.

Since the beginning of bilateral and multilateral negotiations earlier this decade at Madrid, Israel has sought to protect its continuing control over this resource in the West Bank, which was described by Israel's state comptroller in February 1993 as the "principle reservoir of drinking water for the Dan region, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Beersheba" and the "most important long-term source in the [national] water system."

### **Industrial Pollution**

Approximately 160 Israeli-owned industrial concerns are located in the West Bank. For Israeli industrialists, the West Bank at least in one sphere has enjoyed a comparative advantage over Israel. Environmental regulations on soil, air, and water quality, and restrictions on industrial development generally, have been far less comprehensive and far less assiduously enforced compared with Israel. Combined with state-subsidized incentives for Israeli businesses to relocate to industrial parks in and near settlements, the relative laxity of environmental enforcement and monitoring has led to the relocation of a number of “dirty” concerns to the occupied territories. Factories posing an environmental risk generally use “wet processes” in packaged food manufacturing, metal coating, and textiles.

The Shomron Municipal Environmental Association (SMEA), a governmental body established by settlements in the northern part of the West Bank to monitor and improve environmental quality, acknowledges that “wastewater effluents from these plants and from nearly 100 residential communities in our region, if not properly treated, pose a threat to the groundwater quality in the region. In addition, industrial air emissions and noise generation can be problematic at some factories.”

Forty-five businesses operate in the industrial park of Burkan, adjacent to the settlement of Ariel. Most are engaged in the production of fabrics and plastics for export. Palestinians complain that industrial waste generated in the industrial park is dumped on Palestinian land.

“The owners of these factories escape the tighter rules on health and the environment inside Israeli itself to work on the West Bank, where they get tax breaks,” explained Khalil Suleiman, an environmental expert from al-Najah University in Nablus. In addition to Burkan, Palestinians have complained about the operation of industrial facilities at Ariel, Karnei Shomron, Kiryat Arba, and Ked-dumim. Of particular concern is the effect of industrial development on the quality of groundwater, which Palestinian investigators have found to be “significantly more polluted” near settlements than elsewhere.

The settlement of Kiryat Arba has been identified by Palestinian investigators as “the main source of pollution in the Hebron area.” A tile factory located in the settlement industrial area at one time flushed its waste-

water through the sewage system, which resulted in numerous problems. The city of Hebron successfully petitioned the court to stop this practice. Now the wastewater is trucked off in tanks and dumped on a Palestinian field. The water contains high levels of calcium carbonate, increasing the already high pH level of the land.

### **The Case of Geshurei Industries**

Geshurei Industries, a manufacturer of pesticides and fertilizers, was originally located in the Israeli town of Kefar Saba. Concern about the environmental effects of the factory—on land, public health, and agriculture—resulted in an Israeli court order in 1982 closing the plant. Since 1987, the factory has been operating across the Green Line, in the West Bank town of Tulkarm, where there are effectively no controls on waste disposal or air pollution. Other Israeli industrial polluters, including those working in asbestos, fiberglass, pesticides, and flammable gases, also relocated to the Tulkarm area. According to a recent report by a Palestinian nongovernmental organization, the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW), factory pollution directly affects 144 dunams of prime agricultural land and “causes substantial damage to the public health.” The Israeli court has ordered some remedial action, including compensation to affected farmers, but the plant remains in operation.

LAW’s report notes the following effects of the Geshurei factory operation:

- the decay of a majority of trees and other vegetation around the plant;
- the settling of chemical dust and residue and a liquid substance that leaves a calcium-like deposit on the land and vegetation, causing a decrease in field and hothouse agricultural production;
- the prominence of sodium and salt factory by-products in soil samples of land found to be nonarable, both of which are prominent consequences of wastewater contamination of agricultural land;
- the discovery of sulfamic acid, a starting material for a herbicide used as a nonselective weed killer, in groundwater samples from the area surrounding the factory.

The report also notes that “this is clear evidence of polluting groundwater through leakage of chemicals and proof of the improper disposal of wastes and by-products.”

LAW documented “a very high ratio of health-related problems among farmers and people living around the factory, including severe headaches, itchy eyes, spastic and chronic coughs, and bronchial asthma.” The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture has recently noted that “the public health of the community has not been well-documented due to decades of military occupation and direct conflict, suggesting that environmentally related health problems may be more pervasive than currently estimated. The long-term impact on soil and groundwater has similarly received inadequate attention.”

Tulkarm’s agricultural land has historically been a significant factor in the local economy. As a consequence of the harmful effects of Israeli-operated industry around Tulkarm, agricultural profits were reduced by 21.5 percent between 1992 and 1997, according to LAW. The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture estimates that 17 percent of Tulkarm’s agricultural land has been affected by pollution originating at the six Israeli concerns located in the Tulkarm area. Three of the factories sit on what Palestinians claim to be *waqf* land. Other sites are claimed by private Palestinian owners. Several factories are located less than 100 meters from residential housing.

Settlers have been implicated by Palestinians in what Palestinians term “pesticide attacks,” in which settlers destroy cultivated fields by spraying chemical pesticides during the agricultural season. LAW notes that in one incident in the village of Turmus ‘Ayya, settlers sprayed crops of vegetables, cereals, and olive trees in this fashion.

### **Dumps**

Hundreds of sites for the disposal of trash are located in the occupied territories, including dozens that are unauthorized. There are 246 sites in the West Bank north of Jerusalem alone. Most of the sites are simple and primitive with few if any environmental safeguards, and none is used exclusively by settlements or Palestinian communities. SMEA acknowledges that “sites are improperly maintained, generating odors and smoke which are a nuisance to neighboring residents, as well as posing a threat to groundwater quality.”

A site in Jiyous, near the northern West Bank town of Qalqilya, is typical. Sited on 12 dunams, 200 meters from the river bed that serves as a source of drinking water for the village of Azoun, the site opened in 1990 and is administered by Palestinians under the

direction of SMEA. It is used principally by the settlements of Karnei Shomron, Kedumim, Tzofim, and Ma’ale Shomron. SMEA is now being pressured by Israeli trash contractors to permit them to use the dump for trash generated in Israel, after the Israeli dump they had been using was closed by the government. Residents of Azoun complain of an epidemic of flies in summer and of smoke wafting into the village when trash is burned. They claim that 200 olive trees have been damaged by smoke.

Sites such as the one at Jiyous are attractive trash disposal options for Israeli communities. With disposal costs three to six times greater in Israel, sites in the West Bank offer many Israeli towns a closer, cheaper alternative to dumps within Israel proper.

Israel conducted a Geographic Information System study in 1996 as part of an effort to develop a master plan to establish priorities to improve and to consolidate the system of trash disposal in the West Bank. Israel’s plan for trash disposal in the West Bank is being devised with no official or informal Palestinian participation.

### **Quarries**

There are literally thousands of stone quarries on the West Bank, supplying 80 percent of the material needs of Israel’s construction sector. Many of these stones are used in settlement construction. Israeli concerns operate six West Bank quarries. Most of these quarries have operated for years, but the Palestinian Authority (PA) has also considered the siting of new quarries in Palestinian-controlled areas, run in partnership with Israeli companies.

One of these, at a controversial site in Wadi al-Teen—an important natural grazing area that supports livestock farmers in neighboring Palestinian villages—was to be the new site of a quarry whose operators are relocating from sites in Israel.

The Applied Research Institute—Jerusalem, a Palestinian environmental group, notes in its report, “Wadi al-Teen Quarry and the Systematic Expropriation of Palestinian National Resources,” that “the construction of a quarry at Wadi al-Teen will undoubtedly bring environmental degradation, threaten the bio-diversity and wildlife in the area, close off major natural grazing and agricultural areas, and deprive Palestinian farmers of run-off water used for irrigation. Furthermore, the plan will adversely affect the living environment in neighboring Palestinian villages due to dust and other types of air pol-

lution. Most important, this project allows Israel to exploit Palestinian stone, the main natural raw material in the West Bank."

The public outcry over plans to establish a quarry at Wadi al-Teen has recently forced the PA to reconsider the project. "What is the PA planning to tell those who demonstrated against settlement activity in Wadi al-Teen," asked Palestinian Legislative Council member Hassan Khreisheh before reconsideration was announced. "How can we tell Israel to stop building settlements when we are granting them even more land to establish quarries?"

Many quarries are located in close proximity to Palestinian residential areas. The clouds of dust produced in the quarries pose certain health risks. Palestinians charge that those residing near such enterprises suffer from increased levels of asthma and acute bronchial infections.

Settlers have organized to prevent the operation of quarries near their residential areas. Together with Palestinians, they have filed a unique, joint appeal to oppose the creation of a new stone-crushing site in the village of Dura, near Hebron.

#### **Obstacles to Cooperation**

The mitigation of environmental problems in the occupied territories, including those caused by the existence and expansion of settlements, is viewed by some Israelis as a forum for joint Israeli-Palestinian action. Yet Israeli environmental planners in the territories continue to view Palestinians as junior partners at best. Palestinians, for their part, are willing to cooperate with Israeli communities within Israel's pre-1967 borders, but they refuse as a matter of principle to participate in joint efforts with settlers.

"Our feeling—in fact, it's more than a feeling," explained the director of the settlers' Judea Towns Association for the Environment, "is that the Palestinian Authority is not interested in cooperating with us." In Hebron, for example, the Palestinian municipality refuses to participate in a wastewater treatment scheme in which some of the treated water will be used by Israeli settlers.

Rafael Eitan, Israel's minister of environment, recently warned that "if the Palestinian Authority doesn't answer our request for cooperation we will carry out the projects essential to protect the environment in Israel and the residents of the territories ourselves, and I will act to deduct the costs from the money forwarded by the government to the Authority."

Palestinians recognize that, even without taking the settlements into consideration, the West Bank and Gaza Strip have myriad environmental problems. "Environmentally speaking," explained Imad Attrash, director of the Children for the Protection of Nature in Palestine, "I am very depressed. We have problems with pollution, sewage, industrial zones situated in residential areas, as well as disposable diapers."

The prevailing sentiment among Palestinians is to treat the environmental implications of settlement expansion as a political issue, one related to the continuing Palestinian refusal, particularly on a popular level, to concede the principle of joint action with settler and settler-oriented institutions.

### **SETTLEMENT CHRONOLOGY**

#### **5 May**

*Ha'Aretz* reports that 1,000 Jews live in the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City.

#### **6 May**

A twenty-eight-year-old Ateret Cohanim seminary student is stabbed to death in the Old City's Muslim Quarter.

A knife-wielding Palestinian is shot dead in the settlement of Eli.

Palestinians erect a tent outside the settlement of Metzad, northeast of Hebron, to protest ground work undertaken by settlers to establish an agricultural farm outside the settlement's perimeter fence.

#### **11 May**

*Ma'ariv* reports a sale in Paris offering 1,000 houses in twenty-seven settlements; a similar effort will soon begin in New York. According to YESHA, 500 French families currently live in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with 200 additional families scheduled to settle there in 1998.

#### **12 May**

Labor Party leader Ehud Barak declares during a visit to the West Bank settlement of Beit El that "Beit El will remain in our hands forever! And the Palestinians will remain in Ramallah forever."

#### **15 May**

Israel television [Channel 1] reports that Ateret Cohanim officials plan to turn Zedekiah's cave in Jerusalem into "a religious Disneyland exhibiting Biblical themes." The plans include a tunnel to be built beneath the Muslim Quarter. Ateret Cohanim has already begun fundraising for the park,

which will occupy 13,000 sq. m. underground.

### 19 May

Peace Now reports that 70 percent of the housing planned for Israel's orthodox Jewish sector (29,000 units) will be in settlements—14,000 units in Mod'in Ilit and Kiryat Sefer, 5,700 in Beitar, 1,200 in Emmanuel, 1,100 in Hashmona'im, and 6,624 in Matityahu.

### 20 May

A petition is filed with Israel's High Court to nullify the E-1 plan for the expansion of Ma'ale Adumim (see Settlement Monitor in *JPS* 108).

### 21 May

Israel television [Channel 1] reports that PM Netanyahu plans to seek \$1 billion in U.S. aid to finance the construction of bridges, elevated and bypass roads, and additional infrastructure in the occupied territories in the event of an agreement on redeployment.

### 25 May

In the Golan Heights, 380 garden homes in fourteen settlements are put up for sale. Monetary assistance of up to 95 percent of the value of the property is available. According to the Golan settler council, there are 16,500 settlers in the Golan, including 6,500 in Qatzrin.

*Al-Quds* reports that barrels containing dangerous chemical wastes were returned by the PA to Israel. The wastes were first seized in July 1997 when Palestinian naval police caught a Palestinian on his way to dump the barrels, which had been taken from a settler's car, at the Gaza coastal area of Mouassi. The Israeli Environment Authority in the Gaza Strip confirmed that the barrels contain dangerous chemical wastes. Legal measures will be taken against the settler.

### 26 May

Members of Ateret Cohanim begin laying foundations for nine new buildings in the Old City's Muslim Quarter. Protestors, including Palestinian Legislative Council members, clash with police at the site. Following a court order to halt construction issued at the request of the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA), Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert signs a demolition order instructing Ateret Cohanim to evacuate the site.

### 28 May

The city of Jerusalem agrees to put up temporary buildings for the Ateret Cohanim

members taking part in an "archeological dig" on the site. (The West Bank settlements of Ofra and Shilo had similar origins.) The settlers vow to establish an educational center with hundreds of students on the site.

### 29 May

The Knesset Finance Committee approves 130 million shekels [\$36 million] for religious schools and West Bank settlements. \$10 million is allocated for new bypass roads (one from Tekoa to Jerusalem; another bypassing al-Arub in the Etzion Bloc, and one bypassing Beitunia near Ramallah). An additional \$5 million will be provided for settler regional councils.

### 1 June

At the grand opening of a new restaurant/banquet hall on Ha-Gai Street in the Old City's Muslim Quarter, Mayor Olmert praises the Ateret Cohanim association, saying "House after house, we will build Jerusalem."

### 5 June

Palestinians try to block the expansion of Beitar Ilit west of Bethlehem to a 5,000-dunam area of "state land" northwest of the existing settlement (see also 9 June below).

The Follow Up Committee for Israeli Arab Affairs calls on Arab citizens of Israel to "boycott" the products made in Israeli settlements. The committee also plans to compile a list of goods produced in the settlements to distribute to Arab villages, the Arab press, and institutions in Europe.

The PA calls for a "general mobilization" against Israeli settlement policies after Israel's Interior Ministry approves the construction of fifty-eight new dwelling units at a Jewish seminary on the Mount of Olives. This land was once zoned for a school for Palestinian girls from the neighboring village of al-Tur.

### 8 June

*Ma'ariv* reports that the Defense Ministry will spend \$500,000 to restore the Jewish seminary building at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus, site of the most violent clashes during the September 1996 tunnel affair.

Settlers of the El Ad group move into four buildings in the Silwan village in East Jerusalem, which were purchased by the group for \$200,000.

### 9 June

The official Palestinian newspaper *al-Ayyam* reports that a new settlement called Hadar Beitar is being built adjacent to the Green Line near the villages of Wadi Fukin and Husan southwest of Bethlehem. Hadar

Beitar will be an extension of the existing settlement Beitar.

### 10 June

*Al-Quds* reports that a Palestinian is killed by Israeli soldiers near the Gaza settlement of Morag. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights calls upon the international community to intervene against the escalating use of force by the occupation forces, also noting the wounding of another Palestinian citizen on June 3 by a settler near the Gaza settlement of Atzmona.

### 11 June

The first civilian guard to operate independently of the Israeli police and IDF for protection of settlements is established in the West Bank by military order.

Ariel settlement is classified as a city.

### 15 June

The establishment of a new industrial park on 1,200 dunams next to Keddumim is announced. Land is priced at \$32,000/dunam, including development costs. Businesses locating to the site will enjoy benefits available to "Priority A" areas.

### 16 June

Settlers from Bet Hagay near Hebron kill a Palestinian in a random attack.

### 18 June

The EU announces plans to investigate goods imported from Israel to determine if they originate in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The EU executive commission claims that products from these areas are receiving illegal customs concessions due to the inappropriate use of the "Made in Israel" label which permits them to enter the EU duty-free.

### 21 June

The Netanyahu cabinet gives preliminary approval to a plan to establish an "umbrella municipality" encompassing metropolitan Jerusalem. The plan will invest Israeli civilian agencies with extensive powers over the development and expansion of the settlements included in the scheme (see Doc. C2).

### 23 June

Five Palestinian houses are destroyed in the Hebron region and thirty families are evicted, bringing to eighty-one the total number of homes demolished this year in the West Bank.

### 24 June

An Israeli television [Channel 1] investigation into the transfer of hundreds of trailers into the occupied territories by the construction and housing ministry reveals that there are currently 3,600 mobile homes—1,400 of which stand empty—in West Bank settlements. About 1,700 apartments, which are also state property, are also empty.

### 25 June

For the first time in five years, new construction is approved for Kiryat Arba bordering Hebron. Approval for the construction of 150 new units was facilitated by reclassifying as a "village" the settlement's Harsina Hill neighborhood. Similarly, Ma'ale Ephraim and Avnei Hefetz are transferred to the jurisdiction of the Housing Ministry's "Village Construction Administration."

The Knesset finance committee approves \$24 million for the construction of 400 new units in "village settlements."

### 28 June

The Netanyahu cabinet approves Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to extend the construction of new Israeli cities along the Green Line to the region opposite Hebron, where six new cities are to be built.

### 30 June

The IDF "Security Interests" map presented to a Knesset committee excludes fifty-nine of the 150 West Bank settlements.

### 2 July

A stand-off develops in the Gaza Strip along the road from Dayr al-Balah to the Mouassi district after IDF forces prevent passage to a group of Palestinians, including a PA minister. (The road had been closed to Palestinian traffic for three years.) Israel imposes a closure on the Strip.

### 3 July

A compromise on the Gaza stand-off is reached at 4 A.M.: the blocked Palestinian convey is allowed to proceed, Israel lifts the closure, and Palestinians clear the blocked road junctions at Morag, Netzarim, and Gush Katif. Settlers criticize the IDF "surrender" to the Palestinians.

During the incident, IDF reinforcements were sent to the Strip. Settlers were unable to enter or leave many settlements due to the Palestinian road blockades. The IDF offered residents of Netzarim an airlift by helicopter to the settlement but the fifty men, women, and children stranded at the Qarni crossing declined the offer.

**6 July**

The Knesset Law Committee endorses a draft law submitted by the Moledet faction that would extend Israeli law, judicial system, and jurisdiction to the local and regional councils of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Netanyahu government opposes the legislation.

**10 July**

Due to increased demand for building materials, a cement factory is being constructed in the Etzion bloc south of Bethlehem, despite complaints of Palestinian villagers nearby. Construction of a new industrial area in the Etzion bloc for high tech industry will commence within the coming three months on 400 dunams.

**13 July**

The UN Security Council issues a presidential statement on Israel's "umbrella municipality" plan (see Doc. A4).

**17 July**

*Yerushala'im* reports that Amana, the construction subsidiary of Gush Emmunim, has received permission to build and market 1,000 new dwellings, including 72 units at Adam, 43 at Rimonim, 44 at Elon Moreh, and 196 at Beit El, at prices starting at \$40,000.

**19 July**

Peace Now reports that 11 percent of apartments built and marketed by the Housing Ministry in 1998 are located in settlements [excluding East Jerusalem]. Figures from the Housing Ministry and the Israel Land Authority reveal that 5,242 of the 48,862 units to be marketed in 1998 are in settlements [excluding East Jerusalem].

**27 July**

*Ha'Aretz* reports that more than a half million Palestinians in the West Bank—a third of the population—are without regular sources of water this summer. Palestinians blame the distribution policies of Israel's water carrier, Mekorot, a charge denied by Israel.

**28 July**

*Ha'Aretz* reports that housing sales in the first five months of 1998 in Jerusalem [east and west] declined by 49.6 percent and in

the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim by 58.3 percent compared to the same period of 1997.

**31 July**

*Qol Ha'Ir* reports that the civil administration has approved the construction of a new neighborhood of 200 units in Kiryat Arba [population 6,000], with prices starting at \$90,000. Purchasers are eligible for loans and mortgages of \$70,000 and grants of \$40,000.

**1 August**

At the south Gaza Strip settlement of Ele Sinai (seventy families), Palestinian police destroy a fence constructed illegally by settlers after a stand-off in which armed settlers faced Palestinian police. "Who cares if [Palestinians] have deeds? They also have deeds to Ashkalon, Jaffa, and Shaykh Munis [the Knesset]," commented one settlement leader. The fence is re-erected by the IDF overnight, and IDF forces prevent the Palestinian police from destroying it once again.

**4 August**

Two Israelis from the West Bank settlement of Yitzhar are killed while patrolling on a road recently opened by settlers outside the settlement's boundaries. Israeli security sources believe that a local dispute between settlers and Palestinians over land rights precipitated the well-planned attack.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reports that 1,300 immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States moved to settlements during 1996, compared with 1,200 in 1995.

**7 August**

Peace Now reports 5,235 units under construction and 3,159 empty dwelling units in West Bank and Gaza settlements, a vacancy rate of almost 8 percent.

**11 August**

New regulations are issued concerning the treatment of settlers by Israeli police, military, and intelligence services. According to *Ha'Aretz*, Israeli police, rather than the military, will henceforth have ultimate authority over cases involving settlers, and a special effort will be made "to prevent deterioration in relations between Israelis and Palestinians over land ownership questions."