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Settlement Monitor

Author(s): Geoffrey Aronson

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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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SOVEREIGNTY, TERRITORY, AND FINAL STATUS

From Settlement Report, January–February 2000.

The final status negotiations now underway between Israel and the Palestinian Authority are informed by, but conceptually different from, the framework resulting from the Declaration of Principles initiated in Oslo in September 1993. Unlike previous discussions, which centered upon creating an interim regime regulating interaction between Israel and the nascent Palestinian self-governing authority, these “final status” talks aim at a much grander goal—the permanent resolution of all outstanding issues between the state of Israel and the Palestinian people.

Foremost among these issues are the creation and territorial dimensions of a Palestinian state; the extent of Israeli control over territories in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, captured in June 1967; the status of Israeli settlements; the status of Palestinian refugees from the 1948 and 1967 conflicts; and water rights.

According to the most recent timetable, established in the September 1999 Sharm al-Shaykh accord, 13 February 2000 was the target date for a “framework agreement” out-

lining the general principles underlying the yet-to-be negotiated agreement, which was to be finalized in September 2000.

Disputes over sovereignty and territory are at the heart of the final status talks. Indeed they are at the heart of the century-old conflict between the two peoples. To an extent, the issue of Palestinian sovereignty has already been addressed. Although Israeli PM Ehud Barak has yet to utter (“even in the shower,” according to one aide) the words “Palestinian state,” it is clear that his view of the final status agreement as a mechanism for the resolution of all outstanding issues can only be credibly addressed by a treaty signed by two states.

Having acknowledged the need for an internationally recognized Palestinian state, defining the character and extent of Palestinian sovereignty is therefore a basic requirement of the current diplomatic process. It is at this juncture that the Palestinian and Israeli visions of sovereignty and territory clash.

The Palestinian view is straightforward. Sovereignty and territory are mutually reinforcing. Complete and unambiguous Palestinian sovereignty should extend throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem, and over all of its inhabitants. All Israeli settlements are illegal and must be

transferred to Palestinian control. To the extent that Israelis are allowed to remain in these areas, they will come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian state, losing the extraterritorial status that they currently enjoy.

This Palestinian view has been a constant refrain of Palestinian negotiators in the talks with Israel and with U.S. officials, including President Bill Clinton. Negotiations have been suspended temporarily by the Palestinians to protest continuing settlement expansion. With the exception of a temporary halt in the publication of housing tenders in settlements, a "confidence-building measure" of dubious impact that was rejected by the Palestinians, Israel has exhibited no intention of curbing expansion. Rather, if history is any guide, one can expect the pace of settlement expansion to increase, as it did after Camp David in 1978 and after the Oslo agreement in 1993. Indeed, that is what is happening today.

Israel, unlike the Palestinians, views both the territorial framework and the acknowledgment of the special status of settlements and settlers established during the interim period as precedents for the final status. With the exception of the Abu Mazin-Beilin agreement, a preliminary understanding that was never formally acknowledged, there is no evidence that Israel's basic territorial demands in the occupied territories have been modified by its rapprochement with the PLO. Indeed, there is ample reason to believe that Israeli leaders view the final status process as a vehicle to gain Palestinian acceptance of these demands.

Israel's view of its strategic territorial requirements in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip predate the June 1967 war. According to Yuval Ne'eman, who has played a key role in the debate on Israel's preferred security borders and is the author of the 1953 Lavi plan, the first Israeli effort to formalize its preferences, Israel cannot abide a situation in which "population centers, from which reservists are drafted, would be conquered before the enlistment can proceed. Thus, at least border zones must be held, and it is desirable as well to hold the Jordan Valley; a sufficient mass of hilly crossing areas must be held, to enable a small force to hold off the enemy for the forty-eight hours needed to undertake the recruitment [of reservists]."

In a 7 December 1999 article by Aluf Benn in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'Aretz*, Ne'eman explained, "After the Six Day War we pulled the file out of the archives, in or-

der to compare the plan to the war's results. The only difference was that in the original file there were references to grabbing the Har Dov zone on the Hermon (an area in Lebanon whose fate was not settled by the 1967 war). Everything else was carried out in accord with the plan."

According to Benn, "Barak's positions are an almost precise echo of the desk drawer plan formulated originally by Ne'eman and reproduced in subsequent incarnations."

Barak, like his predecessors, is committed to championing Israel's need for strategic depth provided by the occupied territories. "When the time comes to set out the final status borders," he explained to an Israeli audience in early December 1999, "I believe it to be of utmost importance that we understand Israel's overall situation, as a country surrounded by Arab states . . . with an asymmetry not only in geographic and demographic terms, but also in terms of the character of the threat. Israel has never threatened the sovereign existence of any neighbor, whereas from the dawn of the establishment of our state, our neighbors have threatened the very existence of Israel several times."

The years of Israel's occupation have offered ample proof of the inextricable connection between Israel's strategic requirements in the West Bank and Gaza and Israeli settlement. In the absence of a substantive revision of Israel's security doctrine as it relates to these territories, there is unlikely to be a fundamental reassessment of the demand to maintain and expand the settlement presence. The final status agreement is viewed by Barak as conferring Palestinian acceptance not only on Israel's strategic security requirements, particularly as they are measured in territory long claimed by Palestinians, but also on the presence of most settlers and settlements under yet-to-be-determined degrees of Israeli sovereignty and extraterritorial control.

No detailed version of Israel's territorial requirements has been formally presented to Palestinian negotiators, but drafts prepared by Israel clearly establish an intention to limit the territorial breadth of a Palestinian state.

According to Benn, "Two senior political figures, acquainted both with the prime minister and the land in question, offer the following: Barak . . . will demand roughly 50 percent of the territory of the West Bank, including two security regions in the Jordan

Valley and Samaria, and a ring around Jerusalem. Settlements adjacent to the Green Line will comprise a western security zone, whereas an eastern zone will depend upon deployments of the IDF; the army will be allowed to move between these security zones, under terms to be stipulated in the agreement.

"One possible compromise that might arise at the end of the negotiations would involve classifying the eastern security zone as [area] 'B' lands, subject to Palestinian civil authority and Israeli security responsibility.

"Another formula would have Israel in full control of a thin strip running along the Jordan Valley; hilltops overlooking the valley would be classified as 'B' areas. A border in the west would run as straight as possible between the Israeli settlements and Palestinian villages; there would be some overlap between this new border and the old Green Line."

The dilemma facing Yasir Arafat and the Palestinians is of a far different dimension than that confronting Israel. Barak appears determined to minimize the extent of territory transferred to Palestinian control, while maximizing Israeli security and the prospects of settlement expansion. Arafat must confront the fruits that were planted during the interim period, when the legitimacy of settlements and their expansion was initially conceded, and minimize the territorial consequences of these critical concessions.

NEW SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION UNDER BARAK

TEMPORARY REPRIEVE

At a press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Jerusalem on 8 December 1999, Prime Minister Barak discussed his decision (announced 7 December) not to allow work on housing units in the settlements for which tenders were launched on 2 December and not to launch new tenders until March 2000.

"First of all, I do not deal with appearances. Rather, I deal with the real issues, the essential ones. The government position has always been, since its establishment, to permit only the natural growth of the settlements. Recently, 1,800 units have been constructed or are under construction in the primary settlements. Since it takes approximately two years between the time tenders are submitted to construct new housing units

and [since] the negotiations now [for the framework agreement] will continue for approximately seventy days, and since the submission of bids and tenders now is harmful and will not strengthen our position in the negotiation process, there is no reason not to suspend the submission of new tenders for housing construction from December to March. Current construction, of course, shall continue, and I want to stress that this combination is logical and will in fact strengthen our position, both in the Land of Israel and in the negotiation process. Those who believe that we should continue to request a submission of bids at the moment are misguided on both these points."

TENDERS LAUNCHED FOR WEST BANK AND GAZA SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION, JULY–DECEMBER 1999

Date	Settlement	Housing Units
July 8	Beitar Ilit	589
July 19	Har Adar	185
July 29	Beitar Ilit	500
August 9	Ariel	65
	Kamei Shomron	178
August 19	Givat Ze'ev	594
	Ma'ale Adumim	356
		105
August 30	Otniel	10
September 14	Kiryat Arba	12
October 14	Neve Dekalim (Gaza)	22
October 25	Rafiah Yam (Gaza)	10
November 1	Metzad/Esfar	9
November 4	Sanur/Ganim	14
November 15	Ariel	54
December 2	Giva Benjamin	177
	Alfei Menashe	316
Total:		3,196

Source: Peace Now, 5 December 1999.

ISRAELI SETTLERS ON THEIR FUTURE: OPINION POLL

This poll was carried out in 115 West Bank and Gaza settlements in October 1999 by the Center for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS) and the BESA Center for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University. The sample size was 502, and the margin of error is +/-4.5%. The poll was distributed by the International Republican Institute in Washington.

Introduction

This is the third survey conducted among Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The first survey was conducted during the Rabin government in December 1995, and the second was conducted in June 1997

during the Netanyahu government. This survey was conducted five months after the election of Barak as Israel's prime minister.

The results indicate that several changes have occurred in the demographic characteristics of the settlers during the past four years. The percentage of those over the age of forty-five years has increased from 18% in 1995 to 20% in 1997 to 26% in 1999. The percentage of those holding a BA degree or higher has increased from 28% in 1995 to 33% in 1999. Despite this change in the educational level, the percentage of those with income below the Israeli average has increased from 22% in 1995 to 24% in 1997 to 28% in 1999. The percentage of those who identify themselves as Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox has increased from 45% in 1995 to 52% in 1999. The percentage of those who work in the West Bank and Gaza has increased from 40% in 1995 to 42% in 1999. Finally, the percentage of those who own a house inside Israel has increased from 20% in 1995 to 26% in 1999, with a decrease of 4 percentage points compared to that of 1997 (30%).

The survey shows changes in the public opinion of settlers during the same period. The most significant changes have been the increase in the percentage of those who believe that a Palestinian state will soon emerge; the increase in the percentage of those who are willing to live under Palestinian sovereignty; and the increase in the percentage of those who oppose a confrontation with the Israeli army in the case of settlement evacuation. On the other hand, there has been an increase in the percentage of those who refuse to accept settlement evacuation under any circumstances. The survey shows also that some current views of settlers reflect middle ground between those expressed by settlers under Rabin and those expressed under Netanyahu.

Main Results

- 44% believe that a Palestinian state will be established within the next five to ten years, while 33% believe that the peace process will fail and the Israeli army will reoccupy the West Bank.
- 27% believe that most settlements in the West Bank and Gaza will be annexed to Israel; 17% believe that most settlements will become Israeli sovereign enclaves inside Palestinian areas. Only 11% believe that most settlements will be dismantled, and 5% believe that most will be brought under Palestinian sovereignty.
- 25% of settlers are willing to evacuate the settlements in return for compensation, while 71% oppose that.
- 20% are willing to live under Palestinian sovereignty, while 67% reject that.
- 12% are willing to sell their property in settlements to Palestinian buyers, while 83% reject that. At the same time 23% are willing to accept a Palestinian as their neighbor in the settlement, while 77% reject that.
- Half of the settlers oppose the evacuation of settlements under any circumstances, while 42% are willing to accept evacuation if approved in the Knesset within specific conditions.
- 14% are ready to consider resistance by force against a government decision to evacuate settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, while 79% are not ready to do that. On the other hand, 80% oppose any confrontation with the Israeli army, and only 2% advocate violent confrontations in order to prevent the evacuation of settlements.
- Half of the settlers support Barak's plan to concentrate settlers in several settlement blocs that would be annexed to Israel, while 36% oppose it.
- Settlers' motivations to move to the West Bank and Gaza vary: 46% came for economic reasons, 27% for ideological and religious reasons, and only 4% came to defend the security of Israel.
- Only 13% believe that the peace process will improve the relationship between settlers and Palestinians, while 36% believe that it will make it worse, and 38% believe that it will have no impact.
- A majority of 72% of the settlers voted for Netanyahu as prime minister in the May 1999 elections, while 18% voted for Barak.
- Similarly, a majority of the settlers voted for religious and right-wing parties, with the Likud receiving 24% of the vote, followed by the National Unity (13%), the Mifdal (12%), Shas (8%), and Yahdot Hatorah (6%). Only 9% voted for One Israel (Labor), and 4% voted for Shinui. Less than 1% voted for Tsomet or the Third Way. The new Center Party received 2% of the settlers' vote according to the survey.

Who Are the Settlers?

The survey shows that the settlers today are well-educated with 33% of the adult population holding BA or higher degrees and almost 0% illiterates. Most settlers (78%) immigrated to Israel before 1988, i.e., before the beginning of the Russian immigration, which began to accelerate in that year. The distribution of the ethnic background of the settlers shows them divided into four groups: 32% from African and Asian origins, 31% from American and European origins, 29% with parents born in Israel, and 6% from Russia.

Nonetheless, 70% of the settlers were born in Israel. Most settlers are religious, with 37% considering themselves Orthodox and 16% ultra-Orthodox. Only 16% consider themselves "traditional" and 31% secular. A quarter of the settlers owns a house inside Israel, and 35% have their work there.

SETTLEMENT BRIEFS

From Settlement Report, January–February 2000.

Faisal Husseini, Jerusalem Affairs Minister, Palestinian Authority, interview with al-Sharq al-Awsat, 24 October 1999 (excerpts).

The interview was translated by the Middle East Media and Research Institute.

Husseini: The Palestinians must again begin to fight on the ground [against] the settlement [activity]. . . . Barak will not stop without struggle on the ground.

Q: *What do you mean [by] "fighting on the ground"?*

Husseini: It means that the public [should] go into the streets to clash with the Israelis, in order to defend its property. The Israelis should know that any piece of land that they take will bring about a clash. . . .

Q: *But such a clash may cause the whole situation to blow up.*

Husseini: If it does, it will be Barak's responsibility, because he is the one who took control of the lands, counting on Palestinian lack of reaction.

Q: *You are not worried about the implications [of such an explosion] on the entire peace process?*

Husseini: The peace process is not a Palestinian interest, but rather an Israeli and international interest. Therefore, it is unreasonable that we should pay all of the cost. Either the Israelis pay a real price or they do not want peace.

Shlomo Filber, YESHA Director General, in Nekuda, 29 October 1999.

Filber was writing in the wake of the forced evacuation of the settlement Havat Ma'on in November 1999 as part of an agreement between YESHA and PM Barak (see Settlement Monitor, JPS 114).

The settlement campaign, beginning at Sebastia [in the mid-1970s], has historically been one of "compromise." There, for more than a week, we fortified ourselves in the old railroad station to press our demand to establish a settlement at Elon Moreh. Benny Katzover, Menachem Felix, and Hanan Porat "surrendered" and agreed to "evacuate" to the army camp at Kaddum. To those who don't pay attention, today in Sebastia [the settlements of Shavei Shomron and Kedumim] there are big and flowering communities.

The entire history of settlement has been two steps forward and one step back. We always found the way to insist, to protest, and even to threaten, and in the final analysis to agree to a "historic compromise," which the Left greeted with vicious satisfaction, while we managed to establish another community. Even Rabbi Levinger in his day compromised with Yigal Allon, agreeing [in 1968] to "evacuate" the Park Hotel in Hebron for the barracks of the military government, "surrendering" the immediate demand to settle in Hebron. And today thousands of Jews live in Hebron and Kiryat Arba.

Yasir Arafat, Chairman, Palestinian Authority, Speech to the Twenty-First Congress of the Socialist International, Paris, 9 November 1999 (excerpts).

The principle of a just peace contradicts the continued existence of settlements erected in order to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and to undermine the geographical integrity of the Palestinian territory. Is there any country in the world in which there are settlements not under its sovereignty?

The Likud government of Menachem Begin dismantled the settlements erected in the occupied Egyptian territories, and now the Barak government envisages dismantling the settlements erected on the Golan Heights. Nothing except the logic of injustice can legitimize the continued existence of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. It has become a crucial necessity to stop all settlement activities in the Palestinian territory, totally and not selectively. For settlements are not only illegal and a breach of international law; they are destructive to the peace process itself.