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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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SETTLERS LEAVING: AN INTIFADA PHENOMENON

From Settlement Report, November–December 2001.

According to the YESHA Council, 3,000 settlers—comprising 1.5 percent of the settler population of 200,000—in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip have moved out of the settlements during the last year. Though there was still a net increase of 2,561 in the settlement population during the first half of 2001, the figure of those leaving is about twice the number reported by opposition MK Mossi Raz as late as June. The summer months of school vacation are traditionally the time when most Israelis change residences. On 12 August, *Ha’Aretz* reported that the departure rate had exploded to 5 percent—or 10,000 people—from a typical annual rate of 1 percent.

A central objective of the Palestinian uprising has been to force Israelis to abandon the settlements, although sustained or coordinated assaults on settlements themselves have been rare. In contrast to the first intifada in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, today armed Palestinians have made travel to and from many settlements a life or death proposition. Their assaults have exacer-

bated economic difficulties in some settlements, particularly in the Jordan Valley, and have precipitated the loss of a significant percentage of residents in a few small, isolated, and mostly secular outposts whose prospects for building a sustainable life have never been secure.

During the first six months of 2001, forty-four settlements lost population while a hundred increased their numbers. More than half of the 2,561 net increase, however, was due to increases at three religious settlements: Beitur, southwest of Jerusalem; Tal Zion (Kochav Ya’acov), bordering the northeast corner of East Jerusalem; and Modi’in Ilit, on the Green Line between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, which has grown by 18 percent since last year, to 19,000.

The Israel Defense Force (IDF) has watched the potential flight from settlements with concern, worried that it “will prove to the Palestinians that terror pays, and will encourage them to continue on this road until they attain their objectives through force,” according to one report.

In an interview with the YESHA flagship publication *Nekuda*, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Eitan, head of the IDF Central Command, which includes the West Bank, noted that the decrease in the settler pop-

ulation was not significant. "The settlers are very strong in spirit, with a firm ideology, and this makes it easier for the army."

Settler leaders in the Etzion bloc, which saw its once-secure connection to Jerusalem via the Tunnel Road transformed by gunfire in the early months of the intifada, anticipated a departure rate of 20 percent, "but we maintained a balance and even a little more, and I am surprised for the good," observed Shaul Goldstein, head of the local council.

With the exhortation to "Save the Settlements of Samaria! Come Now!" the settlers, along with religious authorities and the government, have adopted a wide range of programs, incentives, and, in the case of the IDF, military measures aimed at sustaining the pool of current and prospective residents. However, according to *Ha'Aretz*, "If the state were to help them financially to move inside the Green Line [to Israel], one settlement council head said some 15 to 20 percent of settlers would take advantage of it."

Settlements hit hardest by departures include the small outposts of the northern West Bank, Ganim and Qadim, which lost 10 families apiece, and Mevo Dotan and Hermesh, where 20 families from each departed. In Homesh, at least 7 out of 50 have moved. There are no families left in the northern West Bank settlement of Sanur, according to a 17 August report in *Yedi'ot Abaronot*. Near Ramallah, Neve Tzuf, a religious settlement where 2 residents have been killed and 18 wounded in a number of separate incidents, at least 14 families have left. Other religious settlements in the area, however, have welcomed ideologically driven newcomers. Har Brakha, near Nablus, added 11 families. Elon Moreh, nearby, drew 10. Ked-dumim lost 9 families but added 64. In general, renters are believed more likely to leave than veteran residents, but some owners who have the economic where-

withal have also closed up their homes in settlements and left for Israel.

This latter phenomenon has been particularly true in some of the fourteen settlements of the Jordan Valley, where more than fifty families have left. Yafit has suffered the departure of more than one-quarter of its residents since April. "Leaving has become an infectious phenomenon for which there seems to be no cure," noted a 5 October article in *Ha'Aretz*. These outposts, originally settled by the Labor party and which have long labored under economic strains and political uncertainty, are on the brink of a broader social and economic collapse attributed directly or indirectly to the ongoing Palestinian rebellion. Nevertheless, the settlement of Hemdat has added five families, a 50 percent increase. Six additional settlements have each recorded the arrival of a few new families.

The populations at larger, more established settlements, such as Efrat, Elkana, and Kiryat Arba, have remained stable. Ma'ale Adumim, the largest West Bank settlement, is still growing by more than 6 percent annually, three times the Israeli national average. Oranit, situated on the Green Line, is on track to triple its population of 5,000 during the next three years. At Negohot in the Hebron region, 8 new families have joined the settlement's 12 families; Otniel, 15; Susia, 6; and Carmel, 3. Ten families have left Livna, which is in a border area with Israel and was marked for transfer to the Palestinian Authority during the stillborn Taba talks, and four families have left Adura.

In the Gaza Strip, where clashes have been the most sustained and violent, the 17 settlements have sustained a small net increase in population. Netzarim has grown by 8 families, Morag by 7, and Kfar Darom by 6. Neve Dekalim, which sits opposite Khan Yunis, has lost 8 families, but the complement of new students in its religious seminary has been filled.

SETTLEMENT POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, 1972-99

	1972	1981	1986	1991	1993	1996	1999
SETTLEMENT COUNCIL							
Alfe Menashe			1,680	2,860	3,720	4,310	4,400
Ariel		880	4,480	9,050	11,800	14,300	15,100
Bet Arieh		210	590	1,120	1,630	2,070	2,300
Bet El		420	1,450	2,300	2,910	3,460	3,800
Betar			20	1,220	3,940	7,530	12,700
Efrata			1,170	3,030	4,050	5,730	6,200
Elkana		650	1,390	2,360	2,600	2,950	2,900
Givat Ze'ev		480	2,950	5,580	6,380	7,830	10,000
Har Adar					1,420	1,430	1,500
Immanuel			1,730	2,900	3,240	3,480	3,200
Kaddumim		690	1,240	1,850	2,050	2,380	2,500
Karnei Shomron		520	1,970	3,770	4,330	5,230	5,600
Kiryat Arba (Including Hebron)		3,100	3,600	4,670	5,070	5,300	6,200
Kiryat Sefer						5,669	13,000
Ma'ale Adumim		370	10,300	14,600	16,900	20,200	23,800
Ma'ale Efraim			1,100	1,700	2,100	1,590	1,700
Megillot			700	700	700	800	855
Oranit			620	2,580	3,160	3,850	4,800
REGIONAL COUNCIL							
Benjamin (37 settlements)			5,800	14,300	18,600	23,000	25,050
Etzion bloc (18 settlements)			3,400	5,300	6,400	7,500	9,200
Gaza district (19 settlements)	700		2,150	3,900	4,800	5,400	6,600
Jordan Valley (18 settlements)			2,000	2,800	3,000	2,700	3,400
Mt. Hebron (16 settlements)			700	1,600	2,200	3,200	4,500
Shomron (42 settlements)			8,800	10,300	10,500	13,100	17,150
TOTAL POPULATION WEST BANK AND GAZA							
	1,500	*	57,840	99,065	121,900	153,409	186,935
EAST JERUSALEM							
Atarot							
East Talpiot	100	14,900	12,200	15,000	15,000	14,800	
French Hill	2,400	8,800	9,100	9,100	9,000	8,500	
Gilo			25,100	30,200	30,200	30,300	
Har Homa, Givat Ha'matos							
Jewish Quarter	300	1,800	2,200	2,300	2,300	2,400	
Neve Ya'acov, Pisgat Ze'ev			16,600	27,100	34,600	47,500	
Ramot Allon	100	16,800	23,800	37,200	37,200	40,200	
Ramot Eshkol	4,000	16,700	14,900	16,500	16,600	16,700	
TOTAL SETTLER POPULATION EAST JERUSALEM							
	6,900	59,000	103,900	137,400	144,900	160,400	170,400
TOTAL SETTLER POPULATION							
	8,400		161,740	236,465	268,311	313,809	357,335

Sources: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, www.cbs.gov.il; *Israel Statistical Abstract*, 1992, 1994, 1997, 2000; YESHA Council Online; Peace Now; *Ha'Aretz*, 11 August, 1993; *Ha'Aretz*, 16 September, 2001. Prepared by Tobias Van Assche.

*The figure for 1980 was 12,424.

WEST BANK AND GAZA SETTLEMENT FACTS

Compiled from Settlement Report, November-December 2001; Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), "Fact Sheet," 6 October 2001, available online at www.miftab.org.

miftab.org; Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ), "Monitoring Israeli Colonizing Activities in the West Bank and Gaza," available online at www.poica.org; PASSIA, "Settlements," March 2001, available online at www.passia.org; and Peace Now, "Aerial Survey Finds Ten New Settlements in West Bank, Additional Structures at Earlier Sites,"

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4 October 2001, available online at www.peacenow.org.

- The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, covers an area of 5,854 km², while the Gaza Strip covers an area of 365 km².
- According to Israeli data, there are 141 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, satellite images show 282 Jewish built-up areas in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and 26 in Gaza. This is excluding military sites. These built-up areas cover 150.5 km².
- An aerial survey conducted by the Peace Now movement in October 2001 shows that at least 10 new settlement sites, including a total of 65 structures, were established in the West Bank during the period July–September 2001. An aerial survey conducted by Peace Now in May 2001 had found that 15 new sites had been established between February and May 2001. Despite repeated promises from Israeli DM Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, the new survey shows that only one of these fifteen has been removed and that 39 new structures have been added to the remaining 14 sites since May, for a total of 119 structures.
- A total of 25 new settlement sites have been established in the West Bank since the prime ministerial election in February. This does not include the Gaza Strip.

TABLE 1: THE GROWTH OF SETTLEMENT AREA IN THE WEST BANK

Year	Settlement Area (km ²)	Percent of West Bank
1997	108.9	1.9
1999	147.8	2.6
2000	150.5	2.7
2001	222.2	4.0

- Figures released recently by the Israeli Housing and Construction Ministry show the public construction of 1,943 housing units in the occupied territories in the year 2000, while Labor prime minister Ehud Barak was in power. This is the highest number since the current prime minister Ariel Sharon (Likud) served as housing and construction minister in 1992 (*Ha'Aretz*, 5 March 2001).

- The average population growth rate for Jews in Israel is 2.0 percent per year (the rate including non-Jews is 2.5 percent per year). However, the population of the Jewish settlements grows at around 8.5 percent per year, which amounts to more than four times the Israeli growth rate.

TABLE 2: THE GROWTH IN POPULATION

Israel		
Year	Population	Growth
1993	5,327,600	
1994	5,471,500	3%
1995	5,612,300	3%
1996	5,757,900	3%
1997	5,900,000	2%
1998	6,041,400	2%

Jews Only		
Year	Population	Growth
1993	4,335,200	
1994	4,441,100	2%
1995	4,522,300	2%
1996	4,616,100	2%
1997	4,701,600	2%
1998	4,785,100	2%

Settlements ²		
Year	Population	Growth
1993	116,000	
1994	128,000	10%
1995	133,000	4%
1996	147,000	11%
1997	160,200	9%
1998	172,200	7%

²Excluding East Jerusalem.

- From 1992 to 1999, the area occupied by the settlements in the West Bank doubled from 77 km² (which represented 1.3 percent of the West Bank) to 150 km² (which represents 2.6 percent of the West Bank).

TABLE 3: WEST BANK BYPASS ROADS' LENGTH AND BUFFER AREA

	Bypass Roads		
	Under		
	Existing	Construction	Total
Total length	316.7 km	24.1 km	340.8 km
Area including 75 m buffer zone	47.5 km ²	3.6 km ²	51.1 km ²

- Some 100,000 Israelis, comprising 50 percent of the settler population, reside in 8 settlements. The average population in the remaining 140 settlements is 714.
- From January through July 2001, 238 publicly financed housing units were sold in the occupied territories, compared to 466 in the same period in 2000.
- From January through May 2001, 609 housing units in the public and private sector were sold, compared to 862 in the same period in 2000.
- There were 339 publicly financed housing starts from January through June 2001, compared to 1,943 during 2000.
- From January through June 2001, 789 tenders were published for the settlements, compared to 2,423 in Israel (32.6 percent).



The Jerusalem–Gush Etzion tunnel highway is one of the many settler-only bypass roads in the territories. (Jerusalem Post/Ariel Jerozolimski)