

CONSTRUCTION IN THE SETTLEMENTS CONTINUES
Periodic Report, May-October 2007¹
Peace Now Settlement Watch

IN THE REPORT:

- ◆ The Settlers' new trick: instead of transporting – construction of caravans on spot.
- ◆ In Settlements and in Outposts the construction continues.
- ◆ Hundreds of New Housing Units for Ultra Orthodox Settlers in Giv'at Ze'ev
- ◆ Updated List of Outposts

The Number of Settlers: 267,500

The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistic had published the number of settlers in the West Bank updated to 30/6/2007². According to the Israeli CBS, the number of settlers is 267,500, which is an annual growth of 5.8%. The growth in the settlements is much larger than the annual growth in all of Israel, which is 1.8% only. This means that the growth in the settlements is much more than the "natural growth" and includes massive migration of settlers to the West Bank.

1. Construction in settlements

In 88 settlements construction is underway, ranging from a single house to large projects of tens and hundreds of housing units. Most of the large projects are being built in settlements on the "Israeli" side of the fence, in the settlement blocs, and especially in the settlements in the Jerusalem area, in the Ma'ale Adumim bloc, Gush Etzion and the Giv'at Ze'ev bloc.

Construction on different scales is also under way in 43 settlements east of the fence.

- Large projects of hundreds of housing units:
 - In the Jerusalem area: Beitar Illit, Giv'at Ze'ev (in marketing stage), Ma'ale Adumim;
 - In the western West Bank: Modi'in Illit.
- Projects of tens of houses:
 - In the Jerusalem area: Almon (Anatot), Alon, Har Adar, Har Gilo, El'azar, Neve Daniel, Beit Horon.
 - In the Western West Bank: Oranit, Alfei Menashe, Nirit.³
- Smaller projects are under construction in many settlements on either side of the fence.

¹ The report is based on a comparison of aerial photos and site visits.

² See: http://www.cbs.gov.il/population/new_2008/table1.pdf

³ Nirit is a settlement within the borders of Israel. Recently an expansion of the settlement began to be built beyond the Green Line, into the West Bank. For that purpose the expansion was officially declared part of the Alfei Menashe settlement 3 km away and separated from it by the separation fence. For further information on settlement jurisdictions and the absence of territorial contiguity, see the Peace Now report "Construction and development of settlements beyond the official limits of jurisdiction - July 2007" <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=61&fld=495&docid=2411>



The "Nof Oranit" neighborhood, the construction of c. 65 Housing Units is underway

- The New Trick** – instead of transporting the caravans – **construction of the caravans in the settlements.** In the last few month hundreds of new caravans appeared in many settlements and outposts. Because of the prohibition of transporting caravans without a permit from the Civil Administration, the settlers had decided to "bypass" the ban and to construct the caravans in the settlements. The settlers transport the materials (walls, windows etc.) and put it together inside the area of the settlement. In many settlements special workshops for the construction of caravans were set up. In many settlements, especially in the area of the Mate Binyamin Municipal Council, dozens of new trailers appeared in the last few months, as detailed below.



New Caravans set up in Psagot



Workshop for Caravans' Construction in Elkana

Settlement	Number of New Caravans
Ofra	14
Ateret	11
Kochav Hashachar	10
Shilo	10
Pdu'el	5 (and preparation for more)
Kedumim	17

Mitzpe Jericho	5 (and preparation of more among 14 new caravans added lately)
Eli	36 (among 47 new caravans added lately)



The new caravans in Eli

- In the settlement of Psagot, opposite the building of the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council, many new trailers have recently been placed, ready for assembly.

"Pninat Ha'ayalot" -- Giant Project for Haredi Community in Giv'at Ze'ev

Giv'at Ze'ev, a local council northwest of Jerusalem with 11,000 residents, has a diverse population: religious, secular and Haredi Jews. Most of the residents are former residents of Jerusalem, who sought housing at cheaper prices than in Jerusalem, a 10-minute drive from the city.

A few years ago a new construction project began in Giv'at Ze'ev, "Agan Ha'ayalot," and an attempt was made to sell the apartments to mixed population, secular and religious. Sales were sluggish and the project did not get off the ground. Recently the Nofei Yisrael Company had started to market **c. 600 housing units** to ultra orthodox Haredi population.

A publication by the marketing company said: "The project is in a closed compound [...] to protect the interests of the Torah observant population," and includes "synagogues, ultra-orthodox elementary schools, ritual baths and schools for advanced Torah learning" (www.nofi-israel.co.il).

The neighborhood is being built at a great distance from Giv'at Ze'ev, on a 3.5 km winding road from the end of the settlement (the distance as the crow flies is 600 m). Construction of the neighborhood will enlarge Giv'at Ze'ev's area by hundreds of dunams and complete the takeover of the western lands almost as far as the Beit Horon settlement and the separation fence.



"Pninat Ha'ayalot" (Giva't Ze'ev Illit) – new project west of Giva't Ze'ev

Construction of E1 -- The construction of the SJ (Shomron & Judea) district police headquarters is currently being completed, as part of the E1 construction plan for thousands of housing units, industrial and tourism areas between Ma'ale Adumim and Jerusalem. If the plan serializes it could close the door on chances to reach a permanent agreement with the Palestinians. The plan will complete the isolation and disconnection of East Jerusalem from the West Bank and cut the Palestinian space in two: a southern area and a northern area, movement between which would be long and winding. Without reasonable territorial contiguity and without access and connection to East Jerusalem, there can be no viable Palestinian state and we will not be able to reach an agreement to end the conflict.

On September 24, 2007 the OC Central Command issued seizure orders for 1000 dunams to pave a road for Palestinian traffic between the northern and southern parts of the West Bank, consisting of a huge bypass by tens of kilometers east of Ma'ale Adumim and E1.

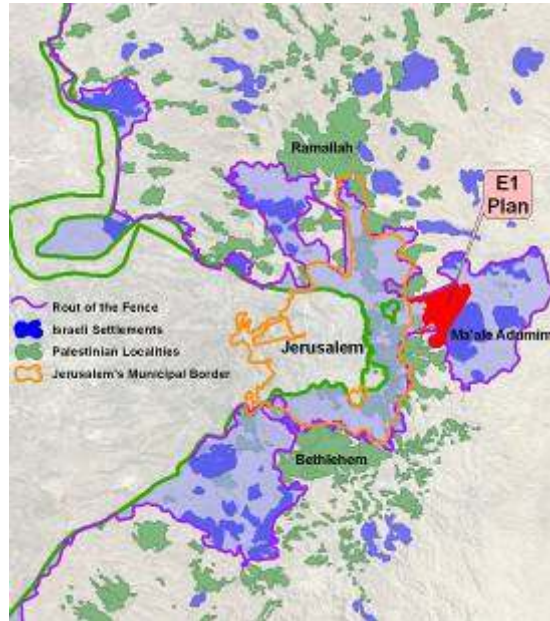
Peace Now believes that the road was meant to allow Israel to feel it was "taking care of the Palestinians' welfare," which is like a person boasting he gave a wounded man a bandage, after cutting off the man's hand himself.



The "highway" to the police station in E1



The Police Station built in E1



Where did the security fence dismantled in the southern Hebron Mountain go? Following an HCJ ruling the IDF dismantled 40 km of a concrete rail built wastefully along highway 317 in the southern Hebron Mountain. The settlement of Susiya knew how to take advantage of it: recently construction of a large complex (apparently a sports complex) has been undertaken in the settlement, with parts of the dismantled concrete rail serving as foundations for the complex



Defense Ministry Marking



The complex built in Susya

2. Construction in outposts

- Construction and expansion continue. In 34 outposts there has been construction or trailers were added.
- At least 35 new trailers have been delivered to the various outposts, and 14 new rooms have been added to existing trailers. 10 permanent buildings are going up in outposts and 8 lots were flattened for construction or the addition of trailers, 6 roads and trails were built inside the outposts.



New basketball field in the outpost of
Bruchin



Preparing the infrastructure for building
in the Tko'a B-C Outpost

- In 16 outposts built after March 2001⁴ there has been development. The outposts are: Avigayil, Bat Ayin West, Givat Assaf, Derech Ha'avot, Gilad Farm, Yair Farm, Migron, Asa'el, Gal Outpost, Tko'a D., Givat Sal'it, Mevo'ot Jericho, Esh Kodesh, Mitzpe Yitzhar, Mitzpe Lachish, Ramat Gilad.



New Caravns in Giv'at Sali't outpost



New football field in Yair Farm outpost

- **Migron** - a year ago Peace Now filed a petition with the Palestinian landowners to evacuate the outpost. The state's position on the petition was that Migron was an illegal outpost that must be evacuated, but since then it has continued to grow and develop. On November 1st the Minister of Defense asked for another two months to conclude the negotiations with the settlers regarding the eviction of the outpost. This is already the 4th time in this case that the state is asking for extra time before providing answers to the Supreme Court. From May to September three new rooms were added to the trailers in the outpost.

For further information see: <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=370&docid=2006>

⁴ The government of Israel promised the "Quartet" in 2004 to evacuate all the outposts built since Ariel Sharon came to office in March 2001. To this day not one of them has been evacuated. According to Peace Now there are 51 outposts built after March 2001, see appendix.



Migron - 22/4/07



Migron - 29/7/07

- Development in outposts against which there are evacuation orders ("demarcation orders") - the OC Central Command issued in 2004 evacuation orders for 13 outposts. Three of them were evacuated and the others were evacuated and then returned to their places or to nearby places, or were not evacuated at all. Even though all of the legal procedures to evacuate the outposts were completed, nothing has been done to this day to evacuate them and they continue growing and thriving. Expansion was noticed in four of those outposts: Givat Assaf (a new trailer and two new rooms for existing trailers), Mitzpe Lachish (ground works for construction or erection of a mobile home), Mitzpe Yitzhar (a new trailer), Ramat Gilad (two new trailers).

Peace Now has petitioned the HCJ on this matter, demanding the demarcation orders be enforced.

For further information see: <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=370&docid=2516>

Evacuation of trailers and other incursions:

Along with the continued development and construction in the outposts and settlements, the government tries to maintain an appearance of law enforcement, which is negligible considering the extent of construction.

- Two new incursions detected by Peace Now and reported to the Civil Administration were evacuated by the IDF: the Ma'on East outpost near the settlement of Ma'on, populated by young people from the settlement, and the Mitzpe Yossef outpost near Mt. Grizim near Nablus, where a religious seminary of Braslav Hassidim operates in the daytime hours.
- On September 25, 2007 a new trailer brought to the outpost of Nofei Nehemia a week earlier was evacuated. In the month of August, 3 new trailers were evacuated from the outpost of Avigayil, after it was reported by Peace Now. Likewise, on September 6, 2007 the security forces demolished an illegal structure in Kfar Eldad (near Nokdim), which turned out to be a dove coat.
- The war of attrition by the settlers against the IDF - during summer vacation, as well as the holiday of Sukkot, the settlers organized demonstrations in which they "erected" new outposts on lands the demonstrators invaded. In some places the IDF had to pursue the large groups of youths who were evicted from the site and came back again repeatedly. The most continuous invasion is into the settlement of Homesh, which was evacuated as part of the Disengagement. There have been

dozens of settlers there since July. The security forces occasionally evacuate the invaders but they return to Homesh within hours. A similar phenomenon is taking place presently during the teachers' strike, but to a smaller extent, near the settlement of Kedumim, at a site the settlers call Shvut Ami. For further details see: <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/he/peace.asp?pi=61&fld=495&docid=2467&pos=1>

3. **Roads:**

On August 26, 2007 Peace Now published a list of roads under construction for the settlers in the territories. An examination by Peace Now showed that presently 33 km of roads are being built to serve a small number of settlers, at an investment of at least NIS 315 million. The upgrading of a small segment of highway 90 in the northern Jordan Valley can be added to this. According to Maariv newspaper, the investment for upgrading the road is of NIS 34 million, invested by the Ministry of Transportation.

For the full report see: <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=61&fld=495&docid=2479>

4. **Summary and conclusions**

Declarations of "freezing the settlements" - in recent months the government of Israel has declared in different contexts its intention to freeze construction in settlements. It was recently published that the defense minister froze approval of construction plans as part of "applying pressure" on the settlers in the negotiations over evacuating the outposts. However, the defense minister's office did not confirm there really was such an order. It appears to be an attempt by the settlers to "raise the price" in negotiations with them and create the impression they are being restricted, especially because of the work of the ministerial committee on outposts (see below).

Negotiations with the settlers to evacuate the outposts - as part of the hearing of the petition by Peace Now and the Palestinian landowners against the outpost of Migron, the state announced that the defense minister is in negotiations with the settlers to evacuate the outposts. According to reports, the emerging "compromise" as part of the negotiations with the settlers includes the retroactive approval of some of the outposts and the relocation of others to "legal" locations that can be approved. Past experience shows that the only ones to gain from such negotiations are the settlers themselves, who knowingly broke the law but retroactively received government approval and recognition of the facts they put on the ground themselves.

Since the phenomenon of the illegal "outposts" began in the 1990s, there have been a number of evacuations of outposts as part of that sort of agreement. In almost all cases the outposts that were evacuated were **unpopulated**, or incursions that were evacuated during the first days before the settlers actually settle down in them. In almost all the populated locations the settlers returned to the outpost (Mitzpe Yitzhar, Hazon David, Ma'on Farm and others).

Peace Now has counted 30 "evacuations" of outposts over the years. 18 of them were never populated; of the 12 that were populated 4 returned after the evacuation; 3 moved to a nearby location; one is maintained by the Army; and only 4 were completely evacuated.

For a list of the "evacuations" see [link].

The ministerial committee on outposts - another worrisome trend is the discussions of the ministerial committee on the implementation of the Sasson Report, which are focusing on a draft prepared by the justice ministry, whose purpose is reportedly to retroactively legalize most of the outposts. Moreover, the draft says the defense minister's permission will not be needed to expand the settlements (in total conflict with the Sasson Report recommendations). Considering the use made in the past by the government of Israel of the term "expansion" of the settlements, there is concern that this is a de facto green light for building new settlements and outposts under the guise of "expansion" of existing settlements, without need for government permission. These worrisome trends, along with the report figures that show construction and investment in the settlements are continuing apace, are a badge of shame.

Appendix: current list of outposts

- Peace Now has checked and updated the list of outposts. According to Peace Now figures the number of outposts today is 105, all populated. For the full list of outposts see [link]:
- The government of Israel has undertaken as part of the "road map" and then again in an explicit letter to the US administration, to evacuate all of the outposts built after Ariel Sharon came to office as prime minister in March 2001. According to Peace Now there are **51 outposts** built after March 2001.

For a list of the outposts built after March 2001 [link].

Next to the description of each outpost on the Peace Now site is an aerial photo from May 2001 showing the outposts were not built earlier: