

Developing Roads = Developing Settlements

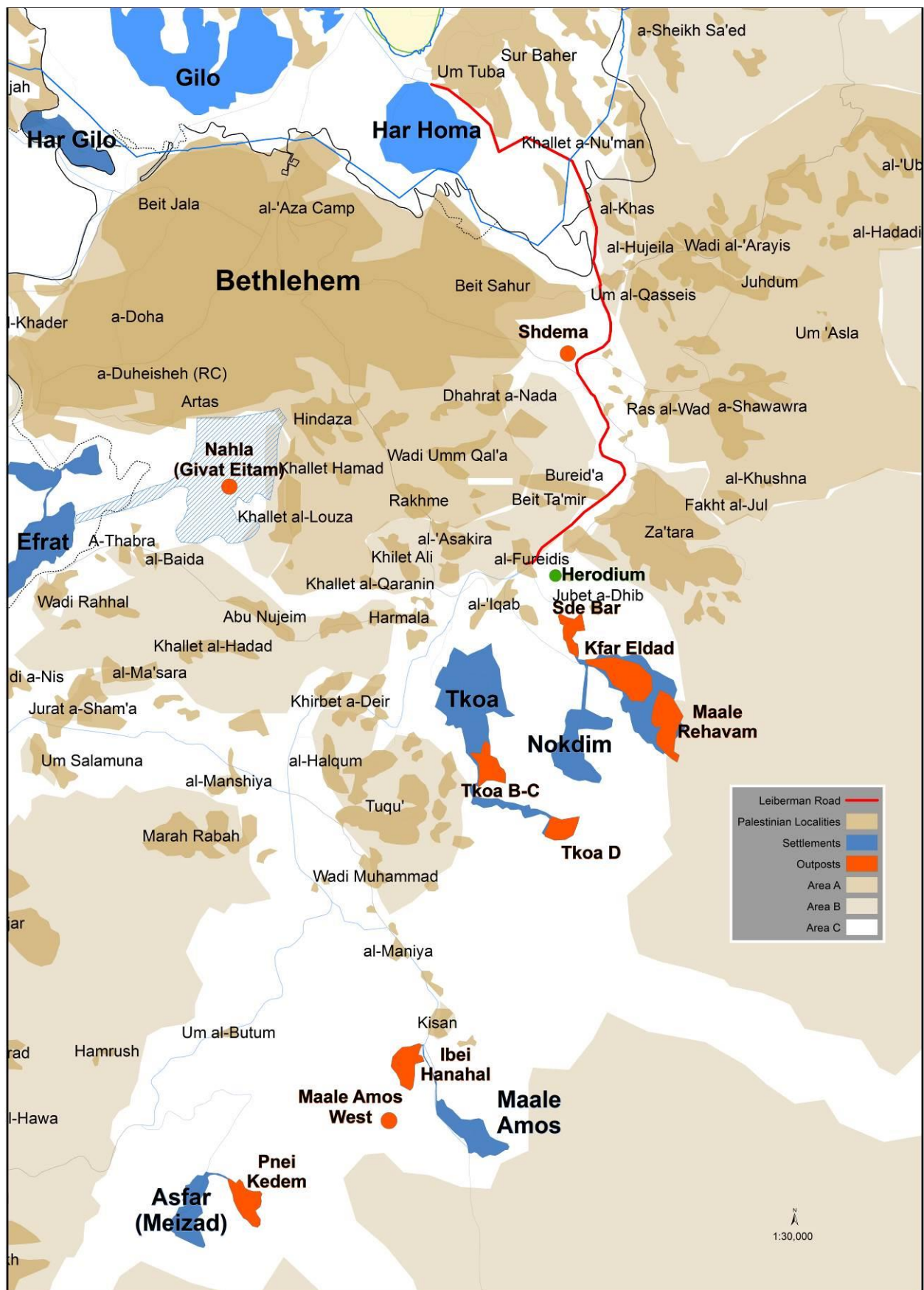
Lieberman Road – Case Study

The accelerated development of settlements along the Lieberman Road has become evident in the eight years since it was opened to traffic:

- **90% increase in the number of settlers** (3,122 in late 2008; 5,923 in late 2014).
- **At least 450 new residential units were built**, comprising **an increase of 1.5** in the number of residential units.
- **~7,200 new residential units in various planning stages:** 293 residential units in Tko'a and Nokdim have been approved by the Minister of Defense and are subject to the approval process; plans for another 900 new residential units in Tko'a, Asfar and Ma'aleh Amos have been submitted to the planning institutions; plans for establishing a city of ~6,000 residential units in Ma'aleh Amos are being prepared by the Ministry of Housing.
- **Three new settlement points were established:**
 - A new **illegal outpost** west of Ma'aleh Amos;
 - **A new industrial zone** is being built north of Ma'aleh Amos;
 - Settlers conduct various activities on the military base that was vacated, east of Beit Sahour ("**Shdema**") and they have established in it a gallery and synagogue.
- **Four illegal outposts are becoming settlements** – Four illegal outposts are in various stages of planning and approval (Ibei HaNachal, Ma'aleh Rehavam, Kfar Eldad and Sdeh Bar).
- **Tourism development** – Tens of millions of NIS were invested at the Herodion site, with a marked increase in the number of visitors.



Lieberman Road under construction, June 2005



Introduction

Roads: The Settlements' means of Development – The discourse relating to settlement development usually focuses on the houses themselves – how many are being built and where – while the roads that enable their existence and construction are subject to secondary consideration. Since 1967, Israel has invested billions of NIS in the construction of an extensive road system to serve the West Bank settlers. It is these roads that enabled the settlers to exist, grow and prosper, and which ensured them convenient and quick access to and from Israel.

Even today, Israel continues to invest in roads and interchanges in the Occupied Territories, increasing the traffic volume and the number of settlers who relocate to them. Last February, the Ministry of Transportation National Road Company issued a tender for constructing an interchange on the Ramallah Bypass Road, at the junction near Jaba and the Adam Settlement. On August 2015, the works on the ground had begun. The tender hardly generated any public interest, but its implications on settlement development in the area are far reaching.

To demonstrate the impacts that roads have on settlement development, we have chosen to examine the Lieberman Road, the road that bypasses Bethlehem on the east and links the settlements southeast of Bethlehem, with Jerusalem.

Lieberman Road – Route 398, connecting Har Homa in Jerusalem and the settlements southeast of Bethlehem (Tko'a and Nokdim), was opened to traffic in 2008. The road is 9 km long and takes 1,585 dunams (392 acres) of land. The cost of the road was estimated at hundreds of millions of NIS and it includes seven bridges and tunnels, intended to enable quick travel with no need to go through the Palestinian villages. The road was called the "Lieberman Road" after Avigdor Lieberman, a resident of Nokdim who served as the Minister of Transportation in the Sharon government when construction began.

10 minutes instead of 40 minutes – Prior to paving this road, the trip from Jerusalem to the settlements southeast of Bethlehem took 40 minutes and it went through the Tunnel Road (bypassing Bethlehem on the west), a bypass of Bethlehem and the adjacent towns to the south, and a drive northeast, through the Palestinian villages of Al-Manashiyya and Hirbet a Dir. The Lieberman Road dramatically shortened the travel time and one can now drive from Jerusalem to Tko'a and Nokdim within 10 minutes, using a quick route, without going through Palestinian villages.

The development born of the Lieberman Road – Tko'a and Nokdim, formerly considered isolated and distant settlements, now became an attractive Jerusalem suburb where people could afford a house at the price of a small apartment in Jerusalem, while maintaining a short distance to Jerusalem's employment and service centers.

Within a short period of time, the road led to a dramatic increase in the number of settlers along it and to far reaching changes in the region, as demonstrated below.



Advertisement for homes in Tko'a – "A Rare Location, Close to the City", December 2009



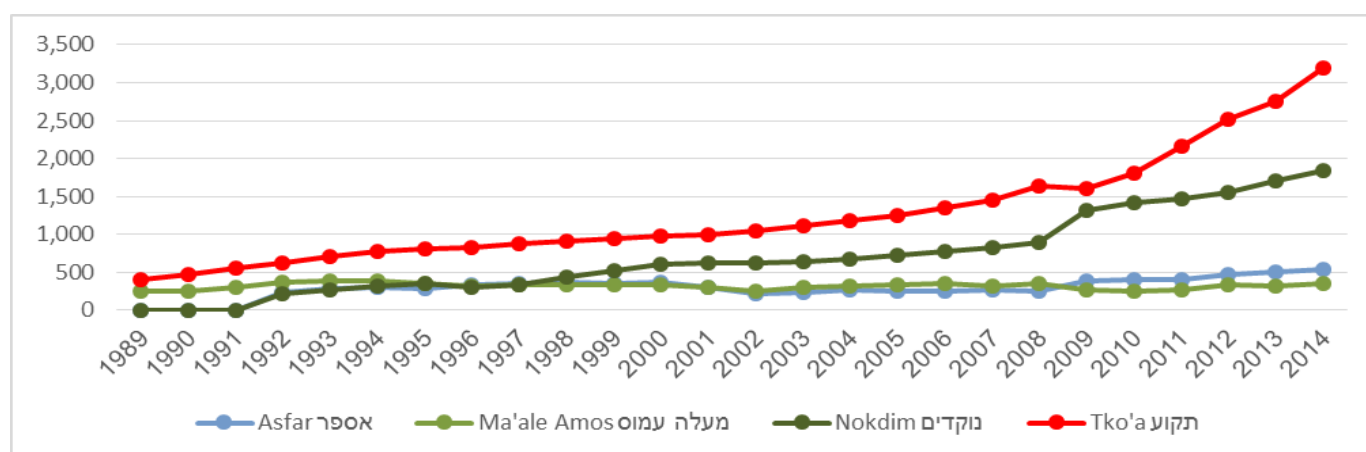
Advertisement for homes in Nokdim – "A House at the Price of an Apartment in Jerusalem", October 2009

1. Population – 90% increase

According to the CBS, when the road was opened in late 2008, 3,122 settlers resided in the settlements along the road, southeast of Bethlehem (Tko'a, Nokdim, Ma'aleh Amos and Asfar). In late 2014, this same figure equals 5,923 settlers – an increase of 90%.

The main increase was reported in Tko'a and Nokdim and the illegal outposts beside them (CBS figures relate to both the settlements and the adjacent outposts), where hundreds of new residential units were built for young couples and families with children.

Number of settlers in the Lieberman Road settlements – CBS figures:



Settlement	Settlers - 2008	Settlers - 2014	Growth Rate
Asfar	253	535	111.46%
Ma'aleh Amos	348	352	1.15%
Nokdim	886	1,836	107.22%
Tko'a	1,635	3,200	95.72%
Total	3,122	5,923	89.72%

Source: CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics)

2. Construction – 1.5 times more

Immediately after the Lieberman Road was opened, many construction projects were initiated in Tko'a, Nokdim and the nearby illegal outposts. Based on a Peace Now count, at least 450 new residential units have been built in the settlements southeast of Bethlehem since 2008. 209 units were built in Tko'a alone, 69 residential units in Nokdim, and 52 new residential units were built in Kfar Eldad, which was a temporary caravan site for Nokdim. In all, the settlements along the Lieberman road increased by 1.5 times.

Settlement	Residential Units in 2008	Residential Units added since 2009	Total Residential Units – 2014	Growth Rate
Ibei Nachal	21	22	43	104.8%
Asfar	89	7	96	7.9%
Kfar Eldad	50	52	102	104.0%
Ma'aleh Amos	75	2	77	2.7%
Ma'aleh Rehavam	18	14	32	77.8%
Nokdim	178	69	247	38.8%
Pnei Kedem	36	13	49	36.1%
Sdeh Bar	33	20	53	60.6%
Tko'a	335	209	544	62.4%
Tko'a Bet-Gimmel	63	27	90	42.9%
Tko'a Dalet	18	15	33	83.3%
Total	916	450	1,366	49.1%

Source: Peace Now count



New neighborhood construction in Tko'a, June 2011



Tko'a, 2008



Tko'a, 2014

In addition, based on information obtained from the Ministry of Housing following a petition pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law, the Ministry of Housing transferred a total of 1,600,000 NIS to the Gush Etzion Regional Council for the construction of infrastructures for 108 residential units in Ma'aleh Amos.

3. Planning Momentum in all Settlements along the Road

In recent years, the planning institutions have accelerated planning toward expanding all settlements along the Lieberman Road and legalizing and increasing illegal outposts.

A. The Ministry of Housing has begun preparing framework plans for establishing a new city at Ma'aleh Amos, probably designated for the Haredi population.

- A detailed plan for 1,000 residential units is begin prepared by the Ministry of Housing.
- A framework plan for 5,000 additional residential units is also being prepared by the Ministry of Housing.

B. Plans for building at least 900 residential units are in various stages of preparation:

- Plan No. 413/1/1 for 224 residential units to establish a new settlement by legalizing the Ibei Nachal outpost;
- Plan for 268 residential units in Asfar being prepared by the Ministry of Housing;
- Plan No. 413/4 for 208 residential units in Ma'aleh Amos was submitted for planning institution approval;
- Plan No. 411/1/2/1 for establishing a new settlement at Sdeh bar, by transforming the educational institution into a permanent settlement, is being prepared by the Gush Etzion Regional Council, and several houses have already been built, although the plan is not valid.
- Plan No. 412/4/1/2 for building a neighborhood of 200 residential units in Tko'a is being prepared and was submitted for planning institution approval.
- Additional plans to expand Kfar Eldad (Nos. 411/6/3 and 411/6/1/2) were also submitted to the planning institutions, but we do not know how many residential units they entail.

C. Plans for another 293 residential units have already been approved by the Minister of Defense and are in various stages of the planning process:

- Plan No. 411/6/1 for 49 residential units in Kfar Eldad;
- Plan No. 411/5 for 40 residential units in Nokdim;
- Plan No. 411/6/4 for 168 residential units in Nokdim;
- Plan No. 411/8 for 12 residential units in Nokdim;
- Plan No. 412/4/1/5 for 24 residential units in Tko'a;

Settlement Name	Plan No.	Residential Units	Status
Ibei Nachal	413/1/1	224	Submitted to planning institution approval
Asfar	Unknown	268	Being prepared by the Ministry of Housing
Kfar Eldad	411/6/1	49	Approved for validation on 21 Dec. 2011
Kfar Eldad	411/6/1/2	Unknown	Submitted to planning institution approval
Kfar Eldad	411/6/3	Unknown	Submitted to planning institution approval
Ma'aleh Amos	413/4	208	Submitted to planning institution approval
Ma'aleh Amos	Unknown	1,000	Being prepared by the Ministry of Housing
Ma'aleh Amos	Unknown	5,000	Framework plan being prepared by the Ministry of Housing
Nokdim	411/5	40	Approved at the objection subcommittee on 3 Feb. 2014
Nokdim	411/6/4	168	Approved for deposit on 16 Jan. 2013
Nokdim	411/8	12	Approved for deposit on 17 Nov. 2013
Sdeh Bar	411/1/1	Educational Institution	Approved for validity on 13 April 2005
Sdeh Bar	411/1/2/1	Unknown	UCP being prepared by the Gush Etzion Council
Tko'a	412/4/1/5	24	Validation published in 2014
Tko'a	412/4/1/2	200	Submitted to planning institution approval
Total		6,993	

4. Establishing New Settlement Points

Ma'aleh Amos West – New Illegal Outpost – In late 2013, a single caravan was brought to the hill west of Ma'aleh Amos. Rumors stated that it was an agricultural farm approved by the Minister of Defense, but we do not know if such approval was indeed granted. Since the single caravan, paths were broken and permanent homes were built – there are currently at least four permanent homes in the area. These houses were built with no permit and with no government resolution on settlement construction. The new plan being prepared for Ma'aleh Amos, Plan No. 413/4 for 208 residential units, might be intended, inter alia, for legalizing this illegal outpost.



Ma'aleh Amos West – A new illegal outpost, March 2015

Shdema – A settlement point to prevent the construction of a hospital for the Palestinians

On the remains of a military base at the eastern end of the Palestinian Beit Sahour, the settlers established a settlement point at which they operate an art gallery and conduct events, lectures and meetings. There are no permanent homes in the field, but the settlement point on the land of Ush al-Ghrab prevents the realization of a plan for establishing a Palestinian children's hospital. During the 1970's, the land was seized for security purposes and used as a military base. In 2006, IDF dismantled the military base and the Beit Sahour municipality applied to construct a pediatric hospital. The U.S. government, through USAID, agreed to finance establishment of the hospital, but it required Israeli approval seeing that it is in Zone C. Following rumors by which PM Ehud Olmert approved the hospital, the settlers began demanding that the land be given to them, claiming that a hospital on site would jeopardize cars traveling along the Lieberman Road. They began to stage protests and cultural activities within the vacated base. Eventually, the army surrendered to the settlers' pressure and IDF protection was left in place, while the settlers continue to conduct activities. For the full story of Shdema – [Press here](#).



Advertisement for settler activity at Shdema



Abandoned IDF base at Shdema

Ma'aleh Amos North – New Industrial Zone – In 1986, the Supreme Planning Council approved a plan for establishing an industrial zone north of the Ma'aleh Amos settlement, but no factories have yet applied for construction within the industrial zone. Works toward constructing a recycling plant on a large area, which would mark the beginning of the industrial zone, commenced in early 2015. Construction of the plant on this area demonstrates that the entrepreneurs believe that they will be able to transport the produce easily and efficiently – a matter that was not possible before the road was paved and established.



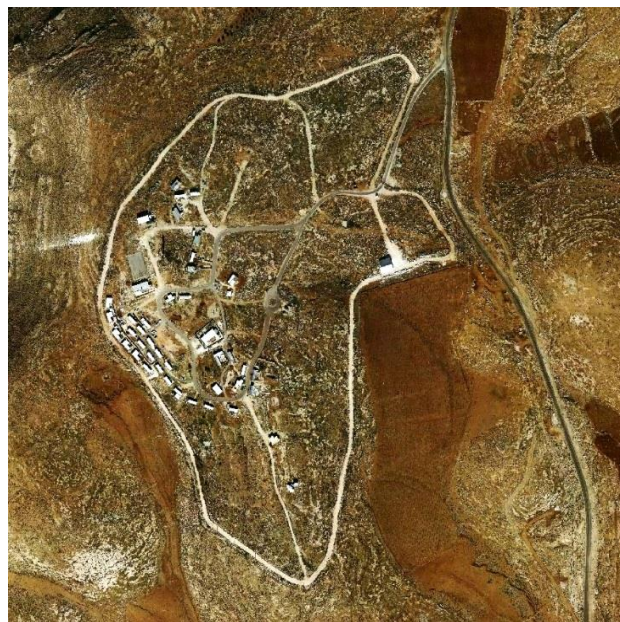
The new recycling plant,
being built south of
Ma'aleh Amos, July
2015

5. Establishing New Settlement by Legalizing Outposts

Ibei HaNachal – Ibei HaNachal was established in 1999 as a small outpost of ~20 caravans. In 2004, the outpost doubled and ~20 new caravans were built. The planning institutions have recently received Construction Plan 413/1/1 for the establishment of 224 residential units at the outpost, aiming to transform it into a real settlement. The plan is subject to Minister of Defense approval which, in practice, will comprise a resolution for the establishment of a new settlement. We do not know whether or not the plan has already been approved by the Minister of Defense.



Ibei HaNachal, 2008



Ibei HaNachal, 2014

Sdeh Bar – The outpost was established as an educational institution for juvenile rehabilitation and was retroactively granted a construction permit under a plan approved in 2005. A new residential neighborhood began appearing in Sdeh Bar in 2014. Peace Now learned that the Gush Etzion Regional Council holds a construction plan (No. 411/1/2/1) that is intended for a residential neighborhood in Sdeh Bar, transforming it into a new settlement. This plan has not yet been approved and the construction on site, it seems, is illegal. Based on information obtained by Peace Now from the Ministry of Housing following a petition pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law, the Ministry of Housing transferred a total of 720,000 NIS to the Gush Etzion Regional Council for the construction of infrastructures for 12 residential units in Sde Bar.



Construction of the new settlement at Sdeh Bar

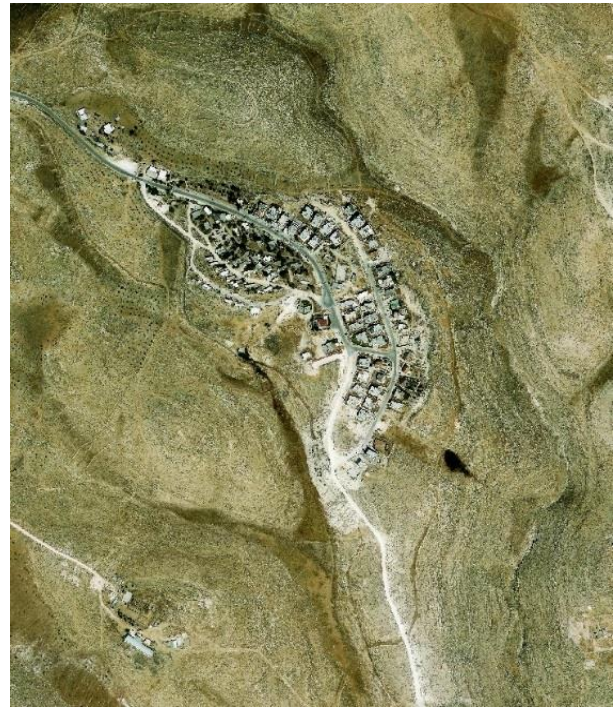


Advertisement for the new settlement at Sdeh bar

Kfar Eldad – Kfar Eldad was the temporary site for Nokdim in the early 1980's. After moving into the permanent homes of Nokdim, the settlers left the temporary caravan site at Kfar Eldad and established an independent settlement. When the Lieberman Road was opened to traffic, permanent homes started to be built illegally at Kfar Eldad without an approved plan. Construction Plan 411/6/1 was approved in late 2011 for the construction of 49 residential units at the outpost that became a new and official settlement. The planning institutions have two more new plans before them for expanding the settlement.



Kfar Eldad 2008



Kfar Eldad 2014

Ma'aleh Rehavam – The Ma'aleh Rehavam outpost was established in 2002, east of Nokdim. In 2004, the authorities issued an eviction notice to the outpost. Approximately two years ago, as part of the Peace Now petition that demanded realization of the order and eviction of the outpost, the Netanyahu government announced its intention to legalize the outpost and turn it into a new settlement. In the meantime, the outpost continued to grow, although the authorities occasionally demolished several structures.

Tko'a D and Tko'a E – The settlers established a new outpost, "Tko'a E", south of Tko'a, following the abduction of the three youths in the summer of 2014. According to media reports, the settlers "agreed" to vacate it in return for the Minister of Defense's promise to approve a construction plan for the Tko'a D outpost – i.e. to turn it into a new settlement and approve the establishment of an agricultural farm at the site of Tko'a E. We have no confirmation of this report.



Tko'a Dalet Outpost, 2012

6. Developing Tourism – Herodion Site

Tourist sites comprise another kind of settlement. Indeed, they do not house settlers, but they attract many visitors and serve as an anchor of Israeli presence.

The Second Intifada rendered the Herodion a deserted site with very few visitors. Following the Lieberman Road and convenient access from Jerusalem, the number of tourists began to grow. On 9 March 2011, the Netanyahu government decided to allocate 9M NIS to Herodion development, in addition to the 7M NIS invested from other sources. The site has been renovated and extended and it currently attracts ~80,000 visitors every year. For more about Herodion, [press here](#).