

Peace Now's Annual Settlement Construction Report for 2017

Construction Starts in Settlements were 17% Above Average in 2017

78% of Construction was in "Isolated Settlements"*

Settlement Watch, Peace Now

Key findings – Construction in the West Bank, 2017 (East Jerusalem excluded) ¹

- According to Peace Now's count, 2,783 new housing units began construction in 2017, around 17% higher than the yearly average rate since 2009.²
- 78% (2,168 housing units) of the new construction was in settlements east of the proposed Geneva Initiative border, i.e. settlements that are likely to be evicted in a two-state agreement.
- 36% (997 housing units) of the new construction was in areas that are east of the route of the separation barrier. Another 46% (1,290 units) was between the built and the planned route of the fence. Only 18% was west of the built fence.
- At least 10% (282 housing units) of the construction was illegal according to the Israeli laws applied in the Occupied Territories (regardless of the illegality of all settlements according to the international law). Out of those, 234 units (8% of the total construction) were in illegal outposts.
- The vast majority of the new construction, 91% (2,544 housing units), was for permanent structures, while that the remainder 9% were new housing units in the shape of mobile homes both in outposts and in settlements.
- 68 new public buildings (such as schools, synagogues etc.) started to be built, alongside 69 structures for industry or agriculture.

Advancement of Plans and Tenders (January-December 2017)

- 6,742 housing units were advanced through promotions of plans for settlements, in 59 different settlements (compared to 2,657 units in 2016).
- Almost 66% (4,471 housing units) of the planned units were east of the proposed Geneva Initiative border.
- Tenders were published for 3,154 housing units, a record high in almost two decades.

* The term "isolated settlements" traditionally refers to settlements beyond those near the Green Line which are thought to be included in a future land swap deal in the context of a two-state solution. Peace Now uses the Geneva Initiative's proposed border as a reference point, as it represents the only prominent (and constantly updating) two-state model that has been agreed upon by Israelis and Palestinians.

¹ As measured by construction starts, according to Settlement Watch aerial photos

² For technical reasons, the reporting period for 2016 was only nine months (September 2015 to June 2016), and for 2017 it was 15 months (July 2016 to September 2017). For the purpose of calculating the comparison to the yearly average, we counted one-fifth of the 15-months count (557 units), as if it were built in 2016, so that for the sake of the comparison in 2016 we counted (1,814 + 557 =) 2,371 units, and in 2017 we counted (2,783 - 557 =) 2,226. All the other numbers in this report are referring to the total count in the 15 months.

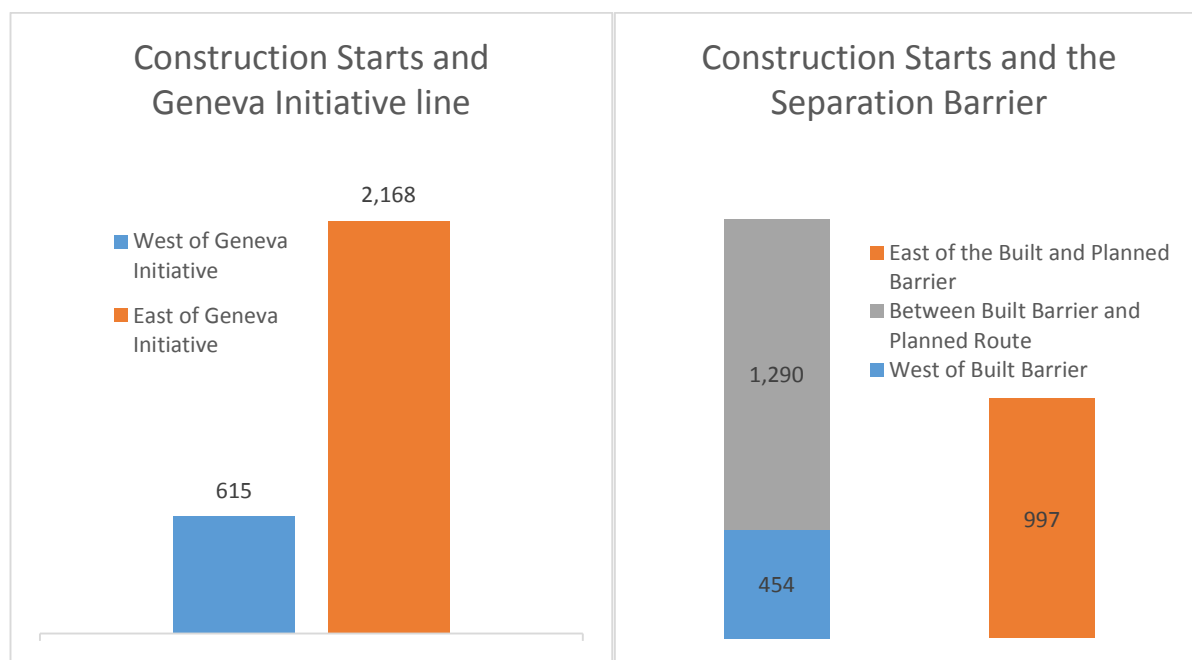
Further Significant Settlement Developments in 2017:

- Three new outposts were established: north of Ramallah (Neve Achi), south of Jericho (Kedem Arava) and south of Dahariya (Shabtai's Farm). In addition, the official [new settlement of Amihai](#) was established south of Nablus.
- Construction of [a new bypass road](#) that will allow for another entrance to Jerusalem for the settlers coming from the north.
- [977 dunams were declared as “state lands”](#) south of Nablus – as part of an effort to legalize the illegal outposts of Givat Haroeh and Palgei Mayim.
- [The construction of 31 housing units](#) was approved in the heart of the city of Hebron, establishing a new settlement compound on land housing the old central bus station.

Expanded Details

Peace Now's Settlement Watch annual construction report for 2017 reveals 2,783 new housing units in the settlements. Construction was largely focused in isolated settlements and in areas that are highly problematic in terms of a two-state solution. Nearly 78% (2,168 housing units) of the new housing starts were in areas that are east of the proposed Geneva Initiative border, and 82% were in areas that are east of the built separation barrier (36% were east of the planned route of the barrier, and 46% in areas where the barrier is planned but not built).

At least 10% (282 housing units) of the construction took place in sites considered illegal according to Israeli law (all construction in settlements is considered illegal according to international law). Of those 234 housing units (8% of all new housing units) were in illegal outposts. Last year Peace Now [published a report](#) that exposed the various mechanisms behind the illegal construction in the settlements and outposts.



Settlements with the Largest Construction

Many of the settlements near the top of the list of construction starts are located east of the border proposed by the Geneva Initiative that Israel would have to evacuate within the framework of a permanent agreement:

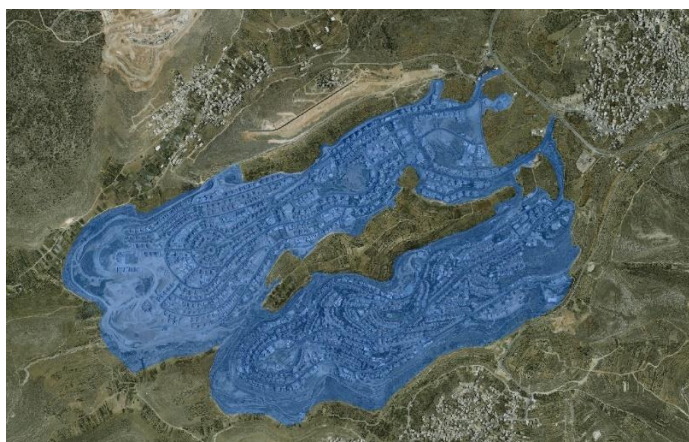
Efrat – As in 2016, The Efrat settlement, south of Bethlehem and close to 9,000 residents, is where the most construction starts were counted in 2017: 292 new housing units, mainly in Givat HaDagan (183 housing units) and in Givat HaTamar (89 residential units). Givat HaDagan and Givat HaTamar were considered illegal outposts that were retroactively approved, and are expanding due to tenders published a few years ago under previous Netanyahu governments.

Despite being in the so-called Gush Etzion area, Efrat is one of the most difficult settlements for the framework of a permanent agreement. In the Geneva Initiative, for example, it was agreed that Israel would evacuate the settlement. This is because Efrat is located east of the main north-south highway (Route 60) linking Bethlehem and Hebron. If Israel were to annex Efrat, it would also annex the highway and thus sever this vital traffic artery connecting Palestinians between the southern West Banks two largest cities. Efrat also blocks the potential development of the city of Bethlehem from the south. For more on this latter subject, [click here](#).

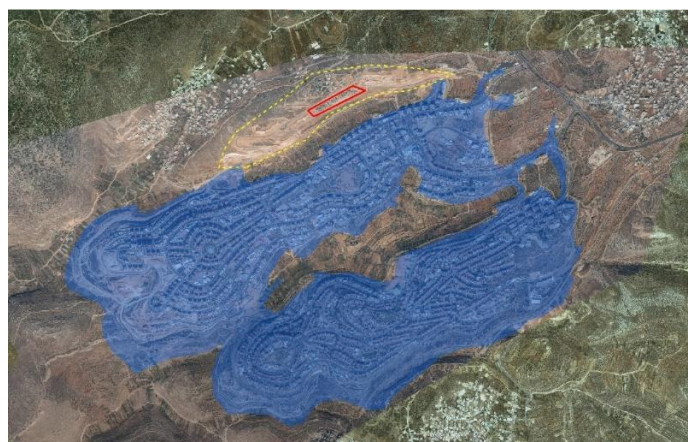
Karnei Shomron – Another problematic settlement to a final status agreement is Karnei Shomron (7,100 residents), located along the road between Qalqiliya and Nablus. According to the planned route of the Separation Barrier, Karnei Shomron is located at the center of a settlement "finger" that jets and curves deep into the West Bank until Kedumim near the outskirts of Nablus. In 2017, 261 new housing units were built in Karnei Shomron as a result of tenders published in 2013 and 2014.

Alfei Menashe – 126 new housing units—the result of tenders published in 2014 and 2015.

Beitar Illit – 270 new housing units. In Betar Illit, a new neighborhood called "Beitar Illit C" was constructed on a hill west of the settlement's built-up area. Contrary to [Netanyahu's announcement this year](#) that he intends not to expand settlements beyond [their "footprint"](#) (i.e. their built-up area), it appears that many of the expanding areas in settlements are on new land far from the built-up area. This new construction in Beitar Illit is the result of tenders published in 2014 and 2015.



Beitar Illit, 2016



Beitar Illit, 2017 – 80 new housing units (red) in Beitar Illit C (yellow)



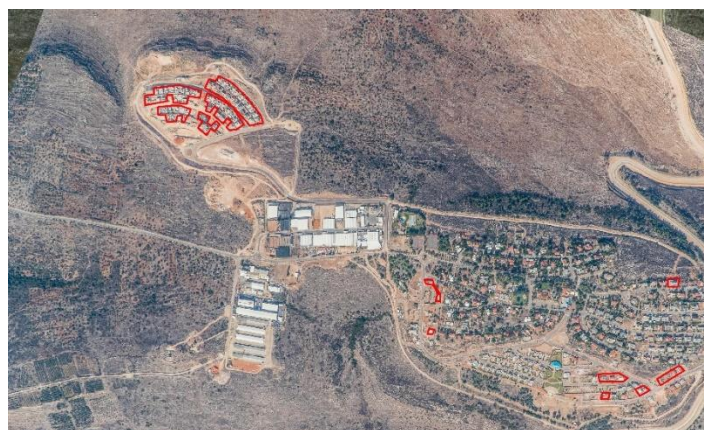
Asfar, 2015



Asfar, 2017



Sal'it, 2016



Sal'it, 2017

Advancing Plans

Significant increase in number of plans – At the beginning of the year, Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that from now on the meetings of the Higher Planning Committee will be held just four times per year, in order to limit the opportunities for public and international criticism. The Higher Planning Committee meetings were held in January, February, June and October, and approved (for deposit or validation) 88 plans with 6,742 housing units in 59 different settlements. About 2/3 of them—4,471 housing units—are in settlements that Israel would need to evacuate within the framework of an agreement according to the Geneva Initiative borders.

By comparison, in 2016, plans for 2,613 housing units were promoted, in 2015 1,732 units were promoted; and in 2014, 6,929 housing units were advanced. For details on 2017 plans, see: [October approvals](#), [June approvals](#), and [January-February approvals](#).

Peak in promoting tenders – Since the beginning of the year, tenders have been issued for the construction of 3,154 housing units in the settlements (not including another tender for the construction of 130 residential units in East Jerusalem). About half of the tenders (1,533 units) were in settlements outside the proposed route of the border proposed by the Geneva Initiative. For comparison, in 2016, tenders were published for 42 housing units, while 560 units were published in 2015, and 2,359 units in 2014.

[Click here for a graph of the tenders for the past years.](#)

Three New Outposts Founded in 2017

Kedem Arava – At the beginning of 2017, several families entered the old site of the Beit Ha'arava settlement, near Jericho, which in recent years served as a residence for foreign workers of the settlements until it was abandoned. The Megilot Regional Council is working to establish a new settlement there for hundreds of families. On September 17, 2017, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman [visited](#) the outpost and expressed support for turning it into a legal settlement.



The sign near Kedem Arava (the Hebrew was changed and now reads "Kedem Arava")

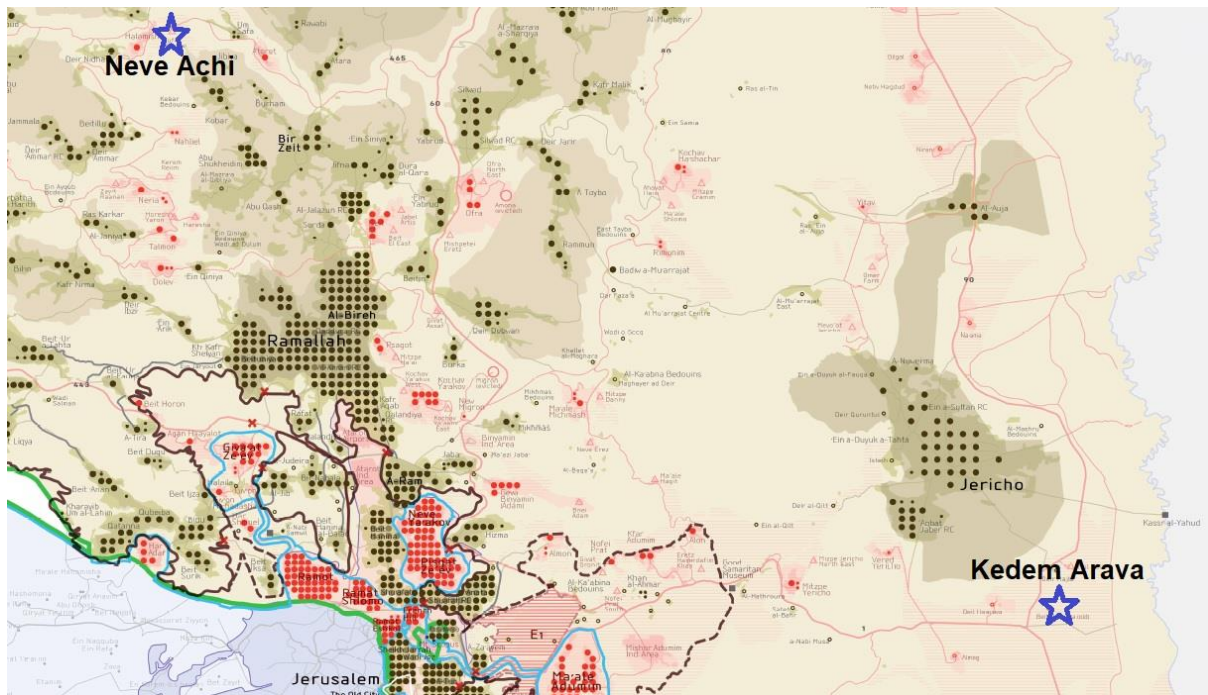
Neve Achi – Following the horrific murder of the Salomon family in the Halamish settlement (north of Ramallah) by a Palestinian terrorist in July 2017, settlers set up a new outpost near the settlement. The new outpost was built outside the perimeter fence of the settlement, on the other side of the inter-urban road that connects Palestinian communities in the area. The intention of the settlers is to turn the road into an internal road inside the settlement, thereby preventing the movement of Palestinian vehicles in the area. Since the establishment of the outpost, the IDF has placed roadblocks and restricted Palestinian travel there.



The outpost of Neve Achi



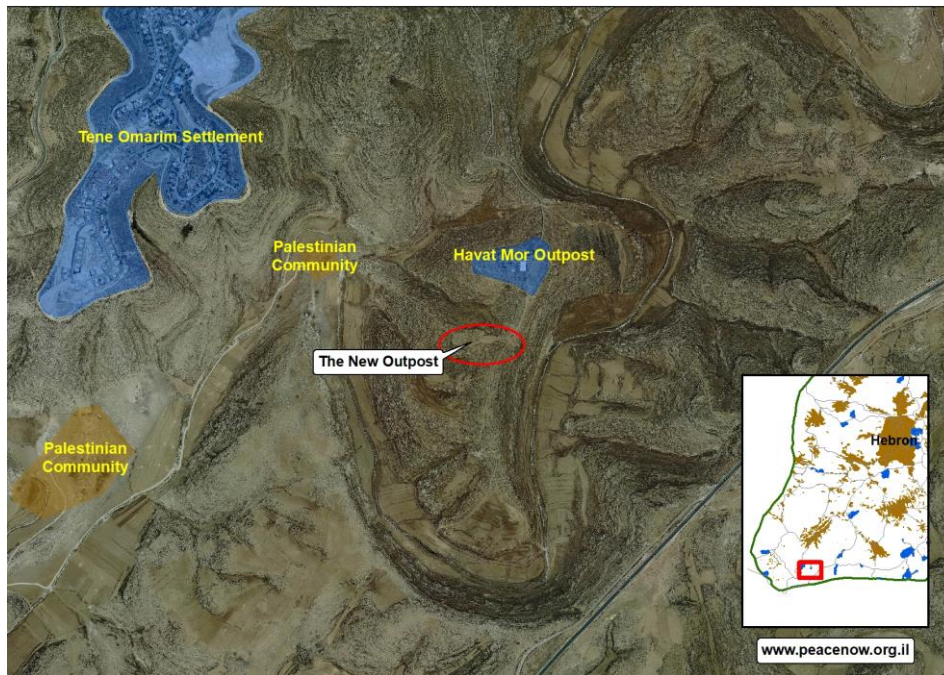
A sign forbidding Palestinians from entering the road. In Arabic: "This area has come under Jewish control. Arabs are forbidden from entering the area, and it is a threat on your lives."



Shabtai's Farm – During 2017, a new agricultural farm was established on around four acres of declared "state lands" south of Dahariya, near the Tene Omarim settlement. The farm was established 300 meters south of another farm, the illegal outpost of Havat Mor (Mor's Farm), which was established in 1999. Nearby Palestinians from Khirbet A-Rahwa report that ever since the founding of the new outpost they have suffered from harassment, threats and limits on access to their grazing areas.



Shabtai's Farm, February 2018.



Appendix: The establishment of new outposts and legalization of old outposts

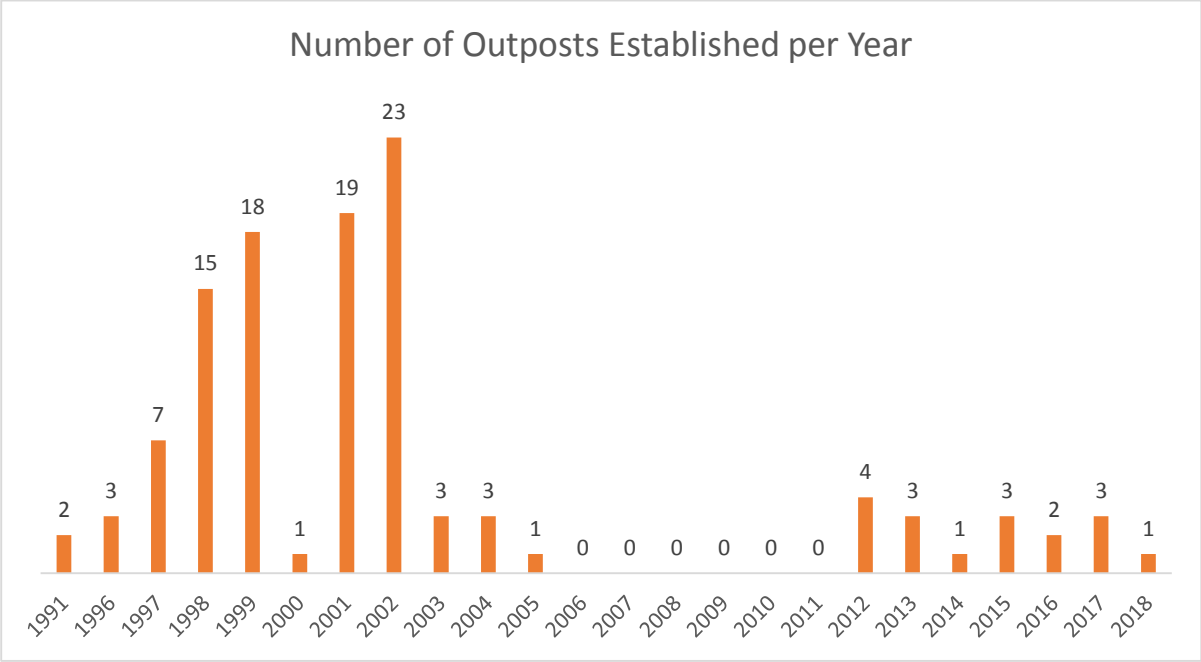
In 1996, the Netanyahu government initiated a practice of unofficially establishing new settlements without any legal authority, known as "outposts." Following domestic and international pressure, the practice was stopped in 2005, when by that time over 100 outposts had been founded. In 2011, the Netanyahu government declared a new policy of legalization of the outposts, which continues until today. Since then, 11 outposts have been fully legalized and another 35 have started the process of legalization.

[In 2012, the establishment of new outposts was renewed.](#) Since 2012, 16 new outposts were established, some of which are already in the process of being legalized.

	New Outposts	Established
1	Zufim North	2012
2	Nahalat Yossef	2012
3	Kashuela Farm	2012
4	Bitronot (Brosh)	2013
5	Maale Amos West	2013
6	Itamar 573	2013
7	Eretz Hamirdafim	2014
8	Shaharit Farm	2015
9	Nofei Prat South (hill 387)	2015
10	Malachei HaShalom	2015
11	Mehula West	2016
12	Um Zuka	2016
13	Kedem Arava	2017
14	Neve Achi	2017
15	Shabtay's Farm	2017
16	Tayasir Farm	2018

	Legalized Outposts	Established
1	Elisha	1999
2	Elmatan	2002
3	Bruchin	1999
4	Rehelim	1991
5	Sansana	1999
6	Horesh Yaron	1997
7	Tal Menashe	1998
8	Mizpe Eshtamoa	2003
9	Nahalei Tal	2012
10	Shvut Rachel	1991
11	Sde Bar	1998

	Evicted Outposts	Established
1	Migron	2002
2	Amona	1997



List of construction starts in 2017, as counted by Peace Now:

Settlement	Construction Starts	Type	Geneva Initiative	Barrier
Adam	86	Settlement	East	East
Ahiya	11	Outpost	East	East
Alei Zahav	11	Settlement	East	Planned
Alfei Menashe	126	Settlement	West	West
Alonei Shilo	7	Outpost	East	Planned
Ariel	110	Settlement	East	Planned
Asa'el	7	Outpost	East	East
Asfar	27	Settlement	East	East
Ateret	1	Settlement	East	East
Avigayil	3	Outpost	East	East
Avnei Hefetz	54	Settlement	East	East
Barqan	3	Settlement	East	Planned
Bat Ayin West	32	Outpost	West	West
Beit Arye	15	Settlement	East	Planned
Beit Ha'arava	5	Settlement	East	East
Beitar Illit	270	Settlement	West	Planned
Bnei Adam	3	Outpost	East	East
Bqa'ot	5	Settlement	East	East
Brosh	3	Outpost	East	East
Bruchin	5	Settlement	East	Planned
Dolev	20	Settlement	East	East
Efrat	20	Settlement	East	Planned
Einav	25	Settlement	East	East
Eli	3	Settlement	East	East
Elkana	1	Settlement	West	West
Elon More	22	Settlement	East	East
Esh Kodesh	13	Outpost	East	East
Eshkolot	23	Settlement	East	West
Etz Efraim	3	Settlement	West	West
Gal outpost	2	Outpost	East	East
Gilad Farm	2	Outpost	East	East
Gitit	3	Settlement	East	East
Givat Hadagan	183	Settlement	East	Planned
Givat Harel	1	Outpost	East	East
Givat Hatamar	89	Settlement	East	Planned
Givat Sal'it	5	Outpost	East	East
Givat Ze'ev (Agan Haayalot)	74	Settlement	East	West
Gva'ot	6	Settlement	West	Planned
Har Adar	2	Settlement	West	West
Har Gilo	3	Settlement	East	West
Har Shmuel (Givat Ze'ev)	6	Settlement	West	West
Haresha	8	Outpost	East	East
Hashmonaim	3	Settlement	West	West
Hayovel	2	Outpost	East	East
Hill 725	6	Outpost	East	East
Hinanit	9	Settlement	East	West
Ibei Hanahal	1	Outpost	East	East
Immanuel	84	Settlement	East	Planned

Settlement	Construction Starts	Type	Geneva Initiative	Barrier
Itamar	3	Settlement	East	East
Itamar 573	2	Outpost	East	East
Kalia	4	Settlement	East	East
Karmeit Doron	24	Outpost	East	East
Karneit Shomron	261	Settlement	East	Planned
Kedumim	12	Settlement	East	Planned
Kfar Tapuah West	1	Settlement	East	East
Kida	3	Outpost	East	East
Kiryat Arba	96	Settlement	East	East
Kochav Ha'shachar	47	Settlement	East	East
Kochav Ya'akov	34	Settlement	East	East
Lehavat Yitzhar	7	Settlement	East	East
Leshem	73	Settlement	East	Planned
Ma'ale Adumim	64	Settlement	West	Planned
Ma'ale Amos	12	Settlement	East	East
Maale Amos West	2	Outpost	East	East
Ma'ale Michmash	6	Settlement	East	East
Ma'ale Shomron	3	Settlement	East	Planned
Ma'ale Yisrael	4	Outpost	East	Planned
Maoz Zvi	7	Outpost	East	East
Maskiyot	9	Settlement	East	East
Masu'a	1	Settlement	East	East
Matityahu	12	Settlement	West	West
Mechola	1	Settlement	East	East
Mechora	2	Settlement	East	East
Mevo'ot Jericho	4	Outpost	East	East
Migdalim	10	Settlement	East	East
Mitzpe Hacha	2	Outpost	West	Planned
Mitzpe Lachish	1	Outpost	East	East
Mitzpe Yair	1	Outpost	East	East
Mitzpe Yericho	33	Settlement	East	East
Mitzpeh Danny	8	Outpost	East	East
Modi'in Ilit	66	Settlement	West	West
Mul Nevo	1	Outpost	East	East
Na'ale	39	Settlement	East	East
Na'ama	4	Settlement	East	East
Nahalei Tal	46	Settlement	East	East
Negohot	5	Settlement	East	East
Nerya (officially part of Talmon)	17	Settlement	East	East
Netiv Ha'gdud	2	Settlement	East	East
Neve Daniel North	1	Outpost	West	West
Neve Erez	7	Outpost	East	East
Nili	14	Settlement	East	East
Nofei Prat	6	Settlement	East	Planned
Nofim	2	Settlement	East	Planned
Ofra	25	Settlement	East	East
Old Massu'ot Itzhak	9	Outpost	West	West
Oranit	12	Settlement	West	West
Ovnat	1	Settlement	East	East

Settlement	Construction Starts	Type	Geneva Initiative	Barrier
Pedu'el	24	Settlement	East	Planned
Petzael	8	Settlement	East	East
Pnei Hever	10	Settlement	East	East
Pnei Kedem	19	Outpost	East	East
Psagot	3	Settlement	East	East
Ramat Gilad	11	Outpost	East	East
Rechelim	5	Settlement	East	East
Reihan	10	Settlement	East	West
Revava	1	Settlement	East	Planned
Rimonim	2	Settlement	East	East
Rotem	2	Settlement	East	East
Sal'it	78	Settlement	East	West
Sansana	1	Settlement	East	West
Sde Bar	1	Settlement	East	East
Shaked Farm	2	Outpost	East	East
Shavei Shomron	9	Settlement	East	East
Shilo	19	Settlement	East	East
Shirat Ha'asabim	3	Outpost	East	East
Shvut Rachel	7	Settlement	East	East
Susiya	2	Settlement	East	East
Tal Menashe	14	Settlement	East	West
Talmon	6	Settlement	East	East
Telem	8	Settlement	East	East
Tene	10	Settlement	East	East
Tko'a	28	Settlement	East	East
Tko'a D	4	Outpost	East	East
Tomer	2	Settlement	East	East
Tzofim	11	Settlement	East	West
Vered Yericho	15	Settlement	East	East
Yafit	3	Settlement	East	East
Yair Farm	11	Outpost	East	Planned
Yakir	6	Settlement	East	Planned
Yatir (Metzadot Yehuda)	18	Settlement	East	Planned
Yitzhar	19	Settlement	East	East
Zayit Ra'anana	2	Outpost	East	East