

# West Bank

## Settlements, Communities, and Facts on the Ground

**The Israeli Community of Efrat**



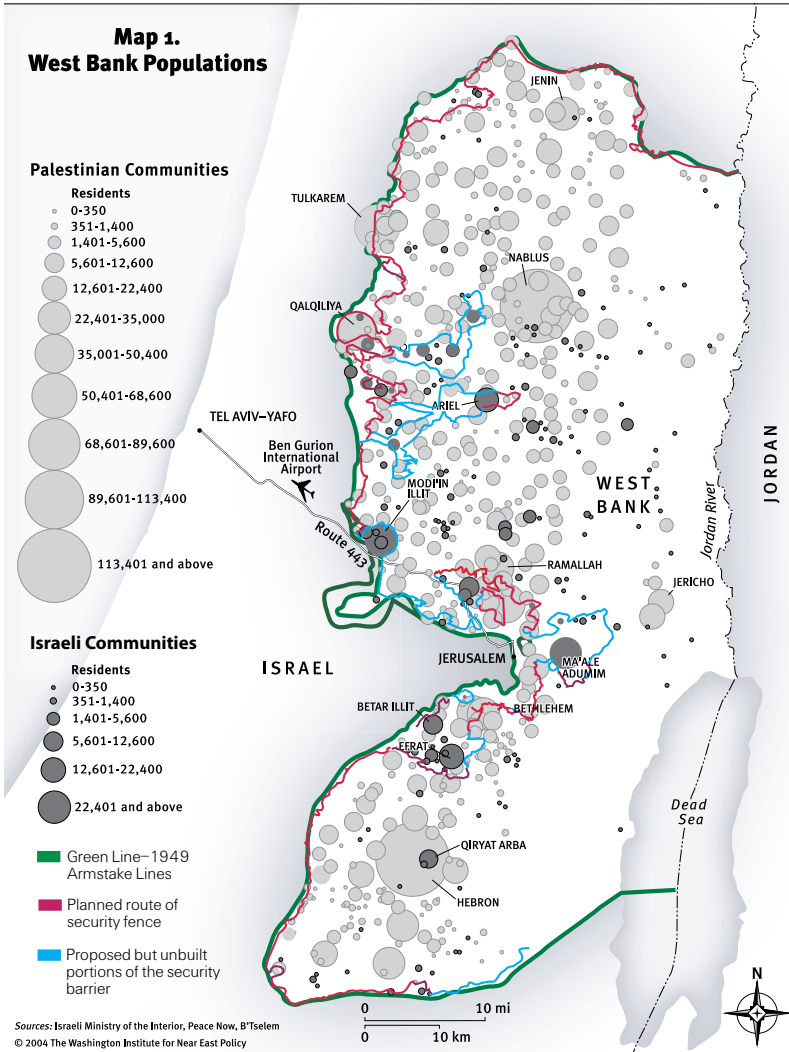
**The Palestinian City of Nablus**



# Israeli Settlements Cover Approximately 1.7 Percent of West Bank Land

The built-up areas of Israeli settlements cover 1.7 percent of West Bank land, according to Palestinian and Israeli sources.<sup>1</sup> The scheduled route of the security fence incorporates between 5 and 8 percent of West Bank land. Israel currently administers 60 percent of the West Bank (known as "Area C") per the Oslo Agreement.

## Large Communities In The West Bank



In 2008, there were 120 Jewish communities in the West Bank, with 289,600 Israeli residents.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[www.memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SD244009](http://www.memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SD244009) and [www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LANGID=1&TMID=1118&FID=442&PID=0&IID=2995](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LANGID=1&TMID=1118&FID=442&PID=0&IID=2995)

<sup>2</sup>[www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=61&docid=4372](http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=61&docid=4372)

# 10 Facts About Israeli And Palestinian Communities

Jews and Arabs have lived in the West Bank for centuries. Today, the Israeli and Palestinian governments are negotiating borders for a possible future Palestinian state.

1. The West Bank, known as Judea and Samaria for thousands of years, is part of the ancient homeland of the Jewish people and of Judaism. It was renamed the West Bank by Jordan in 1950.
2. The only time in over a thousand years that Jews were prohibited from living in the West Bank was when Jordan occupied it between 1949 and 1967.
3. The built up areas of Israeli settlements cover approximately 1.7 percent of all West Bank land.
4. Approximately 75 to 80 percent of Israelis in the West Bank live close to or along the lines that separated Israel and the Jordanian-controlled West Bank before the 1967 War. These areas could be easily included on the Israeli side of a future border with minor land swaps.
5. Ninety-eight percent of Palestinians live under the administration of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in land that covers 40 percent of the West Bank. Israel currently administers 60 percent of the West Bank, known as "Area C," per the interim steps mutually agreed upon during the Oslo peace process. This virtually vacant area has two percent of all West Bank Palestinians.
6. No internationally recognized border has ever separated Israel and the West Bank. Future borders are to be determined through negotiations.
7. The number of *authorized* West Bank Israeli communities has remained the same since 1993, when Israel and the Palestinians signed the peace agreement known as the Oslo Accords. However, since 1993, the number of structures and people in many of the settlements has grown.
8. As the Palestinian Authority has begun to improve law and order, the West Bank has experienced renewed prosperity. Notably, the PA is in the process of building its first planned city, Rawabi.
9. No Palestinian Arab state ever existed prior to the one currently being proposed by the United States, Israel, and other nations.
10. One-point-three million Israeli Arab citizens live safely in Israel. With true peace, Jews should be able to safely live in Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, Yemen, and the proposed Palestinian state.

# Israeli Settlements Today

## Sizeable Cities, Small Rural Communities, and Villages

### Though the term “settlement”

sometimes refers to makeshift dwellings, most Israeli settlements are fully developed communities where people conduct their daily lives. Some are cities with full urban infrastructures, while others are smaller communities that range from residential suburbs to agricultural kibbutzim (cooperative communities) with only a few hundred people. There are also “outposts,” which are small communities that were never authorized by the Israeli government. The government considers these “outposts” illegal.



**Top:** Ma'ale Adumim, a 30-year-old residential city three miles northeast of Jerusalem, was built on vacant, unowned land. With its 33,259 residents, it is the second-largest Jewish community in the West Bank.



**Left:** Kibbutz Almog guest house. Almog, located in the arid Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea, has 24 families that developed cultivation techniques for salty soil and grow crops for export.



**Right:** Beitar Illit, located a half mile from the Green Line, was established in 1985.

It is named after the ancient Jewish city of Betar, originally located half a mile away.

# Israeli Settlements

## Politically Contentious but not Illegal

**The West Bank is disputed territory.** No Palestinian-Arab state ever existed in the region. Current Arab residents have claims to the West Bank, where they want to build a state, but Israel also has legal, historic, and security claims to this land. Many scholars argue that the Palestine Mandate (1920) laws are still operative today in the West Bank because no sovereign state ever legally replaced the Mandate in this portion of its former territory. The international community never recognized Jordan's seizure and annexation of Judea and Samaria (1948-1967), which it renamed the West Bank.

The League of Nations stipulated that the Jewish national home was to be in the Palestine Mandate and that Jews should settle in the land. Many scholars claim that the Fourth Geneva Convention, which sets rules about occupation of a foreign territory, cannot be applied to Israel and the West Bank because of the legal rights that the Mandate granted to Jews. The Oslo Accords agreements between Israel and the Palestinians also did not prohibit either group from building communities in the West Bank.

Today, Israelis and Palestinian-Arabs both live in the West Bank. Their governments are trying to negotiate future borders and determine which sections of the area will be under Israeli or PA jurisdiction. Until these negotiations conclude, the West Bank remains disputed territory without a defined, internationally recognized border.

There are 1.3 million Israeli Arabs living in Israel.



Israel: Baqa al-Gharbiyye, an Israeli Arab city of 19,200 people (2001).

**Ideally, Jews should have the right to settle anywhere in the world**, just as other national and religious groups do. If there is true peace, the Jewish right to continue to reside in the West Bank should not be abrogated, just as Israel's 1.3 million Arab citizens (mainly of Palestinian descent) will have the right to remain in Israel even if a Palestinian state is created.

\*For more information about the Mandate, see two articles by Eugene W. Rostow, "Bricks and Stones, Settling for Leverage: Palestinian Autonomy" (1990) and "Resolved: Are the Settlements Legal? Israeli West Bank Policies" (1999) online at [www.bjeny.org/254.htm](http://www.bjeny.org/254.htm).

# Palestinian Communities

Currently, 95 to 98 percent of West Bank Palestinians lives on 40 percent of West Bank land. The remaining 60 percent of the land, called "Area C," is only sparsely populated and under Israeli administration per the Oslo Accords. While Israel permits some Palestinian building in Area C, Palestinians constructed almost 5,000 non-permitted, illegal outposts and structures in Area C between 2000 and 2007. Israelis and Palestinians are negotiating how much and which sections of Area C will be added to territory that is governed by the Palestinian Authority.



Nablus, with 140,000 people, is the largest Palestinian city in the West Bank and is surrounded by vacant, undeveloped land.



Sixty percent of the West Bank, called "Area C," is virtually vacant land and is inhabited by 2 percent of the Palestinian population.

# Palestinian Cities

The Palestinians began governing themselves in 1994 when the Palestinian Authority was established. Today, most Palestinians live in cities like Nablus and Tulkarm and in other communities that are governed by the Palestinian Authority.<sup>1</sup>



The Palestinian stock exchange is in Nablus.



Ramallah is the Palestinian political and economic center of the West Bank.

<sup>1</sup> *The CIA World Fact Book* reports that 72 percent of the population is urban (2008). [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html)

# West Bank Roads

**Israel initially built bypass roads in the West Bank** to facilitate rapid travel on roads that went around populated centers. They were used by both Palestinians and Israelis.<sup>1</sup>

**When Palestinians launched the terrorist war in 2000**, they attacked Israeli vehicles, forcing Israel to separate Palestinian drivers from Israeli drivers as a safety precaution, temporarily designating some roads only for Palestinian use and others only for Israeli use.

**Restrictions are not based on religion or race.** Israelis include Christians, Jews, Muslims, and other ethnic and religious groups. Vehicles are differentiated by whether they have Israeli or Palestinian Authority license plates.

**As security concerns decline**, Israel will likely relax road restrictions, as it is doing for Route 443 from Modiin to Jerusalem.



Palestinian Authority license plates are green and white.



Israeli license plates are yellow and black.

# Water in the West Bank

## Israel has been supplying water to Palestinians

**Water is a precious commodity in the arid region**, but Israel uses the same aquifers for its water today that it used before 1967, when its administration of the West Bank began. The water in the aquifers naturally flows seawards, into Israel. Israeli settlements are connected to Israel's national water system and do not use the Palestinian Authority's water system.

Palestinian fresh water consumption grew over 300 percent between 1967 and 2008.\* Despite the scarcity of water, Israel agreed in the Oslo Accords to annually give 31 million cubic meters (mcm) of its own water to West Bank Palestinians to supplement their water resources. In fact, Israel has given progressively more each year. In 2008, Israel gave 40 percent more than agreed upon: 51.8 mcm.<sup>2</sup>

\* From 60 million cubic meters (mcm) in 1967 to 180 mcm in 2008, according to the Israel Water Authority.

<sup>1</sup> BTselem, "Information Sheet," August, 2004, p. 7 at [www.btselem.org/Download/200408\\_Forbidden\\_Roads\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/Download/200408_Forbidden_Roads_Eng.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Water Information from Israel Water Authority, "The Issue of Water between Israel and the Palestinians," p. 36, March 2009 at [www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/71BC5337-F7C7-47B7-A8C7-98F971CCA463/0/IsraelPalestiniansWaterIssues.pdf](http://www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/71BC5337-F7C7-47B7-A8C7-98F971CCA463/0/IsraelPalestiniansWaterIssues.pdf)

# Settlements, Security, and the Peace Process

**As the chart below illustrates, Israeli settlements are not an obstacle to peace.** The chart correlates progress and setbacks in peace efforts with the number of Israeli settlers and settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>1</sup>

Year	Israeli Settlements	Events
1949-1967	<b>Despite 0 settlements in the West Bank and 0 in Gaza...</b>	465 Israelis were murdered in terrorist attacks. 1967 War: Arab armies mobilized 250,000 troops and, in an act of war, cut off Israel's international shipping.
1979–1994	<b>Despite 120 settlements in the West Bank and 17 in Gaza (population: 136,109)...</b>	Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979) –Israel uprooted all 7,000 Israelis from settlements in Sinai. PLO and Israel signed the Oslo Accords (1993). Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty (1994).
2000-2004	<b>Despite 123 settlements in the West Bank and 17 in Gaza (population: 246,000)...</b>	Peace negotiations in progress: Israel offered to uproot most settlements for peace. Palestinian response: the second Intifada. Over 1,000 Israelis were killed; approximately 3,500 Palestinians were killed.
2005-2008	<b>Despite 0 settlements in Gaza...</b>	Israel uprooted all Gaza settlements. Hamas launched over 8,000 rockets and mortars from Gaza into southern Israeli communities.

## Security concerns play a major role in peace negotiations.



*Photographer: Hagai Nativ, courtesy of Dr. Martin Sherman, academic director of the Jerusalem Summit*

The Palestinian town of Rantis is 4.3 miles from Ben Gurion Airport. If terrorist groups like Hamas or Islamic Jihad are not controlled, they could attack from Israel's eastern border along the West Bank. Security officials are very concerned that the heart of Israel's population centers would be in short rocket range.

<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Bard, "Palestinian Policy Mistakes Fuel Settlement Growth," at [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/69\\_settlegrowth.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/69_settlegrowth.html); Settlements and population in West Bank from B'Tselem at [www.btselem.org/Download/200205\\_Land\\_Grab\\_Eng.doc](http://www.btselem.org/Download/200205_Land_Grab_Eng.doc); Casualties from [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/osloterr.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/osloterr.html) and [www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2000/1/Terrorism%20deaths%20in%20Israel%20-%201920-1999](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2000/1/Terrorism%20deaths%20in%20Israel%20-%201920-1999)

# Law and Order on Palestinian Streets Lead to Prosperity Despite Israeli Settlements

**The West Bank is experiencing renewed prosperity**, including a construction boom. During the 1970s, the West Bank and Gaza became the world's fourth-fastest-growing economy, ahead of Singapore and Hong Kong, and one of the world's fastest-growing populations.<sup>1</sup> The violent Intifada (2000-2005) brought economic reversals, but as the Palestinian Authority has begun taking measures to control terrorist groups, reduce official anti-Israel incitement, and cooperate with Israel, prosperity is returning.



Artist's rendering of Rawabi, the first planned Palestinian community in the West Bank



Jenin—"Herbawi Home Center mall, a new luxury establishment on the city's outskirts. The five-story building is filled with deluxe, foreign-made products....The profit forecasts for the project have been so favorable that the owner plans to open four more shops in the West Bank."<sup>2</sup>



Children play in the swimming pool at the Mukhmas Funland amusement park in Ramallah, July 2007.  
(Photo by Rachael Strecher/AP)

Every city in the West Bank has a pool or a recreational complex, and Ramallah has more than 10. New fitness gyms opened up regularly in Ramallah in 2006, and a new five-star hotel will open in Ramallah in 2010.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Efraim Karsh, "What Occupation?" *Commentary*, July/August, 2002 archived at [www.palestinefacts.org/what\\_occupation.html](http://www.palestinefacts.org/what_occupation.html)

<sup>2</sup>Avi Issacharoff, "Luxury Palestinian Mall Signals Transformation of 'terrorist capital,'" *Haaretz*, June 21, 2009 at [www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1094441.html](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1094441.html)

<sup>3</sup>Avi Issacharoff "West Bank Swimming Pools..." *Haaretz*, Aug. 8, 2007 at [www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=890972](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=890972); and Ischaroff, "Setting Aside Politics to Lift Weights," *Haaretz*, Sept. 10, 2006 at [www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/759207.html](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/759207.html); and NPR, "Ramallah: West Bank's Boom Town," May 28, 2009 at [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104648041](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104648041)

# Creating the First Arab Palestinian State in History

**In 1994, during the Oslo Accords, Israel helped Palestinians set up their first government in history, the Palestinian Authority.** Historically, no Palestinian Arab state had ever existed. After the ancient Jewish state fell in the first century, no nation arose in its place. The region was ruled by successive empires. During the 1948 War, Egypt and Jordan invaded and occupied the West Bank and Gaza and did not establish a Palestinian Arab state. Even the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) specifically excluded the West Bank and Gaza from its description of Palestine in its 1964 Covenant.



**PA President Mahmoud Abbas**

Today the Palestinian Authority governs 98 percent of the Palestinian Arab population in the West Bank, and Hamas governs the Palestinians living in Gaza.

**If Israel agrees to give up parts or most of the West Bank in future negotiations,** Israel will be giving up portions of its ancient homeland and holiest sites to create the first sovereign Palestinian nation in history.

**Hebron: One of the oldest Jewish holy sites, located in the West Bank.**



**Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in Hebron—**

In one of the oldest extant recorded land deeds, biblical text reports that the Jewish patriarch Abraham bought the cave and surrounding land from a local tribal chief. It is believed that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives are buried here. It is one of the holiest sites for Jews who have prayed at the cave for millennia.

# Imagine Peace



Copyright 2010. Debbie Cooper Photography.

Imagine peace in a Middle East where Israel and her neighbors join forces to become a major player on the global stage. With shared technology and resources, the possibilities are endless. But more important is a future filled with peace and prosperity for our children and for generations to come.

**StandWithUs**

If you're a student or alumnus, register at  
[www.StandWithUsCampus.com](http://www.StandWithUsCampus.com).

To order our 44-page color booklet, visit: [www.StandWithUs.com/store](http://www.StandWithUs.com/store)  
Help us distribute these booklets on campuses everywhere.

**StandWithUs, P.O. Box 341069, Los Angeles, CA 90034-1069**  
[info@standwithus.com](mailto:info@standwithus.com)  
**310.836.6140**

© 2010 StandWithUs. All rights reserved.

SWU637 08/10