

**On the Occasion
of U.S. President Barak Obama's Visit
To the Occupied State of Palestine**



The Fading Israeli - Palestinian Peace

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**Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem
(ARIJ)**

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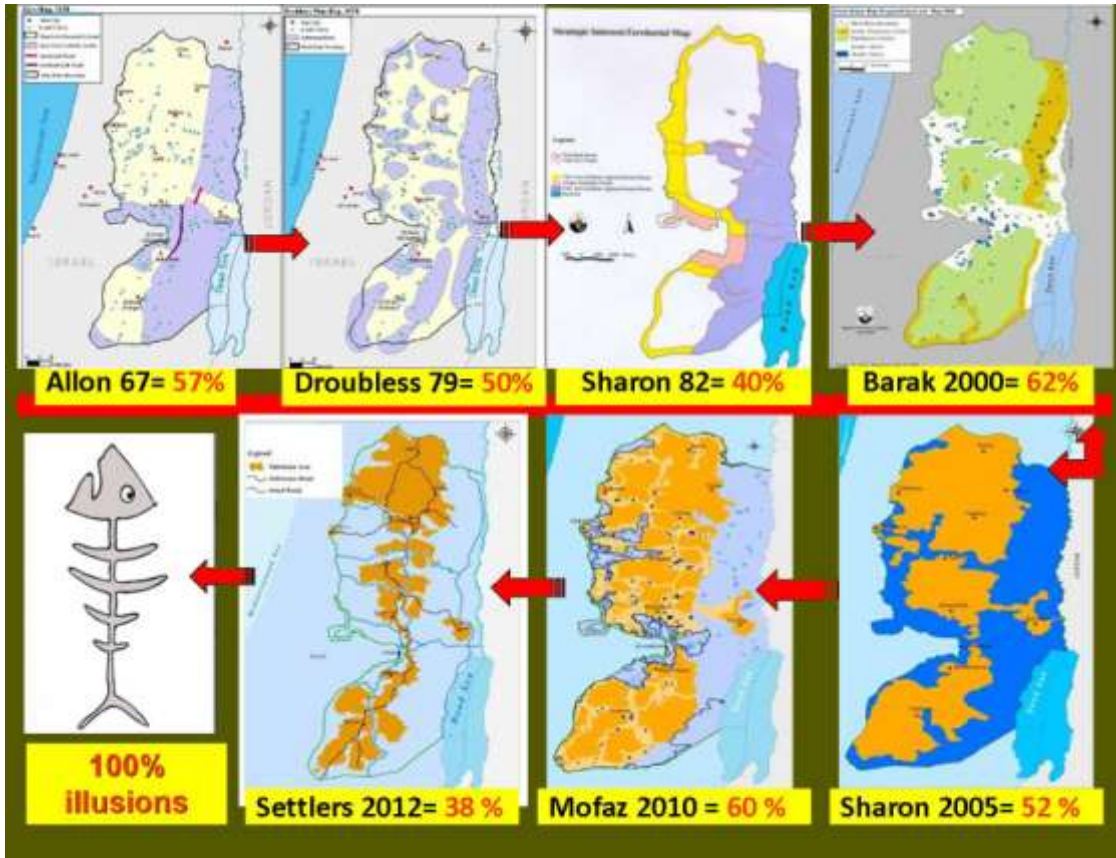


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Over the years of occupation many Israeli proposals were submitted to manage the conflict starting with Allon plan in 1967 giving the Palestinian 57% of the West Bank to the last of which from the settlers giving the Palestinian 38% of the West Bank and with one thing in common and that is not coming close to the Palestinians rights and aspiration for a State proving that they were all 100% illusions.



Preamble WE HAVE A DREAM

There is a saying in the Middle East "*all the problems, the conflicts, and tribulations fallback to Palestine*". Although it would seem that there is some exaggeration to that saying there is not, for all issues of the Middle East have to do with the Palestinian issue in one way or another, so even when there is no direct involvement of Palestinians, the Palestinian issue will be used to justify or consolidate an act.

Almost 20 years have passed since the Oslo Accord was signed in 1993. At the time, the Palestinian people and the leadership were entering uncharted territory for them - peace with the Israelis. Many Palestinians and Israelis alike have doubted that the viability and the authenticity of such peace. They are suspicious of whether this peace can possess the durability, sustainability, and overall effectiveness, to resolve one of the most complicated conflicts in modern history. On the one hand, the Palestinians argue that their rights to this land are indisputable and that they have the heritage and history to show for it. More than that, they have the living, breathing testimonies of those who once existed in what is so called Israel. On the other hand, the Israelis base their claim on a divine right to this land and a history in the land that goes back more than 2,000 years.

When the U.S President Barack Obama took over office on January 20, 2009, optimism dominated the atmosphere, with anticipation that a wind of change was on the horizon. Even though Obama emphasized that under his administration the U.S would continue its commitment to the security of Israel, many regarded this as a typical pronouncement for every U.S president. He also emphasized the inevitability of a Palestinian State and the imperative that all forms of Israeli settlement construction cease and the outposts be dismantled. The U.S. position on the matter seemed so firm that appeared that Israel would indeed freeze the settlements' construction and dismantle the outposts.

Over the past couple of decades the Palestinian people have established solid ground for a promising democracy with enormous prospective for a dynamic state at peace with its neighbors. Democratic values of pluralism, individual rights and freedoms, and the rule-of-law are ingrained in the Palestinian people, suggesting that a viable state is not only feasible, but a natural next step

once the Israeli occupation comes to an end. There are, of course, many important details and obstacles to work out in development of this future state, particularly regarding its borders.

Some issues taken for granted when it comes to this conflict. Firstly that Palestine should exist on the land occupied by Israel during the 1967 war, (known as the 1967 border lines with Israel), with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital. Secondly, the state of Palestine must be geographically contiguous and undivided in order to truly be considered a sovereign state with absolute dominion over its territory so that there cannot be Jewish-only access roads and settlements dotting its landscape. Thirdly there must be a resolution for refugees from neighboring countries to become a part of the new Palestine based on UN resolution 194.

Many obstacles remain, although Palestinians will be able to manage these challenges if there is enough international support. Regardless of past and the extreme circumstances they continue to face, the Palestinian people are incredibly resilient and embrace a culture of democracy. With the proper support, the Palestinian Authority could well be on the road to creating the dynamic, democratic Palestine that people have desired for so long.

The PLO, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, accepted the Interim Agreement in 1995 as an interim step towards a final peace treaty between Israelis and Palestinians. The Interim Agreement stated that: "neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations".

Unfortunately, the years that followed represented a continuation of Israel's' systematic policy of settlement expansion, which doubled between 1993 and 2000. It has spiraled since then simultaneously with the Israeli Government's domination by right-wing leaders.

The foremost supporters to the settlement program have been Prime Ministers Sharon, Olmert, and Netanyahu and their leadership has resulted in the illegal construction of thousands of housing units in settlements, especially in the city of Jerusalem.

Concurrently, Palestinian leadership has asked that negotiations resume only after Israel had fulfilled its own obligations by the freezing of all settlement construction in the West Bank and Jerusalem, including so-called "natural growth" construction. For Palestinians, such a moratorium is a prerequisite for the resumption of negotiations with the Israeli side, as they view it as an obligatory part of the Road Map and one which Israel has been evading for decades.

In reality, Israel continues to violate and manipulate the Interim Agreement by creating de facto realities on the ground which has severely fragmented the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These so called “facts on the ground” will not only affect the outcome of the final status negotiations, but may well preclude any possibility of creating a viable and sustainable Palestinian state.

Today, there is a growing skepticism that renewed negotiations can lead to a just and lasting peace based upon the realities on the ground. The Palestinians also realize that they stand at a crossroads deciding how to proceed without a partner in the peace process.

At this time, Palestinians are more aware of what lies ahead of them. At one time Palestinians were eager to put the occupation behind them and move forward with their long-stalled lives, but they seem unable to do that as long as they see that such intention does not exist on the Israel side of the equation. Viewing the progression of events since the Interim Accords, the Israelis have a different vision of peace that seeks to tailor the long anticipated Palestinian state to conform to their colonization plans. Unfortunately, even those who anticipated such a turn of events, earnestly wish that they had been wrong. They believe that the sacrifices made by the Palestinian people in their quest for peace are worthy of an end that would justify what they have endured in the creation of the state of Israel and the ensuing occupation.

Despite the conventional wisdom, the end of Israel’s occupation of Palestine is not merely awaiting the resolution of a few issues. The countervailing Palestinian narrative reveals that it is the very Israeli occupation of Palestine that is preventing fruitful peace negotiations. The facts on the ground show that far from being a “peace partner”, Israel is actively seeking to annex so much Palestinian land that there can never be a “two state” solution because Palestine would have no contiguous land area.

In reality, a careful examination of historical facts shows that the Palestinian side has been a very willing peace partner. Most notably, President Abbas and the PLO have honored their role in the Road Map for peace agenda, and ended the violence on the part of Palestinians in the West Bank. Israel’s refusal to acknowledge their efforts in the peace process seems more than shortsighted, as it appears inconceivable that Israel will find a more willing peace partner than Abbas and the PLO. To some, shunning the PLO poses the real risk that the “Arab Spring” could come to Palestine and leave Israel with no partner at all.

Accordingly, Palestinians call upon President Obama to induce Israel to:

- Abide by international law by ending its occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza including East Jerusalem) and to END its prolonged daily attacks and assaults on the Palestinian people; immediately release all political prisoners; stop all the attacks on the Palestinian institutions and residents; and abandon its policy of land confiscation particularly against agricultural land, which is the only source of livelihood for many Palestinian farmers.
- Relinquish its intolerant policy that resulted in the mass murder of thousands of Palestinian civilians, entire families at times.
- Conform to international humanitarian law and all international regulations; respect the Palestinian humanitarian and basic rights to live freely with dignity, and to allow religious freedom, freedom of movement, and the right to live anywhere, all of which are granted and sanctioned under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Remove all obstacles and barriers (more than 600) erected in the occupied territory to restrict Palestinian movement, consequently affecting the education, health, economic and social segments of Palestinian society.
- Remove all checkpoints surrounding occupied East Jerusalem which isolate it from the rest of the West Bank, allowing freedom of access to the city's Holy sites for both Christian and Muslims to practice religious freedom.
- Stop constructions immediately and begin dismantling the Segregation Wall being built illegally in the West Bank
- Respect and concede the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling of July 9, 2004 to on the Segregation Wall and all Israeli related activities in the occupied territory.
- Stop political arrests and all forms of torture and humiliation against Palestinians.
- Release all Palestinian political prisoners from Israeli jails, particularly minors and women.
- Release all members of the Palestinian parliament taken in custody
- Stop all forms of manipulation to alter the geographic and demographic status of occupied East Jerusalem in favor of the Israelis.

- Restore and respect the territorial unity between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip according to the signed agreement as prior to the year 2000.

It is the dream of Palestinians to live in peace and justice alongside the Israeli

People and we look to President Obama and all people of good will to join us

In making our dream a reality

This report tackles the significant myths and counterproductive claims that have been set forth as pillars of fact and presented to the United States people and their government, as well as the

international community, during the numerous rounds of peace negotiations. Despite the conventional wisdom, the end of Israel's occupation of Palestine is not merely awaiting the resolution of a small number of "minor" issues. The report makes clear that there is a countervailing narrative about the Occupation that creates a realistic, nuanced and balanced view of a very tragic and complex reality – for Palestinians, and Israelis.

The PLO, founded in 1964 as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, strongly believes in coexistence and tolerance, and seeks comprehensive support from the international community, primarily the United States, as the key sponsor of the peace process.

President Abbas, represent historical and national leaders of the Palestinian people who strongly believe in peace and a two state solution based on the 1967 borders. Even though for the last twenty years the negotiation process has produced no viable results, President Abbas continues to seek a peace based on a -two state solution. When he sought non-member observer status for the Palestinian state at the UN, President Abbas confirmed his unshakable commitment to peace based upon international law and the UN resolutions, and recognized Israel's right to exist in security, side by side with the future independent Palestinian state. Instead of being supported in his efforts, Israelis, including the Israeli government, continued to claim Israel has no partner for peace.

Israelis and Palestinians can solve their disputes through bilateral negotiations:

Israel continues to occupy Palestine and increasingly advances its colonialist aims through implementing restrictive fiscal, military and political policies, in opposition to the conditions set out in peace accords that were the result of past 'bilateral' negotiations. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the UN Security Council recently expressed doubt that bilateral negotiations present a realistic way forward for Israeli and Palestinian parties, saying; *"A negotiated two-state solution, to which both leaders are committed, must remain the highest priority. We fear, however, that the door for such a solution may be closing before our eyes"*.

However, the U.S. President Barack Obama's planned visit to the West Bank and Israel during March 2013 relatively demonstrates a renewed focus by the U.S. on the political landscape of the

Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the visit itself may be a catalyst for resuming negotiations needed before bilateral negotiations can be resumed. Facts on the ground must change before parties can engage in talks of a truly bilateral nature; both parties must acknowledge one another as sovereign entities of relative power. Negotiations between the Occupier and the Occupied simply will not succeed.

Five reasons why bilateral negotiations have not and will not work:

1: Lack of mutual recognition:

The definition of 'bilateralism' is, 'political, economic, or cultural relations between two sovereign states.' bilateral negotiations between conflicting parties in any conflict scenario necessitate that both negotiating states must be sovereign entities. However, Israel has repeatedly failed to acknowledge Palestine as a sovereign state, and to this day, all negotiations have taken place without recognition of Palestinian sovereignty by Israel and the failure of some key stakeholders of the peace process and of the international community, until recently, to recognize Palestine as a sovereign entity.

Although Palestine has agreed to acknowledge the reality of Israel's statehood, (accepted by 160 member states of the UN), the Palestinian position during negotiations has been weakened through international rejection of its statehood. Until the majority of the world recognizes Palestine as a sovereign state, Israel will have no incentive to do so.

In November 2012, the Palestinian National Authority, led by Mahmoud Abbas, made a unilateral move to secure statehood by requesting that the UN, through a vote of its members, to upgrade Palestine's status from a "non-member entity" with no voting rights, to a "non-member state observer". The upgrade was partly a symbolic request for recognition, and partially an expression of its frustration at the prolonged stalling of the peace process. Both Israel and the United States voted against the measure. Status as an observer state in the UN will allow the 'State of Palestine' to join treaties and specialized UN agencies, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Law of the Seas Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Criminal Court. It permits Palestine to claim legal rights over its territorial waters and air space as a sovereign state recognized by the UN. Perhaps most importantly, this change in status allows the Palestinian people the right to sue for control of their claimed territory in the International Court of Justice.

However, this change in status is just the first step needed to make bilateral negotiations a plausible end to the conflict. 'Non-member' status (shared with only one other entity, the Vatican) does not give Palestine the same level of sovereignty as Israel, which possesses permanent membership status. Israel's rejection of Palestine's bid for recognition in the UN illustrates its unwillingness to have an equal, bilateral partner. The U.S., as the main mediator of the conflict throughout the lengthy peace process, recognizes the state of Israel but not the state of Palestine, exposing an inherent bias in the negotiation process.

Furthermore, Palestine's change in legal status does not change the facts on the ground. Palestine remains under Israeli occupation and there are a multitude of freedoms (self- trade, movement of goods, travel, natural resource control and management, among other) that must be gained before meaningful Palestinian independence can be achieved.

Israel rejected Palestine's call for statehood, arguing that recognition bypasses the peace process. However, bilateral negotiations require that two sovereign partners to work out their grievances with one another. During a conference in Jerusalem in November 2012 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded to Palestinian aspirations for statehood by urging Israel to stand against the creation of a Palestinian state, saying, *"the only way to achieve peace is through agreements that are reached by the parties directly... and not through UN resolutions that completely ignore Israel's vital security and national interests. And because this resolution is so one-sided, it doesn't advance peace, it pushes it backwards"*. A Clear, rejection by Israeli PM Netanyahu for hopes of a bilateral equal relationship between Israel and Palestine, well documented through his unwillingness to support the creation of Palestinian statehood prior to entering negotiations.

Without statehood before a future negotiation process, the parties can never truly enter into a bilateral relationship based upon genuine recognition and relatively mutual power. Therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that Israel does not genuinely seek compromise, peace and settlement with Palestine as a recognized political equal.

Israel's claim that it has no peace partner has been made several times by Israeli politicians to justify the lack of progress in talks. This rhetoric emerged in the era of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barack and later strongly used by his successor Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, he who

insisted that there was no Palestinian partner for peace said, "*If it appears that there is no partner on the part of the Palestinians, we will isolate ourselves from them politically and financially.*"

More tragic than its refusal to recognize Palestinian sovereignty, Israel's deliberate and systematic policies are aimed at undermining the power of the Palestinian National Authority to administer control over all Palestinian affairs. Such policies include the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements within Palestinian territory, and the refusal to allow Palestinian citizens to develop housing, agricultural structures or to control their own natural resources.

As long as such actions taken by Israel continues on, the parties' relationship as occupier and occupied will always remain unfairly asymmetrical with no hope of them becoming equal negotiating partners.

2: Israel's lack of willing to make concessions

The reality of events on the ground must be compatible with the potential for a successful negotiated solution to the conflict. In conflict theory, the compatibility of events with resolution represents the pre-negotiation stage of a conflict lifecycle; 'parties solve their conflict only when they are ready to do so.' Negotiations have little hope of succeeding in the middle of a protracted conflict. There must be either a scenario of an 'imminent mutual catastrophe' thus hurrying partners to seek peace or there must be a recognized stalemate between parties which they both perceive a need to find a way out of.

As long as Israel maintains a position of greater power than Palestine, or does not see its situation as one of a catastrophe in need of urgent resolution, the scenario is not ripe for negotiation. The following are a number of examples of actions Israel is currently engaging in within the Palestinian territories, actions which destroy any chance of Israelis and Palestinians solving their grievances through bilateral negotiations.

- **The highest number of Israeli checkpoints ever in Palestinian territories**

According to Israeli NGO B'Tselem, as of December 2012 there were 97 fixed checkpoints within the occupied Palestinian territories, with 57 located well within the West Bank and 16 located in

the H2 region of Hebron. Forty of the checkpoints are the last inspection point before entering Israel, although many are located a few kilometers east of the Green Line or just outside of the entrance to Jerusalem. In these areas, checkpoints greatly restrict Palestinian freedom of human movement and the movement of goods. Moreover, the check-points restrict the sovereignty of the Palestinian National Authority to control roads, access to Palestinian territories, and to provide security. It is most unlikely that bilateral negotiations can begin while checkpoints are in place.

- **Settlement expansion:**

The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ)'s Geo-Informatics Department reports that as of 2012 there were 196 Illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, covering a total land area of 194.7 square km. Data shows that Palestinian land annexed by settlements has increased by 3.4% since 2009. The settler population has grown from 564,625 settlers in 2009 to 693,673 in 2012, representing an increase of approximately 13.2%. Furthermore, the 'Peace Now' group reports that between 2001 and 2009, the number of settlements grew 5% annually. That compares to an average Israeli proper population growth of just 1.8% over the same time period. By comparing the data from both Peace Now and ARI, one can see that settlements grew considerably between 2001 and 2012.

Mostly importantly, settlement growth has taken place under the watch of international observers who have made no significant efforts to hold Israel accountable for their expansion of settlements within the West Bank, although settlements are illegal under International human rights law. It is notable that this expansive growth took place during numerous peace attempts, including bilateral negotiations and high level talks, including the Taba talks (2001), the Saudi Peace Plan (2002) and the Road Map (2003). It seems evident that productive negotiations cannot take place until settlement construction is completely halted. Yet, during late 2011, current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the Israeli position, "*We won't renew settlement freeze to lure PA to talks.*" clearly this sentiment continues to hinder the peace process.

- **Increasing settler violence.**

A report on settler violence by The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) notes an increase in violence against Palestinian communities in the West Bank.

The violence occurs entirely with the support of the Israeli Occupation Forces and illustrates the Israeli government's tactic of forcing Palestinians to leave their lands through intimidation and violence. The report states that 'the number of settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties and property damage has increased by 32% in 2011, as compared to 2010.' The same report represented that over 80 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of approximately 250,000, are vulnerable to settler attacks. Of these, 76,000 Palestinians are considered to be at 'high risk.'

Israeli NGO B'Tselem further supports these claims. That organization has documented numerous acts of settler violence including: settlers uprooting olive trees, burning Palestinian lands, properties and possessions (often cars), throwing rocks and stones at Palestinian citizens and attacking them with knives, guns and other deadly weapons. Finally, a comprehensive village and town socio-economic profiling of 11 Governorates in the West Bank has documented a worrying number of cases of settler violence across all localities surveyed.

Those incidents involved many of the actions documented above by B'Tselem, some, unbelievably, committed while the settlers were being protected by Israeli soldiers. Israel's continued support of settler violence through its refusal to take legal action against settlers would seem to illustrate that it is Israel who is not ready to be a "partner for peace".

- **Demolition of housing is another facet of Israeli occupation.**

While Israel uses numerous reasons such military necessity, punishment, failure to obtain a building permit, among the most prominent, all of the demolitions violate the article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibiting the destruction of personal property, "except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations". Moreover, in East Jerusalem and the 61% of the West Bank designated as Area C Palestinians must obtain permits to be able to build a home from the Israeli authorities. Not surprisingly, as part of the annexation process Israel has put in place cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, and in practice, few permits are granted. Owing to a variety of reasons, primarily natural growth, Palestinians build the houses anyway, Since the initiation of the peace process in 1993 3,175 houses have been demolished by the Israeli army in area C including East Jerusalem by Israeli Army and the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the Israeli Ministry of Interior in Jerusalem indicate that the number (the initiation of the peace process) till 2012 stand at 3,175 houses In Jerusalem.

Palestinians can only obtain building permits in 13% of East Jerusalem and it is extremely difficult to get them as the application process is complicated and expensive and the number of permits granted each year to Palestinians does not meet the existing demand for housing. According to the Israeli organization Ir-Amim, natural growth among Palestinians in East Jerusalem requires the construction of 1, 500 housing units per year; however, only an average of 400 housing units is authorized each year. Furthermore, much of the area available for Palestinian construction is already built-up and difficulties related to land registration and fear that land ownership rights will not be respected by the Israeli authorities deter many landowners from even applying for permits. Therefore, unauthorized or 'illegal' construction has become a common practice, both within authorized as well as in forbidden built-up areas. However, those who build 'illegally' face the threat of demolition, displacement, and other penalties, including costly fines, confiscation of building equipment, and possible prison sentences. After decades of discriminations in housing, there are entire neighbourhoods that are unplanned and underserved which face the threat of wide-scale demolitions.

The Israeli Committee against House Demolition (ICAHD) calculated that the Israeli Municipality in Jerusalem demolished more than 2,000 Palestinian houses between 1967 and 2000. Between 2000 and September 2011, the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem demolished additional 1,091 Palestinian houses in occupied East Jerusalem. In Jerusalem demolitions were carried out in three different forms with the majority carried out by the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem. The second types of demolitions were based on orders from the Israeli Ministry of Interior. The third type is referred to as "self-demolishing" which occurs when Palestinian Jerusalemites are forced to carry out the demolishing of their own houses in order to avoid further penalties and fines if the municipality carries out the demolition. . Moreover, according to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in the oPt, at least 28% of all Palestinian homes are at risk of being demolished because they "violate" Israeli zoning policies This means that at least 60,000 Palestinians are at risk of losing their homes.

3: Increasing Israeli control over natural resources especially in the Jordan Valley region:

A 2012 report by global NGO Oxfam looked into the serious difficulties and denial of human rights faced by Palestinian citizens in the Jordan Valley region of the West Bank. Nearly the entire Jordan

Valley region (87%) falls under lands classified as 'Area C' by the Oslo Interim Accords II. In Area C Israel is in full control of security and administration related to the territory. In Area C Israel prohibits Palestinian building and land management by not approving or authorizing building permits and plans.

Further, the report claims that "The Jordan Valley has the potential to be the breadbasket of any future Palestinian state. Due to its fertile lands and water availability, this area could be improving the food security of residents living in the region and nearby, in addition to providing income from agricultural activities for the local population. However the report goes on to document that only 6 per cent of the land in the Jordan Valley is currently available for Palestinian use and development as the remaining 94% falls under absolute control of the Israeli occupation.

Daniel Levy summed up the Israeli position in "The Economist Debates" (October 17, 2011) arguing that, "One would not be unfairly maligning the current Israeli leadership to suggest that the positions of the government led by Binyamin Netanyahu and his foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, contain intransigence incompatible with productive negotiations." Levy further goes on to assert that, "On just about every issue Mr. Netanyahu's parameters for a two-state solution have significantly shifted the goalposts away from what might be considered reasonable to any fair-minded neutral observer, let alone any Palestinian."

Genuine willingness to make peace must be accompanied by actions which show that 'painful concessions' are being taken to bring resolution to the conflict. However, thus far the majority of 'painful concessions' have been forced upon the Palestinians by military terror imposed by Israeli occupation forces. If genuine concessions are to be made by both sides in order to achieve a durable peace. They must be done around a negotiating table where both sides are on an equal footing. Both sides must recognize the need to make concessions to one another in order to live peaceably while respecting basic human rights.

Oslo II in 1995 covered a number of final status issues which have blocked the peace process, including; status of Jerusalem, the fate of refugees, security arrangements, borders and settlements. This is not to say that the difficulty in working out the final status issues means that bilateral negotiations cannot work; indeed, these are issues that should be worked out around the negotiating table.

However, Israel's present actions on the ground demonstrate its unwillingness to concede any of these issues. Israel's consistent refusal to make concessions makes settlement of these issues increasingly unlikely. The continuation of settlement construction, redefining the boundaries of Jerusalem through the creeping apartheid of the Segregation Wall, and land seizures certainly cannot be seen as helping to pave the way for a resolution on final status agreements.

- **Control of Water Resources**

UN resolution 64\292, July 29, 2010, finds access to clean water a human right. The right to clean water has a unique place in Israel's policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When Israel confiscates Palestinian lands, it also takes control over water bodies such as seas, lakes, wells and springs in order to provide a surplus of water to its settlers in the West Bank.

Israel does this at the expense of the Palestinian community by hindering them from reaching their water resources through constructing checkpoints, outposts, as well as the segregation Wall.

Presently, water bodies such as seas, lakes and rivers, amounting to 99% of the water paths in the West Bank, are under Israeli control. The Segregation Wall has destroyed or isolated more than 135 wells and 59 springs.

According to the non-government institution Emergency Water Sanitation and Hygiene in the occupied Palestinian territory (EWASH), Palestinians consume on average 70 liters of water per person, even though the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a minimum of 100 liters water a day for every human being. On the other hand, Israelis consume an average 300 liters of water per person a day - three times, more than WHO standards. Moreover, some Israeli settlements in the West Bank consume 700 liters per person per day.

4: Israel has genuine aspirations for peace and desires to end its control over the land it has occupied since 1967

Did Israel Ever Seek to end its control over the land it has occupied since 1967 and give it back to the Palestinians? The answer is no. The present Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a

living testimony to this fact. Consistent in his convictions he renounced the peace process when he was prime minister in 1996 and refused to continue with the peace negotiations. Restored to power in 2009, he is still unwilling to continue with the peace process unless he can unilaterally dictate its rules and outcome, starting with burying the two-state solution.

In fairness, Netanyahu is not unique in his stance. Every Israeli prime minister has held the same positions, and the only distinction is the manner in which Netanyahu is the straight forward, blunt manner in which he deals with it, which in some respects may actually be easier to deal with than a more subtle approach.

The Israeli persistence in expanding illegal settlements is an unmistakable indication of its intention to sabotage the peace process because Israel knows full well that the Palestinians view the settlements as a clear daily message to the average Palestinian that the Israeli government never intends to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian lands.

Israel went even further to show its disinterest in the entire peace process when it claimed that the Palestinians represented by the late President Yasser Arafat were not partners in the peace process. When Arafat was assassinated in 2003, and Mahmoud Abbas became the president, Israel continued to evade its obligations in the peace process, eventually claiming once again that it was the Palestinians who were not ready for peace.

Israel can only redeem its reputation with the Palestinians and the entire Middle East when it complies with U.N resolution 242 by withdrawing from the land it has occupied since the 1967 war, including territories of neighboring Arab countries.

Israel must also recognize the Palestinian refugees' and their rights in compliance with the U.N. resolution 194 and compensate them for decades in Diaspora. Every year more nations are demanding that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights be honored and put into effect, particularly in the Middle East.

The final status issue regarding Jerusalem is critical to a lasting peace. The constant Israeli provocation of the Palestinians, the tenders issued to increase the settlements in the Jerusalem area in particular, and Israel's insistence that East Jerusalem is not part of the occupied territory are the

surest indicators of Israel's lack of desire for peace. Despite the fact that not even one country in the world recognizes East Jerusalem as part of Israel, Israel continues to block housing for Arab Israelis. Israel even goes so far as to destroy their homes, while simultaneously encouraging and facilitating the growth of non-Arab Israelis in the same area. Israeli's takeover of East Jerusalem continues despite the UN resolutions after the 1967 war calling upon Israel to withdraw from East Jerusalem. Israel's activities in East Jerusalem are indisputable evidence that Israel is not Partner for peace.

5: Israel's fails to recognize Palestine

The Israeli Government believes that Palestine has no right to exist and have demonstrated this position on numerous occasions.

In 2009, status chart relating to Israeli and Palestinian fulfillment of their respective obligations under the Road Map to peace, have found Israeli falling to adhere obligations; "Statement affirming commitment to the two-state vision; calling for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians." Status: "Failed".

On November 29th 2012 Israel joined by only eight other UN member-states, rejected Palestine's call for statehood by voting "no" to UN Resolution 194, A "No" vote for granting Palestine as a non-member observer status. Israel argued that recognizing Palestine's right to exist bypasses the peace process, even though bilateral negotiations require two sovereign partners in order to resolve grievances.

The question remains, is why Palestine must recognize Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state and yet Israel needs not accept Palestine right to exist as a sovereign state?

The peace process ended Israeli occupation but left certain issues to be resolved

The Madrid conference in 1991 presented for the first time a historic opportunity to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace. In

September 1993, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel signed the Declaration of Principles (DOP), which called for an interim period of 5 years during which the representatives of the Palestinian people and the Israeli government would initiate negotiations over the final status issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and water.

It was also agreed that during the interim period neither party would initiate any action that might jeopardize the outcome of final status negotiations. The "Oslo II" agreement, signed in Washington D.C. in September of 1995, set out the interim stage for Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, pending "final status negotiations" which were scheduled to begin in May 1996 and finish by May 1999.

Under the Interim Agreement the first phase of the Israeli military forces redeployment was to be completed prior to the eve of the Palestinian elections, or at least 22 days before the day of the elections; with further redeployments completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Palestinian National Association legislative council. During that time, the powers and responsibilities relating to the West Bank and Gaza strip territory were to be transferred gradually to Palestinian jurisdiction, except for the issues of the settlements and Jerusalem which were to be settled by the permanent status negotiations. This meant that 95 % of the West Bank and Gaza should have come under Palestinian control 18 months after the inauguration of the Council in 1999.

In 1993, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the State of Israel signed a peace agreement, according to which Israel agreed to commence phased withdrawal from the territories (West Bank and Gaza) occupied in the 1967 war. This withdrawal was to be based on both the terms of the agreement and further negotiations. The agreement garnered much attention from the international community, which at the time dared to hope that it was witnessing the end of one of the world's most protracted conflicts. Unfortunately, the peace sought by both parties when they entered negotiations quickly proved to be little more than a mirage. Nearly two decades later, the conflict has turned into a maze of inverted realities for both sides.

The Oslo signed agreement called for a five-year phased period during which the Israeli army would withdraw from occupied territory and a Palestinian Authority would be set up, paving the way for final status negotiations and a permanent settlement of the final issues of Jerusalem,

borders, refugees, water and settlements. Nonetheless, from the onset Israel has acted to annex as much land as possible from oPt, condemning Palestinians to live in confined cantons that are economically unviable and heavily dependent on international aid.

For the Palestinians, the advantages and disadvantages of the peace negotiations were many and varied. However one significant reality is that by 1993, Palestinians had proved not only their resilience in the face of oppression, but also their ability to refine their resistance – a characteristic that caught Israel off guard as it remained entrenched in its outdated conception of the occupation. Prior to the 1993 agreement Palestinians had much greater room to maneuver – with any failure to ensure their wellbeing falling upon the shoulders of the occupation. However, upon the signing of the Oslo Accord, Israel presumed that it was no longer accountable for the areas ceded to the Palestinian Authority - areas where the majority of the Palestinian population lives.

It appeared that in Israel's judgment, the Oslo accord ended the conflict with the Palestinians and the remaining issues were merely details that to be worked out, or not, in the future.

However, on the ground, neither of the above agreements became effective. Stalled negotiations and other delays, as well as re-negotiation of what was already agreed upon, led to only partial Israeli withdrawals. Consequently by March 2000 the areas under effective Palestinian control amounted to no more than 18.2 % of the West Bank total area, defined under Oslo accord as Area A.

In July 2000, President Clinton hosted the Israeli and Palestinian leaders for a summit at Camp David in an attempt to revitalize the peace process with an agreement on the final status framework. However, this summit failed to achieve its objectives when on 28th of September 2000 Ariel Sharon made his following provocative entry into the sacred vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque the second Intifada erupted.

Since 2000, Israel's closure of the Palestinian Territories has restricted the ability of Palestinians to travel and work to a degree unprecedented in the prior 34 years of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Internal closures separate Palestinian localities from each other and result in hampering and sometimes freezing, the economic, political, educational, medical, and social service activities necessary for a healthy society. Such cantonization of the Palestinian Territory is achieved through the use of

roadblocks (including destroying the paved roads), checkpoints, and military patrols, all designed and established to promote Israeli settlers' desire to have a segregated transportation grid, which facilitates the settlers' travel and lifestyle, while at the same time expanding Israel beyond the 1949 Armistice line.

For any nation sovereignty over natural resources is one of the key elements necessary to achieve sustainable development and sound environmental management. The case of Palestine is no different than other nation as it passes from occupation to liberation. Without the ability to regulate land use over a contiguous piece of land, natural ecosystems cannot be maintained, the status of the environment cannot be properly monitored, and environmental protection cannot be implemented. The divisions of West Bank land into areas A, B, and C has produced two different and parallel planning schemes: one Israeli, to serve the Israeli settlers living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and the other Palestinian, to serve the Palestinian people. As the controlling power, the plans of the Israeli authority have systematically hindered the development of the Palestinians and damaged the environment in the process. All these practices have created a geographical discontinuity of the lands under the Palestinian control. This discontinuity is a major physical impediment towards accomplishing sustainable development in Palestine.

The Israelis have severely limited Palestinian access to a large portion of the natural resources in the West Bank. Areas such as the Jordan Valley and the Eastern Slopes are considered major natural resources in the region. Palestinians maintain a natural growth rate of 4%, which means that population densities in Palestine are especially high, with more than half of the Palestinian population (53%) in Palestine is under age 18.

Moreover, Palestinian decision-makers face the major dilemma of how to initiate agricultural development strategies given the uncertainties related to the eventual outcome of the final status negotiations. The constraints facing the nascent Palestinian economy became especially apparent after the Oslo Accord. Notwithstanding high hopes from the peace accord, the Palestinian economy plunged into a recession since 1993. The most apparent reason for the recession was Israel's frequent closures of the borders between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, within the West Bank, and from Palestinian National Authority (PNA) controlled areas into Israel.

These closures imposed by the Israeli occupation army essentially prevented the flow of goods and services between Palestine and Israel as well as within Palestinian itself. The economic situation deteriorated further following the Israeli siege imposed on the Palestinians as a result of the start of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000.

The peace process has bought progress to the Palestinians

As a nation under occupation, Palestine's progress in all spheres of development depends to a great extent on Israel's actions and policies. Two things can be reasonably asserted; i) in failing to implement the peace agreements Israel has evaded responsibility for its actions and continued its settlement enterprise expansion in occupied Palestine, which is negatively affecting Palestinian progress ii) each failed peace attempt has historically been followed by a backlash against the Palestinians resulting in punishing them for the failure, and further hindering their progress.

Main areas of stunted progress:

Below are some brief case studies highlighting some of the main areas of progress which have been hindered despite Palestine's efforts to engage in peace?

- **Construction of the Segregation Wall:**

Construction of the segregation wall has taken place throughout peace talks taking place after 2002. The Segregation Wall, cited by the Israel Government as necessary for security purposes, in reality represents a tactic for seizing Palestinian lands, creating territorial continuity between illegal Israeli settlements built on Palestinian lands, as well as gaining control of and managing natural resources within the Palestinian territory. All spheres of life, including economic and political progress are negatively affected by the Wall. The Segregation Wall restricts trade, access to medical care and schools as well as access to agricultural lands for and to provide food security and income. Just as critically, the Segregation Wall hinders Palestinian access to Jerusalem which is the capital for services in Palestine.

- **Land Seizure:**

The Second Interim Agreement of the Oslo Accords (1995) classified Palestinian territories into three distinct areas of legal and administrative control; Areas 'A', 'B' and 'C.' Area A refers to areas

under the full security and administrative control of the Palestinian National Authority. Area **B** refers to locations in which the Palestinian National Authority has complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. In Area **C**, Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory and all Palestinian building and land management is prohibited without the consent or authorization of the Israeli Civil Administration.

- **The Aid Problem:**

The stalled peace process has also stalled genuine and sustainable development within Palestine. As final status issues have been set aside for the almost 15 years since the second Oslo Accords, Palestine cannot make progress in controlling its own economy, trade, production and the other aspects of self-determination. Because Israel and Palestine have failed to reach a peace agreement, the living conditions and development prospects of the Palestinians continue to worsen and the Palestinian economy is kept afloat by the international aid, which floods into the region. In 2011 the World Bank declared the Palestinian Authority to be the only government in the world with a 'near total dependence on aid.' In addition, according to the World Bank, Palestinians, per capita, are the largest receivers of aid in the world. As long as the peace process fails to find a resolution, this grim state of affairs will continue with international donations helping to maintain a false reality of development in the occupied territories. However, if international aid were to be withdrawn, there would be little genuine development in the area. The foreign aid masks the real failure of the peace process whereby Israel has no legal accountability as it continues to carry out the restrictive policies which preclude development and progress in the Palestinian territories. Sadly, Israel is aided and abetted by the international community's reluctance to impose sanctions on its colonizing and occupying activities.

Ultimately, donor aid agencies must deal with the question of how best to confront Israel's illegal and destructive policies at work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They must understand that real development under occupation is impossible and that genuine development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory can not materialize until the issues of land and other resources that shape the Palestinian economy are addressed in a fair and sustainable manner. Aid has its greatest and best impact only when it is coupled with a clear political agenda in the pursuit of a just peace settlement.

According to the 2012 United Nations Development Program Report, “The “stuttering” implementation of the peace accords between the Israelis and the Palestinians, the consequent violent backlashes by the Israelis and the political considerations of the donors has repeatedly shifted financial resources away from statehood efforts and towards humanitarian support. After each round of peace attempts, the climate for progress worsens for the Palestinians Historically, after the parties leave the negotiating table and accords are drawn up, the increasingly right-wing Israeli Government continues the settlement expansion which is aided by the humiliation of the checkpoints and isolating Segregation Wall. Thus Israel’s pursuit of its ambition to colonize the Palestinian territories continues to retard Palestinian’s progress.

The land classifications expressed in Oslo II were not properly enforced and later, on October 23, 1998, the Wye River Memorandum was signed to "facilitate implementation" of the Oslo Interim agreement. . The memorandum stipulated that further redeployments of Israeli troops would give the Palestinians control over approximately 40% of the West Bank (Table 1). The redeployments were to be conducted in three stages and it was projected that after the completion of the third stage, 18.2% of the West Bank would fall under Area A with 21.8%, in Area B, and the remaining areas would continue to be Area C. The first stage went into effect on November 20, 1998, two weeks after the agreed timeline. However, the following two stages were stalled and on December 15, 1998, the Israeli government announced its decision to stop further redeployment, thereby freezing the implementation of the Wye agreement indefinitely.

Table 1: The redeployments as mentioned in the Wye River Memorandum

	Total Area A	Total Area B	Total Area C
Stage I	10.1%	18.9%	71.0%
Stage II (not implemented)	10.1%	23.9%	66.0%
Stage II (not implemented)	18.2%	21.8%	60.0%

Since the Wye River Memorandum encountered obstacles in implementation, it needed a new agreement to effectuate its terms. On September 4, 1999 the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum was signed. Its purpose was to reiterate each party’s commitment to implement Oslo II as well as the other agreements between the PLO and Israel since 1993. It provided that Permanent Status talks were to resume in an accelerated manner and September 2000 was set as the deadline for their conclusion. The memo also contained clauses detailing the release of prisoners, the operation of the

Gaza Port, the Safe Passage Route, and modifications in the stages of redeployment. The first and second stages were implemented (albeit after delays) while the third stage, which was scheduled for the 20th of January 2000, has not been implemented (Table 2)

Table 2: Redeployments as mentioned in the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum

	Total Area A	Total Area B	Total Area C
Stage I	10.1%	25.9%	64.0%
Stage II (implemented in delay)	12.1%	26.9%	61.0%
Stage II (not implemented)	18.2%	21.8%	60.0%

The final status negotiations which were supposed to commence in May 1996 and end by 1999 officially started in early September 1999. In the interim, the Israeli government continued its unilateral practices in the West Bank and Gaza strip creating de facto realities on the ground. These de facto realities clearly prejudice the outcome of negotiations on the final status of the Occupied Territories in Israel's favor. Such activities are in total violation of United Nations' resolutions, particularly 298 and 242, as well as standing Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

Israel's failure to uphold the divisions of land as per the agreements has resulted in a negative effect on Palestinian development. Today, Israel has greater security and civil control over a larger area of the West Bank than the area controlled by the Palestinian National Authority, thus restricting Palestinian development of land use, housing construction and resource management, as well as other facets of development.

Not a Fence, Not a Barrier, but a Segregation Wall

On June 2002, the Israeli Government launched its policy of unilateral segregation within the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) by establishing a Segregation Zone along the western side of the occupied West Bank. The Western Segregation Zone is the area west of the Segregation Wall that reaches to the 1949 Armistice Line (the Green Line). The Segregation Zone covers substantial and significant land areas that are rich in natural resources (water aquifers) as it runs along the western part of the West Bank from north to south, and seizes the most fertile agricultural lands. At the same time it divides Palestinian communities into enclaves, undermining the territorial

contiguity between the Palestinian villages and cities, while encapsulating and protecting most of the illegal Israeli settlements. The term “Segregation Wall” identifies two types of structures: used in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: either 20, 25, or 40 feet high concrete barriers, or a multi-line parallel fences.

The type of structural partition is based upon whether the area is agricultural land or a densely populated village or town. When the Segregation Wall construction is a fence, it cuts through vast agriculture lands, and is more devastating to the land than the wall because it requires an area of 22-44 yards wide to complete. Moreover, the fence is double, reinforced with barbed wires, trenches, military roads and footprint-detection tracks, and includes 10 feet high electrified metal fence, equipped with security surveillance cameras. In areas with sizeable population or in close proximity to the Green Line, the concrete Segregation Wall is employed; including cylindrical watchtowers spread 275 yards apart along the wall.

According to the latest update in April 2007, the Wall will extend 480 miles, but only 72 miles will run on the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line). Therefore 283 square miles, or 13% of the total area of the West Bank will be isolated by the Segregation Wall. The following table shows the classification of Palestinian land within the isolated area:

Western Segregation Zone (283m²) Land use/ Land cover		
Item	Area/ m²	percentage
Agricultural Land	134	47.5
Israeli settlements & military bases	42.5	15
Forest and open space areas	96.5	34
Palestinian built-up area	10	3.5
Total	283	100%

- *Is it a temporary structure?*

The Israeli government maintains that the Segregation Wall is a temporary structure designed to prevent attacks on Israeli citizens by physically separating the West Bank from Israel. However, the route of the Wall proves the Israelis' false narrative that it is a temporary structure. 107 Israeli settlements, accommodating over 80% of the Israeli settlers' population in the West Bank will be included in the area annexed from the West Bank, as well as 400,000 Palestinians in 66 Palestinian communities, including East Jerusalem,

- ***The Segregation wall causes suffering in the Palestinian community in Jerusalem.***

The suffering of Jerusalem's Palestinians is no different from the suffering of Palestinians in the West Bank. However, for Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem there is also an added dimension because Jerusalem is an historic and religious symbol for hundreds of millions of Palestinian Muslims and Christians.

Today, Palestinians make up 35 percent of Jerusalem's citizens and that percentage is rising. This statistic represents a demographic threat to Israel, not only because the Palestinian population growth threatens resources available to Jerusalem's Jewish residents, but also because it exposes the Israeli policy of discriminating against its Palestinian citizens by marginalizing their place in the city in order to maintain a Jewish demographic superiority through an overall neglect of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Sometimes they revoke Palestinians residency status (for example 14,000 East Jerusalem Palestinians had their residency revoked between 1967 and 2010). Routinely, they deny building permits to Palestinian residents who are forced to build without a permit in order to meet their needs of 'natural growth'. Then the Israeli government demolishes the houses and shops because they have been "built without a permit". This vicious cycle is compounded by Israel's refusal to develop infrastructure in East Jerusalem. The lack of adequate roads, sewage treatment, water and electricity has led to substantial poverty and the inability to access education. Thus, Israeli policies force the exodus of large numbers of Palestinian families from East Jerusalem.

While the segregation wall in West Bank divides Palestinians villages and neighborhood, Israel policies in Jerusalem divide Jews from Palestinians.

The Israeli separation's policies not only jeopardize Jerusalem's ability to be a central city for both Palestinians and Jews, but also impede Palestinian territorial continuity between the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Settlement Expansion

The Israeli government encourages the settlements in the occupied West Bank and in the Jerusalem area in particular, by giving incentives to the settlers, including housing subsidies, income tax reductions, disproportionately generous budget allocations to the settlement areas, as well as business grants. In the past two decades, these policies, aided by the construction of bypass roads to link the settlements, and the excessive control of the Israeli Army, the area annexed by Israeli settlements' has increased 182% (from 69 km² in 1990, to 194.7 km² in 2012) (ARIJ GIS database 2012). In return, the number of Israeli settlers went from 240,000 in 1990 to more than 693,000 in 2012, - an increase of 189% (ARIJ GIS Department, 2012).

- ***The Expansion of the settlements is to meet the needs of natural growth.***

Since Netanyahu came into power in March 2009, he has offered no viable alternatives to the status-quo in the occupied Palestinian territory, nor has he ever addressed the Palestinians as equal partners in the peace process. He actively spurns peace by continuing and expanding construction activities in the Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, especially focusing on Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, a part of the city which Israel annexed illegally and unilaterally after the Six Day War.

The Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territory are one of the foremost obstacles to ever achieving any real progress in the peace process. Furthermore, they block agreement on the other important final status issues of Jerusalem, borders, water, refugees and Israeli security concerns. As more Palestinian land is taken for settlement expansion, less land is available for future Palestinian development. Additionally, as settlement building and expansion continues, there is growing concern that the increasing fragmentation of the West Bank territory will endanger the possibility of a contiguous Palestinian state in the future.

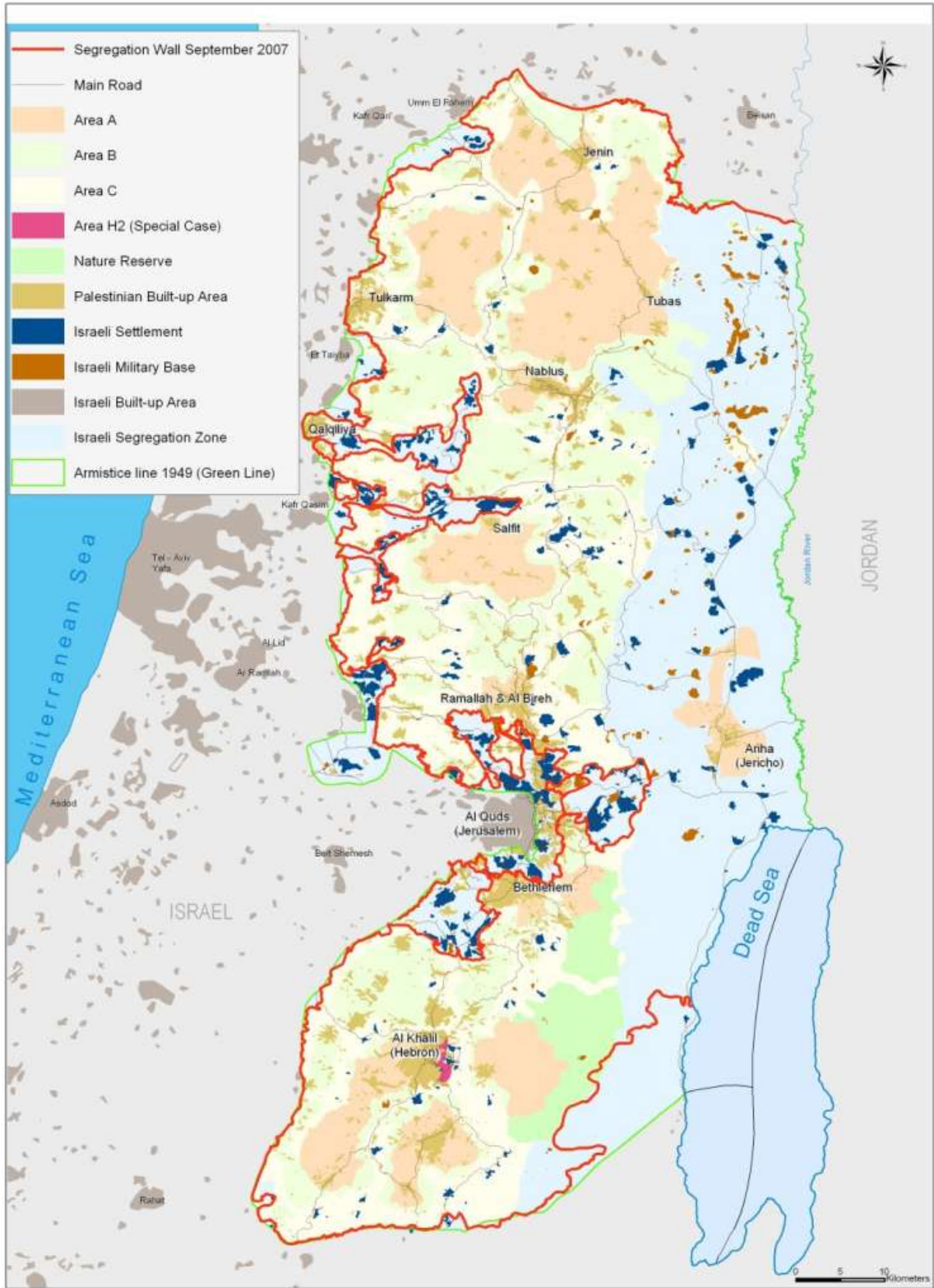
During his first four-year term, Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu failed to make concessions in return for true peace with the Palestinians, while at the same time stalling the peace talks, and blaming the internal conflicts between Fateh and Hamas for precluding Palestine from being a credible peace partner. Further, he has claimed that the Palestinian National Authority is nearing collapse, and is no longer able to carry out its internal and external obligations towards the peace process.

While it is true that Netanyahu has repeatedly offered the Palestinians peace negotiations, he has simultaneously supported and encouraged the continuing construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory even though international law and UN resolutions clearly define the Israeli settlements as *illegal*.

- **The 10-month settlement freeze**

On November 27, 2009, Prime Minister Netanyahu, declared a 10-month settlement freeze in the West Bank, beginning in December 2009 and ending in September 2010, claiming that it would give the peace process a chance to move forward. However, he excluded ongoing settlement projects initiated prior to December 2009, and also exempted from the freeze new building as part of the natural growth in existing settlements. Moreover, East Jerusalem was excluded from the moratorium and settlement expansion continued there, even though the Road Map peace plan of 2003, called for Israel to freeze *all* settlement activities in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

During the time of the settlement freeze various Israeli ministries and bodies published plans for building approximately 25,000 housing units in Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Virtually 99% of the plans were issued for Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and settlements located in the Western Segregation Zone, (the area Israel seeks to annex through the construction of the Segregation Wall), as well as for Israeli settlements located in existing major settlements blocs.



The Segregation Wall Plan in the Occupied West Bank

- **The settlement moratorium had no meaningful effect on the ground because:**

In September 2010, following the expiration of the 10-month settlement freeze, Israel restarted construction in the settlements and announced that it would build 18,000 settlement units in 2011 and more than 26,000 units in 2012. With these announcements, Israel rendered the entire settlement freeze meaningless and insignificant by applying its own conditions to the conflict.

This cynical expansion and development cannot be construed as a good faith effort by Israel to resume serious peace negotiations with the Palestinians when prior to the announcement of the moratorium, the Israeli authorities issued plans for more than 30,000 units to be built in settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including settlements in East Jerusalem. Therefore, during the so-called 2010 settlement freeze the pace of building in settlements was mainly unaffected.

Not only did Israel exclude East Jerusalem settlements from the freeze, but it also continued to issue housing plans for targeted settlements with high strategic importance, as well as locations in East Jerusalem, in the Western Segregation zone and inside existing settlement blocs. Notably, Israel has repeatedly asserted it doesn't consider Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem to be "settlements" since Israel contends that any construction in Jerusalem is part of their own '*eternal and undivided capital of Jerusalem*', even though it lies within the occupied territory, that has never been recognized by the international community .

By forcing facts on the ground and manipulating the geographic and demographic balance of the occupied territory, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem, Israel is destroying any possibility of fruitful negotiations to reach a peace agreement based on a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as the capital of both states.

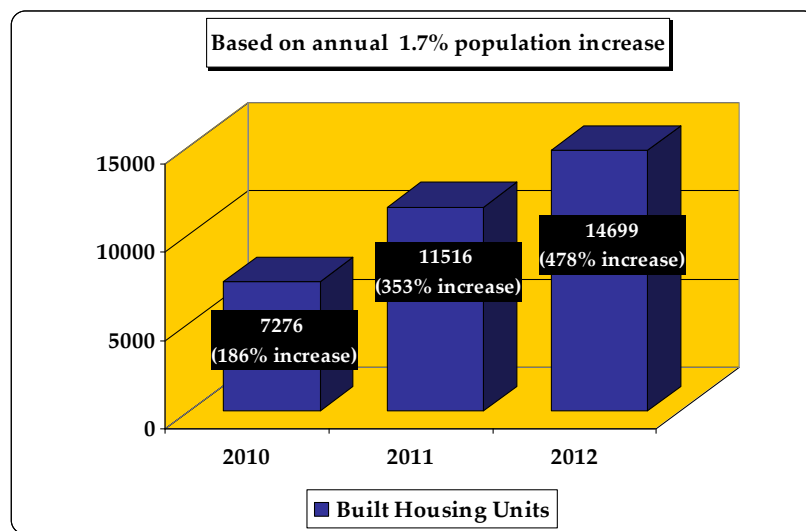
By continuing construction in settlement blocs surrounding Jerusalem, Israel is aiming to cut off the city from the rest of the Palestinian West Bank Governorates. To that end, Israel wants to maintain control over the five major Israeli settlement blocs in the West Bank to ensure that it remains a predominantly Jewish state, irrespective of the cost to the Palestinians.

Additionally, the settlement expansion is in conflict with the performance-based Roadmap which states:

“Creation of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders through a process of Israeli-Palestinian engagement, launched by the international conference. As part of this process, implementation of prior agreements, to enhance maximum territorial contiguity, includes further action on settlements in conjunction with establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders.”

- **Netanyahu’s legacy of settlement construction in the oPt**

Israel has always claimed that building new housing units in Israeli settlements is necessary to meet natural growth. However, while the Israeli settler population has increased between 4.7% and 4.9% each year since 2000, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) states that the natural population growth of Israel is 1.7. According to CBS, that growth rate would mean that the 628,000 settlers in the occupied West Bank (including East Jerusalem) would be in need of 2,541 housing units based on an average of 4.2 people per household. However, an analysis conducted by the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ), using high precision aerial photos, revealed that during the freeze of 2010, construction actually comprised 1,819 structures (representing 7,276 housing units) in 133 Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (186% increase). After the expiration of the freeze, an additional 11,516 settlement units were constructed in 2011 (a 353% increase) and 14,699 units in 2012 (a 478% increase). Figure 1 indicates that settlement expansion exceeds the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics figures:



Therefore it seems that growth is exceeding what would be “naturally expected” and rather than being spontaneous, the growth appears to be in the service of Israel’s political objective of colonizing the West Bank and Jerusalem.

- **Israeli “Outposts”, merely another tool to annex land**

In 1996, following the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1995, the Israeli settlers initiated a new phenomenon known as "outposts". An Outpost is created when a group of Israeli settlers takes control of a Palestinian hilltop located in close proximity to existing Israeli settlement which is known as the "mother settlement". The outposts often consisting of a few caravans of Israeli settlers are now spreading throughout the occupied Palestinian territory (opt).

Typically, Israeli uses four different methods to confiscate Palestinian lands for the establishment of outposts. All are illegal as they are inconsistent with international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which would seem to make the outposts nothing more than a pretext for seizing land. . In the first method, the outposts are frequently built on areas proclaimed by the Israeli Army to be “security areas”. The so-called “security areas” are conveyed to settlers control as soon as the Israeli army evacuates the military installations on the particular site. Israel engages in a second method whereby outposts are erected along confiscated lands, or on the buffer zones of bypass roads constructed for the sole use of nearby Israeli settlements. Another method involves confiscating massive tracts of land and proclaiming them to be “state lands”. Additionally there are private purchases of land, but in many cases these “purchases: are considered to be the result of fraud, and in all cases are illegal under international law.

Consecutive Israeli governments, regardless of the party in power, have not officially sanctioned the outposts’ sites, but certainly they have encouraged them by providing military protection and infrastructure services, in addition to occasional financial support. Many existing outposts have grown so large that they are in reality settlements. The number of outposts grew to a record high in 2013 of 232 outposts, not counting the dismantled outposts in various areas of the West Bank.

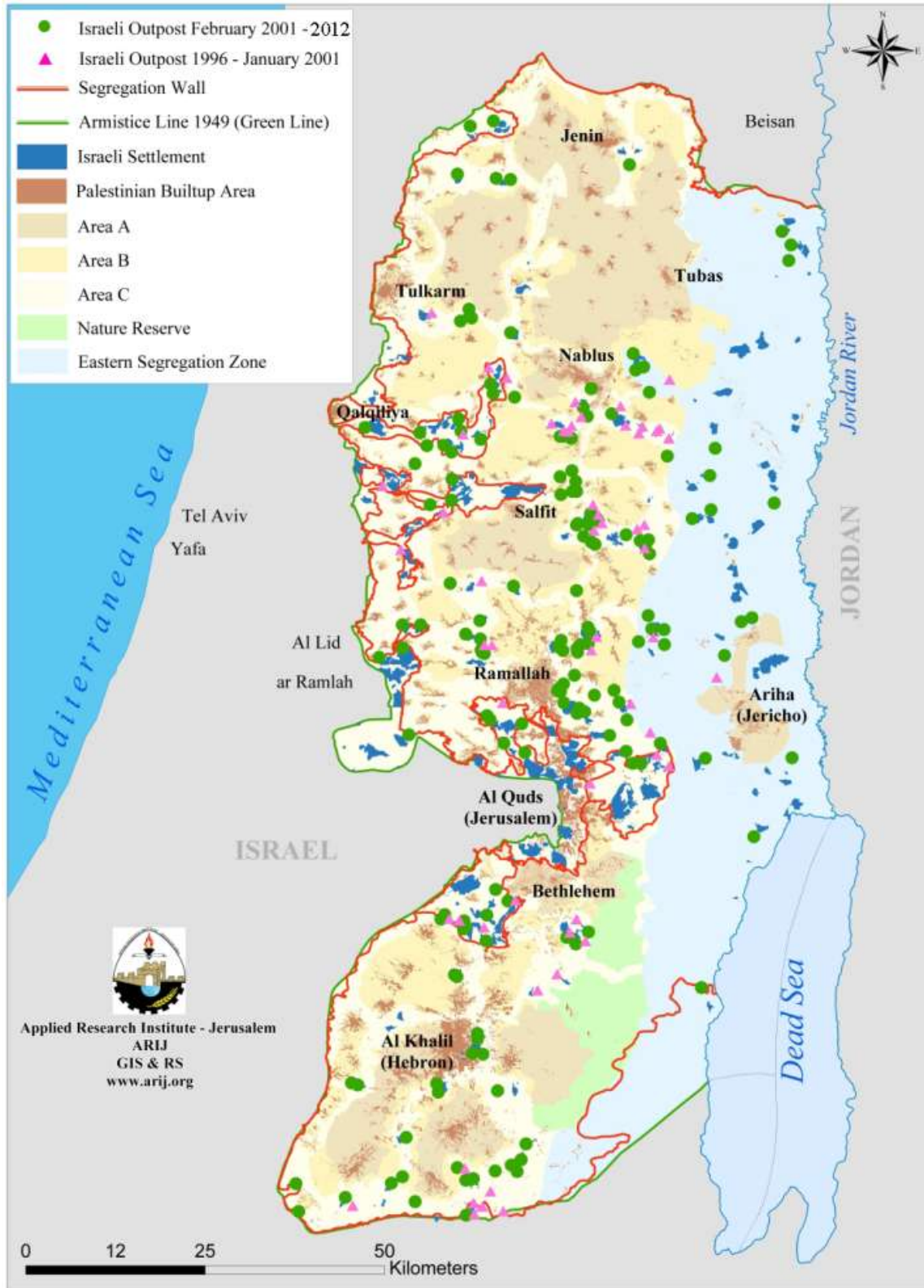
Because the construction and expansion of the outposts have re-enforced the contiguity between the outposts and the mother settlements they contribute to the expansion of the territory illegally annexed by Israeli settlements.

At the request of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Talia Sasson, former head of the Israeli State Prosecution Criminal Department, prepared, on March 10, 2005, a report on the status of established Israeli outposts in the occupied West Bank. The report acknowledged more than 125 outposts in the West Bank. The outposts were classified as one third illegal, one third as uncertain status, and the remaining third as governmentally supported to connect the outpost's homes (caravans, mobile homes, etc.) to the water and electricity networks. Sasson also noted in her report;

“... All outposts are illegal. It is important to emphasize that it's not merely to evacuate the outposts but to cease the entire procedure of budgeting and transferring state funds to the outposts. The very heart of the report is about the enforcement of the law, which is not a political issue, but a legal one, of tremendous importance for a democratic state.”

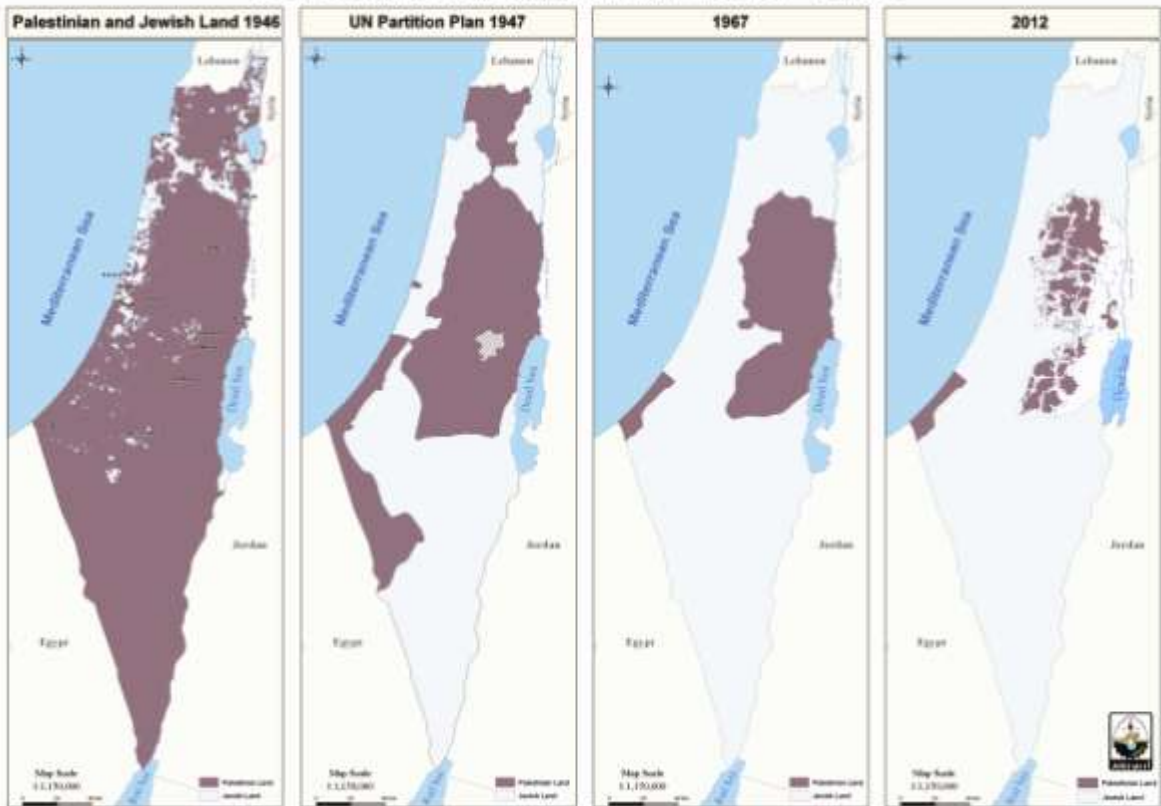
In the eight years since the Sasson report, Israel is still equivocating by failing to dismantle the outposts in the West Bank. A few attempts were made, but Israeli settlers dismantled and relocated the outposts, or simply reestablished them on the original sites.

Therefore, by creating what they believe to be '*irreversible facts on the ground*', it is clear that through its use of settlements and outposts Israel intends to put an end any prospect of a viable Palestinian state. These hardly seem the actions of a willing “partner for peace”.



Distribution of Israeli Settlements' Outposts in the occupied West Bank

Palestine Loss of Land 1946 - 2010





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