

## PLO NEGOTIATIONS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

### ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY: AN UPDATE OCTOBER 2009 – MARCH 2010

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*As recently published data reveals, Israeli settlement activity continued unabated throughout 2009 under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership. Even after Netanyahu's announcement of a partial and temporary "moratorium" on 26 November 2009, settlement activity continued throughout the West Bank, especially in and around East Jerusalem. In addition to being illegal under international law, such Israeli violations of the Road Map continue to undermine the very possibility of the two-state solution and international efforts to create an environment conducive to the resumption of a credible and meaningful peace process.*

#### I. 2009 SUMMARY

2009 Overview	
Housing construction starts	2,316
Housing construction completions	2,300
Housing units under active construction <sup>1</sup>	3,721
Building permits for privately-initiated construction ( <i>excluding</i> East Jerusalem area)	1,188
Housing units tendered	712
Housing units planned in and around East Jerusalem	~ 50,000
Outposts <sup>2</sup>	~ 110
Palestinian homes and other buildings demolished	269
Checkpoints and roadblocks in the West Bank <sup>3</sup>	573

#### II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

##### A. Construction

- **Housing starts:** According to the most recently available official data, public and private construction began on a total of **2,316 new housing units** in settlements throughout the West Bank (including East Jerusalem<sup>4</sup>) in 2009:<sup>5</sup>

	Public	Private	Total
East Jerusalem	386	205	591
Rest of West Bank	595	1,130	1,725
	981	1,335	2,316

- **Housing completions:** Meanwhile, construction was completed on an additional **2,300 housing units** in settlements throughout the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) in 2009:<sup>6</sup>

	Public	Private	Total
East Jerusalem	366	32	398
Rest of West Bank	979	923	1,902
	1,345	955	2,300

- **Active construction:** As of the end of September 2009, **3,721 housing units** were under active construction in settlements throughout the West Bank (including East Jerusalem):<sup>7</sup>

	Public	Private	Total
East Jerusalem	667	201	868
Rest of West Bank	943	1,910	2,853
	1,610	2,111	3,721

- According to a report released by Peace Now in February 2010, more than **30 settlements** have violated the so-called “moratorium” announced by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in November 2009.

## B. Tenders and Building Permits

- ***Tenders:*** In the past six months, Israeli authorities published at least six separate tenders for the construction of **712 units**, all of them in settlements located in and around East Jerusalem:

Tender #	Settlement	Governorate	Date	Publisher	# Units
107/2009/י	Pisgat Ze'ev	Jerusalem	Jan. 7	ILA	24
109/2009/י	Pisgat Ze'ev	Jerusalem	Jan. 7	ILA	126
10002/2009	Pisgat Ze'ev	Jerusalem	Jan. 7	MoCH	48
297/2009/י	Ramot	Jerusalem	Feb. 15	ILA	20
n/a	Neve Ya'akov	Jerusalem	Feb. 15	n/a	377
n/a	Har Homa	Jerusalem/Bethlehem	Feb. 15	n/a	117

712

At least **five additional tenders** were issued for **Ariel, Betar 'Illit, Elqana and Har Homa** settlements, for **infrastructure projects** such as road work, electrical/lighting, plumbing and sewage infrastructure, and building of public parks.

- ***Building permits:*** The Israeli government issued **permits** for privately-initiated construction of **1,188 housing units** in West Bank settlements (not counting those within the Israeli-defined Jerusalem municipality<sup>8</sup>) in 2009.<sup>9</sup>

## C. Other Plans and Approvals

- There are currently some **50,000 settlement housing units** in various stages of development in and around East Jerusalem (see attached **map**). Approximately 1,000 units are under construction in Har Homa, 100 in Gilo, and 100 in Ramot Allon. Some 14,000 units are in advanced stages of approval and/or implementation, while the remainder has yet to be submitted to the respective planning committees. In the past six months alone, progress has been made on plans for Beit Orot (24 units), Ramat Shlomo (1,600 units), Gilo (900 units), Giv'at Hamatos (549 units), and Pisgat Ze'ev (600 units).<sup>10</sup>
- In the remainder of the West Bank, Israel continued to move ahead with settlement plans despite the so-called “moratorium” announced on November 26. In the Metropolitan Jerusalem area, some **300 housing units** are under construction in **Giv'at Zeev**, **600** in **Ma'ale Adumim**, **200** in **Betar 'Illit**, **50** in **Efrat**, and **16** in **Neve Daniel**. In the past six months, Israel also has approved the construction of **25 housing units** in **Qedar** and **112 units** in **Betar 'Illit**, as well as **28 new schools** throughout the West Bank and **14 structures** in **Qiryat Netzafim** settlement. In January, the Israeli Defense Minister approved a plan to **upgrade** the Academic **College** of Judea and Samaria, located in **Ariel** settlement, **to a university**.<sup>11</sup>
- On February 21, the Israeli cabinet included a number of Palestinian archaeology and heritage sites among some 150 Israeli national heritage sites that are to receive NIS 400 million (US \$100 million) in the next six years, thereby consolidating Israeli control over these Palestinian areas. Notable among these Palestinian sites are the **Haram Al-Ibrahimi** (Tomb of the Patriarchs) in Hebron and **Bilal Bin Rabah Mosque** (Rachel's Tomb) in Bethlehem.<sup>12</sup>

- In early March, the mayor of the Israeli-defined Jerusalem municipality unveiled details of a long-expected plan to demolish Palestinian homes and make way for an Israeli-sponsored **public and tourist park** in the al-Bustan area of Silwan in East Jerusalem. According to the plan, at least **22 Palestinian homes** are to be **demolished**. Another 66 Palestinian homes are under threat of demolition.

#### D. Financing and Financial Incentives

- On December 13, the Israeli cabinet passed a resolution approving a **new map of “national priority areas”** (NPAs), including at least 90 settlements, most of which are located east of the Wall. These settlements will be entitled to continue receiving **economic subsidies** – such as subsidized housing loans, discounted land prices, and grants and tax benefits for industry and agriculture – to incentivize migration to, and settlement in, these illegal communities.<sup>13</sup>

#### E. Demolitions

- In the past six months, **at least 76 Palestinian homes and other structures**, including 24 in and around East Jerusalem, were **demolished** by Israeli authorities, causing the **displacement of 229 people, including 106 children**. Areas hardest hit included: Beit Hanina, Shufat, Jabal al Mukabbir, Ath Thuri, Ras al Amud, Al Esawiya, Silwan, Beit Safafa and At Tur in the Jerusalem area, as well as Khirbeit Tana (Nablus), Jaba’ (Bethlehem), Idhna (Hebron), Hebron City and Ad Deirat (Hebron).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As of September 2009.

<sup>2</sup> This number does not include outposts of a transient or temporary nature (*e.g.*, outposts removed by the Israeli army immediately or shortly after being established, or outposts that are inhabited during the day only or periodically during the year).

<sup>3</sup> As of December 2009 (United Nations Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs).

<sup>4</sup> Palestinians define “East Jerusalem” as the 6 km<sup>2</sup> municipal area as it existed on 4 June 1967. Israel defines “East Jerusalem” as the 70 km<sup>2</sup> of West Bank territory it illegally annexed in 1967 as part of its unilaterally declared municipality of Jerusalem. In this report, “East Jerusalem” refers to the Israeli definition only because Israeli sources that are cited in the report compile data using the Israeli definition.

<sup>5</sup> Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) and Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing (MoCH).

<sup>6</sup> ICBS and MoCH.

<sup>7</sup> ICBS.

<sup>8</sup> Data unavailable for these settlements.

<sup>9</sup> ICBS.

<sup>10</sup> Peace Now, Ir Amim, *Ha’aretz*, and *Jerusalem Post*.

<sup>11</sup> BBC, Ma’an News Agency, *Ha’aretz* and Peace Now.

<sup>12</sup> *Ha’aretz* and *Jerusalem Post*.

<sup>13</sup> Peace Now and *Ynet*.

<sup>14</sup> Displacement Working Group.

