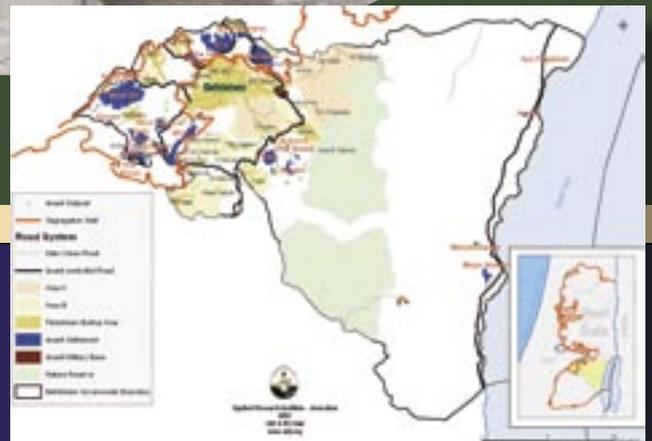
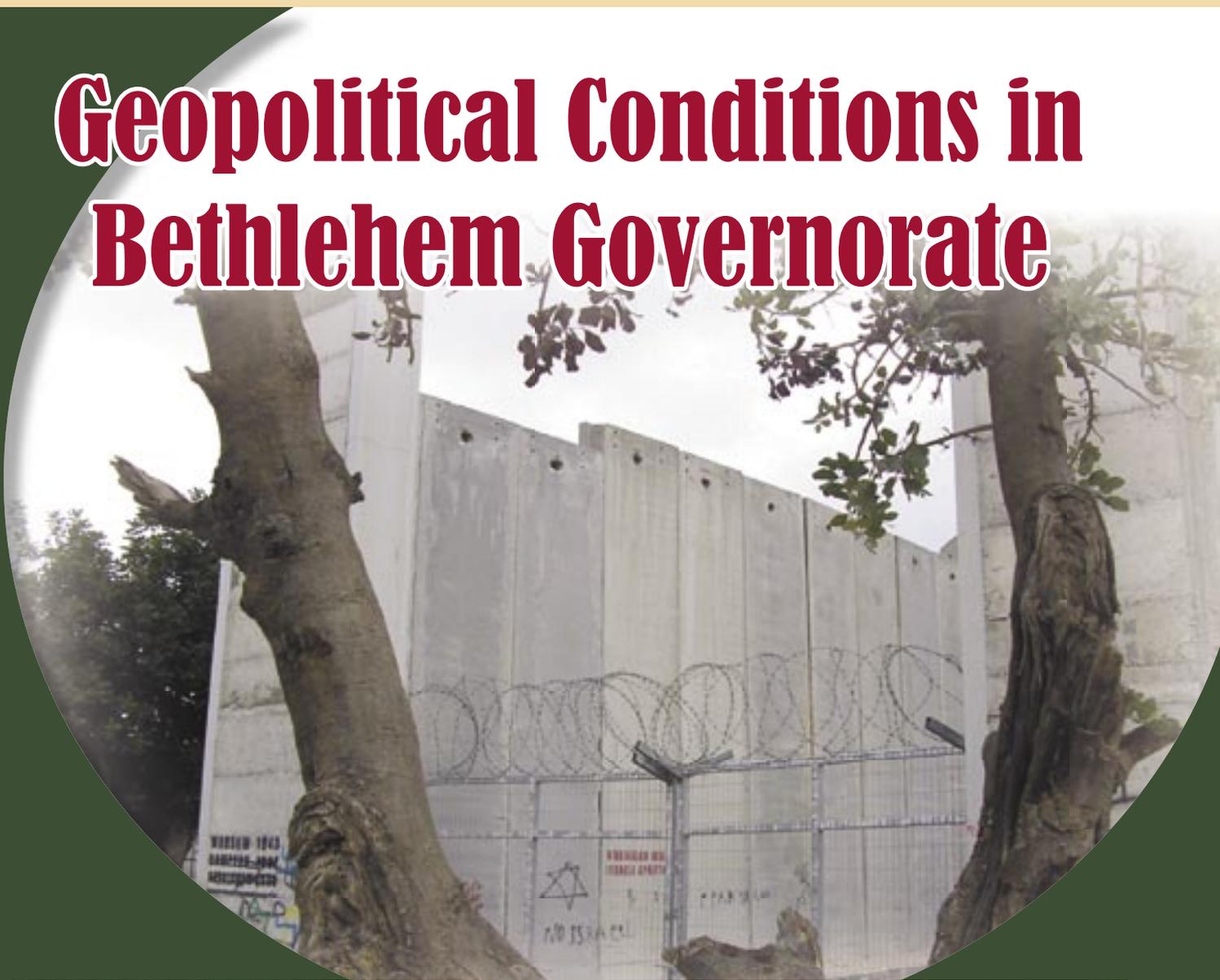


# Geopolitical Conditions in Bethlehem Governorate



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## The Israeli Segregation Plan in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

In June 2002, the Israeli government launched its policy of unilateral segregation between Israel and the Palestinian territory by creating a Segregation Zone on the Palestinian lands in the West Bank. The Zone cuts through the western part of the West Bank and runs from north to south grabbing the most fertile agricultural lands, isolating Palestinian communities in enclaves, undermining the territorial contiguity between the Palestinian villages and cities, grasping the natural resources and capturing most of the Israeli settlements.

In addition, Israel has de facto created an Eastern Segregation Zone without walls or fences but through control of access points along the Jordan Valley and the shores of the Dead Sea. This zone has a total area of 1664 Km<sup>2</sup>, representing 29.4 % of the West Bank and includes 43 Israeli settlements and 42 Palestinian localities.

In most areas where the Wall cuts through, the Segregation Zone consists of a 40-100 meters wide double layered fence that comprises barbed wires, trenches, military roads and footprint detection tracks as well as 4-5 meters high electrified metal fence supplied with security cameras. In areas with sizeable population and/or in-close perimeter with the Green Line, the Segregation Wall consists of 6-8 meters high concrete wall supplied with military watchtowers lined-up 250 meters apart.

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the Israeli government published a revised route of the Western Segregation plan, where the Wall will run for 683 km in the West Bank. Only 138 km (20.2% of the total length) runs on the Green Line (the 1949 Armistice Line). When complete, this zone will isolate 576 km<sup>2</sup> of Palestinian land (approximately 10% of the total West Bank area). It also encloses 98 Israeli settlements accommodating 83% of the Israeli settler's population in the West Bank and 55 Palestinian localities. In September 2004, the Israeli Occupation Forces issued military orders creating a buffer zone averaging 150-200 meters on the Palestinian side of the Segregation Zone where new construction is prohibited. As a result, an additional 252 km<sup>2</sup> of the West Bank (4.4 %) will become inaccessible to Palestinians.

### Status of the Western Segregation Zone

Status of Western Segregation Zone (Km)	Percentage from the total Wall length
Existing sections	244 36%
Planned sections	323 47%
Under Construction	116 17%
<b>Total length</b>	<b>683</b>

### Palestinian resources isolated by the Segregation Plan

#### Agricultural areas

- Up to 189,001 dunums of agricultural areas are isolated in the Western Segregation Zone in addition to 863,879 dunums in the Eastern Segregation Zone, which form 37% of the total agricultural areas of the West Bank.

#### Open space

- Up to 146,824 dunums of open space are segregated in the Western Segregation Zone in addition to 610,723 dunums in the Eastern Segregation Zone, which form 46% of the total open space areas of the West Bank.

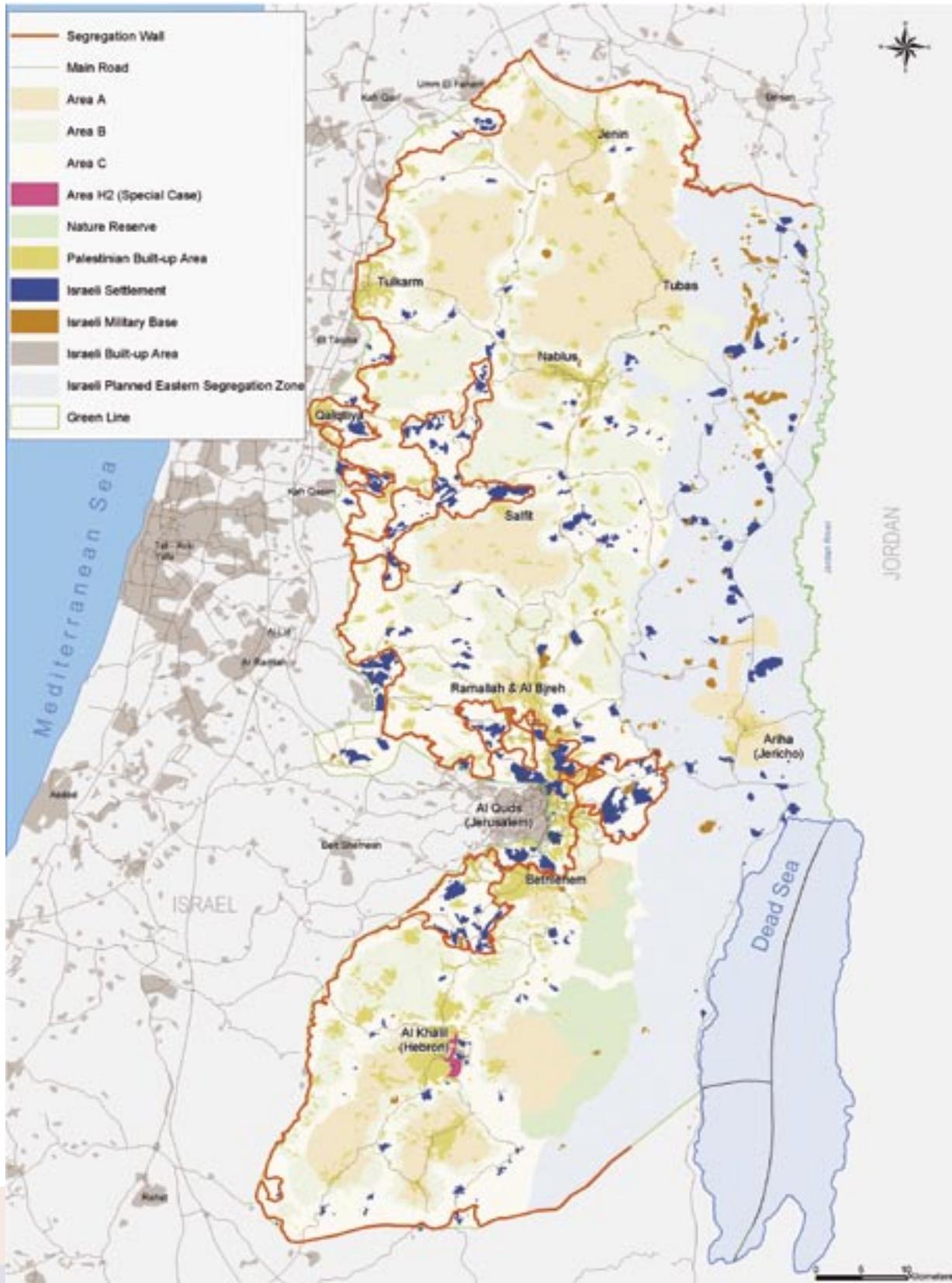
#### Forests

- Up to 128,404 dunums of forested areas and areas with shrubs are included in the Western Segregation Zone and 110,274 dunums in the Eastern Segregation Zone, which form 37% of the total forested area and area with shrubs of the West Bank.

#### Water

- The Eastern Segregation Zone lies over the eastern (Jordan Valley) water aquifer with a safe yield of 172 MCM / year
- The Western Segregation Zone lies over the northwestern and western aquifers with a combined safe yield of 507 MCM / year.

- The combined number of water wells utilized by the Palestinian population in the Segregation Zones is 136 with a combined average annual pumping rate of approximately 44.1 MCM
- The combined number of water springs in the Segregation Zones is 46 with a combined average annual discharge of approximately 23 MCM.
- Up to 221 dunums of inland water areas are isolated in the Western Segregation Zone and 685 dunums in the Eastern Segregation Zone, which constitute 99% of the total inland water area of the West Bank.



## Bethlehem Governorate

Bethlehem Governorate lies in the southern part of the West Bank south of Jerusalem. Bethlehem Governorate hosts the Church of nativity in Bethlehem city, the Shepherds field in Beit Sahour as well as a number of important religious sites that attract pilgrims from all over the World. Jerusalem and its religious sites together with Bethlehem have become the focal points for pilgrimage to the Holy Land and resulted in an organic twinning between the two cities throughout the history and went beyond to include cultural, economic and social ties. Bethlehem Governorate has an area of 608 Km<sup>2</sup> and is home to 174,654 Palestinian inhabitants (PCBS, 2005). It has been targeted by the Israeli occupation since 1967 when 18.1 Km<sup>2</sup> from its lands were unilaterally annexed by Israel to the municipal boundary of Jerusalem. However, since 1967, the owners of the “annexed areas” continued to access their land until the Segregation Zone was constructed.

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed in September 1995 between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Israel, 47.63 Km<sup>2</sup> of Bethlehem Governorate were classified as area A (areas under complete

PNA control), 33.84 Km<sup>2</sup> were classified as area B (areas under Palestinian civil administration but Israel continued to have overriding control for security), 423.98 Km<sup>2</sup> were classified as area C (areas under full Israeli Control), while 102 km<sup>2</sup> were classified as Nature Reserves.



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### Occupation practices in Bethlehem Governorate

Throughout the past 38 years of occupation Israel has constructed 19 illegal Israeli settlements with an estimated settler population of 77,376 in Bethlehem Governorate, that occupy an area of 18,094 dunums (18.094 km<sup>2</sup>), (ARIJ database, 2005) see table 1. Additionally, 18 Israeli outposts have been also erected since 1996 till 2005, see table 2. The existing Israeli bypass roads stretch over 76 Km in length in and around the Governorate, while an additional 30 kilometers of bypass roads are planned within the Governorate.

**Table 1: Israeli Settlements in Bethlehem Governorate**

	Israeli Settlement	Date of Establishment	Area-2004 (dunum)	Population 2005
1	Allon Shevut	1971	1003	3300
2	Avenat	NA	93	40
3	'Ayn Fashkhah	1969	97	NA
4	Betar Illit	1985	4686	26300
5	Efrat	1979	2180	7300
6	El David (Kfar Eldad) & Izdebar	1999	217	650
7	Elazar	1975	536	1100

	Israeli Settlement	Date of Establishment	Area-2004 (dunum)	Population 2005
8	Gavaot	1984	135	120
9	Gilo	1971	2738	30200
10	Givat Hamatos	1991	288	NA
11	Hadar Betar	1978	58	30
12	Har Gilo	1972	414	371
13	Har Homa	1997	2205	4000
14	Mizpe Shalem	1971	423	192
15	Mshoki Dargot	1991	77	201
16	Neve Daniyyel	1982	584	1400
17	Nokdim	1982	397	674
18	Rosh Zurim	1969	893	298
19	Tekoa (including Tekoa C,D)	1977	1071	1200
	<b>Total</b>		<b>18094</b>	<b>77376</b>

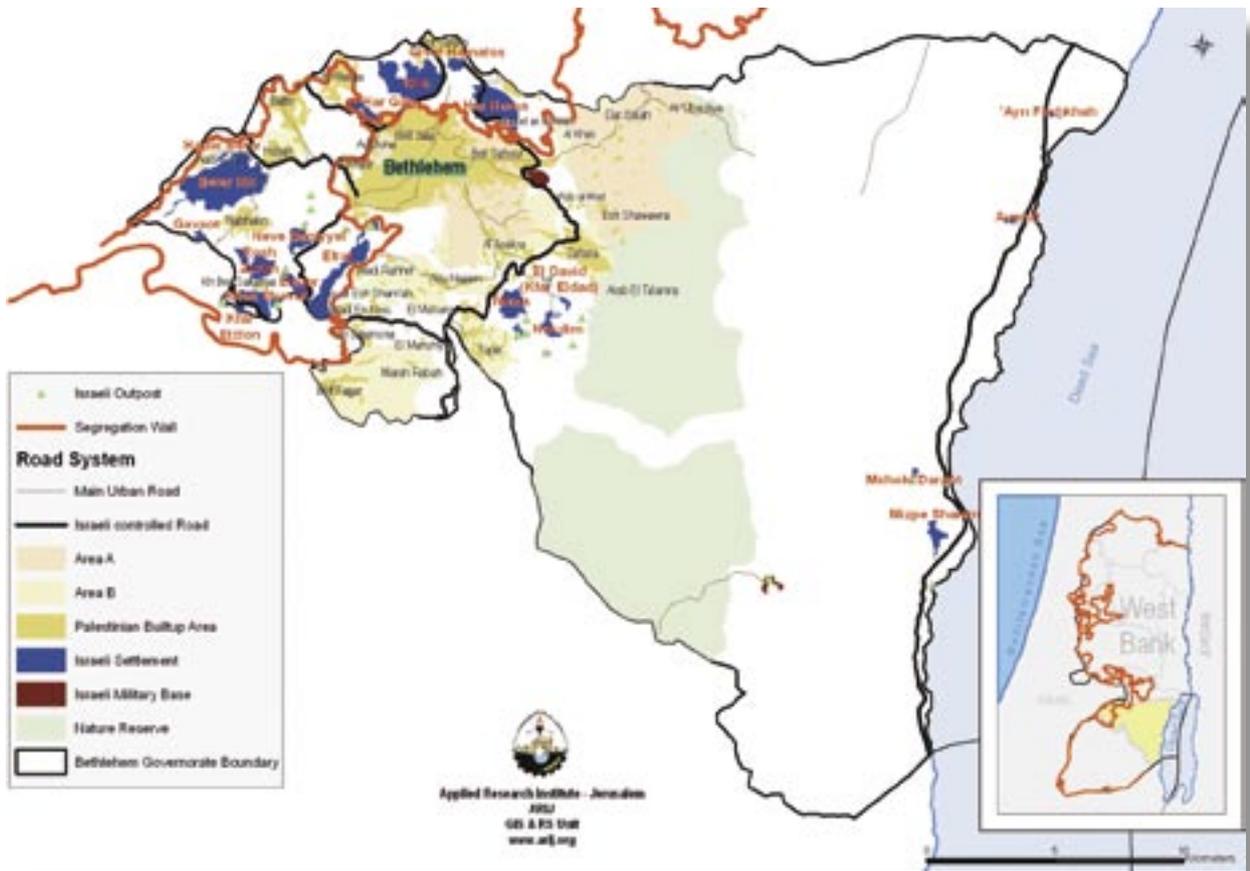
Source: ARIJ Database

**Table 2: Israeli Outposts in Bethlehem Governorate**

	Closest Mother Settlement	No. of structures	Outpost name	Status
1	Allon Shevut	30	East Allon Shevut	Outpost
2	Elazar	22	Derech Ha'avot	Outpost
3	Efrat	15	Giva't Hatamar	Inside settlement Master plan
4	El David (Kfar Eldad)	18	Ma'ale Rehavam	Outpost
5	Tekeo	10	Tekoa B & C	Inside settlement Master plan
6	Efrat	19	Giva't Hadagan	Inside settlement Master plan
7	Kfar Aldad	12	Kfar Aldad Farm	Inside settlement Master plan
8	Neve Daniyal	NA	Neve Daniyal North	Inside settlement Master plan
9	Taqu	2	Taqu' D	Inside settlement Master plan
10	Neve Danyiel	12	North Neve Danyiel	Outpost
11	Tekoa	1	South east Tekoa	Outpost
12	Efrat	17	West Efrat	Inside settlement Master plan
13	Neve Danyel	3	North Neve Danyel	Outpost
14	Nokdim	20	South Nokdim	Outpost
15	Nokdim	NA	South East Nokdim (construction)	Outpost
16	Mshoki Dargot	7	South Mshoki Dargot	Outpost
17	Unknown	4	Near the Dead Sea	Outpost
18	Unknown	NA	East Arab Al Rashaydah	Outpost

Source: ARIJ Database

During the years of the second (Al-Aqsa) Intifada, the Israeli authorities stepped up their occupation activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, destroying Palestinian agriculture, confiscating lands, demolishing Palestinian houses, expanding settlements, erecting outposts, expanding bypass roads, imposing severe restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement and the construction of the Segregation Zone. Table 3 indicates some of the Israeli violations in Bethlehem Governorate.



**Table 3: Israeli violations in Bethlehem Governorate during the years 2002-2005**

Year	Land confiscated (Dunum)	Land threatened (Dunum)	Uprooted trees	Houses demolished
2000	7280	16078	740	2
2001	200	680	17860	4
2002	1737	199	1230	150
2003	15477	4429	27753	29
2004	9520	6901	1340	52
2005	2130	42275	2164	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>36344</b>	<b>70562</b>	<b>51087</b>	<b>249</b>

Source: ARIJ database



### Bethlehem and the Segregation Plan

The Segregation Wall in Bethlehem Governorate extends for 52 kilometers starting from Beit Sahour city, extending to the northern entrance of Bethlehem city, stretching towards the western side of Beit Jala, encompassing Gilo settlement and heading towards the western rural villages of Al Walaja, Nahhalin, Husan, Wad Fukin and Battir to reach Gush Etzion settlements bloc in the south isolating 73,000 dunums of lands behind its path.

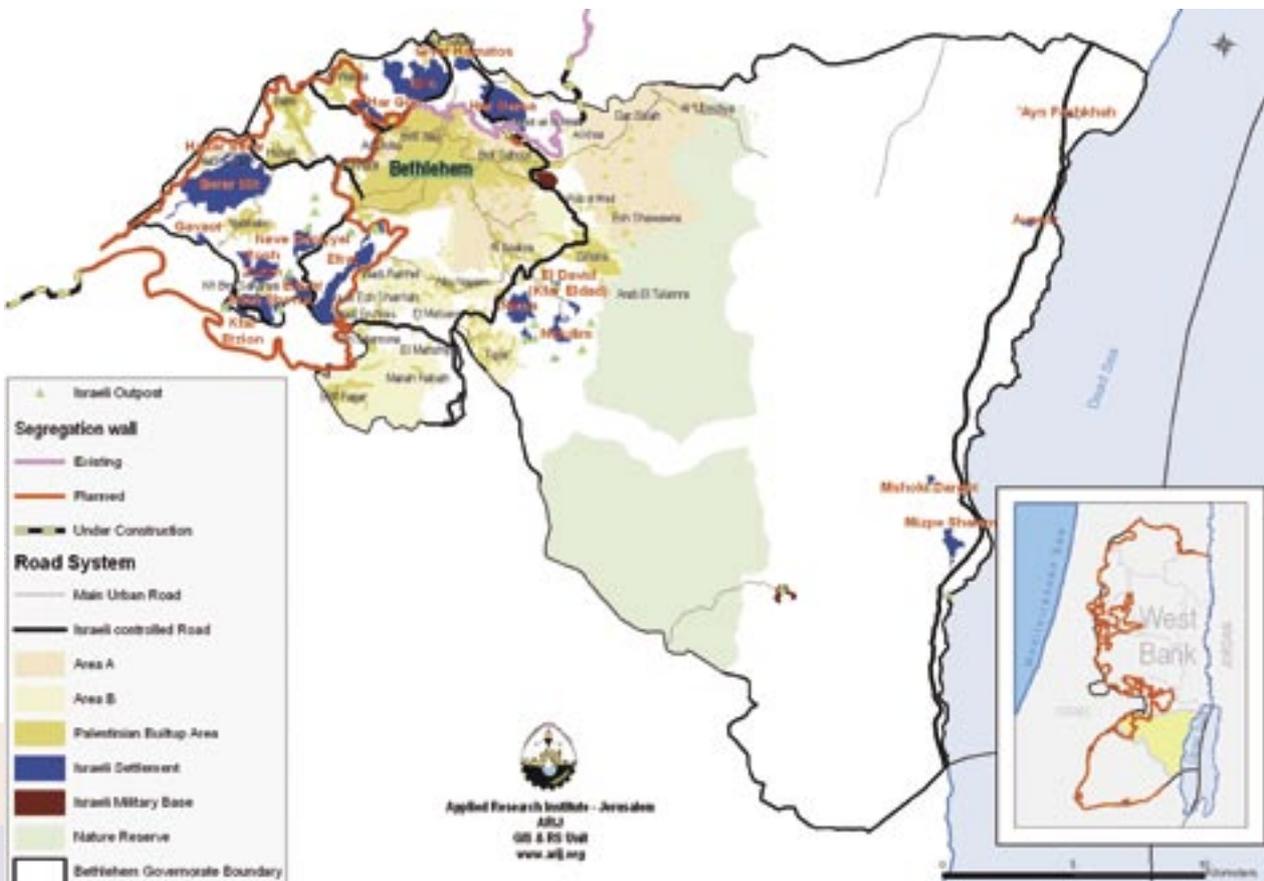
## Status of the Segregation Zone in Bethlehem Governorate (Km)

Existing sections			
	<i>Fence</i>	11.3	14.3
	<i>Concrete Wall</i>	3	
Planned sections			35.5
Under Construction			2.2
<b>Total length</b>			<b>52</b>

### Facts about the Wall in Bethlehem Governorate

- 50.5 Km (97%) of the total 52 km lies east of the Green Line inside the West Bank.
- 1.5 Km lies on the Green Line.
- The Segregation Wall penetrates to a depth of 0 to 10.72 Km inside Bethlehem Governorate.

In Bethlehem Governorate 73,000 dunums (73 km<sup>2</sup>) of lands will be segregated behind the Wall. Also, the Segregation Wall confines the western rural villages of Battir, Husan, Nahhalin, Wad Fuqin and Al Walaja in a large canton, thus incarcerates more than 18,651 Palestinian residents, whereby any movement from or to these villages will be controlled completely by the Israeli occupation forces. These residents will be segregated from their lands, livelihood, and vital social services that are only found in the city centers east of the Wall such as hospitals, schools and universities. Of the isolated lands in Bethlehem Governorate 20,575 dunums are agricultural lands in addition to 2900 dunums of forests, as most of the agricultural lands in the cities of Beit Jala and Al Khader and the only recreational forest will be segregated. Entrance to the isolated agricultural lands will only be to farmers who are able to prove landownership through a credited Israeli organization (most likely to be the civil administration) and only the owners whose names listed in the ownership deeds (usually the eldest of the families) will receive permits. Furthermore, the Israeli civil administration will only issue permits on seasonal basis. Hence the owners will find a hard time to manage the cultivated lands on their own especially that the permits do not include additional labor or equipments.



## Major Impacts of the Segregation Plan in Bethlehem

The construction of the Segregation Zone has negative impacts on the political, economical, social as well as environmental aspects of the Palestinian life. Following is a summary of those major impacts.

### Political Impact

- The Israeli government through constructing the Segregation Zone is unilaterally delineating the political borders for the State of Israel as the Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, declared in a conference in Caesarea that: "One does not have to be a genius to see that the fence will have implications for the future border. This is not the reason it was built, but it could have political implications" (Aljazeera Net, December 2005)
- The Segregation Plan intends to keep more than 45% of the Bethlehem Land under Israeli control in the Eastern and Western Segregation Zones
- The Segregation Zone is placing many Palestinian towns and villages in geographically disconnected and segregated enclaves or ghettos
- The segregation plan is creating new demographic facts that will lead to forced migration among Palestinians who will lose their livelihoods
- The Plan will sever the organic tie between Jerusalem and Bethlehem

### Economic Impact

- The Segregation Plan causes severe damages to the Palestinian agricultural sector and to the Palestinian farmers as a result of land confiscation and the constraints imposed on mobility and marketing
- Israel maintains control over Palestinian trade and tourism
- Unemployment as well as poverty levels increase
- Rise in land prices and reduction of investment opportunities

### Social Impact

- Thousands of Palestinian citizens will be cut-off from the main urban centers where health, educational and social services are located
- Harsh measures are imposed on Palestinian mobility and movement, transportation from or to the segregated areas is extremely difficult
- The Segregation Zone is cutting-off social relations between Palestinian citizens living on either sides of the Wall
- Increased urbanization pressure and population density

### Impact on the Palestinian environment

- There will be no places for landfills or waste water treatment sites
- Natural resources will decrease, forests, pastures, open spaces and recreation areas will be extremely limited
- Loss of grazing area and increase in desertification
- A distortion in wildlife movement as a result of cutting-off different kinds of animals from their natural habitat
- The Segregation Plan is altering the Palestinian natural landscape
- Many archeological and historical sites related to the Palestinian cultural heritage will be segregated behind the wall.
  - Loss of open space which poses a threat to the sustainability of the urban and rural areas as well as a threat to more losses of the natural resources and biodiversity



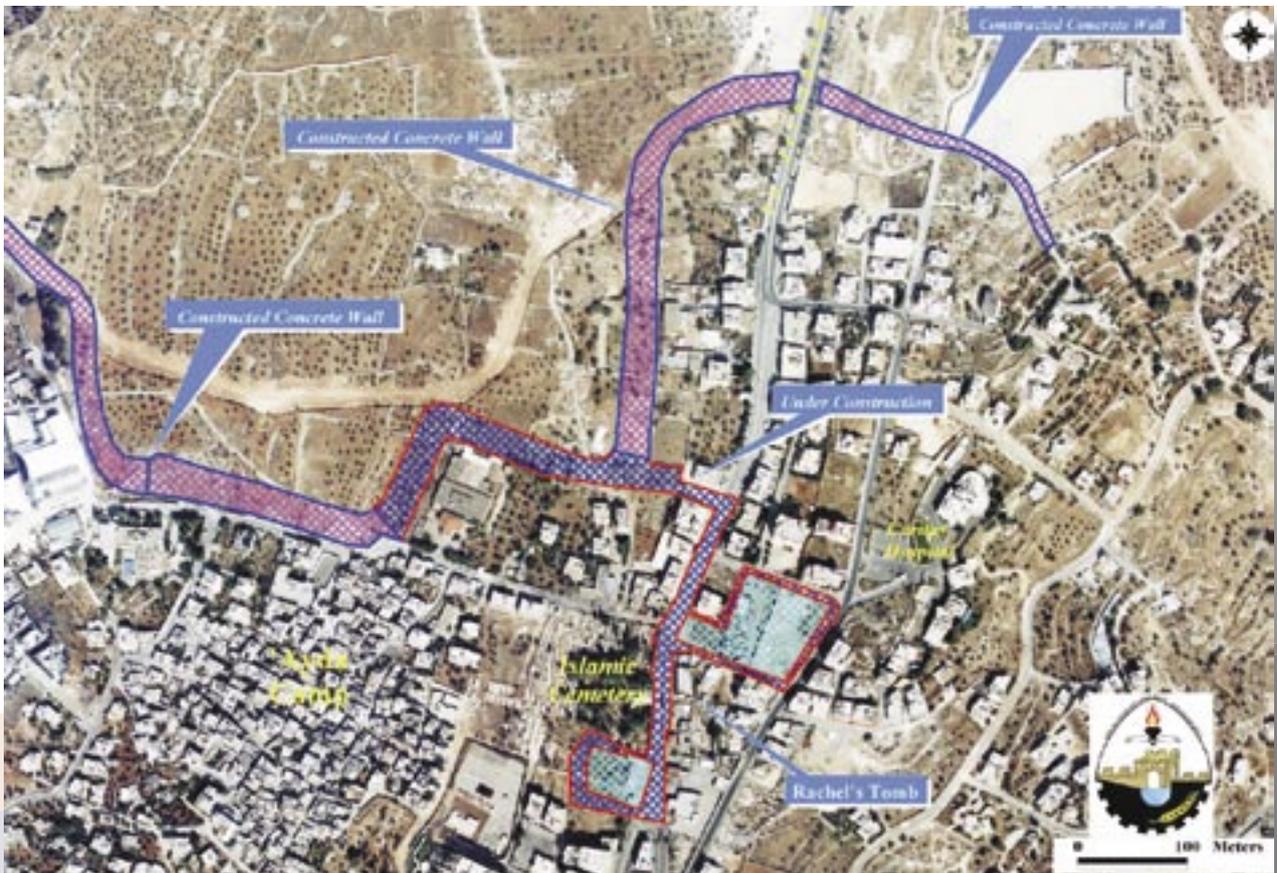




### Rachel's tomb in Bethlehem

Rachel's tomb is located in the northern entrance of Bethlehem city and was visited by pilgrims from the three religions due to its historic, religious and touristic importance. But since the outbreak of the second Intifada the Israeli authorities hindered the non-Jewish pilgrims from visiting the place.

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The Segregation Wall under construction in northern Bethlehem confiscates 26.5 dunums of lands and ensures to connect and annex the tomb, the adjacent military base and the surrounding empty lands to Jerusalem municipal boundary and keep them north of the Wall. Kever Rahel Fund founder and director Miriam Adani indicated in February 2005, (JPost, February 11, 2005) that the Segregation Plan in northern Bethlehem is the “first step towards the establishment of a Jewish community around the Rahel’s Tomb compound.” Furthermore, the Wall at Bethlehem’s northern entrance will cut the historic and religious route between Jerusalem and Bethlehem used for decades by pilgrims and locals. Today this route is marked by a closed 9m high iron Wall gate, and movement is directed towards Gilo terminal. More than 40 stores and tourist amenities located in Bethlehem’s northern area (once a reviving commercial area) are severely affected by the Wall and the majority of which went out of business or relocated.

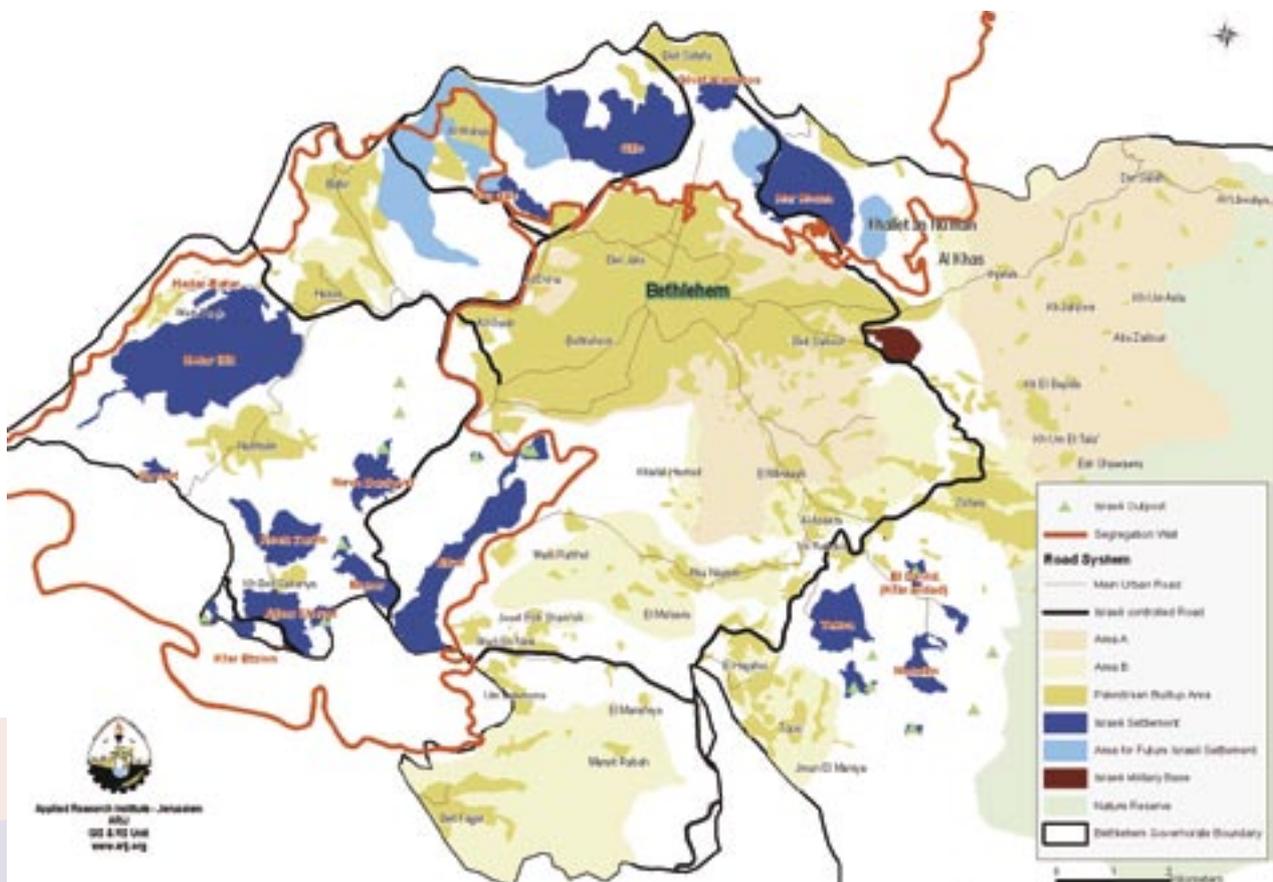
## The Israeli new plans for Bethlehem Governorate

### Two Settlements near Har Homa

The Masterplan set by the Israeli Jerusalem municipality (Master plan Jerusalem 2000) indicates the presence of two new settlements in the vicinity of Har Homa in Bethlehem Governorate, one to its southeast and another to its northwest. These new settlements will have an approximate area of 1080 dunums. The Masterplan also indicates that the residential area of Har Homa is planned to reach 1410 dunoms that is an increase by 350% than its size today which is 400 dunums. Har Homa and the new settlements are planned to comprise of 2500 dunums of land.

### Giv’at Yael settlement

In June 2004, the Israeli authorities announced the construction of a new Israeli settlement in Al Walaja village northwest of Bethlehem. The plan envisions the building of “Givat Yael” settlement on 2,000 dunums of Palestinian lands. Whereby, more than 13,200 housing units will be constructed which will be able to absorb 55,000 illegal Israeli settlers. This settlement will physically complete the ring of settlements that separate Jerusalem and encircle Bethlehem starting at Har Homa extending to Gilo and Har Gilo, linking with the planned Giv’at Yael and continuing to “Gush Etzion” bloc in the southwest.



## The International Legal Status of the Segregation Wall

In July 2003, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) passed an advisory opinion declaring that the Wall Israel is constructing is illegal. The Court based its decision on international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Hague Regulations, various human rights treaties and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Segregation Wall results in the violation of human rights including the right to Self-Determination, the right to freedom of movement, the right to work, the right to medical treatment, the right to education, the right to an adequate standard of living and access to holy places. The ICJ decision upholds the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, which they are prevented from exercising by the Wall's disruption of the territorial integrity and unity. 'Self-defense' or 'state of necessity' can not be used as justification for violating this right and other international legal principles and therefore Israel must cease construction and all other states must refrain from supporting Israel in building the Wall.

Moreover, the construction of the Segregation Zone is a violation of all peace agreements signed between the Israelis and Palestinians and a breach to Oslo Interim Agreement which states 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" (Article XXXI, clause 7).

## Conclusion

Despite international rejection, Israel is proceeding with its unilateral plans to build the Segregation Zone confiscating large tracts of Palestinian lands in Bethlehem. If this continues, the urban area in Bethlehem Governorate will be completely surrounded by a complex of Walls, settlements and roads that will prevent any future possibility for the community to expand and will jeopardize sustainable development. The population densities in the urban area (Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahur, Al Douha, Al khader and the three refugee camps Al Dihushe, Aida and Al Aza) reached to nearly 6920 person/km<sup>2</sup> in 2005, with the creation of the Segregation Zones and the isolation of the open spaces the population densities are projected to increase to nearly 8002 persons/ km<sup>2</sup> in the coming five years.

The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) emphasizes the imperativeness that Israel complies with the international legitimacy, laws and resolutions of the United Nations; stresses the necessity to hold Israel accountable for its acts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; calls for Israel's long time apathy of the international community's will to end and thus Israel be made to conform with the United Nation's resolutions including: Security Council Resolution 452 (1979) which calls upon 'the Government and people of Israel to cease, on an urgent basis, the establishment, construction and planning of settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem,' Security Council Resolution 446 (1979) which '[d]etermines that the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East'.

For more information please visit the following sites: [www.arij.org](http://www.arij.org) - [www.poica.org](http://www.poica.org)

