

CHAPTER FIVE:  
RISKS AND UNCERTAINTY

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## INTRODUCTION

The specificities of the historical and political context in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) set the parameters of the current economic, social and food security situation of the population, much more than the geographical and agro-ecological characteristics of the oPt. Since 1967, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been marked by different periods of intensities. Following the second *Intifada* initiated in 2000, the Israeli government has tightened the movement of Palestinians in and out of the territory, and initiated the construction of the West Bank Barrier. According to the Israeli plan, the West Bank Barrier will run across 709 Km (60% of which completed to the date) and stands to isolate upon completion 13% (733 Km<sup>2</sup>) of the West Bank total area<sup>130</sup>.

The Gaza Strip has been under a blockade, since the Hamas Party took control in June 2007, with extremely severe restrictions on the entry of goods and virtual halt of exportations and movements of Gazan people in and out of the territory. Operation Cast Lead launched by the Israeli Army against the Gaza Strip in December 2008/January 2009 caused a large number of Palestinian deaths (about 1450) and wounded (5,455) as well as widespread destruction of housing (more than 5000 of total destruction and more than 25000 of partial destruction) and infrastructure<sup>131</sup>. Violence in Gaza has not fully subsided despite the unilateral ceasefire declared by Israel on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

Economic growth in the oPt has markedly decreased due to the conflict, through the following: controls imposed by Israel on the entry and exit of goods, services and people; impediments to construction and infrastructure investment in the oPt; the expansion of Israeli settlements and associated violence; and the direct destruction of houses, crops, animals, water and sanitation infrastructure by the Israeli Army. After years of conflict, food insecurity affects population groups according to their livelihoods and the combined effects of violence, natural disasters and economic shocks. Most of the food insecure households in the oPt are by now chronically food insecure, but the severity of food insecurity deepens whenever the conflict situation worsens or additional shocks (natural, economic) occur<sup>132</sup>.

The land issue is a crucial question that is affecting the creation of a Palestinian state. In 1995 the PLO and Israel signed the Oslo II agreement, which concluded that the Israeli Army engage in a phased withdrawal from areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, beyond the "Gaza-Jericho" agreement (signed 1994), starting with redeployment of the Israeli Army from the major population city centers and later on a second redeployment from rural area. Accordingly, the oPt went under three categories: Areas "A," "B" and "C" designating varying levels of control (See table 5.1).

**Table 5.1: Areas Definition in Oslo II Interim Agreement of September 1995**

<b>Area A</b>	The Israeli army has pulled out fully and Palestinians hold all responsibilities for internal security and Public order.
<b>Area B</b>	Palestinians have full control over the civil administration and Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security.
<b>Area C</b>	The Palestinians have responsibility for civil life such as economics, health, and education; while, Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory.

This jagged distribution has fragmented and scattered the oPt and turned it into isolated cantons, physically separated from each other.

After more than 42 years of occupation, 38% of total land area of the West Bank is under under Israeli occupation, and used for military use, checkpoints, road closures, construction of settlements and the West Bank Barrier<sup>133</sup>. In the absence of positive signs towards a resumption of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, the already severe food insecurity and vulnerability situation in the oPt is not expected to improve in the coming few years.

<sup>130</sup> - OCHA. *Five Years After the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. A Summary of the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier.* July 2009.

- According to the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) and based on aerial photo analysis -June 2009-, the West Bank Barrier runs along 781 km across the West Bank territory. The source for the planned route of the West Bank Barrier comes from a map issued April 2007 and published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense website "Israel's Security Fence" in September 2007.

<sup>131</sup> The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) - Urbanization Monitoring Department. *Analysis of Satellite Images, "Monitoring Israeli activities in the oPt" project funded by EU.* November 2009.

<sup>132</sup> WFP/FAO. *Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Report in the oPt.* December 2009.

<sup>133</sup> - The World Bank. *The Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank.* Social and Economic Development Group, Finance and Private Sector Development, Middle East and North Africa Region. 2008.

- According to the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ) some 61% (3456 km<sup>2</sup>) of the West Bank territory falls under complete control of the Israeli Army, and is defined as area "C". It also includes the western Segregation zone (733 km<sup>2</sup> -13% of the West Bank total area)

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WEST BANK BARRIER<sup>134</sup>.

The construction of the West Bank Barrier started in 2002. Five years on, almost 60% of the 709 km long Barrier is complete, a further 10% is under construction and 31% is planned<sup>135</sup>. When completed, the majority of the route will run inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem; only 6.6% (51 km) of which runs along the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line). The total area located between the Barrier and the Green Line amounts to about 13% (733 km<sup>2</sup>) of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and No Man's Land.

The continuing construction of the Barrier inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is not only contrary to the International Court of Justice advisory opinion, but is also responsible for the humanitarian impact on the Palestinian cities, towns and villages.

In the northern West Bank, Palestinians residing in the military closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line ('Seam Zone') require permanent resident permits to continue to live in their own homes. They face restricted access to health and to education services, and are cut off from family and social networks, which are generally located on the 'Palestinian' side of the West Bank Barrier. Approximately 38,911 West Bank Palestinians<sup>136</sup> will reside between the Barrier and the Green Line once construction is complete, in addition to the majority of the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem 269,450<sup>137, 138</sup>.

The impact of the West Bank Barrier has been particularly severe on Palestinian rural communities due, in part, to the destruction of trees, crops and irrigation systems. In addition, the intrusive route of the Barrier through 8 of the 11 West Bank governorates isolates the farms, greenhouses, grazing lands and water resources of thousands of farmers. Since October 2003, Palestinians in the northern West Bank require visitor permits to reach and cultivate their land in the closed area. Permits are only issued to those who are able to prove landownership. This will be further aggravated with the completion of the Barrier as farmers will have to access their land through "agricultural gates". Entrance and movement of agricultural inputs and machinery are also restricted. The lack of access to land in the Seam Zone has severely curtailed agricultural practice and undermined rural livelihoods.

In January 2009, the 'closed area' designation was extended to the Ramallah, Hebron and parts of Salfit, Bethlehem and Jerusalem governorates (central and southern West Bank). Almost 15% of West Bank agricultural land will be lost once the construction of the Barrier is complete.

Already, food insecurity levels are higher among households living in the Seam Zone. The prevalence of food insecurity among this group affects 28% of households, 3% more than the average remaining in the West Bank<sup>139</sup>.

## AVAILABILITY OF LAND

In developing countries, land is of fundamental importance to economic activity and development: it is often the most common means of storing wealth and a powerful economic asset; it provides a foundation for economic activity in sectors as varied as agriculture, industries, housing and tourism; it is also a key factor in the functioning of market (e.g. credit), and non-market institutions (e.g. local governments)<sup>140</sup>. Since the Israeli occupation, Israel has restricted Palestinians from using their land and the natural resources, hence limiting development in any aspect of the Palestinian society; or to function like regular one.

Restrictions of movement of people and commercial goods, access to unskilled jobs in Israel, lack of movement of people and goods, the expansion of settlements and related infrastructure, the West Bank Barrier and lack of access to work and / or Palestinian agricultural lands, the closure of the Israeli labor market to Palestinians, the Gaza Strip blockade as well as the repeated destruction of physical assets during regular military incursions are all Israeli measures imposed on Palestinians forming key elements in the food security downturn in the oPt. Such measures are supported by Israel matrix of control tools that varied from declaring vast parts of the oPt as «closed military areas», which is forming more than 1000 Km<sup>2</sup> (almost 18% of the West Bank area), built 199 settlements (9% of West Bank area), 232 outposts and hundreds of military bases (49 km<sup>2</sup>), and imposing restrictions on movement with hundreds (578 in October 2009<sup>141</sup>) of obstructions (checkpoints, road blocks, earth mounds, earth walls, road barriers, road gates and trenches) and with a lengthy network of bypass roads (800 Km in length - 112 Km<sup>2</sup>)<sup>142</sup>.

<sup>134</sup> Mainly based on OCHA. *Five Years After the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. A Summary of the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier*. July 2009.

<sup>135</sup> - OCHA. *Five Years After the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. A Summary of the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier*. July 2009.

<sup>136</sup> - According to the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) and based on aerial photo analysis - June 2009-, the West Bank Barrier runs along 781 km across the West Bank territory. The source for the planned route of the West Bank Barrier comes from a map issued April 2007 and published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense website "Israel's Security Fence" in September 2007.

<sup>137</sup> Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), *Population census, 2007*

<sup>138</sup> The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) - Urbanization Monitoring Department. *Analysis of Satellite Images, "Monitoring Israeli activities in the oPt" project funded by EU. November 2009 & Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Population census, 2007 & Info gathered from Village Councils and Municipalities of communities in J1 area that will be isolated by West Bank Barrier.*

<sup>139</sup> According to the latest route of the West Bank Barrier (April 2007), 66 Palestinian communities will be isolated away from the rest of the West Bank, out of which 30 Palestinian communities exist in Jerusalem and under Israeli control; will be isolated away from the rest of the West Bank.

<sup>140</sup> FAO/WFP. *Socio-Economic and Food Survey Report-West Bank*. August 2009.

<sup>141</sup> The World Bank. *The Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank*. Social and Economic Development Group, Finance and Private Sector Development, Middle East and North Africa Region, 2008

<sup>142</sup> OCHA, *West Bank Movement and Access Update*, November 2009.

<sup>143</sup> The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) - Urbanization Monitoring Department. *Analysis of Satellite Images, "Monitoring Israeli activities in the oPt" project funded by EU. November 2009.*

In addition to the seizure of large tracts of Palestinian land, the establishment and continuation of settlements is a major obstacle to peace in the oPt. Between 1989 and 2009, the settler population grew by over 220% (reaching 580,000 persons in 2009) and the land area controlled by settlements by more than 700% (according to master plan released by Israeli Civil Administration for the settlements in the year 1991 to allocate areas for future expansion<sup>143</sup>).

The territorial division of the West Bank distorts the land use of the Palestinians. Development is not suitable in Area C due to Israeli imposed restrictions on access to land as well as difficulties to obtain construction permits. Recurrent destruction of trees, private homes and public infrastructure, as well as settlers' encroachments on this land create a permanent state of insecurity that deters Palestinian investment<sup>144</sup>. As a result, economic activity in Area C is limited to low intensity agriculture.

The conflict and the fragmentation of the territory create a scarcity of land, having a direct effect on the price of land, while also putting additional pressure on remaining agricultural land in Area A and B as to cope with the population growth. The majority of Palestinian recent constructions took place in areas A and B within identified municipal boundaries under Palestinian control.

The security buffer zone along Gaza's northern and eastern border came as a part-clause of the 1994 Oslo accord, under which, the Israelis were to maintain 0.5 km wide security zone across the northern and eastern Gaza's 58 km border. This security zone occupied 29 km<sup>2</sup> (8%) of Gaza's area to remain under the Israeli Army control along with Palestinian security monitoring. After the Palestinian second *Intifada* broke out in September 2000, by the end of 2005 when the Israeli Army completed its disengagement (redeployment) and the latest in June 2007, and in an unilateral step, the Israeli Army expanded the security buffer zone area along Gaza's northern and eastern border to a width of 1.5 km. Accordingly, the newly defined security buffer zone occupy an area of 87 km<sup>2</sup> (24%) of the Gaza Strip area<sup>145</sup>.

Before the blockade in 2006, the agricultural sector in the Gaza Strip employed 40,000 people, generating livelihoods for a quarter of the population. Approximately 5,000 farmers were dependent on the export of cash crops, the two largest ones being carnations and strawberries (others crops exported were cherry tomatoes, green peppers and certain potato and cucumber species). The Israeli authorities have completely banned exports since 2007, with the exception of 147 truckloads of cut flowers and strawberries allowed out of Gaza, compared to a monthly average of 1,090 truckloads exported during the first 5 months of 2007 to the West Bank, Israel and Europe.

In the Gaza Strip, access to land is prevented in the buffer zone that runs along the border with Israel with a width of circa 300 meters. Farmers living near the border fence have seen their greenhouses, orchards and fields destroyed, and access in the Buffer Zone further curtailed<sup>146</sup>.

In addition to land restriction, the Israeli Army currently prohibits Palestinians from fishing beyond three nautical miles (nm) from the shore. This prohibition set end of 2008 followed a previous reduction of the fishing zone in October 2006 from 12 to 6 nm. The limits in fishing distance provoked over-fishing in shallow coastal waters, depleting stocks and compromising the future viability of the fishing industry.

Land cultivation is a fundamental means of survival for many Palestinian communities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Both non agricultural livelihoods and agricultural livelihoods are in danger of further erosion with the current fragmentation of the oPt. If systematic Israeli restrictions on movement of people and good, access to land and water persist, livelihood opportunities will remain limited in the oPt. The removal of restrictions is an essential prerequisite as to start the revival of the economy and allow free access to agricultural areas within the oPt.

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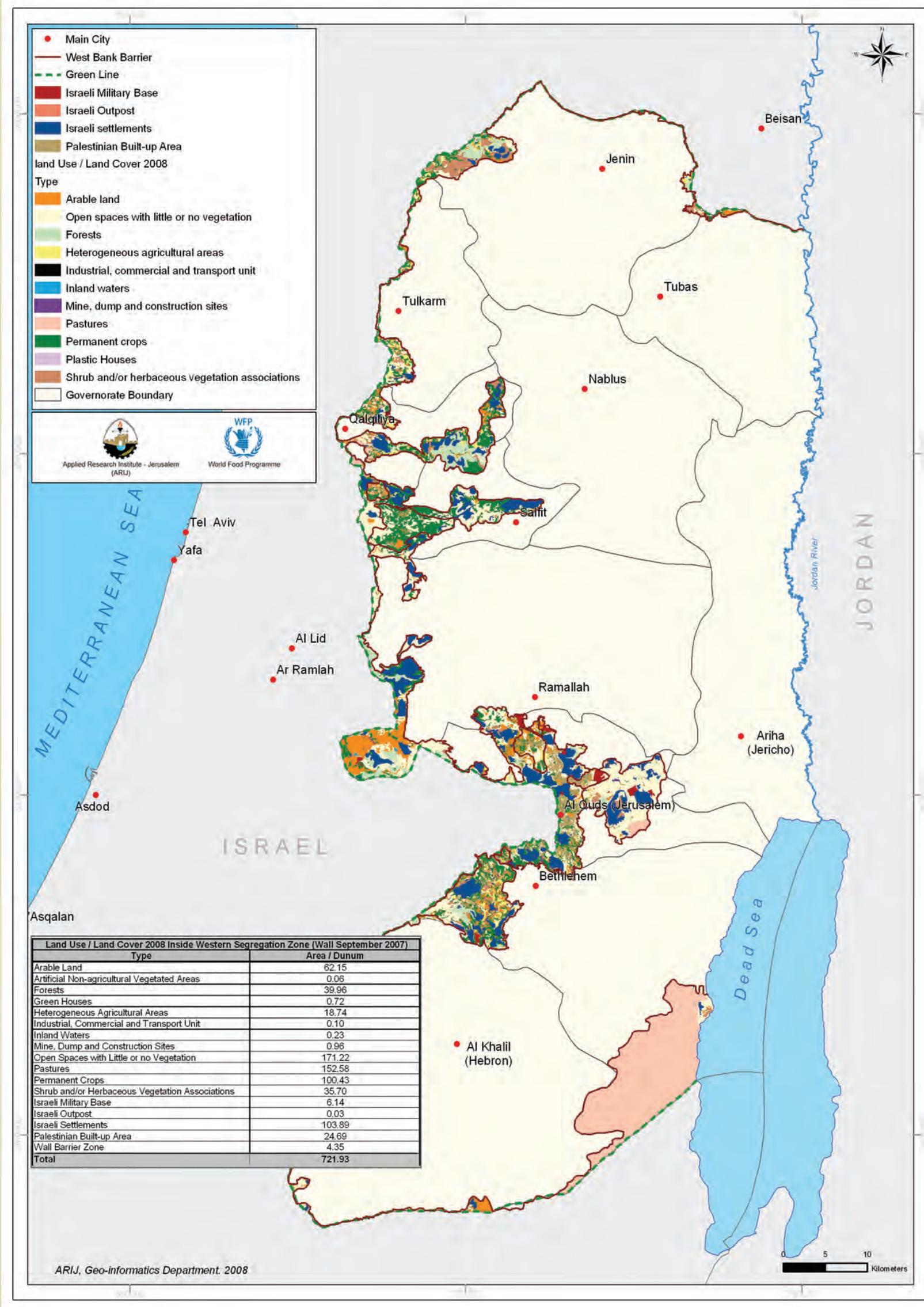
<sup>143</sup> The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) - Urbanization Monitoring Department. *Analysis of Satellite Images, "Monitoring Israeli activities in the oPt" project funded by EU. November 2009*

<sup>144</sup> The World Bank, *The Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank. Social and Economic Development Group, Finance and Private Sector Development, Middle East and North Africa Region, 2008*

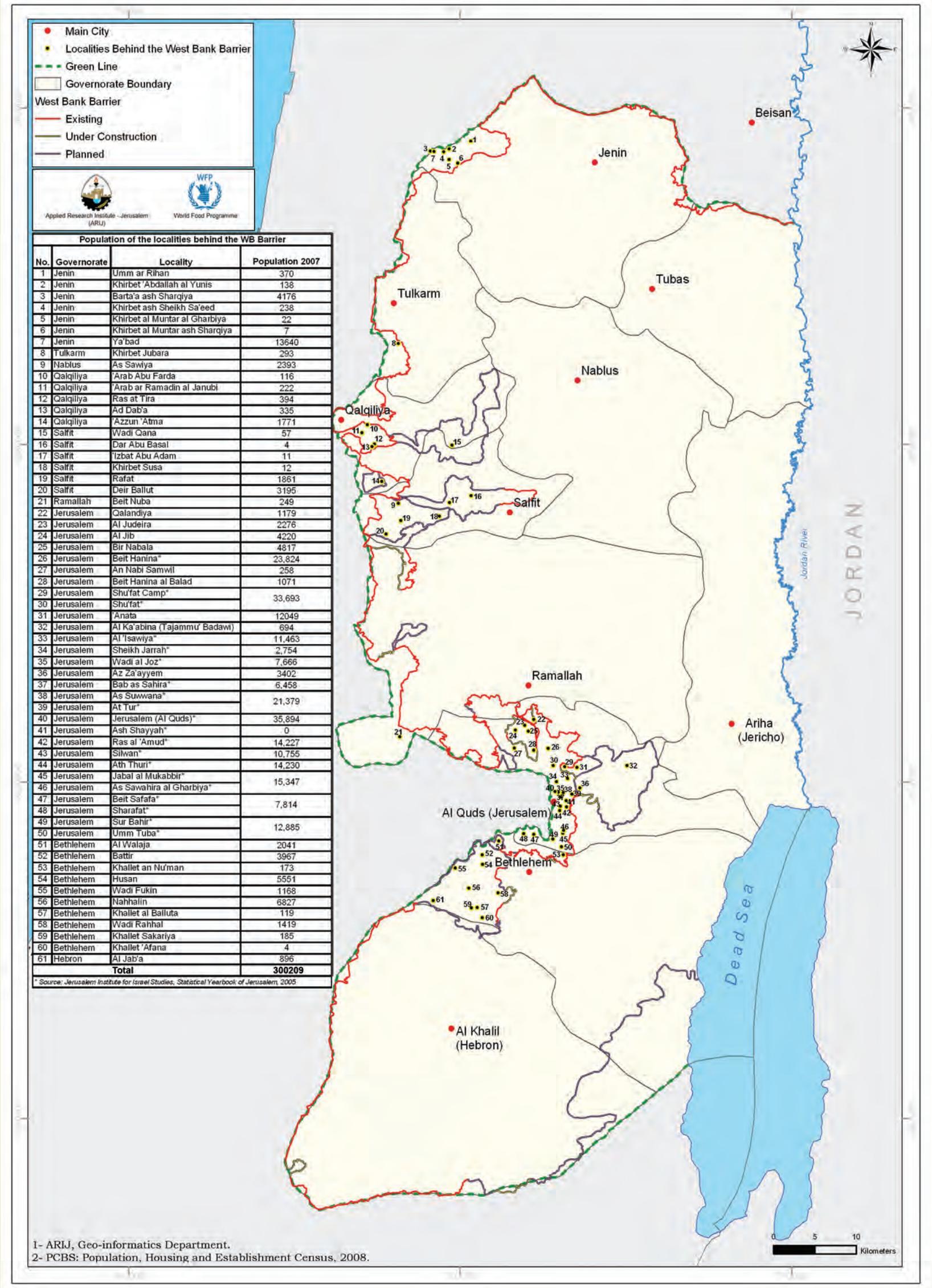
<sup>145</sup> The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ)- Urbanization Monitoring Department. *Analysis of Satellite Images, "Monitoring Israeli activities in the oPt" project funded by EU. November 2009.*

<sup>146</sup> WFP/FAO. *Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis Report in the oPt. December 2009.*

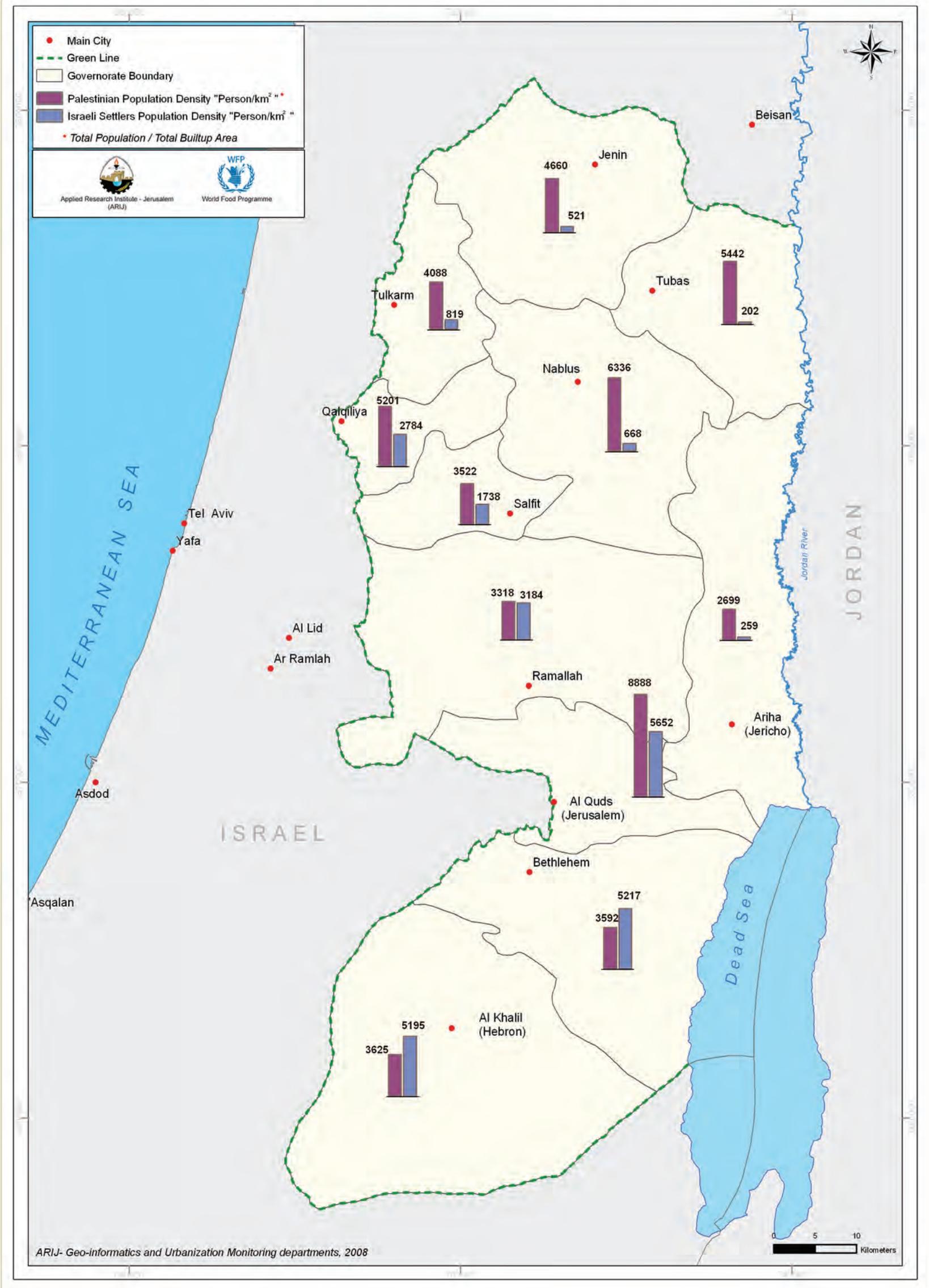


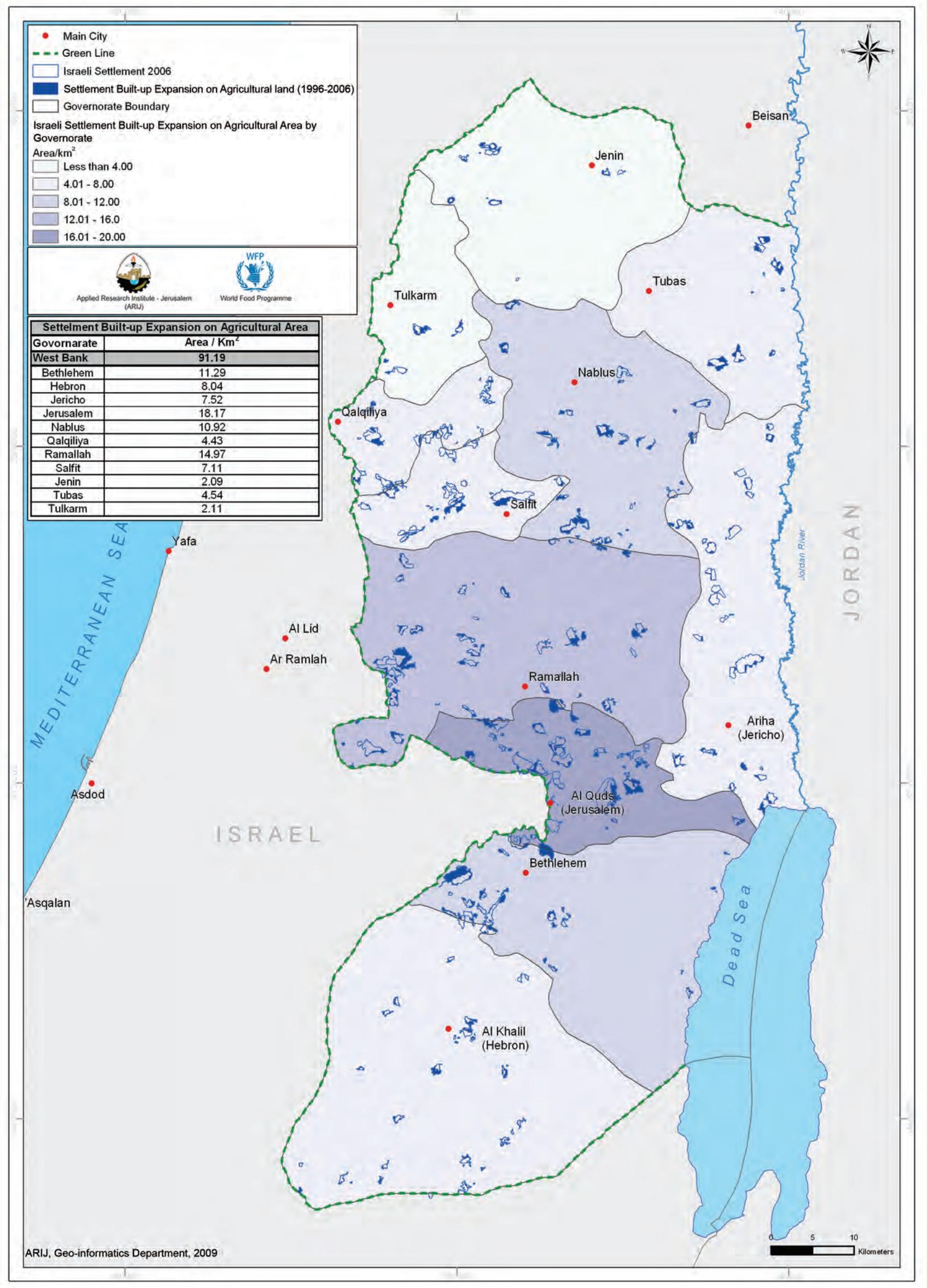


Distribution of the Palestinian Locality behind the West Bank Barrier and their Population, 2007

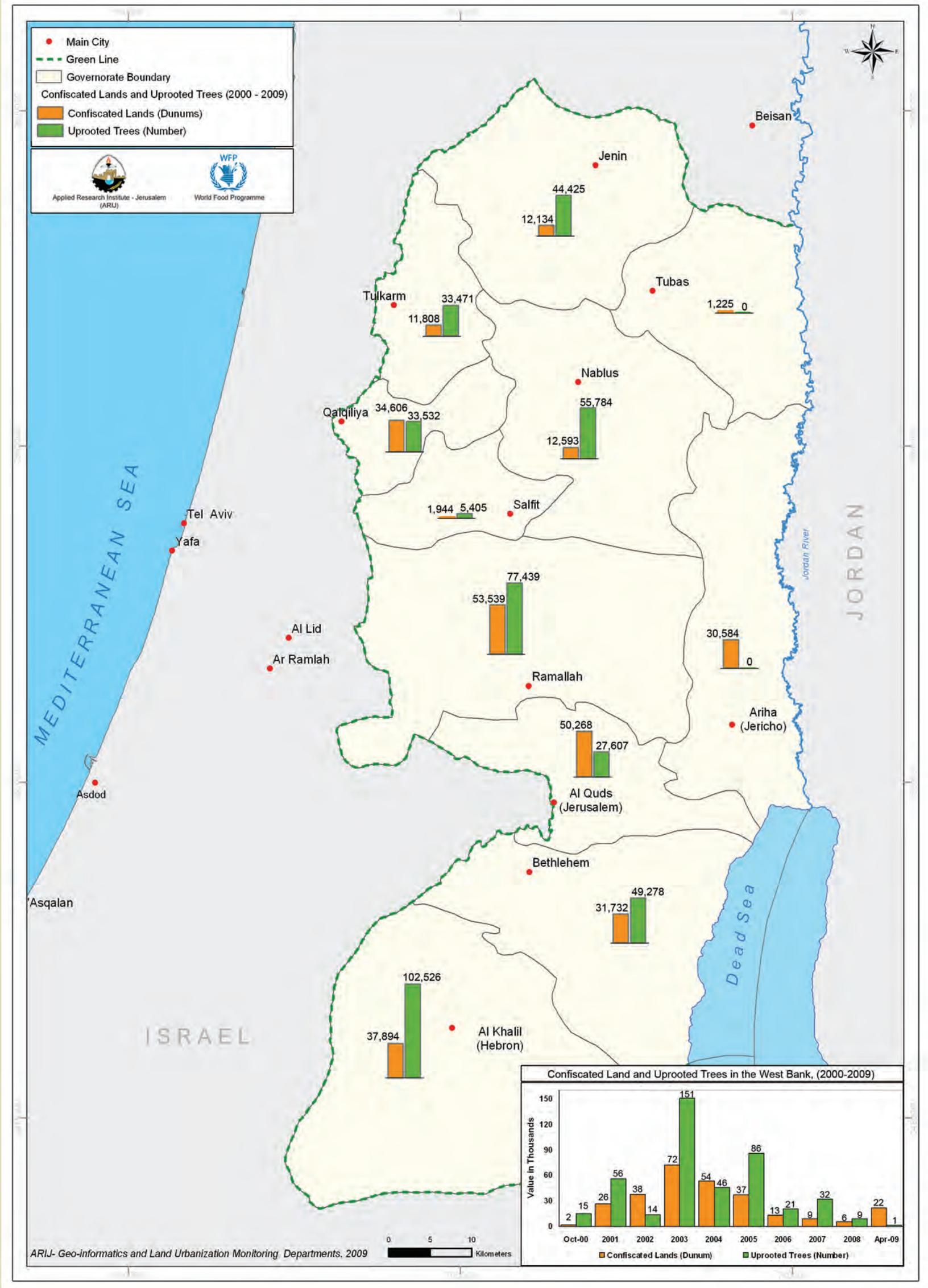


Population Density Comparison between Palestinians and Israeli Settlers in the West Bank, 2007/2008

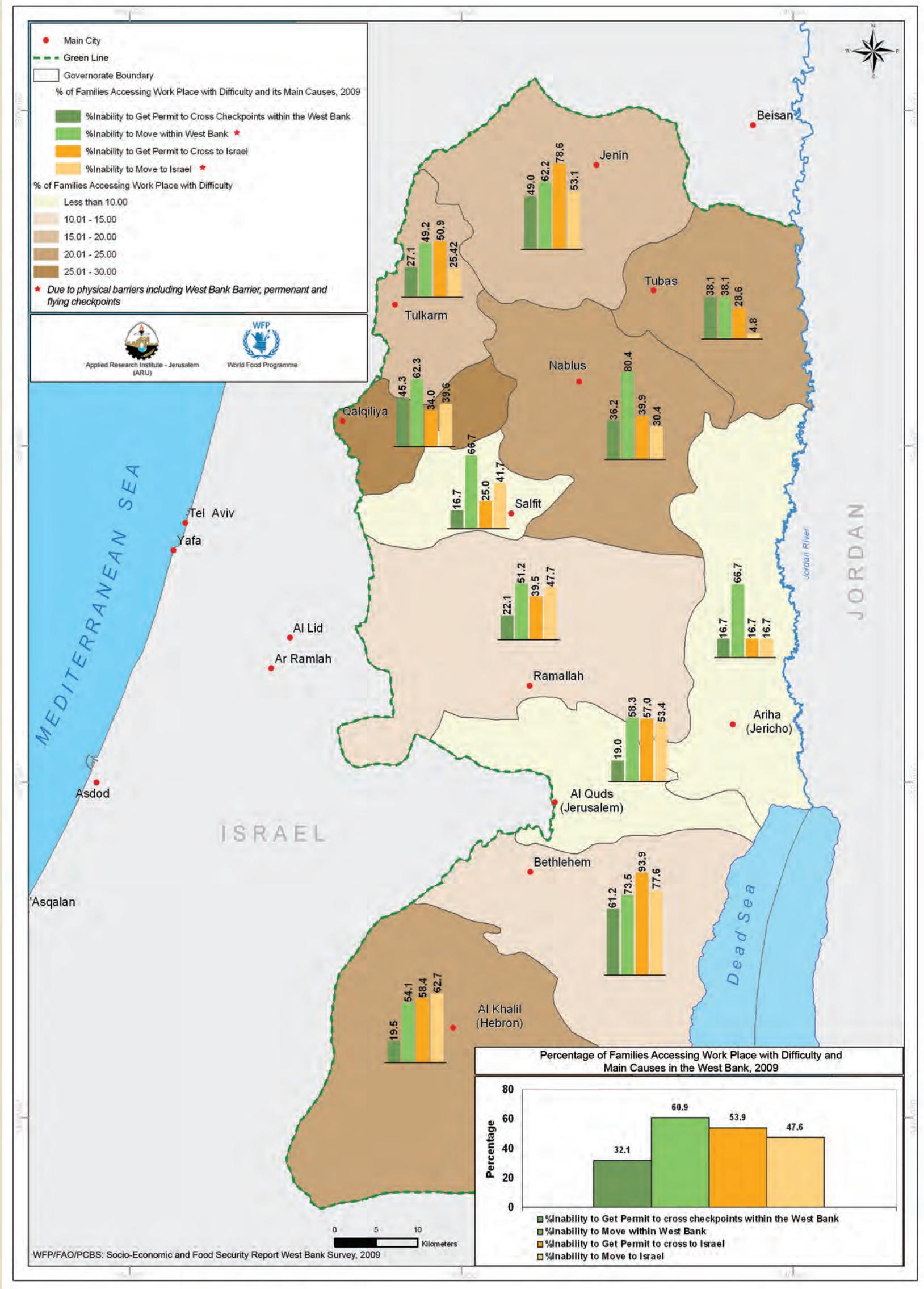


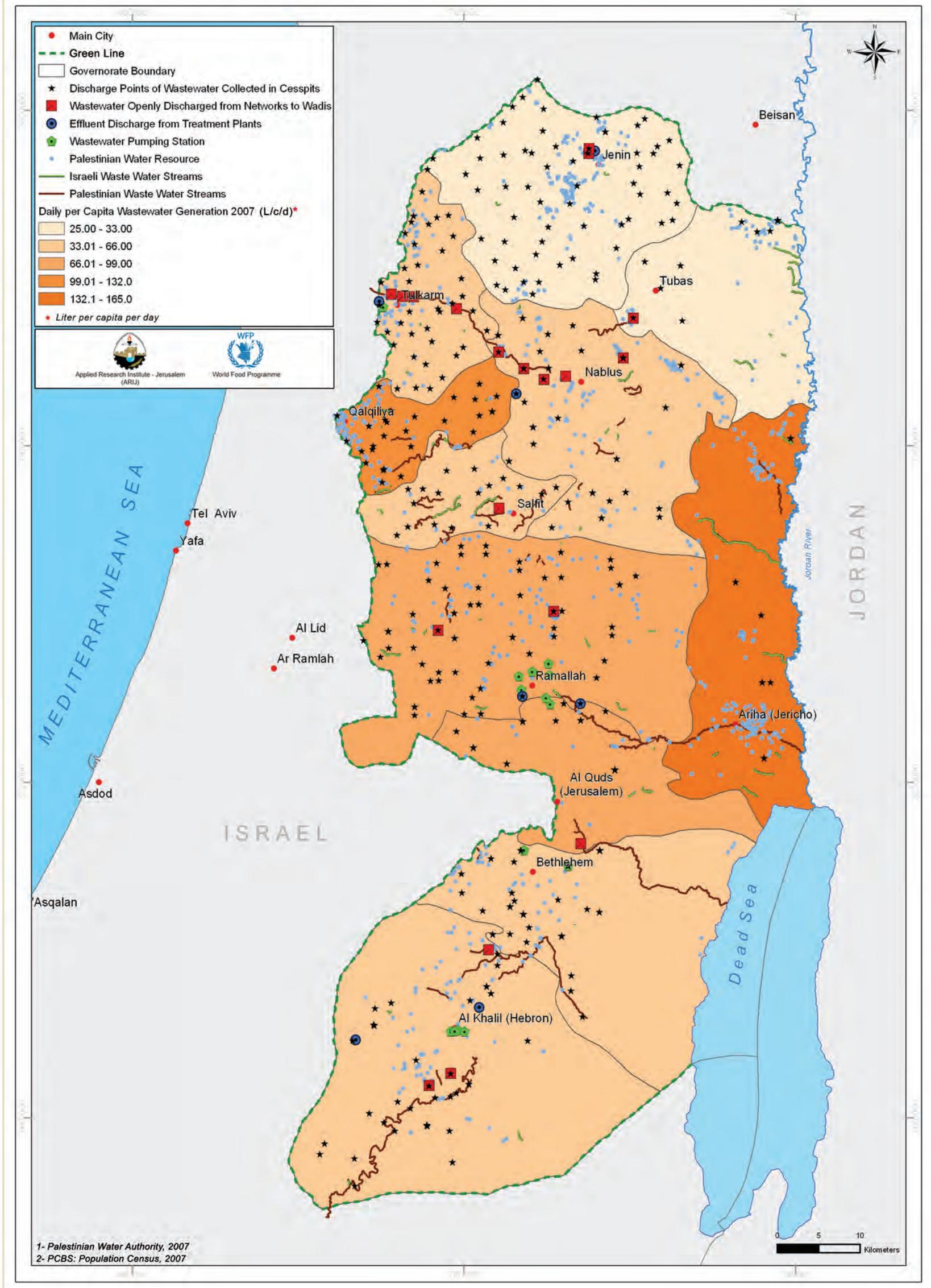


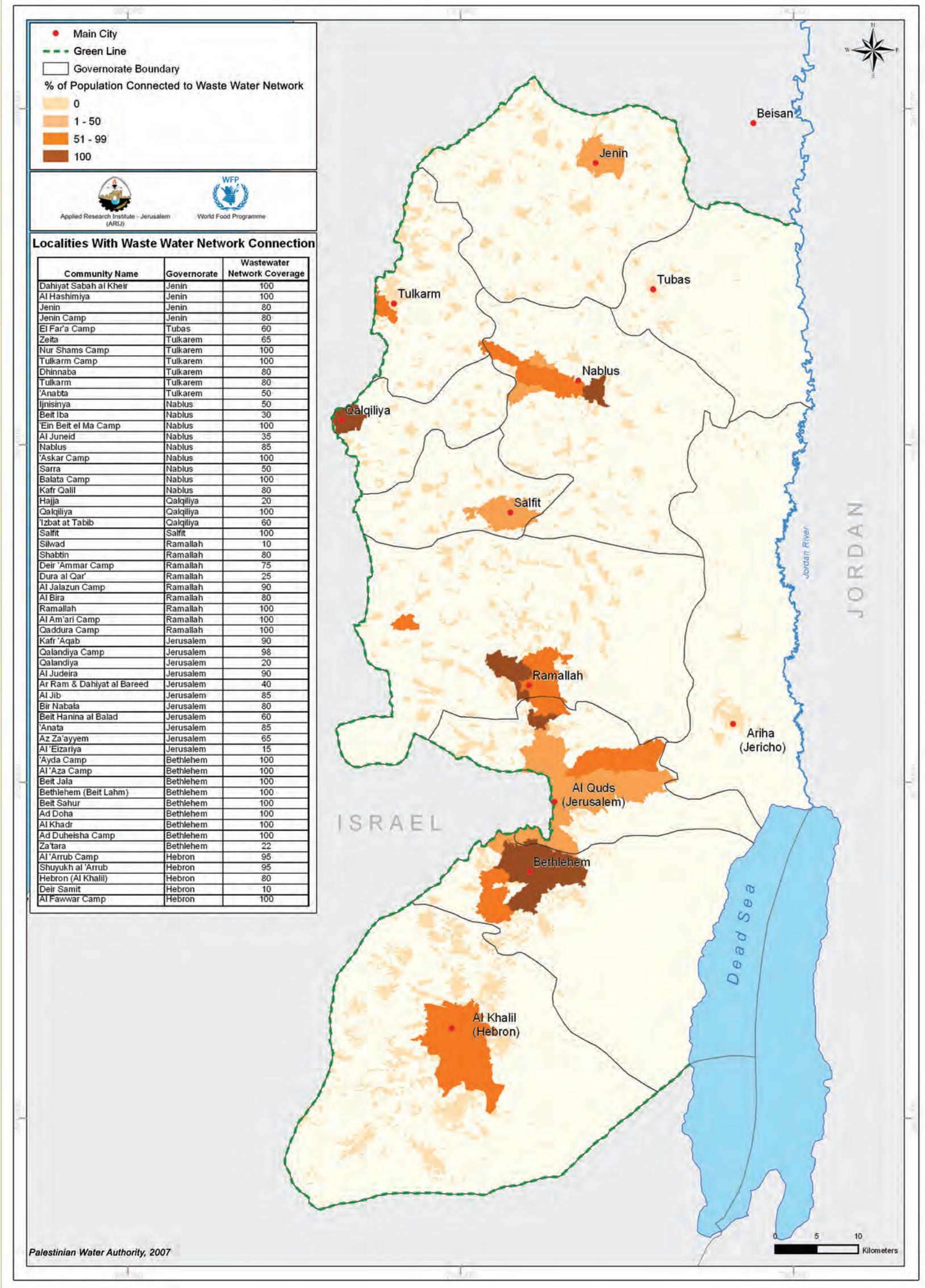
# Confiscated Lands and Uprooted Trees in the West Bank, 2000 - 2009











Israeli Security Zone in the Gaza Strip, 1994 - 2007



Location of Destroyed Sites by Type as a result to the Israeli Attack in the Gaza Strip, 2008 - 2009

