

Size and Population of Israeli Settlements

Map 3 mirrors the previous one, which featured the 'iron grid' of fragmentation and encapsulation imposed on the Palestinians by way of the settlements. This map explores the real dimensions of size and demographic weight the settlements are effectively shoring up. Acknowledging these dimensions is a prerequisite to calculating what would be needed to solve the impediments they cause.

Even at a glance the map and accompanying table and charts provide for startling observations:

- The vast majority (85%) of West Bank settlements, excluding those in East Jerusalem, are almost insignificantly small in residential size and capacity; the largest of them can be compared to small villages of about 1 sq. km. with, on average, some 700 inhabitants.
- Just a minority (15%) - some 20 settlements - resemble small townships, which, on average, are double the size of the former group but with denser populations, reaching averages of about 6,000 residents. Two from this group - Ma'ale Adumim and Ariel - have been granted city status, with populations of over 25,000 and 16,000 respectively while another four - Giv'at Ze'ev, Modi'in Illit, Betar and Efrata - are currently developing into small towns, reaching averages of about 10-15,000 inhabitants.
- The map illustrates the invalidity of the Israeli ploy of distinguishing between settlements on the West Bank and those in annexed East Jerusalem, ignoring international unanimity in regarding the latter area as part and parcel of the occupied West Bank. The municipal cluster of some 10 Jerusalem settlements houses half of all West Bank settlers, in urban densities unparalleled with other settlements, yet occupying a total area of less than 0.2% of the West Bank.

The other half of Israeli settlers lives in settlements outside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries. Although their built-up area is seven times larger than that of the Jerusalem settlers (due to their 'garden suburb'-character), these settlements - including their access roads - consume only 1.4% of the West Bank, bringing the total percentage of currently built-up settlement land to 1.6%, including the settlements in East Jerusalem.

The 'settlement blocs', which the Barak government intended to annex to Israel as part of a final status agreement, comprise of one third of all West Bank settlements and contain 70% of the total non-Jerusalem settler population. When including those living in Jerusalem this figure rises to 85% of all settlers and brings the total settler population in the proposed annexation to some 330,000. Having deducted those 15% of settlers who live neither in Jerusalem nor in the 'settlement blocs' but in the remote settlements, Israel's claim to inhabited non-Jerusalem West Bank territory is reduced to 0.6% and, even when combined with the 0.2% of the West Bank shored up by East Jerusalem settlements, still only amounts to a total of 0.8%.

This figure, when compared to the minimal 6% annexation proposed by Barak's government, indicates the extent of Israel's intended expansion upon the current settlement network.