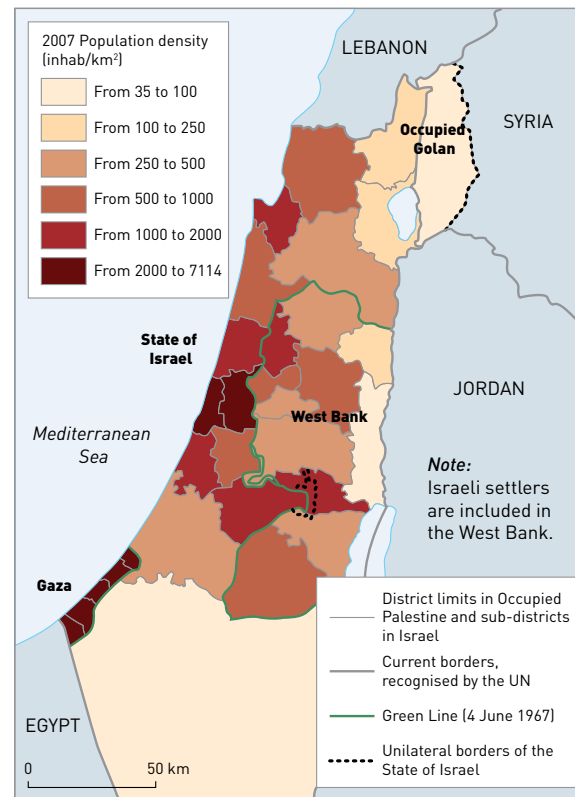


High Densities and Urbanisation

The very high population density on either side of the Green Line is immediately apparent. Israel has more than 300 inhabitants/sq km and even 500 inhabitants/sq km if the desert area of Negev is excluded, which is comparable to that of the West Bank. However, if we calculate the Arab population density of the West Bank in relation to the area that is actually accessible, zones A and B, as defined by the Oslo Accords (1993), the density of Palestinian Arabs reaches 1,000 inhabitants/sq km. As for the territory in the Gaza Strip, its density is one of the highest on the planet, with 4,000 inhabitants/sq km. The pressure on the environment is extreme and only increases with the sustained population growth that affects all Palestinian territories. The rural lifestyle has practically disappeared in favour of a generalised urbanisation.

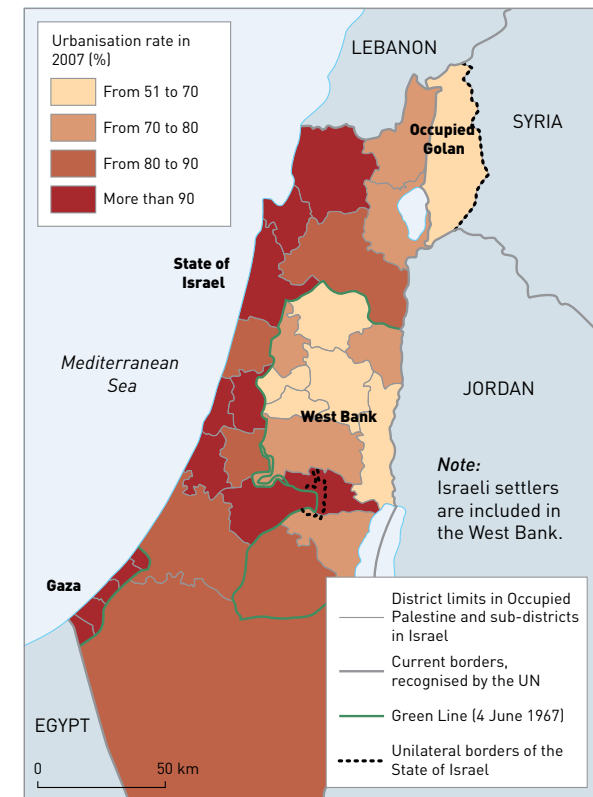
The population of Israel and the occupied territories is highly urbanised: 90 per cent and 75 per cent. The Gaza Strip may be considered 100 per cent urbanised. On the West Bank, urbanisation reached 75 per cent with a clear difference between the south and the north, the latter having remained more rural. The urban network is dominated by the central agglomeration of Ramallah-Jerusalem-Bethlehem which comprises, including the settlements, 1.1 million inhabitants (800,000 Arabs and 300,000 Jews). Hebron and Nablus polarise the rest of the West Bank, but are not overwhelmed by the central urban area because the obstacles Palestinians have travelling there limit their appeal. The compartmentalisation of the

POPULATION DENSITY IN 2007



Sources: Statistical offices of the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel.

URBANISATION IN 2007



Sources: Statistical offices of the Palestinian Authority and the State of Israel.

territory favours the maintenance of secondary cities and of a stratum of small cities, as is the case around Hebron, which under normal circumstances would be crushed by the power of a metropolis in such proximity.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli colonisation divided the territory into four sections that today constitute the four main metropolitan areas of the territory: Gaza, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younes, and Rafah. Since the withdrawal of the Israelis in 2005,

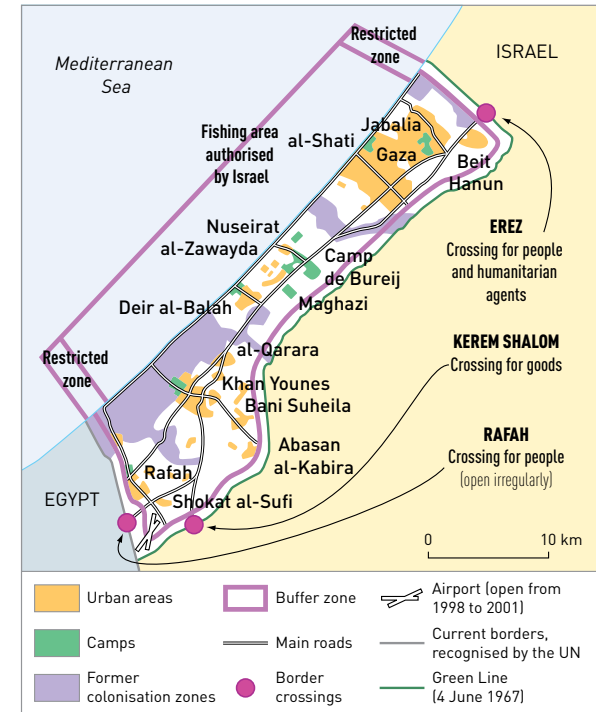
THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IN 2007



THE URBAN NETWORK IN 2007



THE GAZA STRIP



the gaps between sections have been filled by the urban expansion that accompanies strong population growth. The lack of financial means and the Israeli blockade prevent the construction of modern buildings and favour instead a spontaneous spreading of the habitat. One-third of the population continues to live in refugee camps (50 per cent of all refugees) against less than 8 per cent in the West Bank (25 per cent of the refugees).