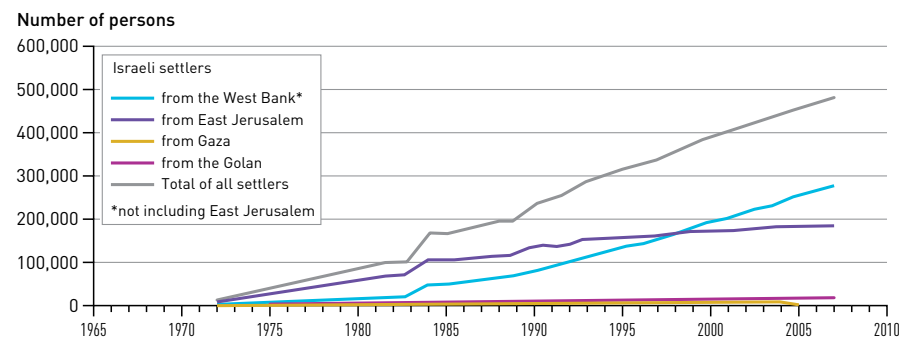


## Jewish Colonisation

The Jewish colonisation movement in Palestine has been compared with Israel's strategy of conquering occupied territories since 1967. However, it must not be forgotten that the colonisation movement already began at the end of the nineteenth century with the creation of the first rural settlements, some of which took the form of kibbutzim. The Jewish colonies spread in the areas that were least populated at the time: the coastal plain from Jaffa to Acre, the Jezreel Valley, and the upper Jordan River. The Arab population, more than 80 per cent rural, resided in the hills where the climate was healthier than along the coastal region. This population practiced a traditional Mediterranean agriculture of tenant farming based on wheat, vines, and olives. The Jewish settlers developed an irrigated and intensive agriculture that quickly established itself but did not lead to the modernisation of Arab agriculture. The policy of hiring only "Hebrew labour" meant that Arab farmers did not work on Jewish farms and thus were unable to acquire the know-how essential for agricultural development. The massive Jewish purchases of land under the British mandate and the exclusion of Arab peasants contributed to the Arab uprising of 1936. At that time, only 10 per cent of the farming land in Palestine was owned by Jews, but it was the most fertile land. In 1947 the Zionist leaders relied on the network of Jewish settlements to claim the territory of the Jewish state, although the majority of the Jewish population lived in cities and only a minority lived in the countryside, unlike the Arab population.

Following the conquest of 1967 colonisation continued in the territories occupied by Israel: the Sinai (until its restitution to Egypt), the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. Its participants were motivated by Zionist ideals, but they also included citizens wishing to benefit from inexpensive housing and reduced tuition fees, as these were subsidised by the state of Israel in the settlements. The settlements, whether considered legal or illegal, were part of a global strategy to conquer Palestinian territory and to raise the stakes within the framework of the negotiations with Palestinian interlocutors and Arab belligerents. The Israeli leaders did not hesitate to sacrifice settlements if the situation demanded it. Peace with Egypt was contingent on the restitution of Sinai and the destruction of settlements. The progressive integration of Jerusalem into the state of Israel was accompanied by the withdrawal from

### POPULATION GROWTH AMONG ISRAELI SETTLERS

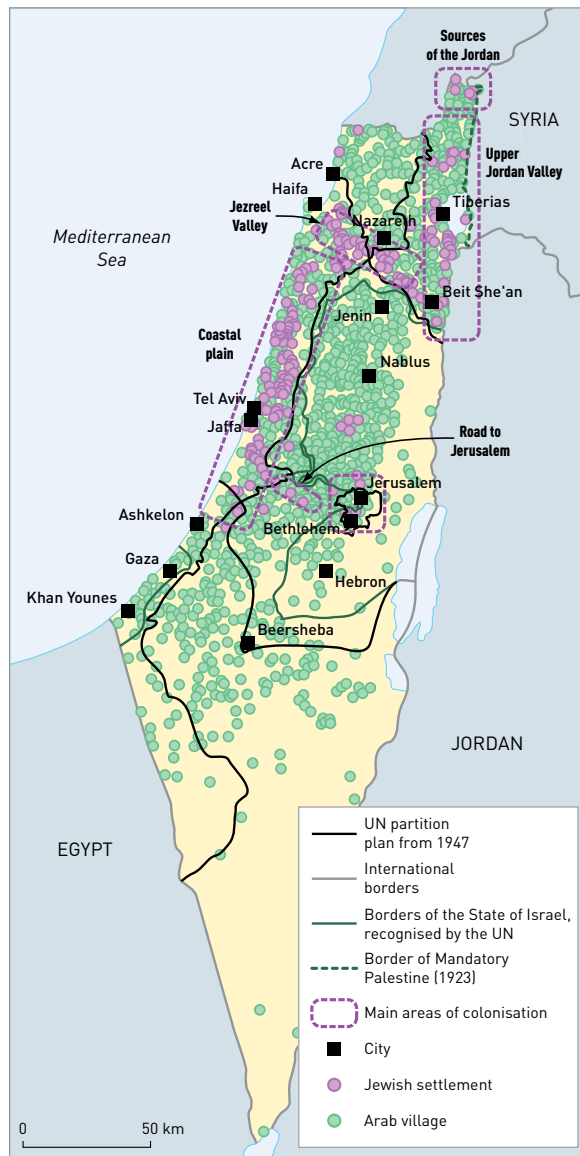


Source : B'tselem.

Gaza in 2005. Eventual peace with Syria might translate into the surrender of settlements in the Golan Heights.

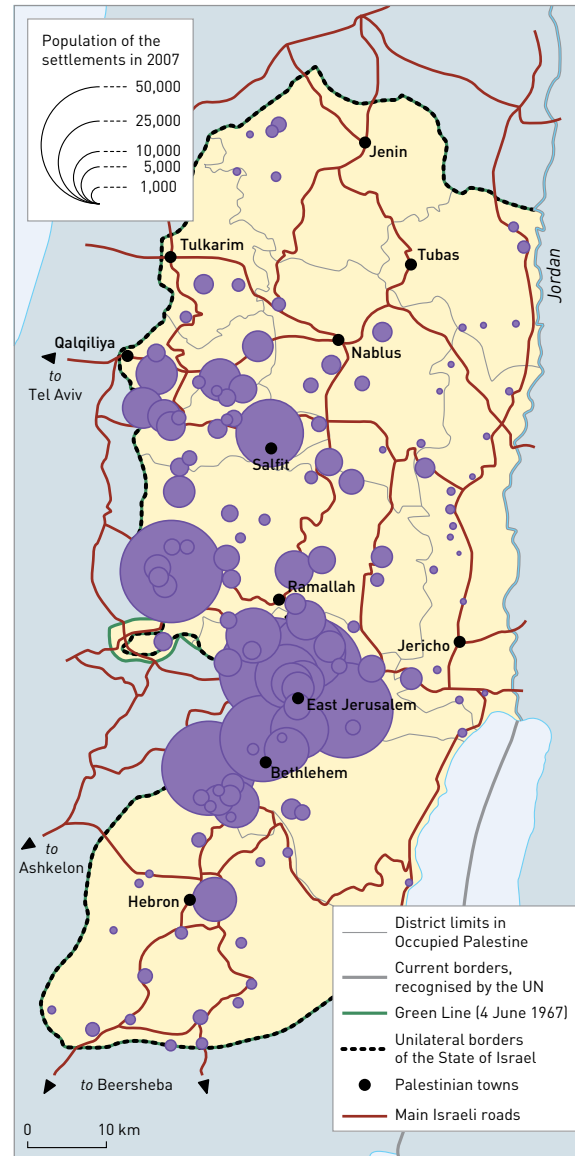
Between 1967 and 1973 colonisation took place primarily in the Jordan Valley and around Jerusalem. The aim was to control the border with Jordan and occupy a territory that was relatively lightly populated compared to the rest of the West Bank. Since the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and until 1980 Israeli efforts focused on creating a Jerusalem-Dead Sea axis that cut the West Bank in two. In the 1980s the central hills around Nablus and Hebron were divided up, and the satellite settlements in the conurbation of Tel Aviv were also developed to the east of the Green Line. The West Bank was divided and controlled through a network of roads (reserved for settlers) which connected the settlements to each other and to Israeli territory. Any territorial continuity of the West Bank was henceforth impossible. From 1991, when the Oslo process began, the creation of legal settlements was limited. But unauthorised settlements grew in numbers on the central ridge, and the whole area experienced an exceptional population growth; the Jewish population in the West Bank went from 200,000 in 1991 to 500,000 in 2010, or close to 20 per cent of the population, which may be considered the "threshold of irreversibility," beyond which it is no longer possible to detach the West Bank from Israel. The Council for Jewish Settlements wants to see a million Israelis in the West Bank alone by 2020, or 1.7 million including East Jerusalem. That figure is enormous, but, at the current pace of colonisation, it is not unrealistic.

### PALESTINIAN VILLAGES AND JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN 1945



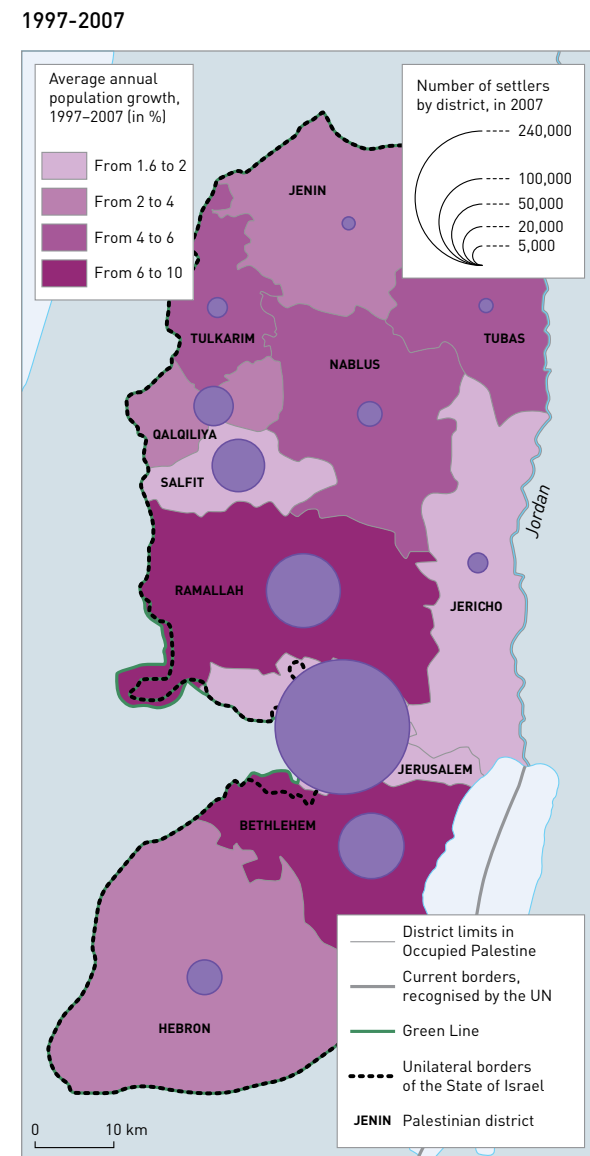
Source: Atlas of Palestine - ARIJ Resource Center 2000.

### POPULATION OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK IN 2007



Source : B'tselem, 2010.

### POPULATION GROWTH OF ISRAELI SETTLERS IN THE WEST BANK 1997-2007



Source : B'tselem, 2010.