



SETTLEMENTS ON THE STOLEN LANDS

H. Zehra Kavak



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Israel's and Israelis' Perception of Settlements and the Peace Process

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**IHH
HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL
RESEARCH CENTER**

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Publication



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DOP	Declaration of Principles
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
NRP	The National Religious Party
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

FOREWORD

The settlements established by the Israeli government by inhabiting the Jewish population in the occupied Palestinian territories constitute a major problem of discussion in Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Constituting serious violations of the human rights of Palestinian people, shedding light on the issue of settlements properly is essential.

This study is an extension of my master thesis which analyzes the issue of Israeli settlements in the scope of the peace process through Israel's and the Israeli settlers' perceptions with regards to Palestinians in an effort to understand the ideological background supporting them.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the supervisor of my thesis, Prof Berdal Aral who has contributed greatly during the process of writing. Also, I would like to thank Dr Agnes E. Brandabur and Dr Philipp O. Amour who are part of the jury for their useful evaluations. It's also my pleasure to convey my sincere thanks to the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation in general and the IHH Social and Humanitarian Research Center in particular who had supported me in my studies and inspired me with this publication. Finally, I would also like to thank my husband Dr Özgür Kavak for his encouragement throughout the whole process.

H. Zehra Kavak, Istanbul

INTRODUCTION

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, having various dimensions such as religious, ethnic, cultural, economic and strategic, constitutes one of the main discussion fields in international relations. The peace process which was started in the 1990s by Madrid and Oslo meetings in order to bring about a compromise for the solution of Israeli-Palestinian conflict could not give a concrete result.

Having various essential issues to be solved, the negotiators of the peace process had to solve a vital topic for peace, that was the issue of settlements. The settlements established by the Israeli government by inhabiting Jewish population in the occupied Palestinian territories constitute a major problem of discussion in Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The number of settlements increased to 124 from 1967 to 2013. Israeli Interior Ministry defines settlements as “communities” even though their situation is deemed illegal by the UN, the International Court of Justice and

the international community. The building and existence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights is perceived as a violation of international law by the various actors of the international community. While Palestinians suffer from settlements in cultural, social and economic terms, Jewish migration to new settlements is encouraged by the occupier Israeli government.

Settlements and settlers are also a source of continuous human rights violations. Settlers' limitless violence to Palestinians such as targeting civilians, demolishing homes, lands, livestock, fruit gardens and holy places carries the issue to the agenda of the international community since they cause serious human rights violations.

From the 1990s up to the present, settlements have constantly been brought to the agenda of the negotiation table. The Annapolis Conference which is encouraged by George W. Bush and signed by Ehud Olmert & Mahmud Abbas in 2007 was perceived by the international actors as a positive development to prevent the construction of new settlements¹. However, this process has failed since Israel issued new legal regulations allowing the construction of new settlements in 2008.² Most recently after the upgrade of Palestine's status in the UN to the permanent observer status in December 2012, occupier Israel announced that it would build 3000 new settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.³ The issue of settlements, recognized

1 See for the documents of this Conference "Special Document File, The Annapolis Conference", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. XXXII, no. 3 (Spring 2008), pp. 74-92.

2 For Post-Annapolis situation of the settlements see "Israeli Settlement Activity Since Annapolis 27 November 2007 - 25 May 2008", Prepared by the Negotiations Support Unit, NAD-PLO <http://www.ajtransparency.com/files/2861.pdf>, (27 September 2012).

3 "Israel to Build 3,000 Settler Homes after UN Vote", BBC News, (November 30, 2012), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-20552391>, (10 December 2012).

illegal by the international society, would be either a key or an obstacle for reaching a conclusion in Israeli-Palestinian accords.

In this study, the issue of settlements is going to be taken into account within the context of the peace process. The question of the study is to reach a conclusion about the impact of settlements on the peace process.

During the study, first, I will try to give a picture of settlement mentality based on both ideological and official perspective before studying the settlement issue and its relation to the peace process. The settlers' perception of Palestine and Palestinians will be questioned to understand the settlement reality which has been declared illegal by the international community. It is argued that the existence of settlements and enlargement constitutes a major obstacle to the peace process and a source of continuous human rights violations. For instance, while Palestinians who are facing with forced evacuation from their homes and lands, arbitrary attacks, demolitions, insults, prevention to access to schools, hospitals and etc. label settler Jewish population as "occupiers", the settlers consider their own presence as a natural and historical right. The settlers refer to Palestine not as an "occupied" territory, but a "disputed" territory on the one hand, while Palestinians see the settlements as the main threat for the continuity of the Palestinian State on the other. Thus, understanding settlers' perception of settlements in particular and Israeli governments' perception of settlements in general will be helpful to get the Israeli stance in the peace process.

Since the issue needs background information for better understanding, the historical background and the situation of settlements according to international law

will also be mentioned in the study. The atrocities carried by settlers will be utilized to understand the reflection of settlers' perception of the land and the people of Palestine.

After understanding the facts on the ground and having an idea about settlement mentality, I will study the peace process and the settlement issue; hence then I hope to reach a conclusion about the impact of settlements on the peace process and so on the future of the peace process.

In this study, both Israeli and Palestinian perspective is being analyzed through Israeli and Palestinian sources. In this respect, understanding settlers' perception of Palestine and Palestinians and Palestinian opinion on settlements would give clue about the future of the peace process.

SETTLEMENTS BY DEFINITION



An Israeli settlement with complicated infrastructure.

1.1. The Terms: Settlement, Outpost and Settler

1.1.1. Settlement

An “Israeli settlement” is an Israeli civilian community built on the lands that were captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War and is considered “occupied territory” by the international community.⁴ During the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel took control of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. A settlement area is located across the Green Line which is the ceasefire line determined in 1949 during the partition of Palestinian lands between Arab and Jewish administration.⁵ Settlements are the living units including large housing projects for Israeli settlers.⁶ No

4 David Newman, “Civilian and Military Presence As Strategies of Territorial Control: The Arab-Israel Conflict”, *Political Geography Quarterly*, vol. VIII/3 (July 1989), pp. 215–227.

5 “Illegal Israeli settlements”, *Council for European Palestinian Relations*, http://thecepr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115%3Aillegal-israeli-settlements&catid=6%3Aamos&Itemid=348&lang=en, (20 March 2012).

6 “What are the Israeli Settlements in the Palestinian Territories?”, <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000530>, (05 May 2012).
Çıkılmazdan Çözümü, Ed.: M. İbrahim Turhan, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2003), p. 31.

doubt, those settlements are built unlawfully on Palestinian lands for Jewish people to settle.⁷ Settlements currently exist in the West Bank from northernmost city of Jenin to its southernmost Hebron. Israeli neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and communities in the Golan Heights, areas which have been annexed by Israel, are also considered settlements by the international community, which does not recognize Israel's annexations of these territories.⁸ Settlements also existed in the Sinai and Gaza Strip until Israel unilaterally disengaged from these areas.

Most of the settlements began as the military centers in strategic locations in the desert have turned to housing for civilians. Still they are protected by the Israeli army. A settlement includes the land for buildings, roads, infrastructure, agriculture and water resources which are necessary to live.⁹

The Jewish settlements could be categorized into three in terms of their locations. First group of Jewish settlements are the ones located across Jordan River creating a barrier between Jordan River and the West Bank. The second group of settlements such as Gilo, Har Homa, Ma'ale Adumim, Mishor Adumim, Tibek Kuteif, Kefair Adumim and Pisgat Zeev located around Jerusalem breaks the connection of Jerusalem to the West Bank and also disconnect other Palestinian cities. The third group of settlements are surrounding the important cities of West Bank such as el-Halil, Eriha, Nablus, Ramallah and Jenin.¹⁰

7 Osman Bahadır Dinçer & Gamze Coşkun, "Jewish Settlements: Another Name for Occupation", *USAK Yearbook*, vol. IV, (2011), p. 207.

8 Donald MacIntyre, "The Big Question: What are Israeli Settlements, and Why are They Coming under Pressure?", *The Independent* (May 29, 2009), <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/the-big-question-what-are-israeli-settlements-and-why-are-they-coming-under-pressure-1692515.html>, (20 September 2012).

9 Dinçer & Coşkun, (2011), p. 208.

10 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Küresel ve Bölgesel Dengeler, Ortadoğu Barış Süreci", (In Filistin Çıkamazdan Çözüme, Ed.: M. İbrahim Turhan, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2003), p. 31.



An outpost which is illegal also in Israeli law.

1.1.2. Outpost

In addition to the settlements, “outposts” are unofficial settlements established in the 1990s whose illegal situation is also accepted by Israeli government.¹¹ Even outposts are built without government approval, without land being formally allocated and without an approved building plan. The construction is aided by the Israeli government and the military.¹²

1.1.3. Settler

The term settler in general is defined as someone who has migrated to an area to establish permanent residence over there.¹³ The Israeli settlers in particular would be defined as “the people who migrated to Israel to live permanently

11 For instance, Israeli Supreme Court ruled about Migron outpost that it was built illegally on private Palestinian land and it would have to be evacuated. See: Matthew Bell, “Israel Evicts Settlers from Illegal Outpost”, (September 03, 2012), *The World.Org*, <http://www.theworld.org/2012/09/israel-vows-to-strengthen-communities/>, (15 January 2013).

12 “Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 2011 Annual Report”, B’Tselem, http://www.btselem.org/download/2011_annual_report_eng.pdf, (10 September 2012).

13 “Settler”, *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Settler>, (10 January 2013).

in the confiscated Palestinian lands.” The Israeli settlers differ among themselves from the perspective of their motivations. Mainly it is possible to divide settlers into three: the ideologically motivated settlers, economically motivated settlers and ultra-orthodox settlers. The first category of settlers has religious and ideological intentions to live as settlers. This group is mostly populated in the area of the Route 60, the main north-south highway stretching from Beersheba to Nazareth, the Biblical land known as Judea and Samaria¹⁴. This group see themselves as the real owners of the holy lands Judea and Samaria.¹⁵ The second group can be defined as economic settlers since they moved to the settlement areas mostly due to benefits like cheap housing, space, tax breaks, and mountain air.¹⁶ On the other hand, the third group ultra-orthodox settlers are the descendants of devoutly religious Jews who are against change and modernization. They live in exclusively cheap and segregated houses, they rejected active Zionism and they believe that the redemption would be by means of religious activity not secular.¹⁷

14 Samaria is the Biblical name for northern West Bank, while Judea is the Biblical name for the Southern region whose capital is Palestine. In this respect, Judea and Samaria refer to the territory known as West Bank. See: “What do the Names Judea and Samaria Refer to?”, *Palestine Facts*, http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_early_palestine_judea_samaria.php, (02 April 2013). The Bible talks about Judea and Samaria as follows: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”, The Bible, Acts, 1:8, <http://bible.cc/acts/1-8.htm>.

15 Jeffrey Goldberg, “Among the Settlers”, *The New Yorker*, (May 31, 2004), http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/31/040531fa_fact2_a, (08 October 2012).

16 “The Psychology of Settlements”, *Illegal Israeli settlements*, *Council for European Palestinian Relations*, http://thecepr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115%3AIllegal-israeli-settlements&catid=6%3Ammos&Itemid=34&lang=en, (10 March 2013).

17 Alon Ben-Meir, “Israeli Settlements: Getting it Settled”, *The World Today*, vol. LXV, no. 8/9, August/September 2009, p. 20-22.

1.2. Historical Process in the Enlargement of Settlements

The Palestinian lands witnessed the flow of Jewish migration since early 20th century. The declaration of Zionism by Theodor Herzl in the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897 encouraged the Jewish population especially from Europe to settle in Palestine.¹⁸ The First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire brought the British mandate (1922-1948) to Palestine. In accordance with the Balfour Declaration (1917) stating the establishment of “a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine”¹⁹, the era of British mandate witnessed the rising migrations of Jewish population to Palestine.²⁰

In 1947, the UN declared the Partition Plan dividing Palestine into two states: one is Arab and the other is Jewish. According to the Partition Plan, Jewish state was covering 56.47% of Palestinian land and Arab State was covering 43.53% of Palestinian land.²¹ In addition, the area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem was declared international zone. By 1948, Israel declared its independence and increased the scope of the land from 56.47% up to 78% between 1947 to 1949. During the process of partition and Israel's independence, Israel depopulated more than 400 villages by force creating 726,000 Palestinian refugees.²²

18 Ami Isseroff, “Zionism and Israel Biographies- Theodor Herzl”, http://www.zionism-israel.com/bio/biography_herzl.htm, (10 April 2012).

19 “The Balfour Declaration”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20balfour%20declaration.aspx>, (15 May 2013).

20 For detailed information about the Ottoman and British periods in Palestine see: M. Lütfullah Karaman, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Çıkılmazında Filistin Sorunu*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul: 1991, pp. 14-40.

21 “UN Partition Plan”, (November 29, 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/israel_and_the_palestinians/key_documents/1681322.stm, (09 July 2012).

22 “What is the Background of Jewish Settlements in Palestinian Arab Areas?”, http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_current_settlements.php, (02 April 2013).

Early settlers,
1975, Sebastia
region.



The developments of early 20th century brought the change of demographic structure in Palestine. Policy of promoting Jewish settlement is long before the foundation of Israeli state, starting from early 20th century, Palestine got Jewish migration up to 1967. The tents and cottages built before the Israeli state formed the basis for further settlements. The settlements actually started to be built after 1967. The Israeli settlements in Palestinian lands firstly established following the 6 Day War in 1967.²³ The outcome of 1967 war was interpreted by Jewish leaders as a divine opportunity to regain Jewish control over the ancient homeland of Jews. For religious nationalists, to settle in these areas became the primary objective. Following 1967 war, movements were organized to build Jewish settlements immediately. At that time the settlers were not exclusively religious but supported by religious parties and leaders.²⁴

23 For Israeli Settlements' chronology see "Settlement Time Line", Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories, *Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP)*, http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement_timelines.html, (10 January 2013).

24 Gerald M. Steinberg, "Interpretations of Jewish Tradition on Democracy, Land and Peace", *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, (October 2000), <http://jcpa.org/article/interpretations-of-jewish-tradition-on-democracy-land-and-peace/>, (18 March 2012).

Following 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the settlement activity was largely carried out especially in East Jerusalem. The Israeli government withdrew Palestinians from the region by force or in return for some payments on the one hand and initiated the first Jewish settlements projects in East Jerusalem.²⁵

The first Israeli settlement Kfar Etzion was established in the West Bank in 1967. In 1977, the number of settlements reached around 30 with 5000 inhabitants.²⁶ A settlement plan prepared by Israeli Defense Minister Yigal Allon was implemented between 1967-1977. The plan focused on providing security for Israel and Jews even if it violated the rights of Palestinians.²⁷

The settler activity in Palestinian lands turned to a serious problem in the late 1970s during the Likud government. The Likud administration targeting to create permanent settlements increased the number of settlers in occupied Palestinian territories from 5000 to 18500 between 1977-1981. In addition, it built more than 20 settlements in Arab populated regions in which previous Labor Party put limits to the construction of settlements.²⁸ Menachem Begin from the Likud Party came to the office of Prime Ministry in 1977 at a time when the “two state solution” was discussed for the solution of the conflict. Begin implemented a settlement plan in which the location of settlements was chosen in such a manner as to prevent the state from division. Ariel Sharon who

25 Ali Balcı, “Yahudi Yerleşimleri: Postmodern Bir İşgal”, *Ortadoğu Analiz*, vol. IV, no. 45, (September 2012), p. 69.

26 “What are the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories?”, <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000530>, (05 May 2012).

27 “The Allon Plan”, <http://www.mideastweb.org/alonplan.htm>, (10 April 2013).

28 Ali Balcı, “İsrail Sorunu: Ortadoğu’nun Gordion Düğümü”, (Ed. Kemal İnât, Burhanettin Duran and Muhittin Ataman), *Dünya Çatışmaları: Çatışma Bölgeleri ve Konuları*, İstanbul: Nobel Publications, vol. I/3, (2010), p. 119.

broke the peace process by his provocative visit to Masjid al-Aqsa in 2000 was the person in charge of settlements in Begin's government. For Sharon the achievement of military occupation would be completed by settling Jewish population in those lands. During Sharon's term which lasted 7 years, 67 Jewish settlements were built. Begin period came to be known by active settlement policy.²⁹

The settler population in occupied Palestinian territories reached to 67000 in 1987 making the daily life inconvenient for the Palestinian population. This process triggered the process known as Palestinian Intifada.³⁰

1.3. Current Situation and Numbers Regarding the Settlements

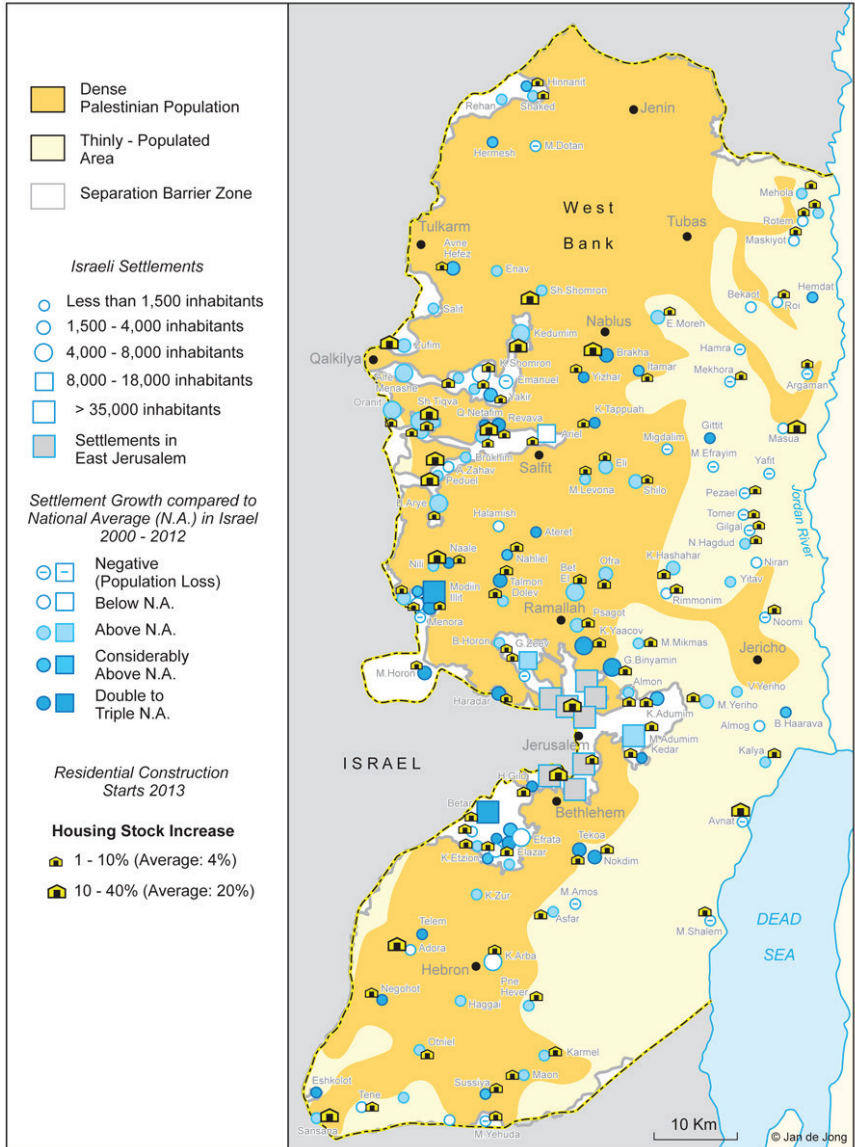
From 1967 to 2013, Israel established 124 settlements in the West Bank that were recognized by the Interior Ministry as "communities." In addition, some 100 outposts were built without official authorization but with support and assistance of government ministries. Furthermore, twelve neighborhoods that were established on land annexed by Israel in 1967 and made part of Jerusalem are deemed settlements under international law. The government has also funded and assisted the establishment of a few settler enclaves in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, including in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrach, Mount of Olives, Ra's al-Amud, Abu Dis, and Jabal al-Mukabber.³¹

29 Shaul Arieli, Roby Nathanson, Ziv Rubin and Hagar Tzameret-Kertcher, "Historical and Economic Impact of Jewish Settlements in the Occupied Territories", *Israeli European Policy Network*, (July 2009), http://www.alzaytouna.net/en/files/selections/Jewish_Settlements_IEPN_6-09.pdf, (20 April 2013).

30 Balci, (2012), p. 70.

31 "Land Expropriation & Settlements", <http://www.btselem.org/english/Settlements/Index.asp>, (10 October 2012).

Israeli Settlements on the West Bank Patterns of Growth, 2013



Israeli policies toward the settlements have ranged from active promotion to forced evacuation.³² Currently, total settler population exceeds 500,000.³³ According to 2011 statistics, the total settler population in West Bank is 328,423; Modi'in Ilit is having the largest settler population that is 52,060. Betar 'Illit and Ma'ale Adummim follows Modi'in Ilit with the population of 39,710 and 36,089 respectively.³⁴

While dismantling 18 settlements in the Sinai Peninsula in 1982, 21 in the Gaza Strip and 4 in the West Bank in 2005, Israel continues to build new settlements in the West Bank. This expansion of new settlements conflicts with the Oslo Agreement.³⁵

The population growth in settlements is figured by the numbers. The population growth in 124 settlements in 2012 was 4.9%, which was higher than the average population growth in Israel which is 1.9%. The annual settler population growth was 2,6 times larger than the population growth in Israel for the same year.³⁶

1.4. Israeli Settlements within the Context of International Law

The building and existence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights is

32 "Government to Target Illegal Outposts", *The Jerusalem Post*, (August 5, 2006), <http://www.jpost.com/Home/Article.aspx?id=21126>, (7 August 2012).

33 "Comprehensive Settlement Population 1972-2010", *Foundation for Middle East Peace*, http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/comprehensive-settlement-population-1972-2006, (5 February 2013). "The humanitarian impact of Israeli settlement policies", OCHA, (January 2012), http://unispal.un.org/pdfs/OCHA_IsrSettlementPolicies.pdf, (27 April 2013).

34 "Settlements in the West Bank", *Foundation for Middle East Peace*, http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/settlements-in-the-west-bank-1, (17 November 2012).

35 "Israeli Settlement", http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Israeli_settlement.html, (15 November 2012).

36 "Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, 2011 Annual Report", *B'Tselem*, http://www.btsalem.org/download/2011_annual_report_eng.pdf, (10 September 2012).

perceived as a violation of international law by the various actors of the international community.

Colonization of the occupied Palestinian territories by Israel violates specific UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions. UN Security Council Resolution 242 mentions “the withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied” referring the territories occupied in 1967 war³⁷ and the UNSC Resolution 452 calls “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”.³⁸

The UNSC Resolution 446 called Israel not to transfer parts of its own civilian population into the occupied Arab territories and not to reshape the demographic makeup.³⁹ The Resolution 446 states that the policy and practices of Israel in the occupied territories have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.⁴⁰

The UN Resolution 465 adopted in 1980 points out that the Fourth Geneva Convention is applicable to the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967:

37 UNSC Resolution 242, adopted by the Security Council on 22 November 1967, <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>, (20 June 2012).

38 “UNSC Resolution 452, Adopted by the Security Council on 20 July 1979”, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/0B7116ABB4B7E3E9852560E5007688A0>, (21 June 2012).

39 “UN Resolution 446, Adopted by the Security Council on 22 March 1979”, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/BA123CDED3EA84A5852560E50077C2DC>, (21 June 2012).

40 “UN Resolution 446, adopted by the Security Council on 22 March 1979”, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/BA123CDED3EA84A5852560E50077C2DC>, (21 June 2012).

All measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and also constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.⁴¹

The Fourth Geneva Convention which is about the Protection of Civilians in times of war states that “the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”.⁴² The United Nations has repeatedly upheld the view that Israel's construction of settlements is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.⁴³ The UN General Assembly reached the following conclusion in its resolution on 20 October 2000:

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, are illegal and are an obstacle to peace, and calls for the prevention of illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers.⁴⁴

As stated in the above resolution, the Israeli settlements are attributed no legal validity and are considered a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Since

41 “UN Resolution 465, Adopted by the Security Council at its 2203rd meeting (1 March 1980)”, <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/3822b5e39951876a85256b6e0058a478/5aa254a1c8f8b1cb852560e50075d7d5>, (21 June 2012).

42 “Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War”, Geneva (12 August 1949), article 49, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380>, (06 September 2012).

43 “UN Security Council Resolution 465”, <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/3822b5e39951876a85256b6e0058a478/5aa254a1c8f8b1cb852560e50075d7d5>, (15 June 2012).

44 “Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, (October 20, 2000), <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/08596718A4F2273685256998004D3993>, (03 September 2012).

Israeli settlements involve the destruction of Palestinian property, it also violates 53rd Article of the Fourth Geneva Convention.⁴⁵ Furthermore, settlements also conflict with Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention which is about the extensive destruction and appropriation of property and with Article 49 which is about the prohibition of the transfer of population into occupied territories.⁴⁶ In addition, the International Court of Justice and the international community underlined the illegal situation of the settlements.⁴⁷

For its part, Israel claims that settlements are consistent with international law and that the Fourth Geneva Convention is not applicable to the territories of 1967, since there is a lack of legal authority in the stated territories.⁴⁸

45 Fourth Geneva Convention states: "Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to other public authorities, or to social or cooperative organizations, is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations." Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, (12 August 1949), article 49, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380>, (06 September 2012).

46 Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, (12 August 1949), article 49, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380>, (06 September 2012).

47 "Israel and the International Community", <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/conflict-prevention/mena/middle-east-peace-process1/israel-international-communityinternational-community/>, Regarding international organizations and courts of law, see "Israeli Settlements under International Law", *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)*, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/TheHumanitarianImpactOfIsraeliInfrastructureTheWestBank_annexes.pdf; regarding the UN, see "Resolution 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979", <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/BA123CDED3EA84A5852560E50077C2DC> and see UN General Assembly resolution 39/146, 14 December 1984 "The situation in the Middle East", <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/39/a39r146.htm>; and see International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, 9 July 2004, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, para 120", <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=4&code=mwp&case=131&dk=5a>; Regarding the European Union position, see "EU Positions on the Middle East Peace Process", http://www.eeas.europa.eu/mepp/eu-positions/eu_positions_en.htm, (10 June 2012).

48 "Although Israel has voluntarily taken upon itself the obligation to uphold the humanitarian provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel maintains that the Convention (which deals with occupied territories) was not applicable to the disputed territory." See: "Israel, the Conflict and Peace: Answers to frequently asked questions", Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (November 1, 2007). http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2003/11/Israel-%20the%20Conflict%20and%20Peace-%20Answers%20to%20Frequen, (16 November 2012).

Settlers protesting the decision for evacuation of an outpost in Beit El settlement in the West Bank.



On the other hand, the International Court of Justice also declared that Israel's policy of settling parts of its population in the occupied territories is a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and that the settlements are breaching international law.⁴⁹

The fact of the violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention is approved by various international actors such as the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Court of Justice. Besides, the High Contracting Parties to the Convention have stated that the Fourth Geneva convention does apply to the situation of settlements.⁵⁰

In addition to the violation of Fourth Geneva Convention, Israeli settlements also violate the Hague Convention IV which is accepted as the first major

49 Peter A. Belmont, "UNSC and ICJ are Agreed: Israel's Settlements are Illegal", (April 15, 2010).<http://123pab.com/blog/2010/04/UNSC-and-ICJ-are-Agreed-Israels-Settlements-are-Illegal.php>, (17 November 2012).

50 Adam Roberts, "Prolonged Military Occupation: The Israeli-Occupied Territories Since 1967", *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 84, no. 1 (January 1990), pp. 44-103.

document of international humanitarian law. The Hague Convention IV states in its 23rd Article that the occupying power is forbidden “to seize the enemy’s property unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war”.⁵¹

A recent resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 January 2010 demanded the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and called for the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites.⁵²

Taking everything into account, it is possible to maintain here that the illegal situation of Israeli settlements is accepted by various actors of international community, and that the Israeli settlements conflict with international law.

51 The Hague Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 18 October 1907, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/195>, (25 September 2012).

52 “UN General Assembly Resolution 64/19 about Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine”, (25 January 2010), <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/6F2DF1FFB49D51AD852576C100537C1F>, (20 September 2012).

**ISRAEL'S AND ISRAELIS'
PERCEPTION OF SETTLEMENTS**

2.1. Ideological Perception on Settlements

It is possible to state that the ideological background for settlements seen in state and public levels can be found in the precepts of both Judaism and Zionism. However, there is a complex situation here. In spite of the fact that Judaism and Zionism differ from each other, while Zionism is a secular ideology and not a religion, the situation appears to be complicated. Even Zionism would be defined as a secular ideology targeting to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine; the religious motives have likewise been persistent in the declaration of Zionist objectives. Yet, there is also an ideology defining itself as “religious Zionism”. Just because of this reason, it is difficult to differentiate Judaist and Zionist objectives in ideological grounds. Hence, while explaining the ideological background of settlements that is influential both at the state and public level, I will draw on both Judaist and Zionist objectives, and also on “religious Zionism”.

Jewish Homeland and Redeeming the Land

It was not [Theodore] Herzl or [David] Ben Gurion who established our state, not the political or practical Zionists that did it, but God Almighty.

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner

By putting the role of Zionist leaders aside, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner talks about the divine role in the foundation of Israeli state. It is possible to read the case as such: Approving Zionist objectives, Rabbi Aviner goes further and claims that there was a power above Zionist leaders helping them to reach their goal. Thus, the Judaist and Zionist objectives mostly overlap. The ideological background to establish Jewish state is also valid for the settlements.

The idea of settling the land is derived from Zionism that holds the belief that the Israelis should gain their “natural and historic right”, establish a homeland in Palestine and redeem the land of Israel. The pillar of Zionism advocating the Jewish majority in the region is thought to be influential in mass-displacement of non-Jews, preventing Palestinian refugees to return their homes and to encourage Jewish migration to the region. This understanding of Zionism is practiced by the Israeli administration. Even Palestinians are forbidden to turn back which means that they live as refugees for generations, Israelis from anywhere in the world can easily settle in Israel and gain citizenship according to the Israeli law of return.⁵³

Zionist objective is stated as the historic goal to establish a Jewish state from Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. For that reason, David Ben-Gurion, one of the leaders of Zionism, was not satisfied with the UN Partition Plan which recognizes two states in Palestine. Ben Gurion states:

53 “Settlements or Peace?”, (12 August 2011), <http://www.paltelegraph.com/opinions/editorials/9825-settlements-or-peace.html>, (02 January 2013). A. Clare Brandabur who lived three years “under Israeli occupation in Palestine” with her own words, says that Israel was designed to exclude Arab inhabitants from Palestine. A. Clare Brandabur, “Roadmap to Genocide”, (September 2008), <http://www.nobleworld.biz/images/Brandabur.pdf>, (10 June 2013).

The Jewish state now being offered to us is not the Zionist objective... But it can serve as a decisive state along the path to greater Zionist implementation. It will consolidate in Palestine, within the shortest possible time, the real Jewish force, which will lead us to our historic goal.⁵⁴

On the other hand, the biblical text determining the Israeli perspective on Palestine is as follows:

(...) Then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispose nations greater and mightier than yourselves. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall be from the wilderness to Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. No mas shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you. Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.⁵⁵

The Jewish people relate their claim of the promised lands to the above verses. The Bible talks about Judea and Samaria as follows: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Judea and Samaria, thought to be the natural homeland of Jewish people, are mentioned in the bible as such.⁵⁶

54 Saifedean Ammous, "Jack Ross Takes on Ralph Seliger's Claim Re Binationalist Zionists", Mondoweiss.net, (September 11, 2008), <http://mondoweiss.net/2008/09/jack-ross-takes-on-ralph-seliger.html>, (03 May 2013).

55 The Holy Bible, Deuteronomy 11: 23-28.

56 The Holy Bible, Acts, 1: 8.

Jews have seen the 1967 War as a divine support for Jewish people to possess the holy lands of Judea and Samaria. The age of redemption is said to have begun with the return of the Jewish people to Zion after long exile. Since Israel's victory in 1967, God's will has been to see a Jewish kingdom that includes the West Bank-Judea and Samaria-and a third temple to be constructed on the ruins of Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock-hallowed Islamic shrines. Jewish settlements throughout the territories captured in 1967 are viewed as vital, temporal expressions of God's will.

Just immediately after 1967 War which was seen as a divine opportunity by Jewish leaders, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook published a list of biblical passages that states withdrawing from the eternal land of forefathers is illegal and unacceptable. Additionally, from time to time a number of rabbis have published documents forbidding the transfer of any parts of the land of Israel to non-Jews.⁵⁷

The settlements were established not only to create facts on the ground but also to affect the hearts and minds of the Jewish people. We believed that, by encountering the holy parts of the land as if they were alive, the hearts of the Jewish masses would be united with the heart of the land. We envisaged the process as reconnecting the national Jewish consciousness with its spiritual roots.

Rabbi Azriel Ariel⁵⁸

The return of Jews to their ancient homeland is having a great historic and religious importance. The Jews pray daily to return their homeland that includes remains of Solomon's Temple, the Second Temple and other holy sites. Even a

57 Steinberg, (2000).

58 Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, London: Pluto Press, 2004, p. 87.

ritual is carried out in Jewish wedding ceremonies such as a glass is broken to symbolize mourning for Jerusalem.⁵⁹

On the other hand, a number of extremist Rabbis relate settlements to the Ten Commandments revealed to Prophet Moses from Almighty God and warns the Israeli army not to evacuate Jewish settlements. In their view, evacuating Jewish settlements would be a violation of commandments revealed to Prophet Moses.⁶⁰

Even though the situation of settlements is declared as illegal by the international community since they are built in occupied Palestinian territories, the Israelis oppose the term “occupied territories” and insist that the territories are not occupied but disputed since they are natural homeland to Jews.

The settlers insist, for starters, that their settlements aren't located on “occupied” Palestinian territory. Rather, they live on “disputed” territory, claimed as a homeland by both Palestinians and Jews (some of whom don't consider themselves Israelis). “This is my homeland,” Dayyan says. “How can you ‘occupy’ your homeland?”

Dani Dayyan⁶¹

The rabbis of the Committee of Rabbis of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District are the spiritual, and thus the political, guides to action for the majority of religious settlers who consult them on matters large and small. They, in turn, look to the writings of Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak Kook and his son, Rabbi Yehuda Tzvi Kook, for guidance.⁶²

⁵⁹ Steinberg, (2000).

⁶⁰ “The Psychology of Settlements, Illegal Israeli Settlements”, Council for European Palestinian Relations, http://thecepr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115%3AIllegal-israeli-settlements&catid=6%3Aamos&Itemid=34&lang=en, (10 March 2013).

⁶¹ The Leader of the Yesha settler council for the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza. See for his words Fred Barnes, “In Defense of Settlers”, *The Weekly Standard*, (August 27, 2010), <http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/defense-settlers>, (07 November 2012).

⁶² “Abraham Isaac Kook”, Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Isaac_Kook, (06 November 2012).

It is possible to say that the ideological background is also transmitted to young generations. In a field study carried out in a Kibbutz high school between 1998-2001, the students talk about the Zionist leaders of the past with a big passion. They expressed enthusiasm about Zionist heroes and Zionist past, and they added "You have to admire what they have done." The students told that they feel themselves connected to the Zionist past and they admire Zionist leaders since they worked to materialize their ideas.⁶³

2.2. Official Perception for Settlements

Ignoring the appeal and objections of the international society, Israel continues to construct new settlements and enlarge the current ones. As well as the religious bodies and Zionist lobby, Israeli governments too have the understanding of Palestine being a homeland to Jewish population. According to Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, settlements are built in the Jewish People's ancient homeland and also the right of Jews to settle recognized by League of Nations Mandate for Palestine in 1922 to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish home in ancient homeland.

The Fourth Geneva Convention was certainly not intended to prevent individuals from living on their ancestral lands or on property that had been illegally taken from them. Many present-day Israeli settlements have been established on sites that were home to Jewish communities in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) in previous generations, in an expression of the Jewish people's deep historic and religious connection with the land...

63 Joyce Dalsheim, "Settler Nationalism, Collective Memories of Violence And The 'Uncanny Other'", *Social Identities*, vol. X, no. 2, (24 January 2007), pp. 151-170.

The right of Jews to settle in all parts of the Land of Israel was first recognized by the international community in the 1922 League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. The purpose of the Mandate was to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in the Jewish people's ancient homeland. Indeed, Article 6 of the Mandate provided for "close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands not required for public use."⁶⁴

The settlement movement in its earlier years was a common expression of Israeli leaders in the right and the left wings, Labor and Herut Parties. The consensus was to perceive the settlement movement as a national goal.⁶⁵ The Israeli leaders Moshe Dayan, Shimon Peres and Ariel Sharon are known by their efforts for Greater Israel.⁶⁶ The Israeli governments either supported or turned a blind eye to the construction of settlements. One of the leading supporters of settlements was the former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon who states: "Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the Jewish settlements because everything we take now will stay ours... everything we don't grab will go to them."⁶⁷

The Zionist and somehow religious objectives to transfer Jewish population in Palestine is also shared by officials. There are plenty of examples in which officials

64 "Israel, the Conflict and Peace: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions", Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2003/11/Israel-the-Conflict-and-Peace-Answers-to-Frequen.htm. (November 1, 2007), "Are Israeli settlements legal?" For detailed analysis see Raja Shehadeh, *Occupiers' Law: Israel and the West Bank*, Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1985, pp. 41-49.

65 Lawrence Susskind, Hillel Levine, Gideon Aran, Shlomo Kaniel, Yair Sheleg and Moshe Halbertal, "Religious and ideological dimensions of the Israeli Settlement Issue: Reframing the Narrative?", *Negotiation Journal*, vol. XXI/2 (April 2005), pp. 177-191.

66 "New Israeli Government will Support Settlements", *Al Monitor*, (5 April 2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/new-israeli-government-settlement-expansion-support.html>, (10 April 2013).

67 Lela Gilbert, "An Outpost Carved in Bedrock", *The Jerusalem Post*, (05 December 2012), <http://www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=147288>, (21 December 2012).

Hills in the
West Bank
filled up with
settlements.



explain their intention to increase Jewish population or they support settlements by their acts. During a meeting between US President Jimmy Carter and Israeli PM Menachem Begin in March 1979, Begin explained his ideas on increasing Jewish population in Palestinian lands as follows:

I don't see any possibility whatsoever to draw any geographical line which can divide [the] Jewish population and Arab population, because we live here together. Believe me, Mr. President, when I use this figure of one million, saying that in 20 to 30 years I hope that one million Jews will live there, Mr. President, I can assure you, they will live there. There's nothing to do about it. They will live there, and if we said that we believe that in Jerusalem, what we call the Greater Jerusalem, it is a crucial problem for us, to have one million Jews, they will live there, and they will live in what we call the area of Gush Etzion, in Tekoa, in Ma'ale Adumim. They will live there. There is nothing [you can] do about it.⁶⁸

68 "New Israeli Government will Support Settlements", Al Monitor, (5 April 2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/new-israeli-government-settlement-expansion-support.html>, (10 April 2013).

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks which he made in June 2012 could be analyzed as a symbol of how the Israeli state officials perceive settlements and settlers. Declaring his intention to increase the number of settlers, Netanyahu also underlines the belief of Palestine being a homeland to Jews:

We are not strangers in Beit El. We are not strangers in Judea and Samaria. This is the land of our Patriarchs. This is where our identity was formed. I say this here in Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, and I say this everywhere in the world (...)
(...) [T]he community of Beit El will be expanded. The 30 families [whose houses were built on stolen land] will remain in Beit El and will be joined by 300 new families. I tell those who think they can use the judicial system to hurt settlement, that they are mistaken, because in practice, the exact opposite will occur. Instead of shrinking Beit El-Beit El has expanded. Instead of hurting settlement, settlement has been strengthened.⁶⁹

The idea of being homeland to Jews, being ancient Biblical state is also persistent in officials' mentality as seen in Netanyahu's remarks. Netanyahu also underlines that the lands are "the lands of our Patriarchs". This ideological and religious perspective would easily be followed in the settlement policy of Israeli governments since they support settlements in various ways.

Although Israeli governments support settlements directly or indirectly, the recently elected Israeli government became familiar with its open support to settlements. Settlement expansion is thought to be a priority under the new government. The new government promises to be in favor of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories to

⁶⁹ Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories, Foundation for Middle East Peace, vol. XXII, no. 4, (July-August 2012), p. 8.

“redeem the land”. What is said by Danny Dannon the deputy minister of security reflects this situation: “The new government will be a national government that will continue to protect the interests of the state, including settlement in Judea and Samaria.” The leaders of the settlement movement came to the government and they control crucial aspects of settlement expansion. Men like Uri Ariel, Dani Dannon, Bentzi Lieberman and others are known as they share Zionist objectives. They in common feel responsible not only to the state but also to God who promised the Land of Israel to the Jews.⁷⁰ The Israeli government officials having Zionist objectives and explaining their intention to redeem the land or to constitute Greater Israel also supports the settlement activity financially. The financial support of Israeli government to the settlements is a fact on the ground. An obvious policy of founding new settlements and expanding them is experienced since the early days of the settlement movement. Cheaper mortgages, easier repayment models and tax reliefs and other financial advantages are offered to each family living beyond the Green Line.⁷¹ If the Israeli government does not support settlements explicitly, it supports settlements via organizations such as Yesha Council or Zionist Federation.

Israeli leaders, sharing the belief of Palestine being a homeland to Jews, personally supported settler activity in various ways by their remarks or acts. For instance, Ariel Sharon bought a flat in the Muslim Quarter of the Jerusalem's Old City in 1990s. It was an act of provocation

70 “New Israeli Government will Support Settlements”, Al Monitor, (5 April 2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/new-israeli-government-settlement-expansion-support.html>, (10 April 2013).

71 “Israel lures settlers with financial incentives”, DW, <http://www.dw.de/israel-lures-settlers-with-financial-incentives/a-16487892>, (05 May 2012).

to express his commitment to reside there but he was not a real resident in fact.⁷² Taking the ideological background into account, such PR acts also reflect that the government has a propensity to increase Jewish population and Israelize the Palestinian lands.

Even having a legal and political framework for the appeals and objections of the international community, Israel has chosen to increase the number of settlements as much as possible.⁷³ It is understood that Israel has an agenda to “Israelize” the lands of Palestinian people. An article published in Haaretz and written by Nadav Shragai also points the same:

The settlers’ struggle to retain the settlements east of the fence is apparent in the analysis of data pertaining to the establishment of new illegal outposts. According to Peace Now, 112 of the 156 (some 80 percent) outposts have been built on the east side of the fence route. Most of these outposts have been established at strategic points all over the West Bank, along main transport routes, in an attempt to link the relatively isolated enclaves to the bulk of the communities in the West Bank and prevent the Palestinians from obtaining these lands.⁷⁴

The motivation of “Israelizing the Palestinian land” is supported by various means. Encouragement by religious and national actors⁷⁵, the legal approval of buildings by

72 “New Israeli Government will Support Settlements”, Al Monitor, (5 April 2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/new-israeli-government-settlement-expansion-support.html>, (10 April 2013).

73 “West Bank Settlement Construction Starts, Public and Private 2006-2009”, http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/west-bank-settlement-construction-starts-public-and-private-2006-2009, (15 September 2012).

74 Nadav Shragai, “Most settlements Lie Est of Fence, Most Settlers West”, (August 16, 2007), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/most-settlements-lie-east-of-fence-most-settlers-west-1.227537>, (18 September 2012).

75 Especially the Gush Eminum movement has a politics to create settlements within the Palestinian territories. See Balci, “Filistin 2008”, p. 131; Shahak and Mezvinsky, (2004), pp. 87-95.

Israeli state and the states' salary for the new settlers⁷⁶ are some motivations for settlers. As a result, Jewish migrations to new settlements and high mortality rates among radical Orthodox Jews have increased settler population.

2.3. Settlers' Perception of Palestine

Afore mentioned Zionist and religious objectives are clearly seen in settlers' own perception. Almost totally, the settlers consider their presence in occupied territories as a natural and historical right and they feel themselves responsible to increase Jewish population in those lands. As mentioned in three categories above, putting the economic settlers a side, it is possible to state that ideologically motivated settlers and ultraorthodox settlers share the idea of settling as a natural and historical right. Hence those settlers perceive the economic and political support by the government as if it is their natural right since they perceive themselves as the ones within the Israeli society that are actively implementing Zionism.⁷⁷

That ideological perception is clearly seen in the settler group known as Gush Eminum or Bloc of the Faithful. That group would be defined as ideological settlers who live mostly around Jerusalem, Nablus and Hebron. The settlement movement Gush Emunim -the Bloc of the Faithful- was born out of the crisis in Israeli confidence caused by the October 1973 war. Its mission was to revitalize the core value of the Zionist enterprise -settlement- in the heartland of Jewish history, in Judea and Samaria. Hebron, Sebastia, Betar, and Beit El were the territorial signposts

76 Balci, "Filistin 2008", pp. 131-132.

77 Susskind, Levine, Aran, Kaniel, Sheleg and Halbertal, (April 2005), pp. 177-191.



A settler family in Barkan settlement, year 2013.

on which Jewish redemption was to be written.⁷⁸ Gush Eminum identifies the settler movement as the return of the Jewish people to their Biblical ancestral homeland. Gush Eminum, formed following 1973 Yom Kippur War, claims that the holiness of the Land of Israel requires possessing it after liberating the land from the foreign rule. For Gush Eminum, this aim could only be achieved through mass Jewish civilian presence.⁷⁹ This religious wing is also gaining support in the Israeli army. The number of people who identify themselves as “religious Zionists” and assume leadership positions in the army is on the rise.⁸⁰

In addition, the settlers also believe that the two regions of the West Bank, Judea and Samaria are the historic birthplace of Jewish people. Most of the important

78 For Gush Eminum see Shahak and Mezvinsky, (2004), pp. 78-95.

79 C. Possik, “Locating and Relocating Oneself as A Jewish Settler on The West Bank: Ideological Squatting And Eviction”, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. XXIV, no. 1, (2004), pp. 53-69.

80 “The Psychology of Settlements, Illegal Israeli Settlements”, Council for European Palestinian Relations, http://thecepr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115%3AIllegal-israeli-settlements&catid=6%3AAmemos&Itemid=34&lang=en, (10 March 2013).

Biblical sites are thought to be in this region; that is the reason why some settlers prefer to settle in this geography.⁸¹ A field study based on interviews with settlers points out that there are three main factors for settlers in choosing where to settle: “ideological factors, topographical factors and legal ownership issues”.⁸²

The ideological antipathy toward Arabs and the complementary belief in the divine nature of Jewish settlement in the territories is shared by religious settlers. Since the conquest of the territories in June 1967, these religious settlers have been the main source propelling both the consolidation of a political coalition supporting colonization of the occupied territories as well as the expansion of the Jewish settler presence.

The ideological attachment determines settlers' decision to live as settlers. Sometimes settlements mean a drop in the quality of living standards, especially in the size and quality of homes such as living in small prefabricated homes. Since the squatting is based on an ideal that is the reclamation of the Land of Israel by the Jewish people, the living standards would not matter for settlers.⁸³

On the other hand, settlers are not homogeneous among themselves. While main interest of many settlers is the well-being of Israeli state as a whole, other settlers focus on personal or group ideology. In addition, preserving and expanding the settlements constitutes the primary identity of some settlers. On the other hand, a group of settlers claims that their identity does not depend on the preservation of the settlements.⁸⁴ The early settlers are

81 Possik, (2004), pp. 53-69.

82 Ibid, p. 60.

83 Ibid, p. 67.

84 Susskind, Levine, Aran, Kaniel, Sheleg and Halbertal, (April 2005), pp. 177-191.

thought to be selective, homogeneous and a voluntary elite group constituting a virtuous society, but the current generation is not so homogeneous.⁸⁵ The young generation hilltop settlers here are worth to be mentioned. The hilltop settlers, who are also defined as Hilltop Youth, mostly live in illegal outposts, receive assistance and are protected by the Israeli military.⁸⁶ For the Gush Eminum movement, the Torah, the land and the people of Israel have equal importance. The state serves for the beginning of a messianic redemption. For that reason, even a non-religious government serves for the holy aims. However, the Hilltop Settlers believe opposite. For this group, the unity of Jewish people is less important than the Torah and the land and there is no holiness in the state. For Gush Eminum, settling land is a high public value; for Hilltop Settlers it is a high private value. The main motive for Hilltop Settlers is to fulfill two commands of God: settling and working in the land of Israel. A field study has shown that the Hilltop Youth are living under poor housing conditions compared to their previous housing, and their parents feel happy with their children's decision.⁸⁷ Another group of settlers identify themselves as economic settlers. They are settled in the blocks surrounding Jerusalem and are encouraged by various incentives such as grants and tax breaks.⁸⁸ It is possible to state that the ideological intentions to settle are low among this group since they choose to settle for economic reasons.

85 Susskind, Levine, Aran, Kaniel, Sheleg and Halbertal, (April 2005), pp. 177-191.

86 Moshe Dann, "In Defense of Hilltop Youth", The Jerusalem Post, (13 July 2004), <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-96356027.html>, (28 March 2013).

87 Susskind, Levine, Aran, Kaniel, Sheleg and Halbertal, (April 2005), pp. 177-191.

88 "The Psychology of Settlements, Illegal Israeli Settlements", Council for European Palestinian Relations, http://thecepr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115%3AIllegal-israeli-settlements&catid=6%3Aamos&Itemid=34&lang=en, (10 March 2013).

2.4. Settlers' Perception of Palestinians

Most settlers perceive the conflict between Palestinians and Jews as a continuous war either be won or lost. They see Arabs/Palestinians as enemies and do not want them to work in Israel.⁸⁹ Gush Emunim zealots see the Gentile world as a whole -but most particularly the Arabs who live in the land which they believe was promised by God to the Jews- standing in the way of their sacred vision. Rabbi Israel Hess cited the Old Testament books of Samuel, Genesis, and Deuteronomy for his belief that these modern day sons of Amalek (descendants of Esau) deserve to be annihilated as were their forefathers. This blend of religious obscurantism, racism, and political elitism is not unique to these sons of Abraham. Its power in Middle East history unfolding today is no less significant than those who claim other forms of divine inspiration.⁹⁰

The Gush Emunim partisans are against any kind of relations with Palestinians. According to them, the new settlements should be constructed and the spread of the settlements should continue up to the reach of natural holy borders. Even there are different views on this “natural holy borders”; it is obvious that Gush Eminum supports this belief and follows an active policy to enlarge the settlements. Furthermore, this understanding is against any kind of agreements on land and encourages doing everything possible to prevent any agreement of holy lands. The atrocities and oppressions against Palestinians are accepted as a requirement for the implementation of above verses.⁹¹

89 Susskind, Levine, Aran, Kaniel, Sheleg and Halbertal, (April 2005), pp. 177-191.

90 Aronson, (Summer 1994), p. 96.

91 See Ali Öner, “İsrail'deki Dinci ve Milliyetçi Akımların Barışa Yaklaşımları”, *Kudüs Dergisi*, no. 6, (Winter 2005), http://haksozhaber.net/okul_v2/article_detail.php?id=5212, (25 February 2013).

In 1992 in a symposium on how Jews should relate to “resident aliens [Arabs] in the Holy Land”, Rabbi Zalman Melamed, chairman of the Committee of Rabbis of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District, explained that “there can be no dispute that it would be ideal if the entire Land of Israel could be settled exclusively by Jews. Every dunam of its land is destined to be worked on by Jews alone.”⁹² The issue of the symposium was meaningful: “resident aliens [Arabs] in the Holy Land”. All in all, it was summarizing the perception about Palestinians: “Aliens”.

In a field study by Joyce Dalsheim, while a teacher talks about Jewish immigration to Israel in the classroom, one of the students asks about whether there was an Arab immigration to Israel or not. The answer of the teacher was as follows:

No, from where, why? What would be their goal in bringing Arabs from other countries? To establish a state? No they already have... No, it's the other way around they were running away, not coming (...) ⁹³

Another striking example is found in the explanations of Rabbi Moshe Levinger about the attack on İbrahimi Mosque in Hebron in 1994 in which 29 Palestinians were killed by an Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein. Levinger states that he was sorry about the death of any living thing but the sorrow he felt toward those Arabs killed, was the same sorrow he felt toward a fly swatted against a wall.⁹⁴

Additionally, the news and the reports of human rights organizations shows that settlers perceive the Palestinians as possible “creatures” who would attack them in any manner. The media and PR campaigns give important

92 Aronson, (Summer 1994), p. 96.

93 Dalsheim, (2007), pp. 151-170.

94 Aronson, (Summer 1994), pp. 95-96.



clues about how the settlers perceive Palestinians. For example, the Yesha Council which is a strong organization to support settlements and working within and outside Israel talks about “Arab terrorism”. While raising funds and consciousness among Jewish population, particularly in the U.S. and France, they give their guests the impression that the settlers live under the shadow of Arab terror.⁹⁵

2.5. Human Rights Violations as an Indicator for Settler Mentality

As it is pointed out before, Israeli occupation of Palestine constitutes one of the major crises in the Middle East that is an essential issue of international relations. The issue of settlements which are considered as illegal by the international society constitutes a basic obstacle for reaching a conclusion in Israeli-Palestinian accords. The issue would seem to stay as a major discussion topic in negotiations since Israeli government continues to support building and enlarging new settlements and does not take measures to prevent settler violation. In this respect, the settler activity

⁹⁵ Peter Shaw-Smith, “The Israeli Settler Movement Post-Oslo”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. XXIII, no. 3, (Spring 1994), p. 105.

which is also seen illegal by the international community causes serious human rights violations such as confiscation of lands, restricting freedom of movement, damaging the land and the resources, stoning and shooting people, beatings, intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, arrests and injury.⁹⁶

The settler violence causing serious human rights violations is generally supported by Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Israeli settlers have been authorized to carry weapons from their earliest days in the occupied territories. Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issued Uzi and M-16 machine guns to early settlers. As the settlement enterprise became more firmly established and the numbers of settlers grew, their institutionalized security role has been expanded by IDF.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, a systematic lack of law enforcement against settlers by Israeli authorities is being reported by Israeli and Palestinian NGOs and Palestinian victims. Israeli NGO Yesh-Din says nine out of 10 investigations of Israeli attacks against Palestinians are closed, with no indictment served, according to a data sheet on its monitoring of police investigations of a variety of offences.⁹⁸ In their attack on the Palestinians and their properties, settlers are supported by Israeli soldiers, and legal proceedings are rarely brought to the agenda.⁹⁹ The violations themselves are a signal for settlement mentality.

96 A study by The Palestine Center in 2012 gives detailed information about settler violation between September 2004 and December 2012. In addition to the categorization of violations, it gives maps and illustrations showing the geographical distribution of settler violence and also gives a chronological documentation of violations taking place in 2012. See: Yousef Munayyer, "When Settlers Attack", The Palestine Center, 2012, http://www.alzaytouna.net/english/selections/2012/Settlers_Attack_2-12.pdf, (27 April 2012).

97 Aronson, (Summer 1994), p. 93.

98 "Analysis: Concerns over Rising Violence in West Bank", (February 28, 2011), <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/4DAA74C90994541C85257845004FF22D>, (20 February 2013).

99 "Israeli Settler Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, (November 2010), <http://www.gdp.ie/pdf/Press%20Release%2004.11.2010.pdf>, (01 Nisan 2013).

2.5.1. Killings

"Israeli settler violence" refers to acts of violence committed by some Israeli settlers and supporters. Over the years settler attacks on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have become routine. During the al-Aqsa intifada, the number of attacks has increased substantially. The violence takes various forms. The most severe, of course, results in the loss of life. From the beginning of the intifada, in late September 2000, to the end of 2004, Israeli civilians killed thirty-four Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In some of these cases, the Israelis acted in life-threatening situations, such as when armed Palestinians infiltrated Israeli settlements.¹⁰⁰

Killing Palestinians is like a natural activity for the settlers. The news indicates that many of the killings are arbitrary. Individual killings have sometimes turned to even massacres. These kinds of killings are a symbol of "Arab hatred" which is supported by religious claims by radical religious groups and ecclesiastics. The case of Baruch Goldstein who killed 29 Palestinians in Hebron is a good example of this perception. Furthermore, even the UN Security Council warned Israel to implement necessary measures to prevent such violent actions; however, the Israeli government did not heed.¹⁰¹ However, Goldstein got a notable public support among Jewish population. In his funeral ceremony in Jerusalem, 1000 well-wishers came together to praise him and his bloody actions. The raising voice of the crowd was "Death to Arabs".

100 "The Nature of the Violence", http://www.btsalem.org/english/Settler_Violence/Nature_of_the_Violence.asp, (27 April 2013).

101 UN Security Council adopted this resolution following the killing of Palestinian worshippers at Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron by an Israeli settler: "Resolution 904 (1994)", "Calls Upon Israel, The Occupying Power, to Continue to Take And Implement Measures, Including, Inter Alia, Confiscation of Arms, with the Aim of Preventing Illegal Acts of Violence by Israeli Settlers". <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f15e14.html>, (10 September 2012).

His massacre was perceived as a gift to Jewish people for the holy Jewish day Purim. A prominent Hasidic spiritual leader Rabbi Israel Ariel named Goldstein a holy man stating that Goldstein redeemed the “People of Israel”. The support to Goldstein both at the public and religious elites’ level gives a clue about the Palestinians’ worth for Israelis.¹⁰²

There is no limit in the definition of the “enemy” and the whole Palestinians in every age are the targets. For instance, the UN announced that 250,000 Palestinians in 83 West Bank communities are vulnerable to settler violence.¹⁰³ The atrocities and killings by settlers could not possibly be evaluated as a security issue since even the children become targets. A high-level racism persists and supported by religious codes.

2.5.2. Physical Attacks

There is a rise in violent acts by extremist settlers against neighboring Palestinians.¹⁰⁴ In 2008, the number of Jewish settlers involved in violent acts was estimated to increase by hundreds, out of a total population of about 500,000. 222 acts of settler violence was reported for the first half of 2008, while it was 291 for the whole 2007.¹⁰⁵

The general attacks of the settlers on Palestinians occur by the use of weapons. Generally, the settlers fire at a distance and it is reported that a serious number

102 Aronson, (Summer 1994), pp. 95-96.

103 “UN Warns 250,000 Palestinians ‘Vulnerable’ to Settler Violence”, Haaretz, (January 18, 2010), <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/un-warns-250-000-palestinians-vulnerable-to-settler-violence-1.261591>, (22 March 2013).

104 Anshel Pfeffer, “Top IDF Officer Warns: Settlers’ Radical Fringe Growing”, Haaretz, (October 20, 2009), <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/top-idf-officer-warns-settlers-radical-fringe-growing-1.5787>, (22 March 2013).

105 “Hundreds Join Settler Violence”, BBC News, (October 2, 2008). http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7647991.stm, (15 March 2013).

of Palestinians are seriously wounded this way.¹⁰⁶ These attacks would turn to physical attacks of groups and in some cases even the primary school children are affected by the attacks, as reported below:

September 22, 2010 - Settlers attacked Palestinian children on their way to the Ibrahimiya school (downtown Hebron), justifying their action by saying that these pupils attacked settler children first.¹⁰⁷

Jewish settlers attacked on Monday morning [22.04.2013] the family of detained hunger striker Samer Issawi in front of the hospital. Shireen, Samer's sister, said on her Facebook page that the settlers' premeditated attack came after the Israeli police refused to allow them to enter the hospital to attend his case hearing. She said that their mother, relatives, and solidarity activists went to the hospital in a bus to attend the hearing but were denied access and staged a rally outside it.¹⁰⁸

In some cases, Palestinians are hit by car, so-called "car accidents". Most vulnerable members of the society are often the victims of these accidents. These "accidents" mostly occur in Hebron and also Nablus, Qalqilya and Salfit that is along an Israeli road corridor. 10 Palestinians lost their lives and 208 were injured by that kind of accidents between September 2004 and December 2011.¹⁰⁹

October 2, 2010- During the evening hours, Sameer Abu Mariyya, 24 years old, from the town of Bait Ummar in the northern

106 "October 8, 2010 - A settler from the north of Hebron shot a Palestinian resident, Ibrahim Muhammad Sharif Basal. He was hospitalized and medical sources indicate that his condition was stable." See "Israeli Settlers' Violence Report - September and October 2010", (November 18, 2010) <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/component/content/article/5-settlers-violence/3010-israeli-settlers-violence-report-september-and-october-2010-.html>, (05 May 2013).

107 Ibid.

108 "Jewish Settlers Attack Issawi's Family", (April 22, 2013), <http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2013/04/22/palhungers-jewish-settlers-attack-issawis-family/>, (26 April 2013).

109 Munayyer, (2012).

Hebron District, was injured when a settler hit him with his car. He was taken to Hebron's hospital for treatment. The settler ran away without providing any assistance. Medical sources reported that his life was not in danger.¹¹⁰

A serious number of events reported in which IDF soldiers joined the settlers' violence:

Residents of the village of 'Asira al-Qibliya in Nablus District held a joint demonstration with Israeli activists... Following their action, soldiers and armed settlers arrived at the scene. The soldiers fired tear gas and rubber-coated metal bullets at the demonstrators, and a settler standing near them opened fire from an M-16 rifle at the demonstrators, who posed no danger as they were running away from the spot. During the event, an Israeli activist went up to a group of soldiers and demanded that they put a stop to the settlers' firing, but the soldiers did not act accordingly.¹¹¹

Attacks by stones and sticks are also among the generally experienced attacks. The groups use these kinds of attacking methods generally:

Settlers attacked a group of farmers north of Hebron on Saturday, a local committee said. Committee spokesman Muhammad Ayad Awad told Ma'an that Hamad al-Sulaibi, 78, was working his land with his nephews when 13 settlers started throwing stones at them in an area known locally as Wadi Abu al-Rish, located opposite the illegal settlement of Bat Ayin. Settlers forced the farmers to leave the area, in the presence of Israeli forces, Awad said.¹¹²

110 "Israeli Settlers' Violence Report – September and October 2010", (November 18, 2010) <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/component/content/article/5-settlers-violence/3010-israeli-settlers-violence-report-september-and-october-2010-.html>, (05 May 2013).

111 "Settler Shoots at Palestinian Demonstrators with Soldiers Present, 2010", http://www.btsalem.org/video/20100626_cdp_settler_shoot_at_demonstraotor_in_asira_al_qibliya, (25 April 2013).

112 "Settlers Attack Farmers North of Hebron", (April 20, 2013), <http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2013/04/20/settlers-attack-farmers-north-of-hebron/> (25 April 2013).

The attacks increasing every day are symptomatic of the settlers' perception of Palestinians. The Palestinians have no single human value in settlers' perception. Additionally, the news and the reports of human rights organizations show that the settlers perceive the Palestinians as a possible "creatures" who would attack them in any manner.

2.5.3. Damaging Living Quarters and Restrictions on Daily Life

The settlers are obviously against having common life with Palestinians; instead, they are engaged in constant interventions and violations influencing the daily life of Palestinians. For instance, house demolitions, forced removal from lands and houses, prevention of travel, prevention of access to school or hospitals are among the violations. These violations in some senses are carried by the Israeli state given that the settlers are the carriers of the state policy in daily life. The following examples are showing this perception:

On 2 January, 2011 settlers from Beit Hadasa and Ramot Yishai in downtown Hebron prevented resident Mufeed Al-Sharabati from reaching his house on Al-Shuhada Street. Sharabati reported to AIC, "After entering the electronic checkpoint on the west entrance of the street, a group of settlers stopped me and called the soldiers to turn me back. When I told them I was going to my house, they shouted and said bad words. The soldiers who came again checked my ID and then turned me back. I waited more than an hour until the settlers left and I tried again. Although the soldiers know I live there, they checked and did what the settlers wanted. There is not only cooperation between the settlers and soldiers, but the soldiers actually do what settlers asked them to do."¹¹³

¹¹³"Israeli Settler Violence Report: January and February 2011", (March 21, 2011), <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/settlers-violence/3430-israeli-settler-violence-report-january-and-february-2011>, (18 September 2012).

September 26, 2010 – Dozens of settlers from the region of Hebron celebrated the beginning of the construction of a new kindergarten. This building is situated near the Avraham Avino outpost, in downtown Hebron. Settlers were also seen at the entrance to Palestinian villages and towns in the southern Hebron district, preventing children and students from going to school.¹¹⁴

Another tactic used to force the Palestinians out is house demolition. House demolition is a controversial tactic used by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and Israeli settlers against Palestinians.¹¹⁵ Another violation known as “arson” in the literature is very common among settler violation. Arson means setting the property on fire. This is most evident in northern West Bank. 55 percent of all arsons took place in Nablus and Qalqilya in the September of 2011 that targeted property and agriculture.¹¹⁶ The interruption to daily life of Palestinians has two basic messages in reality. First of all, the settlers do not have any respect for the daily life of Palestinians. Secondly, they do not have any intention to establish a common life with Palestinians.

The expansion of settlements influences the daily life of Palestinians in various ways. Due to the high unemployment rates in the West Bank, thousands of Palestinians work in the construction of settlements. According to the numbers by Palestinian authority, 12,000 Palestinians are employed in settlement construction. The Palestinians employed in construction of settlements are

114 “Israeli Settlers’ Violence Report – September and October 2010”, (November 18, 2010) <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/component/content/article/5-settlers-violence/3010-israeli-settlers-violence-report-september-and-october-2010-.html>, (05 May 2013).

115 “House Demolitions as Punishment”, http://www.btselem.org/English/Punitive_Demolitions/Index.asp. (25 April 2013).

116 Munayyer, (2012).



not granted basic protections of Israeli labor law. Instead, they are treated under Jordanian labor law that does not require minimum wage, overtime payment and some other social rights.¹¹⁷

Hebron is a good example indicating how the daily life of Palestinians is influenced by settler violence. The settlers in Hebron regularly ransack Palestinian shops, cut electricity lines and water pipes, wreck cars and attack school children.¹¹⁸ In many cases, however, the Israeli civilians do not act in self-defense. These kinds of acts violate the penal law and the open-fire regulations for civilians. Palestinians and Palestinian property would be the target of Israelis. Settlers use weapons and ammunition they received from the IDF. They attack Palestinians to frighten, deter, or punish them. The actions against Palestinians also include blocking roadways, so as to impede Palestinian life and

117 "Israeli settlement", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_settlement, (26 April 2013).

118 Hebron is defined as a city of terror. See: Ran HaCohen, "Letter from Israel", (19 February 2003), <http://www.antiwar.com/hacohen/h021903.html>, (27 April 2013).

commerce. The settlers also target buildings, automobiles, crops, trees, merchants and the market. These actions mostly intend to force the Palestinians to leave. Especially during the season of olive picking, settler violence increases. Even gunfire is opened to olive picking areas leading casualties among Palestinian farmers, destruction of lands and trees, theft of Palestinian crops.¹¹⁹

2.5.4. Restriction on Freedom of Movement

The settlement construction and expansion on Palestinian land causes the fragmentation of the West Bank and isolation of East Jerusalem. Construction of surrounding roads and bypass roads to connect the settlements with each other causes the annexation of a vast area of Palestinian land and restricts the Palestinians' movement. While bypass roads isolates Palestinian cities, the Separation Wall is built in occupied Palestinian territories in such a way that the settlements are left outside, while the Palestinian lands are divided and blocked. This situation prevents the rights of Palestinian people which is a main obstacle for the peace process. For instance, 43% of the West Bank is off-limits for Palestinian use.¹²⁰

2.5.5. Agricultural Vandalism

Agriculture has a vital importance for the livelihood of Palestinians. Alas, the agricultural life of Palestinians is also among the target of settlers. Damage to the agricultural lands, the removal of fruit and olive trees are among the generally witnessed abuses. The message is clear: "We do not want you here and to live with us." The settler violence

119 "The Nature of the Violence", http://www.btsalem.org/english/Settler_Violence/Nature_of_the_Violence.asp, (27 April 2013).

120 "The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies", OCHA, January 2012, http://unispal.un.org/pdfs/OCHA_IsrSettlementPolicies.pdf, (27 April 2013).

reaches its peak generally in the season of olive harvest since the presence of Palestinians in olive gardens is making them easy targets for settlers.¹²¹

Israeli settlers on horseback set fire on Monday to at least 1,500 Palestinian-owned olive trees in the occupied West Bank and others stoned cars, a Palestinian security official said.¹²²

September 20 – Settlers from Kiryat Arba and Giv'at Kharsena settlements (north-east of Hebron) cut down 100 grape trees in Al-Bowaira. The trees belonged to farmer Abed Elrahman Shareef Sultan. Sultan told the AIC that six dunams of 15-year-old grape trees were completely damaged. This area is well known for being targeted by settlers in an attempt to annex it to the settlement. Many international and local committees are committed to protest actions to prevent the settlers from taking this land. This case was reported to the Israeli police station in the old city of Hebron. The Israeli police came and took a report of the aggression.¹²³

The settler violence intensifies during the season of harvest mostly in the vicinity of Nablus. Settler violence tries to discourage Palestinians from harvesting their land. 277 cases ranging from arracks with knives, bats or fists, and from arson to the use of live ammunition were reported during the harvest season of 2010.¹²⁴ B'Tselem

121 Munayyer, (2012). Another violation took place during harvest season is recorded by B'Tselem as follows: "In recent years, olive pickers in areas near certain settlements and outposts in the West Bank have been a target of attacks by settlers, who have cut down and burned olive trees and stolen the crops. Despite repeated complaints, the security forces have not taken suitable action to prevent the violence." See: "29 Oct. 06: B'Tselem Urges the Security Forces to Prepare for the Olive Harvest", http://www.btselem.org/english/Settler_Violence/20061029_Olive_Harvest.asp. (27.04.2013).

122 "Israelis Torch 1,500 Olive Trees - Report", The Irish Times, (July 07, 2009). <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2009/0720/breaking50.html>, (01 April 2013).

123 "Israeli Settlers' Violence Report – September and October 2010", (November 18, 2010) <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/component/content/article/5-settlers-violence/3010-israeli-settlers-violence-report-september-and-october-2010-.html>, (05 May 2013).

124 "Israeli Settler Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, (November 2010), <http://www.gdp.ie/pdf/Press%20Release%2004.11.2010.pdf>, (01 April 2013).

has reported five cases of injury taking place between October 7th and 10th 2012. The cases concerned Palestinian farmers and their olive trees in the Ramallah and Nablus regions. As the olive harvest season began, settlers attacked farmers picking olives and damaged their yields in two of the cases. In the other three cases, settlers damaged olive trees and stole olives. More tragically, the security forces did not take necessary preventions to protect Palestinians. In other words, they allowed settlers to attack Palestinian farmers.¹²⁵

The anger on fruit trees is a symbol for the serious hatred of settlers for Palestine and Palestinians. The consciously and regularly carried out attacks on Palestinians are just symbolizes the settlers' intention to force the Palestinians to leave.

2.5.6. Damaging the Livestock

Even the animals, the livestock are among the target of settlers' anger. The settlers carry out systematic attacks on livestock of Palestinians.

Recently Israeli settlers have stepped up attacks and threats against Palestinian farmers and villagers in these and other West Bank areas, preventing Palestinians from accessing their land. In recent months, repeated physical assaults by Israeli settlers from Ma'ón and the nearby settlement outpost of Havat Ma'ón on Palestinian farmers and on international peace activists and human rights workers, including Amnesty International staff, have not been investigated by the Israeli police. Those responsible for these attacks enjoy impunity. Scores of sheep as well as gazelles and other animals have been contaminated by the toxins and several have died. Palestinian farmers have been forced to quarantine

125 "Five Attacks on Olive Harvesters and Damaged Olive Groves in Four Days", http://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20121011_settler_attacks, (25 April 2013).

their flocks and stop using the milk, cheese and meat from them, effectively depriving them of their livelihood. Since the first poison was discovered near Tuwani on 22 March 2005, more fields have been targeted in the same region.¹²⁶

2.5.7. Damaging the Environment

A similar attitude is experienced for the natural environment and water resources. The organized groups are polluting the water sources of Palestinians or try to make the resources unavailable.

The Palestinian fields were flooded with untreated sewage, when the settlers opened a valve at a wastewater facility, reported the Palestine Solidarity Project (PSP). The crops, grapes and other fruits, on 10 acres of farmland belonging to the Sabarneh family were destroyed from the onslaught of sewage, soaking which soaked the trees. This is the second time in about six months that the family's land has been hit with sewage.¹²⁷

On March 2012, the UN declared violations by settlers targeting to prevent Palestinians' right to access to water. As the UN states, Palestinians have increasingly lost access to water sources in the West Bank since the settlers have been using threats, intimidate and make fences to ensure control of water points close to the settlements. 30 out of a total of 56 water springs close to the Israeli settlers and privately owned by Palestinians are under settler control. In 22 of the water sources, settlers deterred Palestinians from accessing the springs by acts of intimidation, threats and violence. Moreover, the eight springs were found fully under settler control.¹²⁸

126 "Amnesty: Israeli Authorities Must Put an Immediate End to Settler Violence," Amnesty International, (April 25, 2005), see <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/027/2005/en/94bb8cb7-d4f8-11dd-8a23-d58a49c0d652/mde150272005en.html>, (17 December 2012).

127 "Settlers Dump Sewage on Village of Beit Ommar", <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/settlers-violence/3555-settlers-dump-sewage-on-village-of-beit-ommar>, (08 October 2012).

128 "Seizure of Springs by Settlers Greatly Limits Palestinian Access to Water – UN Report", <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41579#UXmfuLWcNqU>, (25 April 2013).

2.5.8. Burglary, Assumption and Depredation

The violent attacks would turn to robbery, grab and plunder. The main idea in these actions is about the denial of property rights to the Palestinians:

Last Friday at dawn, Israeli settlers uprooted more than 500 olive trees from the territories of the Basalta region and stole them. The trees had been planted only the month before by the villagers as part of regional reforestation campaign aimed at protecting Basalta from settler attacks.¹²⁹ Security-camera footage obtained by B'Tselem raises serious suspicion that settlers torched two vehicles in Qusra on the night of 13-14 Oct. '10, in the framework of "price tag" actions. B'Tselem demands law-enforcement authorities take immediate, firm action to protect Palestinians and their property from settler attacks.¹³⁰

2.5.9. Attacks on Religious Values and Symbols

Possibly the most agitating violent act is the one targeting the holy values. Mosques, religious books, historical places having religious importance, cemeteries targeted by settlers. Especially the mosques are frequently attacked:

On December 11, 2009, suspected settler extremists attacked a mosque in the northern West Bank village of Yasuf near Nablus according to Palestinian officials and Israeli police. The people forced their way into the mosque and burned about 100 holy books including Korans, Hadiths, prayer carpets as well as spray painted anti-Palestinian slogans on the floor, some of which referred to the settlers' "price tag" policy.¹³¹

129 "Israeli Settlers Attack Unarmed Palestinian Villagers in Their Homes", (March 09, 2011). <http://www.middleeastmonitor.org.uk/news/middle-east/2130-israeli-settlers-attack-unarmed-palestinian-villagers-in-their-homes>, (22 April 2012).

130 "Suspicion: Settlers Torched Vehicles in Northern West Bank, 2010", <http://www.btselem.org/video/2010/10/suspicion-settlers-torched-vehicles-northern-west-bank>, (25 April 2013).

131 James Hider, "Settlers attack West Bank mosque and burn holy Muslim books", *London: The Times*. (December 11, 2009). http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6953281.ece, (01 October 2012).

In January 2010, Israeli security officers raided the settlement of Yitzhar, forcibly entered the settlement's synagogue and yeshiva buildings and arrested ten settlers, including the Rosh yeshiva, for alleged involvement in the mosque attack.¹³² All were released by the court due to lack of evidence and the court reprimanded the police for arresting the rabbi. As of January 2010 no indictments were served. The state has appealed the ruling.¹³³

Jewish extremists destroyed Palestinian tombstones on Wednesday [25.01.2012] in the northern Israeli town of Beisan, the Al-Aqsa Institute for Waqf and Heritage said. A delegation from the institute visited the cemetery in the town, known in Israel as Beit Shean, and found a large number of graves destroyed and vandalized, official PA news agency Wafa reported.¹³⁴

The following passage shows how the religious hatred is targeting even the holy books:

Suspected extremist Jewish settlers today attacked a mosque in the northern West Bank, burning holy books and spraying threatening graffiti in Hebrew on the building, Palestinian officials and Israeli police said. Extremists broke into the mosque in the village of Yasuf, near the city of Nablus, and burned Korans and copies of the Hadith, or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, and prayer carpets, while spraying slogans on the floor reading "Price tag – greetings from Effi."¹³⁵

Settlers set the Al-Anbiya Mosque in Beit Fajjar on fire. Slogans were also written in Hebrew on the walls. An eyewitness reported that the settlers left the area in a white car bearing an Israeli license plate and headed in the direction of the Etzion junction. 15

132 "Police Arrest 10 in Raid on West Bank Settlement, *Haaretz*, (January 18, 2010), <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1143391.html>, (04 October 2012).

133 "Settler Teens Suspected in West Bank Mosque Arson Freed from Custody", *Haaretz*, (February 07, 2009), <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/1145648.html>, (08 October 2012).

134 "Jewish Savage Extremists Destroy Muslim Graves in Beisan – in Pictures," (January 25, 2012), <http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2012/01/25/jewish-savage-extremists-destroys-muslim-graves-in-beisan-in-pictures/>, (25 April 2013).

135 James Hider, "Settlers Attack West Bank Mosque and Burn Holy Muslim Books", *The Times*, (December 11, 2009), http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6953281.ece, (01 October 2012).

copies of the Quran were apparently burnt and the pillars inside the mosque collapsed. The event was reported to the Israeli police, who publicly declared that an investigation was underway.¹³⁶

2.5.10. Humiliating

The settlers' violent acts on Palestinians are an important source to understand how they perceive the Palestinians. The examples such as killing the civilians by firing them at a distance, killing people by cars, attacking mosques and holy books, polluting the water resources of civilians and damaging the agricultural lands are just showing that the settlers perceive and treat the Palestinians inhumanly:

In the early morning hours of May 1st [2011], International Workers Day, several Palestinians workers, instead of celebrating the occasion, were taken to the hospital after the Israeli soldiers and their dogs attacked them. (...) It is important here to mention that the policy of sending dogs to attack Palestinians, especially workers, has increased.¹³⁷

136 "Israeli Settlers' Violence Report – September and October 2010", (November 18, 2010) <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/component/content/article/5-settlers-violence/3010-israeli-settlers-violence-report-september-and-october-2010-.html>, (05 May 2013).

137 "Palestinians Workers Attacked on International Workers Day", (May 2, 2011), <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/settlers-violence/3569-palestinians-workers-attacked-on-international-workers-day->, (02 October 2012).

SETTLEMENTS AND THE PEACE PROCESS

3.1. Oslo Process

The Middle East Peace Process started in 1991 following the end of Cold War. Reacting immediately to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, the USA and the international community were criticized for their failure to react to the Israeli occupation in Palestine lasting for years. With the effect of the international pressure, the USA called Israel and Arab nations to come together to discuss the solution in Palestine.¹³⁸ This process had a special importance since it was the first enterprise to conduct a global peace mechanism after the Cold War. While the Gulf War was a hot occasion to solve a problem/conflict, the Peace Process was a case of global diplomacy. On the other hand, it was a chance for Israel to have the legitimacy it needed in the international scene.¹³⁹

¹³⁸For detailed information about the peace process see: Edward W. Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, London: Granta Books, 2002.

¹³⁹"Bölgesel Dengeler ve Ortadoğu Barış Süreci" in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, January 2010, p. 390.

The fundamental issues brought to the agenda of the peace process are as follows: Foundation of an independent Palestinian state, borders and division of the land, end of conflict, Israeli settlements, the status of Jerusalem, and return of Palestinian refugees. During the peace process, Palestinian side claimed that the process aimed to establish an independent Palestinian state with the capital Jerusalem, secure the return of Palestinian refugees and the withdrawal of Jewish settlements. On the other hand, Israeli demands can be summarized as follows: Making Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, not to turn to 1967 borders, allowing no foreign armies to the West of Jordan River, and keeping Jewish settlements in the West Bank under Israeli administration.¹⁴⁰

The first steps of the peace process was taken by the Madrid Conference held in 1991, bringing the sides directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict together. The Conference tried to reach a solution based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338 demanding Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967 in exchange for full peace and recognition from its neighbors. On the other hand, since the conference has been suspended, the Madrid Conference -having a symbolic importance because it brought Israel and Arab nations together for the first time- has not produced concrete results.¹⁴¹ The Madrid Conference paved the way for the Oslo Accords in 1993. The necessary conditions for a future Palestine state based on UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 were discussed in the Oslo negotiations too. The Israeli and Palestinian negotiators signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP) as a result of

140 Fatma Tunç Yaşar, Sevinç Alkan Özcan, Zahide Tuba Kor, *Siyonizm Düşündün İşgal Gerçeğine Filistin*, İstanbul: İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı, April 2009, pp. 85-120.

141 Ibid., pp. 86-87.

negotiations. The Declaration of Principles included the recognition of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of Palestinian people. By the DOP, Israel agreed to withdraw from parts of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and acknowledged the Palestinian right to self-government in territories under Palestinian Authority. DOP supposed a 5 year interim period for peace process until a permanent peace settlement was negotiated and an independent Palestinian state established.¹⁴²

Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin were jointly being awarded by The Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East.¹⁴³ Following Oslo Accords, the sides came together to discuss the issues such as Israel's withdrawal from some Palestinian lands it had occupied and the future Palestinian state. As a result of these negotiations, Gaza-Eriha agreement was signed in 1994 in Egypt. On the other hand, the Second Oslo Accord took place in Taba in September 1995 which stipulated that Israel leave 13% of West Bank to Palestinians. Since Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin was killed, the process was suspended.¹⁴⁴

Israel has extended settlements even Oslo Accords were underlying the unity of the West Bank & Gaza Strip and opposing any changes to territorial unity in the region. Israel has extended the settlements from 69 square kilometers to an overall 188 square kilometers since the Oslo Accord was signed in 1993.¹⁴⁵

Later on, the Arab and Israeli side came to the

142 "Text: 1993 Declaration of Principles", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1682727.stm, (10 March 2013).

143 "The Nobel Peace Prize 1994", http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1994/, (15 March 2013).

144 Bora Bayraktar, "Barış Çalışmaları Perspektifinden İsrail-Filistin Sorunu", http://www.bilgesam.org/tr/images/stories/kitaplar/b_bayraktar.pdf, (12 March 2013).

145 "Israeli Settlements' Program Under International Law", (May 05, 2009), http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=1930, (11 March 2013).

negotiation table in Camp David Summit in 2000 by the enterprise of US President Bill Clinton. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak took part in negotiations. Camp David was a significant step in peace process since the final issues such as the withdrawal of Israel from occupied territories, the status of Jerusalem, refugees and settlements were brought to the negotiation table in this summit. Palestine was offered 95% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, whereas East Jerusalem would remain under Israeli sovereignty. The issues of borders, airspace, and water resources of the Palestinian state would stay at the hand of the Israeli administration. President Yasser Arafat, who represented the Palestinian side, rejected what was offered in Camp David. Accompanied by nearly a thousand fully armed Israeli soldiers, the provocative visit of Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Masjid al-Aqsa in September 2000 was a crucial turning point in the peace process. This step ignited the start of second intifada. The peace process that began in Oslo broke down in Camp David in the summer of 2000 and the onset of the second intifada.¹⁴⁶

3.2. Post-Camp David Period

In 2001, former US Senator George J. Mitchell was appointed by US President Bill Clinton to lead a fact-finding committee. The Mitchell Report published by the Committee was stating that all settlement activity should be frozen. In 2003, the Quartet of the United States, the

¹⁴⁶ According to Ahmet Davutoğlu, the visit of Ariel Sharon was not a coincidence or surprise. A symbolic name, Ariel Sharon, who was responsible for the Sabra and Shatilla massacres, visited a symbolic place Masjid al-Aqsa with a military escort which was not at all symbolic. Davutoğlu states that it was possible for Israel to forecast that such a visit would break the peace process. See: Ahmet Davutoğlu "Bölgesel Dengeler ve Ortadoğu Barış Süreci" in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, Küre Yayınları, January 2010, p. 394.

European Union, the United Nations, and Russia issued a Road Map based on Mitchell Report claiming that all settlement expansion was to stop and outposts dating after March 2001 were to be dismantled.¹⁴⁷ The Israeli Prime Minister of the time, Ariel Sharon rejected what was offered by the Road Map.¹⁴⁸ The Road Map is expected to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by 2005 in three phases: Ending terror and violence, normalizing Palestinian life, and building Palestinian institutions in Phase I; transition in Phase II, providing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty and permanent status agreement; and end of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Phase III.¹⁴⁹ One of the latest peace talks between Israel and Palestine was brokered by Egypt in 2008 which lead to Hamas-Israeli ceasefire lasting half a year. The stalled peace process was revived in 2010 by Obama Administration calling the sides to direct talks. The direct talks aimed to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict officially and to form the two state solution which would result in everlasting peace. However, the talks broke down in late September 2010 when an Israeli partial moratorium on settlement construction in the West Bank expired. The Israeli government was calling the Palestinian Authority to recognize Israel as a Jewish state to continue direct talks.¹⁵⁰

147 "Mitchell Report", *Sharm el-Sheikh Fact Finding Committee Report*, (April 30, 2001), http://eeas.europa.eu/mepp/docs/mitchell_report_2001_en.pdf, (18 March 2013).

148 "Settlements or Peace?", *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, (March 2013), <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/mena/middle-east-peace-process1/>, (01 April 2013).

149 "The Road Map: Full text", (April 30, 2013), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2989783.stm, (01 May 2013). Edward W. Said, *From Oslo to Iraq and the Roadmap*, Great Britain: Bloomsbury, 2004.

150 "Direct Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians (2010-2011)", *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_negotiations_between_Israel_and_the_Palestinians_in_2010, (01 May 2013).

3.3. Settlement Issue in the Context of the Peace Process

The peace process starting in the early 1990s by Madrid and Oslo conferences did not produce positive results in restricting settlements although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was brought to the negotiation table as a primary issue to be solved. What is more, Israel used negotiations as a mask to conceal the construction of new settlements. Up to 2000, 250 km of bypass roads crossing and surrounding the Palestinian villages were built to connect the settlements with each other and with other major Israeli cities.¹⁵¹ Although the Oslo Accords aimed to stem the expansion of settlements, the politicians of that era, Yithzak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Benyamin Netenyahu and Ehud Barak, supported the settlement activity. They supported increase of the number of Israeli settlers and the founding of outposts. The government supported the settlements through the state funded Settlement Department of the Zionist Federation.¹⁵² The number of Jewish settlers was 100,000 when the peace process started in 1992. It reached 200,000 in 2000 by the end of the peace process. Similarly, 30 new settlement regions and more than 18,330 new residences were constructed, thousands of acres of Palestinian land was confiscated to connect the settlements with each other during those years. Ironically, Israeli President Ehud Barak, praised by the US President Bill Clinton since he made efforts for the peace process, became the leader who started the biggest settlement

151 Tayyar Arı, "Filistin'de Kalıcı Barış Mümkün mü?", *Akademik Orta Doğu*, vol. II, no. 1, (2007), p. 15.

152 Shaul Arieli, Roby Nathanson, Ziv Rubin and Hagar Tzameret-Kertcher, "Historical, Political and Economic Impact of Jewish Settlements in the Occupied Territories", (June 2009), http://annaveeder.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/iepn_16-6-09.pdf, (01 May 2013).

construction activity during the peace process.¹⁵³ 3196 houses in 16 different settlements were given permissions for construction in five months from July to December in 1999. The number of settlements was doubled in 2000 compared to 1999.¹⁵⁴ The Mitchell Report which was published during the peace process in 2001 indicated that the settler population in the West Bank was doubled between 1993 and 2000.¹⁵⁵

The Road Map proposed by the UN in 2003 focused on establishing two separate states and called both parties to bear the responsibility. USA President Bush was supporting the idea of establishing two separate states, but he also stated that turning to the 1949 borders was not realistic. On the other hand, Ariel Sharon, probably, perceiving Bush's statements as a green light for the settlements, continued to extend settlements. Under his and his successor Olmert's rule, the settler population rose by 100,000.¹⁵⁶ The peace talks which began in November 2007 by the Annapolis Summit again served as a mask for the extension of settlement activities. 1518 new settlements were constructed in 2008 during the Annapolis process.¹⁵⁷ The Goldstone report which was published in 2008 also criticized the settlement activities. Nevertheless, the Israeli government continued on settlement activities in spite of international reactions. In 2007, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert stated that Israel was not building new settlements

153 Balcı, (2010), p. 127.

154 Marwan Bishara, *Filistin/İsrail Barış veya Irkçılık*, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, (Mart 2003), p. 104.

155 "Mitchell Report", (2001).

156 Shaul Arieli, Roby Nathanson, Ziv Rubin and Hagar Tzameret-Kertcher, "Historical, Political and Economic Impact of Jewish Settlements in the Occupied Territories", *Israeli European Policy Network*, (June 2009), http://annaveeder.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/iepn_16-6-09.pdf. (01 May 2013).

157 "Peace Now: Settlements Expanded Faster in 2008", (January 28, 2009), <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3663205,00.html>, (01 May 2013).

for 10 years, but was supporting the construction of existing ones. Stating that several dozen outposts were built without state permission, Olmert stated in the cabinet, "From now on, any new settlement and land nationalization will not be made."¹⁵⁸ Israel supported the construction of 143,000 housing units in the settlements by either constructing, tendering or planning between 2001 and 2008.¹⁵⁹ It is said in a report published by Peace Now that settlement construction rose by 60% in 2008 and 40% of them constructed east of the security barrier farther into the Palestinian territory.¹⁶⁰ The international pressure on Israel began to increase when Barack Obama was chosen as the President of the USA. In 2009, President Barack Obama claimed that stopping the settlements was in favor of USA's interests. As a response to Obama's reaction, Israel declared that it would freeze the settlement activity.¹⁶¹ Israeli government declared a 10-month freeze in December 2009 which included only the 'new settlements', and not the ones already under construction. While announcing this freeze, Prime Minister Netanyahu was saying that it was a bid to restart peace talks with the Palestinians. According to Netanyahu, Israeli government took far-reaching steps for peace; it was thus the turn of the Palestinians to do the same. However, he did not hesitate to declare that Israel would not halt existing construction and would continue to build synagogues, schools, kindergartens and

158 Osman Bahadır Dinçer & Gamze Coşkun, "Jewish Settlements: Another Name for Occupation", *USAK Yearbook*, Vol. IV, (2011), p. 212.

159 "The Israeli Settlements: Illegitimate, Illogical & an Impediment to Ever Achieving Peace", *The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem*, (March 03, 2008), http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=1299, (09 March 2013).

160 Daniel Luban, "Peace Recedes as Israeli Settlements Expand", *Antiwar.com*, (January 29, 2009), <http://www.antiwar.com/ips/luban.php?articleid=14158>, (08 March 2013).

161 Balci, (2012), p. 74.

public buildings which had been necessary for daily life in the settlements.¹⁶²

On the other hand, during a visit by the US Vice President Joe Biden to Israel in March 2010, Israel announced that it would build 1,600 units in a neighborhood near Jerusalem. In the Israeli view, even this move was not violating the settlement freeze since it was not in areas within Jerusalem. The US and the Palestinian government conceived this move as an insult to the Peace Process. In fact, the purpose of Biden's visit to Israel was to assure Israel about Washington's commitment to restart peace talks with the Palestinians.¹⁶³ According to the human rights organization Peace Now, there were many violations during the 10 month moratorium at West Bank Jewish Communities. The settlements violating the freeze were Adam, Oranit, Eilon Moreh, Alfei Menashe, Elkana, Beit Aryeh, Betar Illit, Barkan, Givat Ze'ev, Har Gilo, Talmon, Yakir, Kfar Eldad, Kfar Etzion, Ma'aleh Adumim, Ma'aleh Shomron, Matityahu, Nokdim, Imanuel, Etz Efrayim, Psagot, Zufim, Kedumim, Rosh Zurim, Revava, Shadmot Mechola, Sha'arei Tikva and Tekoa.¹⁶⁴ Peace Now announced that violations of freeze orders were found in no less than 29 settlements. Peace Now reported that Jewish settlers were working during the night and on the sabbath to avoid notice. The response of Palestinian side to these violations was to declare that they would not return to peace talks unless Israel stopped

162 Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu Declares 10 Month Settlement Freeze to Restart Peace Talks", *Haaretz*, (November 25, 2009), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/netanyahu-declares-10-month-settlement-freeze-to-restart-peace-talks-1.3435>, (25 April 2013).

163 Ethan Bronner, "As Biden Visits, Israel Unveils Plan for New Settlements", *The New York Times*, (March 9, 2010), http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/10/world/middleeast/10biden.html?_r=0, (28 April 2013).

164 Tovah Lazaroff, "29 Settlements Defy Freeze Order", *The Jerusalem Post*, (February 15, 2010), <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=168735>, (09 April 2013). "Articles on Violations of Settlement Freeze", *Peace Now*, (February 15, 2010), http://peacenow.org/entries/settlements_freeze_violations, (09 April 2013).

settlement building in the West Bank.¹⁶⁵ Immediately after the end of the freeze, Israeli settlers started to build 600 homes which mostly were in areas that would become part of the Palestinian state in peace talks.¹⁶⁶ Building settlements in the future Palestinian state lands distorts the possibility of the two state solution. In reacting to this move, Ghassan Khatib, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' self-rule government in the West Bank said:

This figure is alarming and is another indicator that Israel is not serious about the peace process, which is supposed to be about ending the occupation.¹⁶⁷

During US President Barak Obama's visit to Israel in March 2013, the peace process and settlements were also among the topics of discussion. Obama expressed that Washington was committed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state and an end to the Israeli occupation. In a joint press conference with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas, Obama said that the Palestinian people deserved an end to the occupation. However, he also drew on the settlement construction as unhelpful to peace efforts. He said that, continued settlement activity was not constructive, appropriate and something that could advance the cause of peace. Furthermore, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told Obama that there would be no return to negotiations while Israel continues to build settlements.¹⁶⁸

165 "Israeli Settlers Disobey the Order to Stop Building", *BBC News*, (February 15, 2010), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8516223.stm, (12 April 2013).

166 "Reports: Settlers Start 600 New Homes since End of Freeze", *Al Manar*, (October 21, 2010), <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=23&frid=23&eid=203>, (22 April 2013).

167 "Reports: Settlers Start 600 New Homes since End of Freeze", *Al Manar*, (October 21, 2010), <http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=1&cid=23&frid=23&eid=203>, (22 April 2013).

168 "Obama's One-Sided Embrace of Israel Angers Palestinians", *The Arab American News*, (Marc 21, 2013), <http://www.arabamericannews.com/news/index.php?mod=article&cat=USA&article=6572>, (22 April 2013).

The Israeli parliament Knesset has always 25-30 deputies in favor of Jewish settlements which corresponds to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the parliament.¹⁶⁹ Even Israeli governments canceled building permits and applied freeze to settlements from time to time during the premiership of Rabin, Netanyahu, Barak, Sharon, Olmert or other leaders. Nonetheless all of them soon gave up the freeze and issued new permits or supported settlements in various ways. This attitude of the Israeli government is conceived as a main threat to the peace process. On the other hand, the fragmentation and division of the Palestinian lands through settlements is also supported by the construction of the wall that traverses the entire West Bank and cuts deep into the Palestinian land. Both the wall and the settlements have undermined the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.¹⁷⁰

A recent development which can be seen as a negative development for the peace process is the re-election of Netanyahu to the premiership in Israel. The Minister of Housing and Construction Uri Ariel who himself lives in the settlement of Kfar Adumim and a founding member of Mishor Adumim settlement is described as “bulldozer” on settlements. The UN envoy Robert Serry evaluated Ariel’s appointment as a factor undermining the peace process: “If the meaning of {Ariel’s} appointment is a wave of settlement construction, this will destroy the chance to reach a compromise and peace between the peoples.”¹⁷¹

169 Dinçer & Coşkun, p. 216.

170 Berdal Aral, “An Inquiry into the “Effective” United Nations Security Council Resolutions Relating to the Middle East Within the Past Decade”, *The Muslim World*, vol. CII, (April 2012), p. 243.

171 “New Israeli Government will Support Settlements”, *Al Monitor*, (April 5, 2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/new-israeli-government-settlement-expansion-support.html>, (10 April 2013).

3.4. Reaction to the Peace Process on the Ground

Oslo process was the greatest challenge for the settlers¹⁷² and the popular reaction to the process rose after the accords. A joint committee composed of rightist parties and movements was established to coordinate the response on the ground. Political parties such as the Likud, Tsomet, the National Religious Party (NRP) and Moledet were among the supporters of the committee. Additionally, politically unaffiliated groups such as Yesha Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Council of Jewish Settlements in English)¹⁷³, Amana, the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, Eminum, the One Israel movement and etc. are also among the ranks of the Committee. The Joint Committee immediately held large public demonstrations to rattle the government in the wake of signing Declaration of Principles (DOP). On the other hand, the Kach and Kahane Chai movements announced that they would arrange “provocations” to disrupt the negotiations.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, the DOP signed as a result of Oslo Accords was not welcomed by the settler population and “Jewish Intifada” was announced by “angry settlers” when a Beit El settler was killed at the end of October 1993 by Palestinians. Following the announcement of Jewish Intifada, “Operation Double”

172 A Jerusalem based freelance journalist Peter Shaw-Smith writes in his article in 1994 just after the Oslo Agreements: “Settlers faced their greatest challenge, but thanks to their work of previous years, they were ready for it.” See: Shaw-Smith, (Spring 1994), p. 99.

173 The Yesha Council is a council for settlements supported also by the Israeli government. Every settlement in occupied territories is represented in the council. The council carries out lobbying activities, spearheading media war to raise consciousness about settlements and the settler population and it has easy access to the highest echelons of government and media. The Council also follows activities abroad especially in the USA. Ibid, pp. 99-109.

174 Ibid, pp. 99-109.

was announced in December which targeted the doubling of the number of settlements in the occupied territories.¹⁷⁵

The religious leaders of the Jewish community in Israel also showed immediate reaction to the Peace Process. In December of 1993, Rabbi Shlomo Gore forbid Jews to evacuate any settlement in the biblical lands of Israel. Furthermore, Rabbi Gore expressed his belief that the Israeli soldiers should disobey any order about the evacuation of those lands. Most importantly, he was calling the soldiers not to obey the secular order if such an order ever came. He explained his idea by stating:

According to halakhah [Jewish law], a soldier who receives an order that runs contrary to Torah law should uphold halakhah and not the secular order. And since settling the land is a commandment, and uprooting the settlements is breaking the commandment, the soldier should not carry out an order to uproot settlements.¹⁷⁶

The peace process and its conditions on settlements raised tension among rabbis also. In addition to the ruling published by Rabbi Shlomo Gore, other rabbis came to the scene with their explanations as a response to the discussions about possible evacuation of Jewish residents in Hebron. A number of rabbis, including the Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapira, called soldiers to reject any order about the evacuation of Jews from either Hebron or another settlement. For example, a member of Knesset Hanan Porat from National Religious Party was explaining his intention to reject such an order and go to jail to pay the price.¹⁷⁷ Rabbis were opposing the peace process since dismantling the settlements and evacuating the land, they

¹⁷⁵ Shaw-Smith, pp. 103-104.

¹⁷⁶ Steinberg, (2000).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

believed, contravened Torah, and the peace process would open “the way for [Arabs] to conquer the entire land”.¹⁷⁸ For his part, Rabbi Nachum Rabinovich from Ma’aleh Adumim settlement with 20,000 residents on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem stated thus: “Wherever the Israeli army pulls out, settlers’ lives will be endangered. There is a fundamental moral issue here and the moral law supersedes any government.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, the rabbis were challenging the secular authority of the government. The call of rabbis did find echoes among the population. A soldier who was sentenced to 28 days prison in August 1995 since he refused to take part in an evacuation was stating that he refused the orders because he did not join the army to fight Jews.¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, surveys done after the break of the peace process in 2000 show that the majority of Israeli population is against what the peace process suggests. For instance, 59% of the Israeli population is not warm to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank even if the Jewish settlements are kept in their place.¹⁸¹

3.5. The Position of International Actors on Settlements

The ongoing settlement policy and construction by Israel is frequently criticized as an obstacle to the peace process by the United Nations¹⁸², the United Kingdom,¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Hillel Halkin, “Israel, Rabbis Battle for Soul of Their Army”, *StopMoskowitz*, (21 July 1995), http://www.stopmoskowitz.org/betel_article1.html, (01 May 2013).

¹⁸⁰ “Israeli Soldier who Refused to Evict Settlers is Jailed”, *HighBeam Research*, (16 August 1995), <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-22747359.html>, (02 May 2013).

¹⁸¹ John J. Mearsheimer & Stephen M. Walt, *İsrail Lobisi ve Amerikan Dış Politikası*, (Translated by Hasan Kösebalaban), İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2009, p. 425.

¹⁸² “Israeli Settlement Plan Denounced”, *BBC News*, (November 18, 2009). http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8364815.stm, (20 December 2012).

¹⁸³ “Britain: Israeli Settlements are ‘Illegal’ and ‘Obstacle’ to Peace”, *Haaretz*, (November 4, 2009). <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1125583.html>, (22 December 2012).

the United States,¹⁸⁴ Arab nations and the OIC. Majority of Western countries, the UN, the International Court of Justice restated their view in 2004 in an advisory opinion stating that the settlements were illegal whether they were in the West Bank or East Jerusalem.¹⁸⁵

The position of the UN on settlement issue has been declared by various resolutions such as 242, 452, 446 and 465. The UN has announced this position in various platforms. For instance, in a document published on 19 September 2003, the UN states: "Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem and occupied Syrian Golan are illegal and an obstacle to peace and to economic and social development."¹⁸⁶

The European Union has adopted a similar posture: On 8 December 2008 the EU confirmed its deep concern about recent accelerated settlement expansion. This expansion prejudices the outcome of final status negotiations and threatens the viability of an agreed two-state solution. The EU considers that settlement building anywhere in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law.¹⁸⁷

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, claimed that Israeli settlements,

184 Steve Erlanger, "Israeli Report Condemns Support for Settlement Outposts", *New York Times*, (March 9, 2005), <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990DE2DF163CF93AA35750C0A9639C8B63&sec=&spoon=&pagewanted=1>, (30 December 2012).

185 Macintyre, (2009).

186 "Fifty-first Session Agenda Item 85, Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly", <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/51/ares51-133.htm>, (20 December 2012).

187 "EU Positions on the Middle East Peace Process", http://www.eeas.europa.eu/mepp/eu-positions/eu_positions_en.htm, (10 June 2012). See also "Declaration by the Presidency on Behalf of the European Union on Israeli Decision Regarding Settlements", (December 18, 2009), http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/112007.pdf, (22 April 2013).

including related infrastructure roads, buffer zones and the separation wall constitutes the single most important obstacle for the resumption of peace talks.¹⁸⁸

The Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report which is also known as ‘Mitchell Report’ underlines that the Israeli-Palestinian violence would not stop unless Israel freezes all settlement construction activity.¹⁸⁹ US also called Israel to cease the settlements expansion activity in order not to stall the peace process. The US President Barak Obama called Israel to freeze all settlement activities to build a momentum for peace.¹⁹⁰ On 10 July 2012, the US State Department declared its opposition to the Levy Committee Report which suggests legalizing most West Bank outposts and supporting the growth of settlements. The State Department explained that the US position on settlements is clear: it would not accept the legitimacy of Israeli settlements.¹⁹¹ The US position on settlements is underlined also by below remarks in the UN Security Council by the US Permanent Representative to the UN:

Like every U.S. administration for decades, we do not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity. We continue to oppose any efforts to legalize outposts. The fate of existing settlements must be dealt with by the parties along with other permanent-status issues.

188 Richard Falk, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967”, *UN Human Rights Council 16th Session*, (January 10, 2011), http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/droi/dv/201/201102/20110207_512ahrc1672falk_en.pdf, (22 April 2013).

189 “Mitchell Report”, *Sharm el-Sheikh Fact Finding Committee Report*, (April 30, 2001), http://ec.europa.eu/mepp/docs/mitchell_report_2001_en.pdf, (18 March 2013).

190 Kessler Glenn, “Obama Continues to Press Israel to Freeze Settlement Activity”, (May 29, 2009), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/28/AR2009052803771.html>, (30 December 2012).

191 Gabe Fisher, “US State Department Comes out against Settlement Report”, *Times of Israel*, (July 10, 2012), <http://www.timesofisrael.com/us-state-department-we-do-not-accept-the-legitimacy-of-continued-israeli-settlement-activity/>, (29 December 2012).

Indeed, the road to peace is long and hard, but the United States remains fully committed to helping the parties reach peace through a negotiated two-state solution.¹⁹²

In 2003, the Quartet of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia issued a Road Map based on Mitchell Report claiming that all settlement expansion was to stop and outposts dating after March 2001 were to be dismantled.¹⁹³ According to UK, France, Germany and Portugal, the EU members of the Security Council, systematic and deliberate expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories including East Jerusalem are threats to the two-state solution.¹⁹⁴ The Palestinian side basically sees the settlements as the primary obstacle to the peace process since the settlements violate the basic rights of Palestinians and the future of the Palestinian state.¹⁹⁵ The Palestine Liberation Organization's Negotiations Affairs Department explains its position on settlements as follows:

In addition to being illegal, Israeli settlements in the [Occupied Palestinian Territories] pose the single greatest threat to a two-state solution and hence, to a just and lasting peace. Settlements, their infrastructure and associated areas of Israeli control grossly reduce the amount and quality of land remaining for our future state and severely undermine its territorial integrity. Under the 'land for peace' formula contained in UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and upon which the peace process is

192 "Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East", (October 15, 2012), <http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/199137.htm>, (25 December 2012).

193 "The Road Map: Full Text", http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2989783.stm, (01 May 2013).

194 "Britain and EU Powers 'Dismayed' by New Israeli Settlements", (December 20, 2011), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/8969157/Britain-and-EU-powers-dismayed-by-new-Israeli-settlements.html>, (28 December 2012).

195 For details see Balci, "Filistin 2008", pp. 117-119, 129-130.

based, Israel is to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967 in exchange for full peace and recognition from its neighbors.¹⁹⁶

The President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas in his speech to UN General Assembly claimed that the primary cause for the failure of the peace process was the colonial policy of Israel supported by the settlement activities. Mahmud Abbas declared that the Palestinian Liberation Organization was ready to turn to the negotiation table if settlement activities were completely ceased.¹⁹⁷ The Chief Negotiator for the Palestinian Authority Saeb Erekat emphasizes that while peace requires an end to occupation, settlements cause permanent occupation.¹⁹⁸

The settlements which are against international law and the UN Convention of Geneva and are being criticized by the international actors such as the USA, Britain and EU, is also heavily criticized by the Arab and Islamic world. Arabs and the Islamic world perceive the issue as the primary obstacle to the peace process. The use of “*al-mughatasabat* [المَغْتَصَبَات]” (*lands seized by force*) word instead of “settlements” by Arabs is a significant signal about the Arab attitude.¹⁹⁹ Jordan, the neighboring country to Palestine, also supports full freeze of Israeli settlements including ‘natural growth’ and affirms that the continuation of settlement activity would endanger a viable Palestinian state.²⁰⁰

196 “Settlements: Our Position”, Palestine Liberation Organization Negotiations Affairs Department, <http://www.intertech.ps/nad/ctemplate.php?id=118&more=1>, (05 April 2013).

197 “Full Transcript of Abbas Speech at UN General Assembly”, *Haaretz*, (September 23, 2011), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/full-transcript-of-abbas-speech-at-un-general-assembly-1.386385>, (06 April 2013).

198 Saeb Erekat, “The Israeli-Palestinian Settlement impasse”, (October 28, 2010), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/28/AR2010102805956.html>, (12 January 2013).

199 For example see “Iqtiham Mughatasabat”, http://www.alqassam.ps/arabic/operations1.php?sub_operation=2, (10 April 2013).

200 “Are Israeli Settlements in the Palestinian Territories an Obstacle to the Peace Process?”, (March 05, 2012), <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000534>, (12 April 2013).



A graffiti in separation wall mentioning the illegal situation of settlements.

The recent decision of Israel, issued in October 2012, to construct 797 new settlement units in East Jerusalem is condemned by OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. İhsanoğlu maintains that all settlement activities are illegitimate and a flagrant violation of international law.²⁰¹ After the upgrade of Palestine's status in the UN to the permanent observer status in December 2012, Israel explained that it would build 3000 new settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The reactions to Israel's plan to build 3000 new settlements also give clue about the position of international actors on settlements. Israel's decision to establish 3000 housing units is condemned by Arab and Turkish Foreign Ministers in a joint statement released during the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum in Istanbul on December 2012.²⁰² Additionally, Britain and

201 "OIC, Turkey Slam New Israeli Settlements in Jerusalem", (October 22, 2012), <http://www.dunya.com/oic,-turkey-slam-new-israeli-settlements-in-jerusalem-169337h.htm>, (15 April 2013).

202 "Middle Eastern Diplomats Condemn Israeli Settlement Plans", (December 01, 2012), <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2012/12/01/middle-eastern-diplomats-condemn-israeli-settlement-plans/>, (28 February 2013).

France expressed concern about Israel's decision to build 3000 new settlements. British Foreign Secretary William Hague claimed that Israel's decision would undermine trust between parties and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius claimed that Israel's decision would undermine Israel's international reputation.²⁰³

203 Yoel Goldman, "UK, France Urge Israel to Reverse Decision on Settlement Construction", (December 01, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-urges-israel-to-reverse-decision-on-settlement-construction/>), (10 February 2013).

CONCLUSION

The Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories constitute a crucial agenda in the negotiation table of Israel-Palestine peace process in addition to a number of issues such as borders, division of land, return of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem. The settlements, being a key issue, could become an obstacle to peace. The settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are generally perceived as the most formidable obstacle to the peace process since both the historical process and the current peace process have shown that Israel continues to seriously violate the rights of Palestinian people in particular and international law in general through its settlement policy.

The issue of settlements has international relations dimensions. It is also related to politics and human rights. The ongoing settlement policy of occupier Israel is frequently criticized by the United Nations, major Western countries and Arab states as well as the international organizations such as Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). They draw on the negative influence of Israel's settlement policy over the building of peace. Furthermore, the Palestinian side sees the settlements as the primary obstacle to the process since the settlements violate basic rights of the Palestinians and poses a major obstacle to the founding of a future Palestinian state.

This study has sought to understand the reasons why the settlements are so important to occupier Israel which continues to resist the calls made by the UN Security Council Resolutions and other cases of international pressure. Israelis are aware that these illegal settlements are a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This dissertation has endeavored to shed light on the settlement mentality, motivations of settlers and main influences on them. This is done by a focus on ideological, official and public (settlers') aspects of the issue in question.

It is argued, in this context, that the strong ideological motivations deriving from Judaism and Zionism, both intersects mostly, dictate that the land of Palestine be seen and treated as homeland for the Jewish people. Believing that the holy lands between Judea and Samaria is the birthplace of Jewish people, it is a widely held view that the Jewish people has a historic and natural right to settle in those lands. Furthermore, it is believed that 1967 War is a divine help to redeem the Jewish birthplace. The founders of Zionism and the state of Israel have been keen to redeem the land from "foreign" rule. This ideological background

is found persistently in the settlement policies of Israel. Israeli officials, religious leaders, the general public and the settlers themselves have shown dedication to this ideal.

In contrast, the human rights violations committed by settlers' themselves and supported by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from time to time are an important indicator of the way the settlers perceive the Palestinian lands and people. The violations targeting Palestinians from every age among settlers and forcing them to leave show that the settlers have no intention to live together with Palestinians and have no respect for their rights. Furthermore, perceived as obstacles to their sacred mission to redeem the land, the attacks on women, children, farmers, farms and even to fruit trees show the serious hatred of settlers towards Palestinians. Defining Arabs as "terrorists" and simply as "creatures", the settlers see no bounds to their extremity. Commenting on the murder of 29 Palestinians in İbrahimi Mosque in Hebron in 1994 by an Israeli settler, Baruch Goldstein, Rabbi Moshe Levinger said that he was sorry about the death of any living thing, but the sorrow he felt toward those Arabs killed was the same sorrow he felt toward a fly swatted against a wall. Attacking, despising and humiliating Palestinians they routinely violate the human rights of Palestinians. Their aggression and fury are nourished by their ideological background as examined in this study.

Based on these findings, it is possible to claim that the Israeli officials, religious leaders and the settlers themselves are having strong motivations for the settlements. For that reason, Israeli governments ignore human rights violations committed by settlers and continue to extend settlements day by day. From time to time, Israeli officials disclose their intention to increase the settler population and

to grab as many lands as possible as stated in the study. Israeli governments support the settlements financially as well. The fearless extension of settlements throughout the peace process from 1991 Madrid up to the present despite the necessities of the peace process and international law is perceived by international society as a serious obstacle to the peace process. Israeli announcement about the construction of 3000 new settlements after Palestine's status in the UN was upgraded to the level of permanent observer in December 2012 and the recently elected Israeli government's inclusion of Uri Ariel -who is known for his pro-settlement policies and named as "bulldozer"- as the Minister of Housing and Construction are current examples about Israel's attitude on settlements and the peace process.

All in all, it is possible to conclude that, having strong ideological motivations for the settlements both at state and public levels, occupier Israel will probably continue to disobey international law, extend the settlements and destroy the chance to reach a compromise and make peace with the Palestinian Authority. That means the settlements are most likely to remain as an obstacle to the peace process.

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