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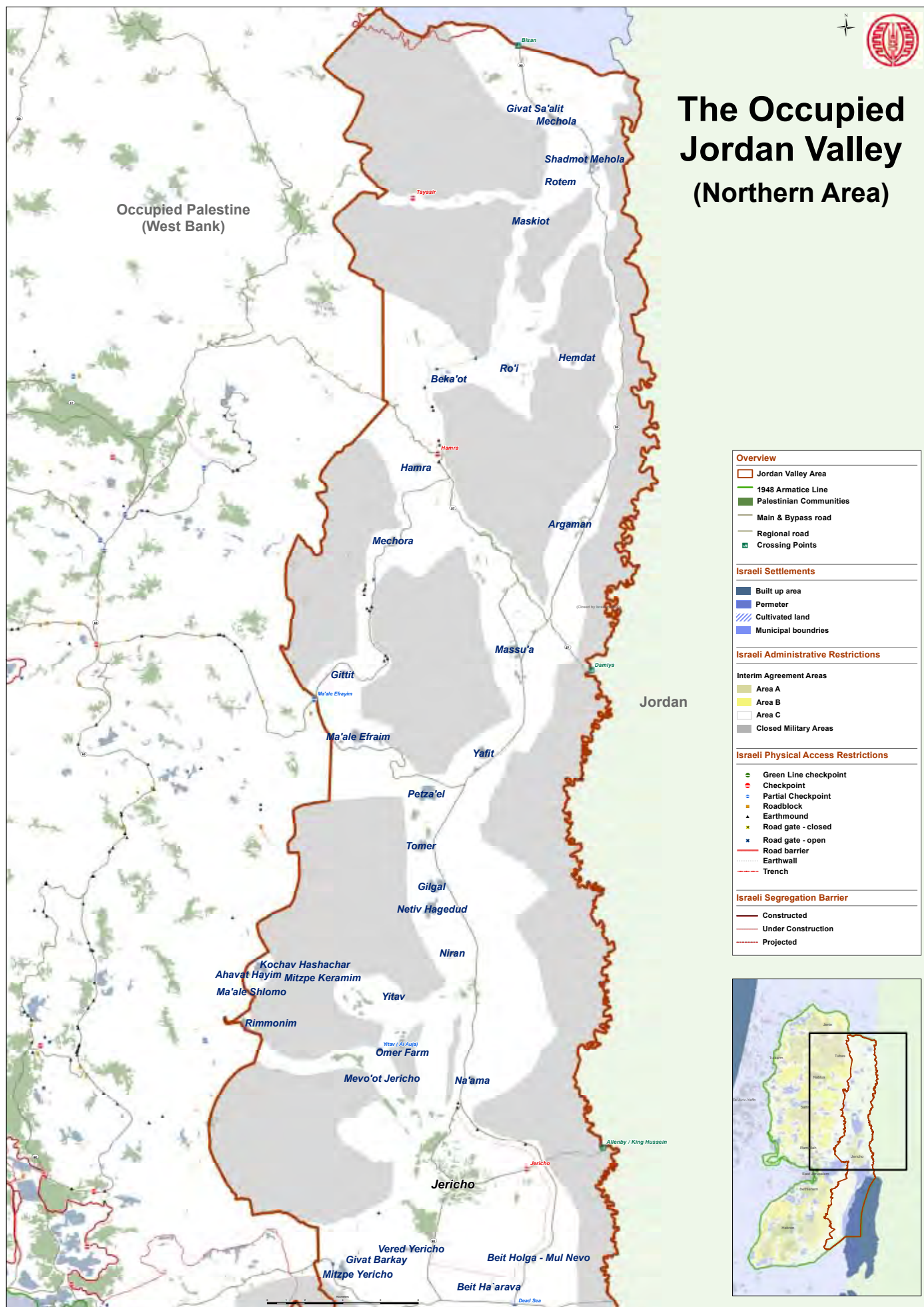


# Cultivating Dispossession:

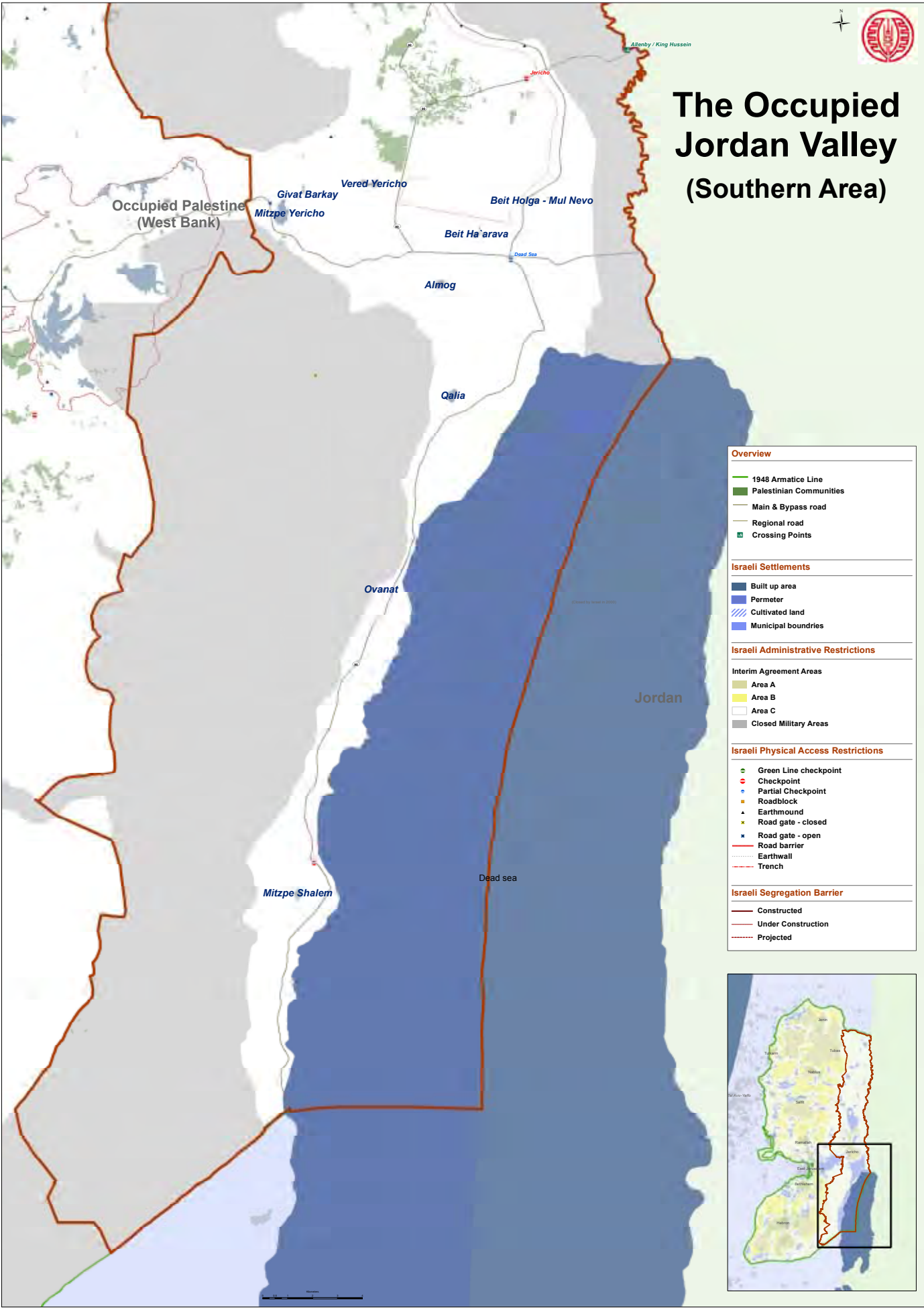
Israeli Settlements in the Jordan Valley



# The Occupied Jordan Valley (Northern Area)



# The Occupied Jordan Valley (Southern Area)



# INTRODUCTION

Israeli settlements have remained, in practical and symbolic terms, a defining feature of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank since their establishment in late 1967 and early 1968. Today, the widening scope of the settlement enterprise embodies the reality of Israeli expansionism and disregard for Palestinian sovereignty. Though discussed in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority as mere dots on a map, the settlements are a stark reminder of the gross discrimination and humiliation Palestinians must face on a daily basis.

Although there has never been an official governmental plan or policy encompassing all of the settlements, this does not in any way abrogate or exonerate the Israeli government's absolute responsibility for the settlement enterprise. Official and unofficial documents published by organizations such as B'tselem or by Israeli researchers such as Shir Hever have clearly proven each Israeli administration's tacit approval of settlement expansion. The issue of settlements has grown so prominent within political conversations surrounding the larger Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that openly discussing the removal of settlements—a move called for under international law—has become a form of political suicide for Israeli politicians. Yet, the fact still remains that maintaining settlements and settlers' luxurious lifestyles comes at the cost of the most basic human rights of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).

Currently, there are over 550,000 (approximately 352,000 in the West Bank and 198,000 in East Jerusalem) Jewish Israelis living in approximately 137 recognized settlements with another 5,000 living in Israeli settlements that are not officially recognized. The totality of these settlements are in direct control of over 42% of the land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Much of this land is located in the fertile Jordan Valley. This means that over 2.6 million Palestinians are required to live on 58% of West Bank land in isolated and disconnected villages and cities.

In the Jordan Valley, this situation is increasingly

desperate as the region's 58,000 Palestinian residents are forced to live on approximately 5% of the land, while 11,679 settlers have direct access to 50% of the land and have indirect access to another 39%. Currently, there are 31 settlements and 7 outposts in the Jordan Valley, which benefit from Israel's monopolization of resources in the area. All of the settlements in the Jordan Valley engage in agriculture or have land set aside for the future development of agriculture. The geographical location of settlements in the Jordan Valley has been determined by the important potential agricultural growth in the region. In addition, these agricultural settlements were established and maintained as export-oriented settlements. The produce grown is not meant to compete with Israeli farmers inside Israel proper but is meant to utilize the comparative advantage of the Jordan Valley for the benefit of settlers. As such, over 95% of agricultural goods grown in agricultural settlements in the Jordan Valley are sold to the European Union and to a lesser extent, to the United States.

The settlements in the Jordan Valley are unique in certain aspects. First, they are agriculturally-based and in most cases employ a plurality or even a majority of the settlers. However, most of the settlers in the West Bank are commuters and very few actually work in their own settlement. Second, the settlements in the Jordan Valley have the highest per capita water usage of any of the Israeli settlements in the oPt. Third, these settlements, geographically speaking, are the furthest away from the Green Line. Fourth, the number of settlers per settlement is the lowest in the oPt. Fifth, the majority of these settlements were established as Nahal military camps (described below) built by the Labor party, and are still politically associated with the Labor party. Sixth, the Jordan Valley settlements have the highest per capita land access and usage rate of settlements. Seventh, these settlements rely heavily on Palestinian labor for agriculture, in addition to construction in and around the settlement. Lastly, although they are dependent on subsidies for their existence, the settlements actually produce economic output,

specifically agricultural produce and agriculture-related products.

The settlements designated as part of the Jordan Valley fall under the jurisdiction of three regional councils and two local councils. The regional councils are Jordan Valley, Megilot, and Mateh Bin-yamin, and the local councils are Ma'ale Ephraim and Ma'ale Adumim. These regional councils are the acting governmental body for Israeli settlers. They are in charge of the distribution of incentives, benefits, and services for those living in the Jordan Valley. They work closely with settlers to maximize the amount of resources and land used by settlers, to the detriment of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley in particular and in the oPt as a whole. The regional councils also serve as a lobbying body with influence in the Israeli Knesset to push forward initiatives that benefit settlers. In a number of cases, specific settlements or outposts have been built with the active support and funding from the various councils, thus confirming their complicity in violating international law.

This factsheet documents the 31 settlements and 7 outposts in the Jordan Valley. For each settlement, there is a brief history as to how and why the settlement was established in the location it is in. Second, bullet point information is provided regarding demographics, land access, and economics of the settlement. Third, a number of photos are provided for each settlement in order to help the reader grasp the enormity of the investment put into these settlements. A number of sources were used to compile information for this factsheet, including primary research conducted by MA'AN. We must especially thank B'tselem and Peace Now for supplying certain vital information used in these profiles, including all numbers regarding water and build up area dunums respectively.

## List of Terms

**Allon Plan** – Plan devised by the then Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon who envisioned Israel's annexation of the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea area in addition to a corridor from Jerusalem to the Jordan River.

**Amana** – Organization that took over formalized settlement activities after the integration of Gush Emunim into the Begin government.

**Beitar youth movement** – Right wing youth movement associated originally with the Herut political party run by Menachem Begin and later by Likud.

**Gush Emunim** – Meaning "Bloc of the Faithful," this was a religious Zionist organization intent on establishing settlements in the West Bank, especially in places they felt held significance to the Jewish faith. Construction of most of their settlements began after 1977 with the electoral victory of Menachem Begin, who sympathized with the organization.

**Kibbutzim** – Collective settlements where the wealth of the community is distributed equally among all of its members.

**Moshavim** – Settlements where certain agreed-upon features are communal whereas others, such as farms, are privately owned with any profit going to the owner of the farm.

**Nahal** – A division of the Israeli military typically originating from Labor party strongholds such as Kibbutzim and Moshavim. This division is responsible for the creation of an overwhelming majority of the settlements in the Jordan Valley and was also in charge of ultimately civilianizing them.

**Outpost** – An Israeli settlement that has not been officially authorized by the State of Israel although they receive most, if not all, services from the state, including construction.

**Petza'el (Fasayil) Valley** – Term used by the State of Israel to refer to the land north of al-Auja but south of Jiftlik.

**United Kibbutz Movement** – Main organization in charge of all the kibbutzim in Israel and the oPt, closely associated with the Labor party.

**World Zionist Organization (WZO)** – A quasi-governmental organization that is in charge of land distribution in the oPt and that plays a role in the distribution of incentives to settlers.

**Yeshiva** -- Religious secondary school for ages 14 and over that focuses on the study of traditional religious texts.



# ALMOG

**A**lmog, located five kilometers south of Jericho, was originally established as a Nahal military camp by the United Kibbutz Movement in 1977. As part of the Allon Plan, the site of Almog was chosen to serve as a boundary to Palestinian expansion out of Jericho. The Israeli government also chose the location for its fertile land and underground water resources, which are exploited for the benefit of settlement agriculture. Originally, the Israeli government and the World Zionist Organization recruited a number of experts to determine what crops to plant, how and where to cultivate them, and how to most efficiently exploit the settlement's water resources.

By the mid-1990s, the settlement's economy shifted toward tourism, given its proximity to the

Dead Sea and a number of religious sites. Guest houses, a gas station, and a strip mall for tourists were developed as a convenient pit-stop on the way from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. The settlement is now focusing its economy on intensive date farming and the further expansion of the tourist industry.

Currently, Almog is advertising new houses that were built in the past two years in order to expand the settlement and recruit young couples.

- **Type of Settlement:** Kibbutz
- **Population:** 210
- **Number of Families:** 60
- **Dunums:** 1,300+ for agriculture, 375 for housing
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters):** 515
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 39,283
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** dates, watermelons, and onions
- **Other industries/services:** Qalia beach resort (shared with BeitHaArava and Qalia), Almog gas station, restaurant, strip mall for tourists, dairy production, cow breeding farm, guest houses, and afterschool institutions



- **Type of settlement:** *Moshav*
- **Population:** 165
- **Number of Families:** >50
- **Dunums:** 1,645 for agriculture, 355 for housing
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters):** 413
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 19,594
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** *Dates, grapes, citrus, herbs, various vegetables, chickens, and turkeys*
- **Other industries/services:** *Goat cheese production, gas station, restaurant, and convenience store*



# ARGAMAN

Argaman was established on 20 November 1968 as a Nahal military camp. Its construction was justified as a military necessity; its location was chosen in order to monitor the Palestinian villages of the area and to secure the roadways for exclusive settler and Israeli benefit. The settlement was built on land that had been owned by Palestinians from Jiftlik, Zbeidat, Marj Na'aje, and Marj Ghazal. In addition, many of Argaman's farmlands are located on the ethnically cleansed village of Al-Suqoor, which was destroyed during the June 1967 war. The name Argaman was selected to commemorate two Israeli soldiers who died in the area.

Argaman was originally meant to be one settlement within a larger settlement grid, used to control and monopolize the natural resources of the area. However, due to challenges in expanding this settlement grid beyond Argaman and recruiting new settlers, Argaman simply expanded into a larger settlement.

The Herut Beiter youth movement was given responsibility for managing the settlement and Argaman became the home of its main office for settlement activities. The settlement became completely civilianized as a cooperative agricultural settlement on 18 May 1971. Over the years, the Beiter movement lost influence and Argaman became a workers' settlement.

Recent years have seen an increase in younger couples who grew up in the settlement, attended university elsewhere, and are now repopulating the settlement. Some of them work in the settlement's agricultural fields, while others work in surrounding settlements. The settlement is looking to cultivate new plots of land to attract new families.





# BEIT HAARAVA

The settlement of Beit HaArava was established in 1980 as a Nahal military camp. The site was chosen because its founders believed a Zionist youth establishment had existed at the same location before the creation of the State of Israel. The military camp was civilianized in 1986 and Israelis from larger cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa were its first settlers.

Beit HaArava's settlers base their livelihoods in a number of sectors, and generally share the settlement's profit amongst themselves. Like other kibbutz settlements in the area, the settlers split profits made from agriculture, the Qalia beach resort, and the Lido gas station juncture. Beit HaArava also maintains a water treatment plant that does quality tests for grey

water and other recycled water for the agricultural irrigation needs of other settlements in the region.

The settlement's new neighborhood is home to half of the settlement's residents, and there are plans to bring in more new families.

- **Type of Settlement:** Kibbutz
- **Population:** 108
- **Number of Families:** 40
- **Dunums:** 1,100+ for agriculture, 537 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 389
- **Per capita daily agricultural-water usage (liters):** 16,963
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates, mangos, lemons, peppers, cherry tomatoes, watermelons, and other vegetables (all organic)
- **Other industries:** Packaging house which services Beit HaArava, Qalia, and Almog, Qalia beach resort which is shared with Qalia and Almog, gas station, water treatment plant, and restaurant



- **Type of Settlement:** *Moshav*
- **Population:** *207*
- **Number of Families:** *63*
- **Dunums:** *2,161 for agriculture, 300 for housing*
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters):** *439*
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** *22,443*
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** *Dates, grapes, peppers, flowers, and herbs*
- **Other industries/services:** *Packaging houses for fruits and vegetables, youth club, nursery, highly developed parks and play areas, car garage, large swimming pool used by neighboring settlements and military bases, and social club*



## BEKA'OT

The settlement of Beka'ot was established on 28 June 1972 and is located between the settlements of Argaman and Elon Moreh. Beka'ot is affiliated with the Agriculture Union Movement. The settlement was named Boka'a, or "valley," because it is situated between the Talmon and Adir mountains. Beka'ot's location was largely chosen in order to better control land and water resources in the area.

In 1975, the settlement started intensive agriculture as a primary means of economic development. During this time, Beka'ot cultivated 300 dunums of grape vineyards, 800 dunums of dates, and 80 dunums of peppers, which it shares with the settlement of Ro'i. Additionally, Beka'ot and Argaman confiscated more Palestinian land to create joint farmlands, which they planted with date trees and grape vineyards. This expansion allowed Beka'ot to build a large packaging house for the benefit of a number of settlements in the area.

Around half of the settlers in Beka'ot are involved in agriculture, mainly grape vineyards, and the other half are independent workers or employed by the Beka'ot municipality in the education sector.

More recently, Beka'ot has seen an influx of settlers, many of whom had previously left the settlement but are now returning.





# GILGAL

The settlement of Gilgal was established as a Nahal military camp on 15 November 1969. The creation of Gilgal was premised on the need to resist Jordanian military advancement in the West Bank. In this early period, Gilgal was the first settlement in the Fasayil valley region; tents were set up to counter Jordanian artillery fire and this in fact represented the first step in establishing permanent infrastructure for a future settlement.

In early 1970, the Israeli Ministry for Housing and Construction began housing construction and Gilgal's original settlers laid down the settlement's first water pipes. These settlers were part of the United Kibbutz Movement, and Gilgal was therefore quickly converted from a military camp to a kibbutz. The name Gilgal means "wheel" and symbolizes forward movement. By May 1973, the settlement was fully established under a mandate of "reinvigorating the land."

- **Type of Settlement:** Kibbutz
- **Population:** 165
- **Number of Families:** 46
- **Dunums:** 5,500 for agriculture and 629 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 387
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 32,891
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates, grapes, pomegranates, horses, poultry, and grass

- **Other industries:** Garage, air conditioning factory, packaging house, garden house, dairy production, 'green-industry' production, fertilizer manufacturer, poultry harvesting, lamp factory, printing houses, photography studio, carpentry shop, frame manufacturer, electricians, beauty parlor, center for alternative therapy, tourist infrastructure, restaurants, guest houses, and extracurricular education services

Initially, the settlement was allocated 160 dunums, largely for agricultural production. This number has increased to over 5,000 dunums. In fact, during the transition from military camp to kibbutz, Gilgal's soldiers would help settlers cultivate the land.

Gilgal continues to play a central role in providing services to other settlements, including education and infrastructure facilities.



- **Type of Settlement:** *Cooperative village*
- **Population:** *330*
- **Number of Families:** *59*
- **Dunums:** *1,750 for agriculture, 885 for housing*
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** *339*
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** *10,067*
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** *Dates and grapes*
- **Other industries/services:** *Turkey house and social club*



## GITTIT

Gittit was established as a Nahal military camp (then called Mahaneh Asaf) in 1972 by the right-wing settler Rahavam Ze'evi, who later became a politician who called for the colonization of the Jordan Valley. The name, Gittit, was chosen as a biblical reference. In mid-1973, Nahal soldiers went to the area supplied with tools, machinery, trucks, and other materials, to civilianize the military camp. Gittit quickly transitioned from tents to permanent housing and was restructured as a kibbutz. However, today this kibbutz community structure is no longer relevant because of the influence of the Beiter Movement.

Initially, Gittit's settlers faced a number of challenges to economic development, including a lack of water resources and agricultural land. By December 1975, Gittit had expropriated land for expansion along with water resources. Three years later, in 1978, the settlement officially created an agricultural economy, focusing on the cultivation of dates, grapes, and greenhouse agriculture.

The settlement has seen notable population growth in recent years, mostly from religious families supported by the Amana movement. Today, both religious and secular settlers live in Gittit.





# GIVAT SAALIT

In January 1998, on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the settlement of Mehola, the Israeli military announced the creation of a new settlement. However, no steps were taken to formalize these plans and recruit settlers until 2002 when the murder of an Israeli soldier, also the daughter of a prominent settler in Mehola, prompted Mehola youth to build on a hill that would become the Givat Saalit settlement. Givat Saalit, or Hill of Saalit, was named after the murdered soldier.

Within two months the head of the Regional Council, Daniel Levy, supplied the youth with caravans, electricity, water infrastructure, and security personnel. The land marked for the settlement was put under the legal jurisdiction of the Mehola municipality.

- **Type of settlement:** Religious community
- **Population:** 61
- **Number of Families:** 11
- **Dunums:** 7,500 potential for agriculture but military orders restrict usage of 7,000 of these dunums; 40 dunums for housing
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters):** 394
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 0
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Carrots, cucumbers, and melons (all in Mehola)
- **Other industries/services:** Small petting zoo

As of early 2012, Givat Saalit has been recognized by the State of Israel as a legal settlement, officially justifying the services that it had in fact been receiving since its establishment. Due to its small size and hilltop location, the settlement can absorb at most an additional 90 families with permanent housing.



- **Type of Settlement:** *Moshav*
- **Population:** *157*
- **Number of Families:** *41*
- **Dunums:** *3,000 for agriculture, 912 for housing*
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** *596*
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** *38,800*
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** *Herbs, bananas, flowers, vegetables, fruits, olives, pepper, cherries, tomatoes, spices, grapes, citrus, cherry tomatoes, amaryllis bulbs, and dates*
- **Other industries/services:** *Garage, pre-military preparatory academy, turkey barn and slaughterhouse, and tourism*



# HAMRA

The settlement of Hamra was first established as a Nahal military camp in 1968. Its first 35 settlers later civilianized the camp in 4 May 1971 and named it A'atara. The name quickly changed to Hamra due to its proximity to Tel Hamra, a nearby mountain, and the name of the Palestinian village near the settlement. After agricultural training, Hamra's settlers began cultivating land expropriated for the settlement, with an initial 1,300 dunums for vegetables and another 250 dunums for orchards, vineyards, and olive groves.

The location of this settlement was strategically chosen to easily connect existing settlements in the region, which consequently separated Palestinian areas such as Nablus and the Jordan Valley. Hamra continues to exist as an agricultural settlement but also relies on small industrial enterprises, originally established to diversify the settlement's economy and ensure it was not completely reliant on only one sector.

Hamra has also diversified its agricultural base. In the 1980s, Hamra developed into a flower-growing exporter for roses, Gypsophila, and artificial wax flowers. At the end of the 1980s, Hamra suffered economically and closed many of its fields. Following this instability, the settlement began emphasizing the cultivation of cherry tomatoes and herbs for medicines and teas.

In recent years, 15 families that previously lived in Hamra have returned to the settlement.





# HEMDAT

**H**emdat is a settlement in the northern Jordan Valley that was established as part of the religious, right-wing Amana organization. Amana is an arm of the Gush Emunim movement, a messianic settler movement that believes in divine inheritance of occupied Palestinian land.

This settlement was established by soldiers in a neighboring military camp, and after it was civilianized in January 1987, the settlement was declared a kibbutz with the name of Agnon. When then-Israeli Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin visited the area a couple of years later, the settlement's name was changed to Hemdat. To this day, the overwhelming majority of the settlers in Hemdat are Orthodox and observant.

- **Type of Settlement:** Religious Moshav
- **Population:** 161
- **Number of Families:** 33
- **Dunums:** 2,000 for agriculture, 246 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 172
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 982
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates and flowers
- **Other industries/services:** None



- **Type of Settlement:** Religious (Modern Orthodox)
- **Population:** 1,803
- **Number of Families:** 350
- **Dunums:** >400 for agriculture, 2,545 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** Information not available
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 221
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Grapes, nectarines, olives, pomegranates, dates
- **Other industries/services:** Ahavat Hayyim yeshiva high school, turkey farm, carpentry shop, telephone manufacturing company, and educational services



## KOCHAV HASHAHAR

The settlement of Kochav Hashahar is located about 18 kilometers northeast of Ramallah, on the western edge of the Jordan Valley. Before there was a civilian settlement, the site was used as an Israeli military base on the Allon Road between the Binyamin region and the Jordan Valley. At first, Kochav Hashahar was slated to become another agricultural settlement, but due to the religious background of the settlers, agriculture became a secondary focus to religion.

The original settlers of Kochav Hashahar carried out massive cultivation for the growing of olive trees, nectarines, and grapes (used for wine). Although a large portion of the settlers were employed in agriculture from the settlement's founding until 2003, in the last decade the overwhelming majority of Kochav Hashahar settlers have pursued work outside the settlement, mostly in Jerusalem. There has been a constant influx of new settlers to the settlement, and each generation is more religiously observant than the last. The youth of Kochav Hashahar are responsible for the establishment of the outposts of Ma'ale Shlomo, Mitzpe Keramim, and Ahavat Hayyim.





## THE OUTPOSTS OF KOCHAV HASHAHAR

### AHAVAT HAYYIM

Ahavat Hayyim is an outpost located at the entrance of the settlement of Kochav Hashahar. The outpost also maintains a yeshiva high school by the same name. The two school buildings are permanent structures made out of cement while the rest of the outpost consists of caravans. The high school was built first and the outpost then filed applications to add caravans for the teachers and students.

The outpost has grown continuously ever since and there are currently 10 families living in the outpost.

- *Type of Settlement: Religious*
- *Population: > 160*
- *Number of Families: 45*
- *Dunums: 0 for agriculture (all is owned by Kochav Hashahar), 126 for housing*
- *Agricultural crops harvested: None*
- *Other industries/services: Ahavat Hayyim yeshiva high school*

### MITZPE KERAMIM

In mid-2001, settlers from Kochav Hashahar and other parts of the West Bank decided to establish an outpost less than one kilometer east of Kochav Hashahar. Initially, the outpost held only caravan-style housing units; however, a few permanent structures were built in the years after.

Currently, there are over 80 people living in





Mitzpe Keramim. Kochav Hashahar will be connected to Mitzpe Keramim through pending plans to expand its population and create more housing units. Settlers of Mitzpe Keramim receive all of their services from Kochav Hashahar, including water, electricity, and communications.

The only road to Mitzpe Keramim is through Kochav Hashahar.

## MA'ALE SHLOMO

Settlers from Kochav Hashahar, wanting to occupy a nearby hilltop, established an outpost overlooking the junction between the Allon Road and Route 449. By the beginning of 1999, settlers had established a few caravans that quickly developed into approximately 20 caravans for over 60 settlers.

Plans to connect Ma'ale Shlomo with Kochav Hashahar have faced difficulties because the one square kilometer piece of land between the two settlements is privately owned by a Palestinian in a neighboring village. Despite this, 85% of Kochav Hashahar's outposts and 93% of the settlement itself were built on private Palestinian land.



# MA'ALE EPHRAIM

**M**a'ale Ephraim was established by the Israeli Ministry of Housing in July 1978 as a civilian settlement of 10 families in the center of the Jordan Valley. Ma'ale Ephraim connects Jordan Valley settlements with settlements between Nablus and Ramallah. Soon after its original 10 families moved in, 50 more families followed.

The settlement was established as a local council and center for Jordan Valley settlements and not as an agricultural settlement. In 1980, the Ma'ale Ephraim industrial park was built to supply the settlers with jobs and create products to be used by other Jordan Valley settlements and to be exported abroad. By the year 2000, all of Ma'ale Ephraim's land was developed, although there are plans to expropriate more land for expansion in the west and south.

- **Type of Settlement:** Local council – urban community
- **Population:** 1,591
- **Number of Families:** 400
- **Dunums:** 0 for agriculture, 1,880 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 474
- **Per capita daily industrial water usage (liters):** 168
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 0
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** None
- **Other industries/services:** Ma'ale Ephraim industrial park, Hesder secondary school (the secondary school for Jordan Valley settler students ages 10-18), Coca Cola label maker, bakery, gas station, biodiesel/solar factory, taxidermy factory, and shopping center



- **Type of settlement:** Religious community
- **Population:** 86
- **Number of Families:** 16
- **Dunums:** 400 for agricultural use and 39 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 228
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 2,900
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Olives and dates
- **Other industries/services:** Goat cheese, sheep, and horse farm



# MASKIOT

**M**askiot was established as a Nahal military camp on 23 July 1986 and stands between the settlements of Ro'i and Rotem. The camp was civilianized by settlers from the Amana settler movement. The name, Maskiot, was derived from a biblical proverb.

Although it is a civilian settlement, Nahal soldiers stayed in the settlement until the year 2000. Consequently, students from a yeshiva of the B'nei Akiva movement in Shadmot Mehola moved to Maskiot to ensure that the homes of the soldiers were maintained. In this time, students attempted to recruit new families to the settlement and facilitated the creation of a pre-military college in the settlement. In 2003, the first students attended the college.

In September 2005, many of the settlers that had been removed from Gaza under the command of Ariel Sharon were relocated to Maskiot. In 2008, Maskiot received formal government permission to absorb these settlers and they moved into ten permanent housing units constructed specifically for them. Currently, Maskiot is building public infrastructure such as a synagogue, a religious bath (mikveh), and a kindergarten.

The settlers have maintained Maskiot as a religious settlement with a more diverse economy than other settlements in the Jordan Valley. Its settlers are employed in education, agriculture, arts, and other professional fields. Since the transfer of settlers from Gaza, violence against Palestinians in the area, specifically in the village of Ein al-Hilwe, has increased dramatically. In the past few years, Maskiot settlers have confiscated 200 dunums from Ein al-Hilwe and have since threatened to confiscate the village's water spring.





# MASSU'A

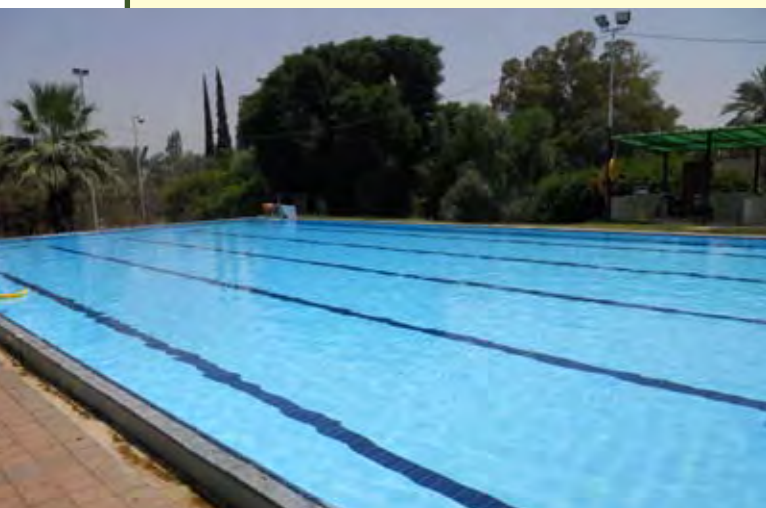
The settlement of Massu'a began as a Nahal military camp and was eventually given to the B'nei Akiva movement in April 1969 to become a civilian settlement. Massu'a is located on the western side of the Palestinian village of Jiftlik. The civilian settlement was originally named Nahal Para'ah but was later changed to Massu'a, a name that symbolizes the tradition of lighting torches wherever a new settlement is built.

Massu'a was established between the settlements of Gilgal and Argamon in order to create a new, connected line of settlements south of the Pera'a valley. Its position has also allowed it to access and control Palestinian land and water resources, and directly cuts through the road between the Jordan Valley and Nablus. Upon its establishment, 500 dunums of land were immediately transferred to the settlement to grow

vegetables and to encourage settlers to remain there. Today, almost half of Massu'a's current settlers are second generation sons and daughters of the founders of the settlement.

Massu'a centers itself in the agriculture sector. Initially, its settlers cultivated eggplants, peppers, zucchinis, and cucumbers, and gradually shifted towards watermelons, dates, and melons. Massu'a settlers are also in charge of the national parks in the area, which cover large swaths of land.

- **Type of settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 189
- **Number of Families:** 55
- **Dunums:** 1,800 for agricultural and 350 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 429
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 26,409
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Eggplant, pepper, zucchini, cucumbers, watermelons, melons, and dates
- **Other industries/services:** Tourism, nursery, and cultural center



- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 154
- **Number of Families:** 59
- **Dunums:** > 4,500 for agriculture, 1,027 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 384
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 19,926
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates, vegetables, wood, and olives
- **Other industries/services:** None



# MECHORA

The settlement of Mechora was established as a Nahal military camp on the destroyed Palestinian village of Um Korika in December 1972. The name of the settlement is an adaptation of the original Palestinian village on which it is built. The settlement was established to more effectively control the Palestinian communities of the area and their land, and was the last in a chain of settlements that run along the Alon Road in the Jordan Valley.

The land that Mechora occupies today was initially given to the Jewish National Fund (JNF) by the State of Israel for the creation of the settlement. The JNF carried out trainings for agriculture and intensely ploughed the land for cultivation. At first, the Israeli government confiscated 1,000 dunums from local Palestinian villages for the establishment of Mechora. Later, another 2,500 dunums were confiscated and cleared. Today, the settlement maintains an agriculture-based economy.

In July 1976, 20 families moved into Mechora and started farming the land. The profits from the settlement's 400 dunums of date trees are shared among its residents. More recently, another 26 new families have moved into the settlement..





# MEHOLA

The settlement of Mehola was established as a Nahal military camp after Israel's occupation of the West Bank in June 1967. The camp was later civilianized on 6 February 1968. On 11 November 1969, an official ceremony made Mehola the first civilian settlement in the Jordan Valley. The name Mehola was chosen due to its biblical importance and is believed to be the location of one of the local councils of the Second Temple.

Mehola's first settlers were part of the Mizrahi Worker's Movement, made up of mainly young people who just ended their military service.

The settlement controls a land area originally called Tel Helo, which was part of the Palestinian village of Ein al-Beida. Settlers confiscated 500 dunums from Ein al-Beida to create Mehola, which is located in close proximity to an aquifer. The settlement expanded onto 5,000 dunums of

- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 454
- **Number of Families:** >95
- **Dunums:** 4,000+ for agriculture, 800 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 394
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 8,966
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Carrots, cucumbers, green herbs, grapes, orchards, lemons, dates, and melons

- **Other industries:** Garage and industrial plant, carpentry shop, outpost caravan manufacturing factory, framing shop, printing office, chicken coop and factory, cow breeder and milk factory, milk powder factory, kindergartens, and day care center

land in the early 1970s. This land was cultivated to produce mass amounts of vegetables and other crops. Today, Mehola has strong economic ties to the region of Beit She'an.

After the construction of Shadmot Mehola in 1978, approximately 1,500 dunums were transferred from Mehola to Shadmot Mehola.

Recently, 20 new families have moved into Mehola, with new housing settlements constructed on the western portion of the settlement.



- **Type of Settlement:** Kibbutz
- **Population:** 204
- **Number of Families:** 80
- **Dunums:** 1,100+ for agriculture, 271 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 423
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 39,821
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates and herbs
- **Other industries/services:** Mineral Dead Sea beach resort (which brings in 250,000+ tourists/year), AHAVA cosmetic company, turkey breeding, dairy farms, and guest houses for international and Israeli tourists



## MITZPE SHALEM

Mitzpe Shalem, the southernmost settlement on the Dead Sea, was established as a Nahal military camp in 1971. In 1977, Mitzpe Shalem's first settlers were sent by the Israeli government to civilianize the camp.

The settlement maintains an agricultural economy and has access to fertile land and underground water resources. It cultivates produce ranging from grapes to various vegetables for international export; due to recent spikes in world food prices however, it now grows dates almost exclusively.

Mitzpe Shalem also developed its tourist industry in the early 1990s, which includes the Mineral Dead Sea beach resort boasting upwards of 30 guest houses.

In recent years, the settlement has seen a small level of growth, with seven new houses established in a newly rehabilitated section of the settlement.





# MITZPE YERICHO

and the Outpost of Givat Barkay

Unlike most settlements in the Jordan Valley, Mitzpe Yericho was established as a civilian settlement. The first settlers were a mix of religious and secular Israelis who created Mitzpe Yericho on land that they believed was the location of a settlement from the late 19th century.

After a couple years of tension between the settlers regarding the vision and purpose of the settlement, secular settlers left and built a new settlement called Vered Yericho, approximately seven kilometers to the east. After this division, Mitzpe Yericho openly embraced a religious identity, and attracted many young and religious couples through massive investment in religious institutions and education. This includes primary schooling until the 8th grade. The school of Mitzpe Yericho has become a popular religious school in the past 15 years.

- **Type of settlement:** Religious
- **Population:** 1,975 (150 of which live in Givat Barkay)
- **Number of Families:** 401 (29 of which live in Givat Barkay)
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters):** Information unavailable
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** Information unavailable
- **Dunums:** 0 for agriculture, 768 presently being used for housing, 2,000+ set aside for future housing and 1,000s that are unusable for agriculture or housing
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** None
- **Other industries:** Humidifier manufacturer, caravan manufacturer, cultural and social buildings for settlements in the area, Wadi Qelt and the St. George monastery





Today, Mitzpe Yericho is the largest settlement in the Jordan Valley in terms of population. There are plans to triple the size of Mitzpe Yericho from 2,000 to over 6,000 settlers on the land between the main section of the settlement all the way to Givat Barkay. In addition, there are potential plans to connect Ma'ale Adumim and Mitzpe Yericho through massive emigration and investment.

## GIVAT BARKAY

In an attempt to attract more young couples in the mid-1990s, settlers of Mitzpe Yericho set up a number of caravans on the north-easternmost point of the settlement's municipal borders. Two separate caravan circles were established in order to offer cheap and temporary housing in the hope that these couples would decide to build houses in Mitzpe Yericho. Over time, better services and living conditions allowed these sites to become full-fledged outposts.

There are currently 29 families living in these caravans, which are connected to water, electricity, and communication networks from Mitzpe Yericho. In addition, the only way in or out of the outpost is through a back route in Mitzpe Yericho. The 30 or so caravans of Givat Barkay are part of an overall trend of caravan settling in the area, as there are an additional 70 caravans at in the area. These caravans are extremely cheap, an enticing factor for young couples.



# Na'AMA

Na'ama is a settlement five kilometers north-east of the city of Jericho. In its early stages of development, Na'ama was a codename for the moshavim movement, used to hide the early planning of the settlement enterprise in the area. A government naming body decided on "Na'ama" because it is the Hebrew version of the Arabic name of the area, Na'ameh. It also serves as an acronym for "Hebrew Youth Settling the Valley."

Na'ama started as a makeshift military camp and by December 1981, 15 settlers civilianized the location. These settlers were trained for settlement-building in Tomer and decided on the Na'ama's location many months in advance. In February 1982, the settlers established a proper water network connected to the Israeli water carrier, Mekerot. The Government of Israel stipulated that settlers were not to expand too far eastward

- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 136
- **Number of Families:** 38
- **Dunums:** >4,000 for agriculture, 657 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 519
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 24,854
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Vegetables, 20 types of herbs, grapes, rosemary, and dates
- **Other industries/services:** Social club, gym, and youth club

into the Jordan Valley buffer zone, although they were permitted to expand north or south of the settlement.

Na'ama's connection to a water network allowed for massive cultivation to take place and since its establishment, it has since become a large-scale agricultural settlement. After 30 years of settlement, 38 families now live in Na'ama and work in agriculture. They are considered experts in the growing of herbs, which they export internationally. Its 800 dunums of date plantations are shared among the settlers.

Many new families have moved into the settlement in recent years, with 16 new housing units built to accommodate the growth.



- **Type of Settlement:** *Moshav*
- **Population:** 179
- **Number of Families:** 61
- **Dunums:** > 4,500 for agriculture, 1,027 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 295
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 28,962
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** *Organic Majdul dates*
- **Other industries/services:** *Accounting, education, tour guides, framing shop, electricians, tourism, nanny services, lifeguards, nut manufacturing company, packaging house, nursery, gym, and play garden*



## NETIV HAgedud

Netiv HaGedud was created as a civilian settlement by the Jewish Agency's settlement department in April 1975. Its settlers were trained in agriculture in Ma'ale Ephraim from April 1975 to November 1976. The original group of settlers surveyed, demarcated, and cultivated the land that became Netiv HaGedud. The settlement was named in remembrance of the Jewish battalion that fought the British colonial army during WWII.

The settlers in Netiv HaGedud now make a living through agriculture, private business initiatives, and as professionals in other sectors. The settlement has grown in the last few years, mostly with new youth members.





# NIRAN

The kibbutz of Niran was established in 1975 as a Nahal military camp and was named after the Palestinian village that existed in the area prior to 1967. In 1977, the camp was civilianized into a kibbutz. The original settlers were trained in Qalia settlement on the Dead Sea until it was possible to inhabit Niran. Its location was considered to be an important link in a string of agricultural settlements in the area. The government naming committee used the name Niran because of its symbolic meaning for agriculture, and its affinity to the settlement Na'aran that was previously located in the area.

For many years, Niran was the leading settlement in the Jordan Valley in terms of agricultural output. Social crises in the 1990s caused a schism in the kibbutz and it was eventually abandoned. In 1999 new settlers, dedicated to farming, moved

in and reestablished the settlement. The new settlers were connected to the immigrant movement and a variety of youth movements whose members chose to live in a cooperative system after their army service. The movement is known by the name, "The Elite Groups of the Aliyah Camps," and its mission is to foster cooperative life in a flexible framework that is suitable to the needs of the individual.

The settlement has seen recent growth in the last years with the arrival of new families. In cooperation with the Jordan Valley Regional Council and youth clubs, Niran is a common place for youth meetings in the Jordan Valley.

- **Type of Settlement:** Kibbutz
- **Population:** 76
- **Number of Families:** 58
- **Dunums:** 4,500 for agriculture, 393 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 395
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 65,842
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates
- **Other industries/services:** Hostel, hotel, social education institutions, packaging house, rehabilitation center, and offices of Jewish identity organizations



- **Type of settlement:** Religious community
- **Population:** 80
- **Number of Families:** 22
- **Dunums:** 0 currently being used for agricultural usage, about 300 dunums of date trees potentially developed in the future, 76 currently being used for housing, about 200 more dunums potentially available for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 273
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 0
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates (owned by an Israeli not living in Ovanat)
- **Other industries/services:** Yiftah special needs school (currently employs half of the residents of Ovanat)



## OVANAT

The establishment of Ovanat was part of broader plans for the establishment of Nahal military camps across the Jordan Valley. In the mid-1980s, the civilianization process began under the auspices of then-Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The establishment was originally called Kidron after the name of a river near the site. The settlement was slow to develop due to a lack of residents. In fact, the site was basically abandoned by the late 1990s, with no permanent residents. The Ovanat college building was the last remnant of the community at the time.

In 2003, a land developer sought to convert the building into a special needs school. Plans were developed and certified by the Megilot Regional Council and teams settled in the area in order to accelerate renovation of the building.

Following the completion of the project in 2004, families started to move into the community to minimize the need to have their children travel long distances to the school. From 2004 until mid-2011, the only residential dwellings allowed were caravan housing. The Israeli Ministry of Defense then signed off on the construction of 20 permanent houses, with roads, for the settlement of Ovanat. Originally, 60 houses were planned for, but the ministry ultimately agreed to carry out only half.

Ovanat's settlers have developed a number of plans for further expanding the area, including cultivating 300 dunums of date trees, constructing a gas station, and possibly building guest houses for tourists.





# PETZA'EL

**P**etza'el, originally named Ma'ale Ephraim, was established as a Nahal military camp. After 7 December 1970, it was civilianized into an agricultural settlement with an initial 25 settlers previously trained in agriculture in the settlement of Gilgal. Permanent houses were built in close proximity to the agricultural fields for the settler farmers. These original settlers were from various places in Israel but shared a common background in agriculture. They first cultivated 85 dunums of vegetables which quickly expanded to thousands. The site was chosen due to the fertility of the land, a number of water springs, and the *Mekorot* water facility in the area.

In 1975, the name was officially changed to Petza'el, which has a biblical connotation and is also the Hebrew version of the name of the

- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 273
- **Number of Families:** 79
- **Dunums:** 5,000 for agriculture, 1,196 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 429
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 28,657
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates, peppers, grapes, cherry tomatoes, eggplants, flowers, pumpkins, and string beans
- **Other industries/services:** Tourist site that dates back to the Bronze Age, packaging houses, youth clubs, and the Friends Meeting House

Palestinian village, Fasayil that was destroyed in the area in 1967.

Today, the settlement is known for having the highest quality dates, fruits, and vegetables, all of which are sold to the European Union. Petza'el controls 25% of the total settler date production in the Jordan Valley. In the past decade, over 30 new families have established homes in Petza'el, increasing the settlement's population by almost 50%.



- **Type of settlement:** Kibbutz
- **Population:** 363
- **Number of Families:** 100
- **Dunums:** 610 for housing, agriculture: Information unavailable
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters):** 967
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 25,301
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Turkeys, dates, herbs, vegetables, and cows
- **Other industries/services:** Dead Sea beach (revenue shared with Beit HaArava and Almog settlements), AHAVA cosmetics company, tourist restaurant, hotels, desert spa, educational facilities, Qumaran touristic site, holiday homes, laundry service, and dairy farm



## QALIA

As part of an attempt to connect settlements in the Jordan Valley from north to south, Qalia was established at the northern tip of the Dead Sea. Shortly after the 1967 war, a Nahal military base was created in the area and remained so until 15 May 1974, when it was officially converted to civilian use. Though the original military base was established on the waterfront, the civilianized settlement was established ] on a ridge overlooking the Dead Sea. The name Qalia is actually an acronym in Hebrew for "Waking up and Resurrection of the Life of the Dead Sea."

Due to its prime climate and arable land, settlers started intensive agriculture to utilize the comparative advantage of the area, which has fertile land year round. This allows the settlers to produce many fruits and vegetables desired by European markets many weeks before the same fruits are ripe in Europe.

In recent years, the settlement's population has greatly increased due to the influx of young couples. In fact, a new neighborhood was built in Qalia in order to house approximately two and a half dozen families who moved in during the past few years. As such, Qalia is the largest settlement in the Megilot Regional Council and houses the elementary school and kindergartens for the six settlements of the council, generating an additional source of income for the kibbutz. It is the most profitable and most successful settlement in the Megilot Regional Council and perhaps in the whole Jordan Valley.





# RIMMONIM

Rimmonim was established as a Nahal military camp in 1977 but was civilianized in 1980. There were three waves of migration to the settlement. The first group was comprised of about 30 families, the second group in the mid-1990s was 100 families, and the third group that arrived in the early 2000s consisted of 20 religious families.

The structure of the community has been a constant point of tension between the settlers of Rimmonim, all of whom come from unique backgrounds and who maintain different reasons for living in the settlement. The most recent source of tension has been the religious identity and influence of newer settlers. Various organizations invested in religious services in Rimmonim with the arrival of religious families in the early 2000s. These services included a male-female segregated swimming pool, a religious kindergarten, a Jewish ritual bath, and a brand new Jewish synagogue.



- **Type of Settlement:** Small town community
- **Population:** 626
- **Number of Families:** >200
- **Dunums:** 2,000 potentially for agriculture, 325 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 160
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 0
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Currently none
- **Other industries/services:** Religious swimming pool used by neighboring settlements, Christian monastery, popular observation point, carpenter shop, framing shop, food catering, and storage facilities

This has created divisions between religious and secular settlers.

Due to the ultimate inability of new settlers to change Rimmonim's status to a religious one, 20 religious families left in 2010, leaving empty houses and a lowered morale among the other settlers. The settlement and the Israeli government have developed plans to double the amount of families and create a tourist industry to attract Christian tourists on their way from Jerusalem to Nazareth. Additionally, approximately 2,000 dunums of potential agriculture land have been allocated to the settlement for future use.



- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 155
- **Number of Families:** 44
- **Dunums:** 3,500 for agriculture, >200 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 350
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 17,253
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Herbs, flowers, tomatoes, dates, and peppers
- **Other industries/services:** Aquarium, fish farm, and local park



## Ro'i

Ro'i was established as a Nahal military camp on 11 March 1976. This was the second settlement established on the eastern shoulder of the Jordan Valley, 2 kilometers north of Beka'ot. The military camp was civilianized rather quickly and became a workers' camp. The core group of original settlers consisted of 11 families and 15 children with plans to expand. After 30 years, Ro'i was home to 24 families including 50 children.

In the past, each family based their livelihood in agriculture, primarily the selling of vegetables and grapefruits in the local market and growing flowers for export. However, many families left due to economic difficulties. The settlers who remained in Ro'i turned to other businesses in order to sustain the settlement. They absorbed new families without any agricultural background.

Out of the current total population, over half are new settlers. Recently, seven new families have moved into the settlement.





# ROTEM

Rotem began as a Nahal military camp and once civilized, developed a mixed religious and secular makeup. The camp was settled on 25 July 1984 by two core groups of the scouts movement. The opening ceremony for the settlement was conducted on 12 November 1984 and was attended by the then-Minister of Defense, Yitzhak Rabin. Soldiers of the camp conducted agricultural work, specifically for wheat crops, but also performed military operations and functions. In 1999, the ultra-Orthodox division based itself in Rotem but eventually moved to Maskiot.

At the end of the year 2000, the Nahal military division moved Rotem's settlers out of the settlement, though MA'AN was unable to learn why these settlers were moved. In their place, an ecological community with a mixed religious and ethnic population was established. The settlement purports to abide by environmentally-friendly standards and practices. Therefore, Rotem uses water conservation plants and recycling to sustain the settlement, and its permanent structures and foundations were established using green technology.

Displayed in the Rotem settlement is a sign stating: "Inscribed on this banner is the most important rule: our Torah and love your neighbor." The settlement advocates for spirituality and accepts both religious and secular Israelis.

Many of the settlers in Rotem base their livelihoods in a range of fields such as alternative medicine, natural cosmetics, cafés, second-hand

- **Type of Settlement: Mixed Village**
- **Population: 101**
- **Number of Families: 30**
- **Dunums: 150 for agriculture, 29 for housing**
- **Per capita daily personal water usage (liters): 120**
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters): 3,191**
- **Agricultural crops harvested: None**
- **Other industries/services: Educational institutions, ecological initiatives headquarters, seminary school**

stores, organic agriculture, music classes, classes on basket weaving from date palms, and classes for drawing. Rotem's settlers are looking to develop the tourism industry in the region.

The Israeli government never authorized zoning plans in Rotem, so most families live in modular homes. However, at the start of January 2013, the Jordan Valley Regional Council was given permission to submit its zoning plans for the settlement. Though not yet officially approved, this would give Rotem the permission to go ahead with the construction of 170 homes and a guest house for visitors.



- **Type of Settlement: Religious Moshav**
- **Population: 576**
- **Number of Families: 107**
- **Dunums: 3,050 for agriculture, 1,099 for housing**
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters): 446**
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters): 7,155**
- **Agricultural crops harvested: Amaryllis bulbs, cherries, wheat, flower palms, and dates**
- **Other industries/services: Milk and dairy products which are sold to Tara dairy, packaging house for Amaryllis bulbs, guest houses for tourists, cultural center, library, day care center, youth club, B'nei Akiva meetinghouse, insurance company, graphic design office, and a religious school that carries out tours of the Jordan Valley**



## SHADMOT MEHOLA

The settlers of Shadmot Mehola were originally part of the settlement of Mehola in the northern Jordan Valley and were part of the Mizrahi Workers' Movement. In 1979, residents of Mehola voted on the economic structure of the settlement and decided to maintain its collective, secular affiliation. Consequently, Mehola's religious- and capitalist-oriented settlers decided to establish Shadmot Mehola out of a nearby Israeli military camp.

Shadmot Mehola, therefore, began as a Nahal military camp but was officially civilianized by 17 January 1984. Seventeen additional houses were built to attract new settlers. The settlement's name is meant to commemorate both the established settlement of Mehola and the previous settlement of Eval Mehola in the area.

The settlement's agriculture is managed through many organizations and institutions. As primary dairy producers in the region, the settlement has an exclusive contract with the Israeli company Tara Dairy.

At the beginning of the 1990s, an organization was created to attract new settlers to the settlement, and shortly afterwards many new families moved to Shadmot Mehola. In recent years, 10 new families have moved into the newly established section of the settlement.





# TOMER

**T**omer is part of the Mizrahi Workers' Movement and was established as a civilian settlement in 1976. It was the third settlement established by the moshav movement in the Jordan Valley. The core settlers were comprised of 17 families, trained in agriculture at the Ma'ale Ephraim settlement training camp. Subsequently, these families moved to permanent housing in Tomer in 1978. Tomer, which means "date" in Hebrew, was named for the date tree which can be found throughout the Jordan Valley. One thousand dunums of date trees are shared among the settlers.

The settlement has also developed beyond agriculture and has played a key role in the social and cultural development of settlements in the region. Tomer hosts events such as holiday par-

ties, national holidays, and joint children's days in partnership with main agricultural unions and community centers throughout the Jordan Valley.

Twenty of the families in Tomer are recent settlers who have expanded the settlement lower down the hill towards the Palestinian village of Fassayil. A majority of the settlers are agricultural workers, with a handful working in educational facilities or in the municipality.

- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 305
- **Number of Families:** 86
- **Dunums:** > 4,500 for agriculture, 419 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 497
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 24,177
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Dates, grapes, peppers, and cherry tomatoes
- **Other industries/services:** Various packaging houses for use by many settlements in the area, processing of agricultural products, extracurricular educational institutions, retirement home, gas station, and football field



- **Type of settlement:** Village community
- **Population:** 249
- **Number of Families:** 60
- **Dunums:** 1,500 for agriculture, 565 presently currently being used for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 381
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 11,557
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Herbs, holistic oils, dates, flowers, grapes, and eggplants
- **Other industries:** Desert spa, guest houses, and tourism



## VERED YERICHO

The original settlers of Vered Yericho were in fact many of the original settlers of Mitzpe Yericho, located around nine kilometers west. After disagreements about the religiousness of the settlement, in 1982 the more secular settlers decided to move east to set up an agricultural settlement overlooking the western side of the Palestinian city of Jericho.

The settlement's economy is based in intensive agriculture for export and the development of tourism infrastructure. Settlers from Vered Yericho have started to drill holes for planting alongside the road that leads to the city of Jericho, further expanding the settlement's municipal borders.

Vered Yericho has seen a steep increase in new residents in the past 10 years and there are plans to increase the population by 50%, from approximately 60 to 90 families in the upcoming years and even reaching 250 families in the upcoming couple decades.





# YAFIT

Yafit was established by twelve families in 1980 in order to connect the existing settlements of Petza'el and Massu'a in the central Jordan Valley. The original point chosen for Yafit was closer to the settlement of Massu'a, but was eventually moved south by approximately two kilometers. Pierre Hemel, the French Jewish leader of the group who helped set up the settlement of Petza'el, accompanied the new settlers to the site and helped them to develop Yafit. The name Yafit commemorates a symbolic figure who advanced the settlement movement.

In 1983, when the permanent settlement was established, it held 27 families. Initially, Yifat faced many economic development problems, although very few families actually left as a result.

- **Type of Settlement:** Moshav
- **Population:** 175
- **Number of Families:** 36
- **Dunums:** 800 for agriculture, 1,297 for housing
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters):** 400
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters):** 27,185
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Majdul dates
- **Other industries/services:** Regional family school, Friends Club meeting house, and the "Jordan Valley Meeting Point" (includes a gas station, restaurants, crocodile farm, and a few stores)

Today, Yafit holds agricultural fields that are co-operatively owned for the benefit of the settlers. Recently, the settlers have built a new neighborhood in the hopes of attracting new families to the settlement.



- **Type of Settlement: Religious-Nationalist**
- **Population: 154**
- **Number of Families: 37**
- **Dunums: 1,400 for agriculture, 491 for housing**
- **Per capita personal water usage (liters): 466**
- **Per capita daily agricultural water usage (liters): 21,121 (Most is routed to the agricultural outposts)**
- **Agricultural crops harvested: Dates, peppers, and a variety of other crops**
- **Other industries/services: Agricultural facility, warehouse, garage, beauty parlor, and health center**



## YITAV

Yitav was established on 24 December 1970 as a Nahal military camp. The area was selected because of its proximity to Wadi al-Auja, a local water resource, and because of its access to the Mu'rrajat road between Ramallah and Jericho. The name Yitav was selected to commemorate the death of a famous settler leader.

To develop the settlement, members first cultivated 150 dunums of herbs. Shortly afterwards, a production line was established to produce shower units and furniture for neighboring settlements. However, Yitav initially struggled with maintaining a stable population, as attempts to bring in new settlers largely failed. By the end of the 1980s, the settlement was abandoned and from 1989 to 1994 fell under the control of a company owned by the United Kibbutz Movement. Then, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Yitav took in many Russian-speaking immigrants.

When the first 10 Russian families arrived in the early 1990s, they were placed in caravans while permanent housing was under construction. In 1994, Yitav was officially deemed a yishuv. Since that time, the settlement has expanded. In 2001, 25 eco-friendly houses were built for the residents, and more permanent infrastructure was established. After the creation of new housing and infrastructure, an agricultural facility was built in Yitav in 2004. In 2006, an additional eight houses were built to house a new influx of settlers to the area.





## OUTPOSTS OF YITAV

### BEIT HALGA – MUL NEVO

The outpost of Beit Halga was established in 2001 by a Greek-Israeli woman and is located adjacent to the Nahal military camp Ein-Holga, near the Jordanian border. The settlers who live in Beit Halga are volunteers who change locations frequently. Currently, there is one Russian-Israeli living there with the Greek-Israeli woman. Although the outpost is connected to the settlement of Yitav, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Megilot Regional Council, which is in charge of Dead Sea settlements. Beit Halga maintains a couple of dunums of agricultural land and ap-

- **Type of Settlements:** Religious-Nationalist
- **Population:** 110 in Mevoa'ot Yericho, 2 in Beit Halga, and 7 in Einot Kedem – Omar's Farm
- **Number of Families:** 27 (25 in Mevoa'ot Yericho, 1 in Beit Halga, 1 in Einot Kedem – Omar's Farm)
- **Dunums:** Mevoa'ot Yericho (300 for agriculture, 31 for housing), Beit Halga (2-3 for agriculture, 11 for housing), and Einot Kedem – Omar's Farm (Approximately 700 for agriculture, 250-300 open space with housing and agricultural structures)
- **Agricultural crops harvested:** Mevoa'ot Yericho – Dates, Beit Halga – Olives, pomegranates, Einot Kedem – Dates, bananas, pomegranates
- **Other industries/services:** Mevoa'ot Yericho – Acclimatization facility, religious facilities, and educational facilities

proximately seven permanent structures. Olives and pomegranates grown there are used to give to tourists and to sell to neighboring settlements.



## EINOT KEDEM – OMAR'S FARM

The outpost of Einot Kedem is also known as "Omar's Farm" and was established towards the end of 2004. It is situated less than a kilometer away from its mother settlement, Yitav, and receives all services, such as water, electricity, and communications from it.

One settler named Omar, confiscated the tract of Palestinian land on which the outpost is located. This settler also warned the Palestinian communities of Ras al-Auja, al-Auja, and al-Nuweima to stay away from the outpost, under threat of violence if they did not comply.

Most of the Palestinians in the area are herders and must graze their animals; the outpost's location in the middle of their land has been disastrous for their livelihoods. Since the establishment of the outpost, residents of Ras al-Auja started receiving more verbal orders from Israeli commanders forbidding them from grazing their animals.

## MEVOA'OT YERICHO

After the signing of the Oslo Accords, a handful of settlers decided to create an outpost near Jericho. The original leader of this movement, from the settlement of Ofra, wanted to keep parts of Jericho in Jewish hands. Therefore, these settlers submitted requests to visit Jericho on religious holidays with the protection of the army. Israeli military commanders refused, but allowed settler families to visit an area outside of the city. As a result, every Saturday for three years, the settlers would set up tents and other small infrastructure to celebrate Shabbat in the area designated by the army. Over time, they applied for permission to officially settle the area. The Israeli Civil Administration initially denied the request, citing a lack of funds. However, the head of the Jordan Valley Regional Council at the time, Dany Levy, fought to estab-

lish the settlement with the support of young settlers.

Towards this goal, Levy proposed setting up an experimental agricultural station at the site and named it the Yitav Acclimatization station. On 16 May 1999, the area received its first shipping containers that contained office and laboratory equipment and other materials for the acclimatization station. Employees at the station were formally registered as workers at the Jordan Valley Regional Council; however, officials such as Levy knew that the purpose of such a project was to eventually create a settlement in the area. Today, yeshiva students and renovators are among those who work at Mevoa'ot Yericho. The outpost has a specialized school for women that focuses on culture, agriculture, religion, and environmentally-friendly practices.



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