

# State Business

Israel's misappropriation  
of land in the West Bank  
through settler violence





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# Introduction

Israel has built more than 280 settlements in the West Bank, which are home to more than 440,000 settlers. Of these settlements, 138 were officially established and recognized by the state (not including the 12 neighborhoods Israel built in the areas it annexed to Jerusalem), and some 150 are outposts not officially recognized by the state. About a third of the outposts have been built over the past decade, most of them referred to as “farms”.

With a total of more than 440,000 residents, the settlements dominate hundreds of thousands of dunams [1 dunam = 1,000 square meters] to which Palestinians have limited access or none at all. Israel has taken over some of these areas using official means: issuing military orders, declaring the area “state land,” a “firing zone” or a “nature reserve”, and expropriating land. Other areas have been effectively taken over by settlers through daily acts of violence, including attacks on Palestinians and their property.

The two tracks appear unrelated: The state takes over land openly, using official methods sanctioned by legal advisors and judges, while the settlers, who are also interested in taking over land to further their agenda, initiate violence against Palestinians for their own reasons. Yet in truth, there is only one track: Settler violence against Palestinians serves as a major informal tool at the hands of the state to take over more and more West Bank land. The state fully supports and assists these acts of violence, and its agents sometimes participate in them directly.

State violence – official and otherwise – is part and parcel of Israel’s apartheid regime, which aims to create a Jewish-only space between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The regime treats land as a resource designed to serve

the Jewish public, and accordingly uses it almost exclusively to develop and expand existing Jewish residential communities and to build new ones. At the same time, the regime fragments Palestinian space, dispossesses Palestinians of their land and relegates them to living in small, over-populated enclaves.

This principle has been implemented inside Israel’s sovereign boundaries since 1948, and extended to the Occupied Territories since 1967. In 2018, it was enshrined in Basic Law: Israel – the Nation State of the Jewish People, which stipulates that “[t]he State views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value, and shall act to encourage and promote its establishment and strengthening.”<sup>1</sup> In keeping with this principle, Israel has dispossessed Palestinian subjects in the West Bank of more than two million dunams of land, on various pretexts. It has used this land to build new settlements and expand existing ones – including their built-up areas, farmland and industrial zones – and to pave hundreds of kilometers of roads that mainly serve the settler population.

This report describes how the state has misappropriated land from Palestinian shepherding and farming communities in the West Bank through systemic, ongoing violence perpetrated by settlers living near them, with the full support of state authorities. The report presents five case studies to illustrate how this policy affects shepherding communities in Masafer Yatta in the southeast Hebron Hills, in the southwest Hebron Hills and in the Jordan Valley, as well as in well-established villages west of Ramallah and west of Nablus.

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1 Basic Law: Israel – the Nation State of the Jewish People, Art. 7. Passed by the Knesset on 19 July 2018. English translation available through Knesset website: <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/Documents/BasicLawsPDF/BasicLawNationState.pdf>

# Settler violence as a means for taking over land

Since occupying the West Bank in 1967, Israel has misappropriated more than two million dunams (200,000 hectares) of land throughout the West Bank. Israel uses this land for its own purposes, including building new settlements, expanding the territory they control, which includes farmlands and industrial zones, and building roads that mainly serve the settler population.<sup>2</sup>

In 1992, for the first time since 1967, the Israeli government decided to scale back construction in the settlements and refrain from building new ones (except in the Jordan Valley and “greater Jerusalem”).<sup>3</sup> Yet the construction of settlements, with the attendant takeover of more land, did not stop – it merely took on a different form. The state aids and abets settlers in violently expelling Palestinians from their land, and sometimes from their homes. It allows settlers to misappropriate Palestinian land in order to build new settlements, expand existing ones and take over pastureland fields and farmland.

This violent reality has forced Palestinians to stay off their land, for lack of choice. In some cases, Palestinians have been actively driven away by settlers. In others, the military has sealed off Palestinian land or required Palestinian farmers to make arrangements to access their own land – which the military normally allows only twice a year (during the general plowing and harvest season and during the olive harvest). In other cases, the presence of settlers and the soldiers protecting them is enough to keep farmers and shepherds away from their land, for fear of getting hurt. Large swathes of pastureland and farmland

have been taken away from Palestinians in this manner. For instance, near the settlements of Shilo and Eli, Palestinian farmers have been denied access to at least 26,500 dunams, and in the Tekoa-Nokdim area, they have been barred access to at least 10,000.<sup>4</sup>

The state, which has control of the area and possesses law enforcement powers, can prevent this violence, protect Palestinians and stop the landgrab. However, having an interest in the outcome of this landgrab, Israel chooses not to do so and instead allows the dispossession and legalizes it.

## Legalizing land takeover

Following the 1992 government resolution to stop construction of new settlements, “outposts” sprang up throughout the West Bank. These are settlements for all intents and purposes, which were built without an official government resolution. Without government approval, no land was allocated for these communities, no municipal boundaries were set for them, and their residents were given no permission to use the land for either construction or farming, with the exception of six farms that were later given allocated pastureland by the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>5</sup> Without a government resolution, no building plans can be drawn up for these outposts to define what uses are permitted in the land. Therefore, all structures in these outposts were built without permits and are illegal – not only according to international law, which prohibits all settlements, but also according to the Israeli authorities.

2 B'Tselem, [By Hook and by Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank](#), July 2010, pp. 21-36. On the state land declaration process, see: B'Tselem, [Under the Guise of Legality: Declarations of state land in the West Bank](#), March 2012.

3 Section B of Government Resolution No. 360, dated 22 November 1992, states: “To approve cessation of construction in Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip, carried out pursuant to previous government decisions found in the government’s secretariat...” See also, Talia Sasson, [Interim Report on the Subject of Unauthorized Outposts](#), submitted to Prime Minister Sharon in March 2005, pp. 62-63 (Hebrew).

4 B'Tselem and Kerem Navot, [This Is Ours – And This, Too : Israel’s Settlement Policy in the West Bank](#), March 2021, pp. 53, 60.

5 Peace Now, [The ministry of Agriculture admits: we fund associations that work in illegal outposts](#), 29 July 2021; Hagar Shezaf, [Israel Allocates Swathes of West Bank Land to Illegal Outposts](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 29 July 2021.

Nevertheless, most of the outposts have been built with state support. Israel has ordered the military to defend the outposts or paid for their security, paved roads, and laid down water and electricity infrastructure for most of them. It has provided support through various government ministries, the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization and regional councils in the West Bank. It has also subsidized financial endeavors in the outposts, including agricultural facilities, provided support for new farmers and for shepherding, allocated water and legally defended outposts in petitions for their removal.<sup>6</sup>

Thanks to this support, some 150 outposts have been built, at least 54 of them fully or partially on land that Israel acknowledges is privately owned by Palestinians.<sup>7</sup> There have been three waves of outpost construction so far: The first wave saw the construction of about 50 outposts, mostly in 1997 and 1998, immediately after the Oslo Accords were signed. The second wave took place during the peak of the second intifada – 2001 to 2003 – with about 50 more outposts established. In the last decade, about 50 more outposts have been built in the West Bank. Some 40 of them are referred to as “farms,” and they rely on sheep, goat and cattle herding in large areas.

The farms were mostly set up on land registered as “state land” prior to 1967, or declared as such by Israel since the early 1980s.<sup>8</sup> Compared to construction in settlements, starting a farm requires far fewer resources, allowing for easy takeover of vast areas spanning thousands of dunams. These areas

usually contain – or are adjacent to – pastureland, water sources and land cultivated by Palestinians.<sup>9</sup>

In the past, the state announced its intention to enforce the law on outposts in the future and even gave the international community assurances to that effect. The promises were never kept.<sup>10</sup> In March 2011, the state announced it would, from then on, make an official distinction between outposts built on land recognized as privately owned by Palestinians and land Israel considers “state land” or “survey land” (land that can be declared “state land”, although the declaration has not yet been issued). The state said it would remove outposts built on privately owned Palestinian land.

This distinction has no legal basis. International law flatly prohibits building communities for the population of the occupier in an occupied territory, regardless of the land’s proprietary status. Israel’s declarations of “state land” in the West Bank are unlawful to begin with, and even if the land in question were, in fact, public land, the public it is meant to serve is the protected persons – i.e., Palestinians, not settlers. Israel’s High Court of Justice, however, accepted the state’s distinction and stated in December 2014 that it would not intervene in the authorities’ discretion with respect to authorizing outposts built on land that is not privately owned by Palestinians.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of the day, nearly all the outposts remain in place. The state has repeatedly postponed action on outposts that were not built on privately owned

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6 B’Tselem and Kerem Navot, **This Is Ours – And This, Too**, supra note 4, pp. 17-20.

7 For the stringent conditions Israel has instituted for recognition of private Palestinian ownership of land and for information on land management in the West Bank, see B’Tselem, **Under the Guise of Legality**, supra note 2, pp. 31-34.

8 Ibid.

9 Amana Executive Director Zeev Hever mentioned how much land the farms have taken over during an Amana seminar entitled “The fight for state lands,” 21 February 2021. According to Hever, the farms’ objective is to “hold on to the land” and create land reserves to implement the vision of one million settlers in the West Bank. See also, B’Tselem and Kerem Navot, **This Is Ours – And This, Too**, supra note 4, p. 18 and the map of the farms, p. 36.

10 B’Tselem, **By Hook and by Crook**, supra note 2, pp. 15-16.

11 HCJ 8395/14 **Turmusaya Village Council Head Ribhi ‘Abd a-Rahman Muhammad et al. v. Minister of Defense et al.** (the outpost of Adei Ad). See also, B’Tselem and Kerem Navot, **This Is Ours – And This, Too**, supra note 4, p. 42.

Palestinian land, citing “priorities” that are forever subject to “a future change in circumstances.” The High Court accepted this argument. As for outposts built on privately owned Palestinian land – Israel removed three such outposts (Migron, Amona and part of Derech HaAvot), and only after years of litigation, including High Court petitions filed with the help of Israeli human rights organizations.<sup>12</sup> In all three cases, the settlers were removed after receiving generous “compensation packages,” which included building new settlements on more land misappropriated from Palestinians for this purpose, and the removal itself was delayed time and again.<sup>13</sup>

## Legitimizing physical violence against Palestinians

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Violence committed by settlers against Palestinians has been documented since the very early days of the occupation in countless government documents and dossiers, thousands of testimonies from Palestinians and soldiers, books, reports by Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organizations, and thousands of media stories. In addition to documenting the violence, this reportage has focused on three main elements: the participation of Israeli security forces in violent incidents, the disregard of Israeli authorities for their duty to protect Palestinians, and the near complete immunity the state gives settlers who harm Palestinians.<sup>14</sup>

This broad, consistent documentation has had almost no effect on settler violence against Palestinians, which has long since become part and parcel of life under the occupation in the West Bank. The violent acts include beating, throwing stones, issuing threats, torching fields, destroying trees and crops, stealing crops, using live fire, damaging homes and cars, and, in rare cases, homicide.<sup>15</sup> In recent years, settlers in so-called farms have been violently chasing Palestinian farmers and shepherds away from their fields and from pastureland and water sources they used for generations. They initiate violent altercations on a daily basis and intimidate flocks belonging to Palestinians in order to scatter them.<sup>16</sup>

The state condones this violence, giving the settlers free rein to terrorize Palestinians and even providing assistance. The military avoids confronting violent settlers as a matter of policy, although soldiers have the authority and duty to detain and arrest them. As a rule, the military prefers to remove Palestinians from their own farmland or pastureland rather than confront settlers, using various tactics such as issuing closed military zone orders that apply to Palestinians only, or firing tear gas, stun grenades, rubber-coated metal bullets and even live rounds. Sometimes, soldiers actively participate in the settler attacks or look on from the sidelines.<sup>17</sup>

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12 HCl 8887/06 Yusef Musa 'Abd a-Razeq al-Nabut et al. v. Minister of Defense et al. (Migron outpost); HCl 9949/08 Maryam Hassan 'Abd al-Karim Hammad et al. v. Minister of Defense et al. (Amona outpost); HCl 8255/08 'Ali Muhammad 'Issa Musa et al. v. Minister of Defense et al. (Derech HaAvot outpost); HCl 7292/14 'Ali Muhammad 'Issa Musa et al. v. Minister of Defense et al. (Derech HaAvot outpost).

13 B'Tselem and Kerem Navot, **This Is Ours – And This, Too**, supra note 4, pp. 17-20.

14 Letter from Deputy Attorney General Yehudit Karp to the Attorney General with respect to the investigation of suspected Israelis in the Judea and Samaria Area, monitoring team report (Karp Report) dated 23 May 1982. Report of the Commission of Inquiry – Massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron 1994 (Shangar Commission), 1994; Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, **Lords of the Land: The War Over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007**, Bold Type Books, New York, 2005. See also, B'Tselem, [Law Enforcement vis-a-vis Israel Civilians in the Occupied Territories](#), March 1994; [Free Rein Vigilante Settlers and Israel's Non-Enforcement of the Law](#), October 2001. See also, Yesh Din reports: [A Semblance of Law: Law Enforcement Upon Israeli Civilians in the West Bank](#), June 2006; [Too Little, Too Late – Supervision by the Office of the State Attorney over the investigation of offenses committed by Israeli civilians against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories](#), May 2008; [Mock Enforcement – the Failure to Enforce the Law on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank](#), May 2015.

15 Yesh Din, [The Road to Dispossession – A Case Study: The Outpost of Adei Ad](#), February 2013; B'Tselem, [Expel and Exploit – The Israeli Practice of Taking over Rural Palestinian Land](#), December 2016, pp. 28-30.

16 B'Tselem and Kerem Navot, **This Is Ours – And This, Too**, supra note 4, pp. 17, 39.

17 Yuval Abraham, [Joint militias: How settlers and soldiers teamed up to kill four Palestinians](#), +972 Magazine, 15 July 2021. See also, Yesh Din,

Soldiers who gave testimonies to Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence emphasized that the military refrains from using troops and measures at its disposal to prevent these attacks. They reported that the military defaults to protecting Jews only, rather than Palestinians; that soldiers are prohibited from “messing” with violent settlers; that they are not given clear instructions on what to do in such cases; and that as a rule, the soldiers themselves prefer not to arrest violent settlers. The soldiers’ response is usually limited to moving the Palestinians away from the violent settlers to “prevent friction.” When Palestinians try to insist on their right to remain on their land, the military forcefully drives them away.<sup>18</sup>

From the beginning of 2020 to the end of September 2021, B’Tselem documented 451 settler attacks on Palestinians and on their property - 245 were directed at Palestinian farmers. This figure excludes the Jordan Valley, where violence takes place on a daily basis. Of the 451 attacks recorded, in 27 cases settlers fired live ammunition, 180 included physical assault, 145 included damage to private property, 77 included attacks on homes, and 35 attacks on passing vehicles. 123 cases included damage to trees and crops, and in 59 settlers damaged farming equipment. The presence of Israeli security forces was recorded in 183 of these incidents: In 66 forces were present and did nothing, in 104 they participated in the attack, usually using rubber-coated metal bullets, tear gas, and stun grenades. In 22 incidents, security forces arrested Palestinians who had been attacked by settlers. In addition, five Palestinians were killed during joint attacks by settlers and soldiers.<sup>19</sup>

Rather than preventing violent actions against Palestinian farmers, the military has developed a

“coordination” system that treats settler violence as a given. This system ostensibly enables Palestinian farmers to access their land, but in fact denies them almost any possibility to do so by limiting their access to a handful of days a year. Even on these days, if settlers violently prevent the farmers from cultivating their land, the military will remove the latter. Settlers, meanwhile, have unfettered access to Palestinian land all year round. Under this system, Palestinian farmers are consigned to partial cultivation of their land that keeps them from maximizing its potential, if they are able to extract anything from the land at all.

The state does not stop at military support for settler violence, but gives settlement security coordinators policing and enforcement powers, including the power to search, arrest and use force. The security coordinators are appointed by the settlement and chiefly represent the interests of its residents. They use their powers to pursue these interests, including expanding the territory of the settlement. To that end, some security coordinators exploit their authority to determine what constitutes a threat, block Palestinians’ access to their land and gradually take them over.<sup>20</sup>

Israel’s inaction continues after settler attacks on Palestinians have taken place, with enforcement authorities doing their utmost to avoid responding to these incidents. Complaints are difficult to file, and in the very few cases in which investigations are in fact opened, the system quickly whitewashes them. Indictments are hardly ever filed against settlers who harm Palestinians and when they do, usually cite minor offenses, with token penalties to match in the rare instance of a conviction.<sup>21</sup>

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[Standing Idly By – IDF Soldiers’ Inaction in the Face of Offenses Perpetrated by Israelis against Palestinians in the West Bank](#), May 2015.

18 Breaking the Silence, [ON DUTY – Settler Violence in the West Bank, Soldiers’ Testimonies 2012-2020](#), July 2021.

19 See more details on some of the incidents on B’Tselem’s blog [State-Backed Settler Violence](#).

20 Yesh Din, [The Lawless Zone: The transfer of policing and security to the civilian security coordinators in the settlements and outposts](#), September 2014.

21 See, e.g., Yesh Din, [Position paper: Settler crime and violence inside Palestinian communities, 2017-2020](#), May 2021.

## Case studies

The cases presented below illustrate how continuous, systemic violence meted out by settlers is part of Israel's official policy, driving massive takeover of Palestinian farmland and pastureland. This reality undermines the bedrock of Palestinian communities' lives, diminishing their income, pushing them into poverty and furthering the fragmentation of Palestinian space.

In the testimonies presented below, Palestinians describe life in the shadow of this violence. Without protection, under the pressure of violence and fear and with no other choice, Palestinian communities abandon or scale back traditional vocations such as sheep and goat farming or various seasonal crops, which allowed them to make a dignified living and live comfortably for generations. Palestinian residents stay away from pastureland and water sources that once served their communities, and limit cultivation of farmland. At that point, the state can take over their land for its own purposes.

The case studies detailed here pertain to two veteran outposts – Havat Ma'on and Havat Gilad, one veteran recognized settlement – Halamish, and several so-called farms. Three of the farms were established near the community of Khirbet Zanutah in the South Hebron Hills, and another in the “nature reserve” of Um Zuqa in the northern Jordan Valley, illustrating the latest method for driving Palestinians out of their communities and land.

### The outpost of Havat Ma'on

The outpost of Havat Ma'on is located at the northern edge of Firing Zone 918, an area spanning about 33,000 dunams, from which Israel has been trying for years to expel 12 Palestinian shepherding communities. These communities

have been living in the area for many years, since before Israel occupied the West Bank. The state is striving to create a settlement bloc stretching from Carmel, through Isaschar Manne's farm, Ma'on and Havat Ma'on, all the way to Avigayil and Susiya. Plans made by the Settlement Division of the World Zionist Organization affirm this pursuit by stating a “buffer zone” must be created in this area to separate the Palestinian villages in it from the Bedouin population of the Arad Valley and the Beersheba Valley inside the Green Line.<sup>22</sup>

An interim injunction issued following a High Court petition filed by local residents in 1999 through the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Adv. Shlomo Lecker has staved off the expulsion, but has also put the residents' lives on hold. The order prohibits them from construction to meet their needs and keeps them in perpetual uncertainty. All the while, Israel continues to use its Civil Administration and military to harass the communities: It approves no building plans and demolishes structures and roads, damages water and electricity infrastructure and sometimes holds military training in the area, causing damage to crops.<sup>23</sup>

Havat Ma'on was established in 1997 on a site located about 900 meters southeast of its current location. The outpost was evacuated in 1999 amid severe violence from its residents, as part of the “outpost agreement” Prime Minister Ehud Barak had reached with the settler leadership. The outpost was moved to a wooded area adjacent to the settlement of Ma'on, inside Tell Tuwani and near the road connecting the Palestinian villages of Khirbet Tuba and Maghayir al-'Abid with the village of a-Tuwani.<sup>24</sup> In these woods lies a water cistern that local Palestinian communities had used until

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22 General Plans in the Judea and Samaria Area, World Zionist Organization Settlement Division, 1997.

23 B'Tselem, [Masafar Yatta communities whose land was declared a “firing zone”](#), 13 September 2020. See also, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, [Firing Zone 918 – What's the Deal?](#), 6 March 2013.

24 Peace Now, [The Outpost Agreement – No Evacuation, No Moratorium](#) (Hebrew), March 2008.

the outpost was moved there. In 2005, the military seized a 900-square-meter area adjacent to the outpost and installed antennas and observation equipment serving to control the entire area surrounding the outpost.<sup>25</sup>

From the very inception of Havat Ma'on, settlers living there used violence to drive local Palestinians away from the pastureland and farmland they had used for generations. The communities directly affected by the violence are Khirbet Tuba, Khirbet a-Saffa and Maghayir al-'Abid to the east, Um al-Kheir and a-Tha'lah (which are also impacted by violence from settlers living in Carmel) to the north, a-Tuwani to the northwest and a-Rakeez and al-Mufaqqarah to the southwest. The latter two also suffer from violence perpetrated by settlers from the outposts of Avigayil and Mitzpe Yair, located to their south. In the past few months, these two outposts have also begun setting up so-called farms.

The violence, which continues to this day, consists of beating – including with sticks, axes and clubs – stone-throwing, riding horses or ATVs to scare and scatter flocks, setting assault dogs on shepherds and sheep, setting fire to fields and cutting down trees.<sup>26</sup> In recent years, settlers from Havat Ma'on,

like settlers in other outposts and farms around the West Bank, have been using drones to scatter flocks belonging to Palestinian shepherding communities. The military prohibits the use of drones in the West Bank, but does not enforce this rule on settlers.<sup>27</sup>

In 2002, settlers from the outpost began attacking and beating Palestinian schoolchildren walking along the dirt road that connects Khirbet Tuba and Maghayir al-'Abid with the only school in the area, located in a-Tuwani. The public outcry did not put an end to the repeated assaults, but only led the Knesset's Special Committee for the Rights of the Child to pressure the military to escort the children on their way to school and back.<sup>28</sup> Although the escort continues to this day, settlers still occasionally attack the children. The soldiers sometimes arrive late, making the children miss classes, and in one case, the soldiers themselves were documented throwing stones at the children.<sup>29</sup> Due to the settlers' attacks, the military closed off the 2.5-kilometer dirt road to all Palestinian pedestrians and drivers except schoolchildren. The closure has forced Khirbet Tuba residents who need to access the main urban center in the area, Yatta, to take a 20-kilometer dirt road suitable for off-road vehicles only.

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25 Seizure Order 16/05. See section 24 of the petition in HCl 242/14 'Ali 'Issa Ahmad Rab'i et al. v. Minister of Defense et al., filed 29 January 2014.

26 See, e.g., B'Tselem [Means of Expulsion – Violence, Harassment and Lawlessness against Palestinians in the Southern Hebron Hills](#), July 2005, pp. 23-32. See also, Jonathan Lis, [11 Settlers Held for Questioning in Suspected Attack on Palestinians](#), [Haaretz](#), 2 March 2004 (Hebrew); Arnon Regular and Jonathan Lis, [Settlers Suspected in Contamination of Hebron Area Well with Carcasses](#), [Haaretz](#), 17 April 2004 (Hebrew); Amira Hass, [Palestinian stabbed in South Hebron Hills. Witnesses: Stabber fled to Havat Maon](#), [Haaretz](#), 22 March 2011 (Hebrew); Amira Hass, [Why Did Police Close Settler Vandalism Case?](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 15 February 2014; Jack Khoury, [Palestinian Child Lightly Injured by Stone Throwing near Havat Ma'on Outpost](#), [Haaretz](#), 21 March 2015 (Hebrew); Amira Hass, [Masked Israelis Attack Activists Accompanying Palestinian Farmers in West Bank](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 8 January 2017; Gideon Levy and Alex Levac, [When Settlers Beat Palestinian Fathers in Front of Their Sons](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 30 March 2018. See also the details of the incidents listed in the petition: HCl 242/14 'Ali 'Issa Ahmad Rab'i et al. v. Minister of Defense et al., filed 29 January 2014.

27 See, e.g., the weekly report put out by Ta'ayush activists, 24-30 January, 2021, on the group's [Facebook page](#); Order No. 1792, Order regarding Flight (Flight Limitations and Forbidden Zone Declaration) (West Bank Area) (No. 13) (Amendment No. 1), 2017, signed by the Military Commander of the West Bank, Major General Roni Numa on 26 December 2017. See also, Roi Sharon, [New Military Commander Order Bans Drones in the Judea and Samaria Area](#), [Kan – Israeli Broadcasting Corporation](#), 22 April 2018 (Hebrew).

28 Transcripts of Knesset Committee for the Rights of the Child, session No. 88 of 2 November 2004, discussing harassment of Palestinian children in the South Hebron Hills

29 Amira Hass, [Stones and Smiles](#), [Haaretz](#), 29 October 2016 (Hebrew); Amira Hass, [Palestinian Kids' Long Trek to School – Past the Settler With the Handgun](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 24 September 2018; Yuval Abraham, [To avoid settlers, the Israeli army escorts these Palestinian schoolchildren](#), [+972 Magazine](#), 2 September 2019. Amira Hass, [The Jeep Was Late](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 10 September 2019.

Violence by Havat Ma'on settlers has intensified over the past two years. They have begun to invade the residential areas of a-Tuwani, a-Rakeez and al-Mufaqqarah, beating locals, damaging water tanks and throwing stones into homes. Some of these attacks have become an organized, routine affair. They usually take place on Saturdays, when dozens of settlers, some armed of them armed and some with assault dogs, descend from Havat Ma'on onto the Palestinian communities and go on a rampage. These mobs include individuals who do not live in the outpost and visit it only on weekends.<sup>30</sup>

Havat Ma'on settlers have repeatedly tried to take over Wadi Hamra, which lies south of the outpost. The valley has olive trees and a reservoir that provides drinking water for local Palestinian residents who are not connected to running water. Settlers have turned the reservoir into a swimming pool and at one point, fenced off Palestinian farmland in the valley. It was not until 2013 that the GOC Central Command issued an order forbidding Israelis – including the Havat Ma'on settlers – from entering the valley. Yet the settlers regularly defy this order, even when soldiers are present, and continue to use the water reservoir.<sup>31</sup>

Over the past year, the outpost of Havat Ma'on has expanded: One of its residents, Isaschar Manne, built a new so-called farm south of the houses of Carmel and east of the dairy facilities it shares with Ma'on. Manne transferred a flock of

sheep previously kept in Havat Ma'on to the new location.<sup>32</sup> A large sheep pen has already been installed there, along with two movable structures and several tents. The farm is marketed as a tourist destination, offering accommodation, a campsite, a wading pool, and cooking, art and mud sculpting classes.<sup>33</sup> Violence by settlers from the farm has significantly limited the pastureland used by local Palestinian shepherds, including residents of Khirbet Tuba in the east, who have stopped taking their flocks out to graze, and residents of Um al-Kheir and Khirbet a-Tha'lah in the north, who have been subjected to violence by settlers from Carmel for years.

Settlers from Havat Ma'on are working towards setting up another farm east of the outpost, near its original site. Meanwhile, it consists of a tent and a flock of sheep that move from one spot to another throughout the hills that dominate the area.<sup>34</sup>

State authorities, including the military, which has the area under observation, are well aware of the violence perpetrated by settlers from the outpost against Palestinians, but choose to do nothing about it, or worse: Some of the incidents take place in the presence of soldiers who stand idly by. In others, soldiers help settlers by driving Palestinians off their own lands, including by firing stun grenades and tear gas canisters at them. Soldiers invariably refrain from detaining or arresting the attacking settlers.<sup>35</sup> A petition filed by residents of

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30 See, B'Tselem [reports](#) on settler violence originating in Havat Ma'on. See also, Hagar Shezaf, [Settlers Attack Palestinian Farmers in Hebron Hills; No Arrests Made](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 26 April 2021; Hagar Shezaf, [Masked Israelis Filmed Throwing Stones at Palestinians While Soldiers Stood By](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 27 June 2021; Hagar Shezaf, [Settler Shoots at Palestinians With Israeli Soldier's Weapon, Footage Shows](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 1 August 2021.

31 Order issued on 9 July 2013. See section 85 of the petition in HCJ 242/14 'Ali 'Issa Ahmad Rab'i et al. v. Minister of Defense et al., filed 29 January 2014.

32 Amira Hass, [Why Did Police Close Settler Vandalism Case?](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 15 February 2014. See also, Yigal Mosko, [Artillery next door, military escort for schoolchildren: South Hebron Hills, the land of the absurd](#), **N12**, 23 July 2021 (Hebrew).

33 See Manne farm [Facebook page](#).

34 See weekly report put out by Ta'ayush activists, 14-20 June 2020, 18-24 April 2021, 2-8 May 2021, 23-29 May 2021, 13-19 June 2021 on the group's [Facebook page](#).

35 Basil al-Aadra, [Arson and gunfire at civilians: A settler shabbat in Tuwani](#), **Local Call**, 27 June 2021 (Hebrew). See also, [Facebook post](#) (Hebrew) by Yuval Abraham, 27 June 2021. Hagar Shezaf, [Settlers Attack Palestinian Farmers in Hebron Hills; No Arrests Made](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 26 April 2021; Hagar Shezaf, [Masked Israelis Filmed Throwing Stones at Palestinians While Soldiers Stood By](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 27 June 2021;

local Palestinian communities to have the outpost removed due to the violence was dismissed without prejudice after the state promised the Nationalistic Crime Unit of the Israel Police would take action against violent settlers from the outpost – a promise that was never fulfilled.<sup>36</sup>

About 20 families currently live in Havat Ma'on. The dozens of structures erected there – permanent homes and agricultural structures such as sheep pens – were built without permits and are hooked up to Ma'on settlement's water and power grids. The Civil Administration has issued about 100 demolition orders for structures in the outpost, but has not enforced them.<sup>37</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture allocated founder Yehoshafat Tor some 3,600 dunams for grazing, although the state agreed that all structures in the outpost were built without a permit.<sup>38</sup>

According to a calculation performed by Kerem Navot at B'Tselem's request, settlers from Havat Ma'on and Isaschar Manne's farm have so far taken over an area spanning 2,640 dunams (1,104 by Havat Ma'on and an additional 1,537 by the Manne farm), where settlers deny Palestinians access to farmlands and pastureland using violent means. Within this area, Havat Ma'on cultivates about 70 dunams.

The settler takeover of their means of subsistence has drastically changed the lives of the local Palestinian communities. In their testimonies, residents describe how, where once they had plenty and lived comfortably, they have been forced into poverty and seeking alternative sources of income.

### **Testimony of Jum'ah Rib'i (48), a husband of two and father of 14 from a-Tuwani:<sup>39</sup>**

I live with my two wives and 14 children less than 100 meters from the wooded area of Havat Ma'on. Like the rest of the villagers, our family always subsisted on farming and raising livestock. I used to have a flock with more than 100 heads of sheep in good years. We made a very good living selling dairy products and mutton. We made more than NIS 100,000 (~USD 31,000) a year, which provided for all our needs and made us financially secure. We built a modern house, some of my children are already married with children, and we would use some of the income to buy fodder for the sheep and tend to them. I also planted some olive trees in the valley next to where they established Havat Ma'on. We would pick the olives and extract a good amount of oil from them for our personal use. I also leased some land from people in Yatta and we used it to grow wheat, barley and fodder for the sheep.

Our suffering began when the military blocked off the road near which Havat Ma'on was established in 2002. Since then, anyone who has tried to cross the road has been attacked by settlers. More than once, settlers attacked me and my sons with stones while we were out grazing the flock, or when we were in the olive groves or on the leased land. In 2018, settlers attacked me while I was picking herbs for my flock in a valley near Khirbet al-Kharuba. They broke my leg, and I had to spend two weeks in hospital and continue treatment at home. To this day, three years later, I can't walk normally and use a cane. I had to sell most of our sheep to cover the cost of treatment. Because I didn't have access to the land, the bought fodder became their primary

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36 HCI 242/14 'Ali Rab'i et al. v. Minister of Defense et al. Amira Hass, [Masked Israelis Attack Activists Accompanying Palestinian Farmers in West Bank](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 8 January 2017.

37 Civil Administration Illegal Construction Layer, received by Kerem Navot in 2020.

38 Hagar Shezaf, [Israel Allocates Swathes of West Bank Land to Illegal Outposts](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 29 July 2021.

39 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 28 June 2021. See also, B'Tselem, [A-Tuwani, South Hebron Hills: Settler grazing flock in cultivated Palestinian field summons other settlers who attack farmers and their homes](#).

food source and it was too expensive. Now I only have 17 sheep and with what we spend on fodder, we make a minimal profit that's barely enough to meet the needs of my large family.

Since Havat Ma'on was established near my home, my family has also suffered direct settler attacks. They throw stones at us and shoot to scare us. The last attack was in last June, when settlers threw stones at us and hit my daughter-in-law. One of them fired live bullets at us.

To make up for the loss of income from raising sheep, which has become unprofitable, two of my sons are forced to work in Israel without a permit. I will not continue to raise sheep in the future. It causes me losses, and I can no longer rely on it.

### **Testimony of Nisrin Harini (37), a mother of seven:<sup>40</sup>**

The establishment of Havat Ma'on changed our lives completely. We have gone from a life of peace and quiet to hell, to a life full of fear and daily anxiety. Our home is located at the eastern end of a-Tuwani, near the wooded area of Havat Ma'on. A dirt road separates our family's land, which lies north of the wooded area, from the outpost. Our family used to have more than 1,500 dunams there, but now the settlers have cherry groves there.

Over the last year, the settler attacks have intensified. A year ago, settlers attacked our sheep and ran over my brother-in-law's son, Hussein al-Harini, with an ATV. They broke his leg. Six months ago, settlers attacked our home and nearby homes while a vehicle was outside our house, unloading sheep we'd bought for fattening. The sheep panicked and ran towards the woods. We gathered them up, but lost one. The soldiers and the settlers didn't allow us to enter the woods to look for it. Losing the sheep cost us 500 Jordanian dinars

(~700 USD). At the end of the year, two settlers tried to enter the mosque near our home. The residents blocked them, so they pelted houses nearby with stones. A few weeks ago, they uprooted 54 olive trees we'd planted by the road that separates the our family's land from the woods. It's the 15<sup>th</sup> time settlers have uprooted our trees in the same spot. In total, they've uprooted more than 150 of our trees there.

We used to have more than 90 sheep and make more than NIS 50,000 (~15,500 USD) a year. We had a much higher standard of living than we do now. Over the years, the flock has shrunk and now we have only 15 sheep. In the last few years, we've relied mainly on our sons' occasional work in construction, in all sorts of places. Near our house, next to the wooded area, we have about six dunams left where we sow grains, some of which we use as fodder for the sheep.

Not a week goes by without our village suffering settler violence. The last time, in May 2021, was when we discovered that a flock of sheep from Havat Ma'on had eaten the grain crops we'd sown in these six dunams. We lost more than NIS 5,000 (~1,550 USD), which is what we'll now have to pay for fodder.

Havat Ma'on has hemmed in our village to the north and east. Settlers watch our every move. It's become a routine. They attack the sheep and the shepherds, and call the military. Then the soldiers come and chase after the shepherds, and sometimes even arrest them. A few months ago, the military arrested our neighbor, Fadel Rib'i, and his two sons.

The soldiers also fire large amounts of tear gas to disperse residents who gather to fend off the settlers and to protect themselves and their property.

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40 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 29 July 2021.

**Testimony of Jaber ‘Awad, a 34-year-old resident of Khirbet Tana and father of two:**<sup>41</sup>

My five brothers and I are partners in raising a herd of more than 800 sheep and goats. Our wives milk them and make dairy products. Raising livestock is the only source of income for our family, which consists of 30 people.

Up until the year 2000, we owned more than 1,000 heads of sheep. We could freely access the pastureland in every direction. We relied on it throughout most of the year, and my father and older brothers would graze the flock at a radius of about four or five kilometers from our home. Raising livestock was a good occupation for my brothers and me. We had a happy, stable life.

In 2002, settlers from Havat Ma'on incessantly attacked Palestinians heading to a-Tuwani, including my brothers and young nephews. In response, the military closed off the road and declared it a closed military zone. Since then, we've had to take bypass routes around the village to the east, through Um al-Kheir – which means we have to travel 21 kilometers to reach a-Tuwani, instead of two kilometers. The closure of the road also makes it difficult to transport the water we need for the family and the flock. Transportation has become more complicated and expensive. My brother 'Ali transports the water tank by dragging it with a tractor, but the overall cost of water is more than five times higher now. Transporting four cubic meters of water from a-Tuwani to Tuba costs about NIS 170 (~53 USD), as opposed to NIS 30 (~9 USD) before they closed the road, and takes an hour instead of 20 minutes. We need about 10 cubic meters a day for the family and the flock, especially in summer.

My family and I have suffered many acts of aggression and arrests by settlers and soldiers. For example, in 2002, settlers threw stones at my brother 'Ali while he was dragging a water tank with his tractor near Havat Ma'on. In 2005, settlers chased us while we were grazing the flock near the original site of Havat Ma'on. They threw stones at the sheep and at us, slaughtered a donkey and injured another one. In 2011, I was arrested twice because the flock was grazing on land the settlers claimed was theirs. That year, a settler stabbed my brother Mahmoud, who was riding a donkey on the way to the doctor ahead of gallbladder removal surgery. He was taken to hospital.

I don't know how we can continue raising sheep here. The recent rise in the price of meat has helped us offset the cost of buying fodder, since we've lost pastureland. Without that, we would have had to sell most of the flock to avoid heavier losses that the family couldn't handle.

**Testimony of Suleiman al-Hadalin (65), a husband of two and father of 11 from Um al-Kheir:**<sup>42</sup>

My sons and I make a living from raising goats, which is our only source of income. We're originally from the area of Be'er Sheva. We came here in the 1950s, after we bought land from residents of Yatta in exchange for 100 camels. At the time, my father had a large flock with more than 1,000 heads of sheep and camels.

Our problems started when the settlements of Carmel and Ma'on were established. Settlers attack us repeatedly, destroying our tents and livestock enclosures and assaulting my sons when they go out to graze the sheep. They claim we're entering "state land" and closed military zones that intended for military training. The settlements

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41 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 14 June 2021.

42 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 28 June 2021.

blocked our way to pastureland south of the village, as well as our access by foot or on donkeys to neighboring communities such as Khirbet Tuba, a-Rakeez and a-Tuwani. Today, we can only get there by car.

Ten months ago, the Manne farm was established opposite our community, two kilometers to the southwest. Settlers there follow what we do by patrolling with ATVs and using drones. Now Um al-Kheir is surrounded in every direction. We may not be able to continue raising sheep, which is our only source of livelihood, because we've sustained too many losses due to the price of fodder and losing our access to pastureland.

Over the years, we've reduced our flocks anyway. My sons and I, 10 families, now have only 200 goats. We got rid of the camels because they need pasture, and don't bring in enough to cover the cost of fodder and veterinary care. In recent years, we've been living modestly. Our good times are a thing of the past. All we have left is the memory of living comfortably, when we had a large flock of camels and goats. We used to save money and trade it for gold. Now, our women have to sell their gold jewelry to ensure a minimal standard of living for the children, because everything is so expensive.

I don't know how long we'll last and continue to raise goats. My sons sometimes look for work in Israel, to make up for the loss of income from the flock. We live with our goats in a prison surrounded by settlements, but we have no choice. We have to hang onto this place.

**Testimony of Yusef Makhamreh (39), a husband of two and father of nine from Khirbet a-Tha'lah:<sup>43</sup>**

I live with my two wives and our nine children. The settlement of Carmel was established two

kilometers east of us. I'm a farmer and shepherd, and I currently have a flock of 200. In 2000, there were 800 sheep in my father's flock. Raising sheep was very profitable back then, because they had free food from nature most of the year, without any major expenses. People could take their flocks out to graze without any restriction, in every direction, all the way to the villages of a-Tuwani and Khirbet Tuba. The money we saved then allowed us to buy land and pay for my wedding and my brothers' weddings. The family used to make more than NIS 200,000 (~62,000 USD) a year. Now, our annual income is less than NIS 50,000 (~15,500 USD). We're a large family and it barely covers our expenses, not to mention the large cost of fodder. I owe fodder merchants more than NIS 45,000 (~14,000).

Over the years, as the settlements spread throughout the area, we lost pastureland. The last year has been the toughest. Settlers from the Manne farm watch our every move. They send drones to hover over the village, drive around on ATVs and chase our sheep. They summon the military and accuse us of entering settlements and "state land".

Three months ago, I was leading the sheep south of the village, along with my uncle Jamal and my cousin Fares. Four settlers showed up and attacked us. They threw stones at the sheep and set their dogs on them. Nine of Fares' sheep were injured. The soldiers arrested Fares. He was held in custody for a whole month and released on an NIS 5,000 (~1,550 USD) bail. Since then, no shepherd has dared go beyond the village with his sheep.

I'm afraid that if things go on like this, I'll have to sell half of my current flock or, God forbid, sell half the land to survive and make a living from this tough work. We have no other profession to make a living from, and nowhere to live other than

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43 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 13 July 2021.

Khirbet a-Tha'lah. I've never been so worried for my sons' future as I am now, this past year.

## Settler “farms” near Khirbet Zanutah

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Khirbet Zanutah is an isolated Palestinian village that lies in the southwest Hebron Hills, several kilometers north of the Green Line. It is surrounded by Israeli settlements, including an industrial zone, which have decreased the pastureland available to residents. As noted, the state is seeking to create a contiguous Israeli presence in the area, without Palestinian communities.<sup>44</sup>

The village is home to about 150 residents who make their living from shepherding and farming. The village has existed for many generations, since long before Israel occupied the West Bank. It lies on the ruins of a site dating back to the Second Iron Age (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE), which was declared an archeological site under the British Mandate. In the past, villagers resided in naturally formed caves in the area. In the 1980s, they began building stone structures and temporary structures on the edge of the archeological site.

In 2007, the Civil Administration issued demolition orders for most of the homes in the village, citing lack of building permits as the grounds. Yet as no master plans have ever been drawn up for the village, the residents had no way of receiving building permits or connecting to water and electricity infrastructure. This planning policy is practiced by Israel in all Palestinian communities in the West Bank.<sup>45</sup>

After the orders were issued, residents petitioned the High Court through the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The court issued an interim order prohibiting the state from demolishing the structures “provided the status quo remains in terms of both construction and occupation in the structures discussed, pending a decision in the petition.” In the years that have gone by since the orders were issued, the Civil Administration has confiscated construction materials slated for the construction of additional structures or bolstering existing ones.

As part of the proceedings, the court, in a break from previous practice, asked the state to clarify what would happen to the residents if their homes were demolished, and forced it to negotiate with the petitioners in order to reach a mutually agreeable solution. In January 2017, the state said it was considering changing one of the planning criteria and undertook not to demolish the structures until a decision was made. The justices delivered a judgment that kept the moratorium on construction in the village in place and instructed that the demolition orders would not be enforced until the Supreme Planning Council gave a decision, but “subject to no further construction at the site.”<sup>46</sup>

The “farms” established in the area are part of the state’s efforts to expel the residents of Khirbet Zanutah from their homes and lands. Village residents currently live in two clusters to the north and south of Road 60 – a road paved by Israel to connect settlements in the South Hebron Hills with Israel’s sovereign territory. The village is trapped between the Meitarim industrial zone and

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44 See above in the section concerning Havat Ma'on.

45 See B'Tselem, [Planning Policy in the West Bank](#).

46 HCl 9715/07 'Abd al-Halim 'Ali Salim Batat et al. v. Subcommittee for Building Enforcement et al. See also, [Cancelling Demolition Orders in Area C Village \(Khirbat Zanuta Petition\)](#), Association for Civil Rights in Israel website; Shuli Hartman, [Anthropological Expert Opinion regarding Khirbet Zanuta](#), Bimkom, July 2012 (Hebrew); Chaim Levinson, [Israel Has 30 Days to Find Solution for Residents of West Bank Village Set for Demolition](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 30 July 2012; Amira Hass, [West Bank Village Inhabited for 3,000 Years Faces Eviction](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 13 October 2013.

the adjacent solar farm to the east and southeast, and three settler farms built on either side of the road. All of these block villagers' access to their pastureland and the farmland they cultivate.

On the northern side of the road, east of the settlement of Tene, the Mor farm was established in 1999. In 2018, the Yehuda farm was established near it. Testimonies collected by B'Tselem, some of which are presented below, and information from other organizations and activists working in the area, indicate that violence by settlers from these two farms threatens the livelihoods of four families living in the northern cluster of Khirbet Zanutah, as it blocks their access to two water cisterns and to pastureland. In early 2021, a third farm was built near the southern cluster of Khirbet Zanutah homes, which until then, had been spared settler violence. The farm is located right next to fields owned by residents of this cluster and to a water cistern that served them. In the short time since its establishment, settlers from the farm have attacked Palestinian shepherds near their homes, punching them and beating them with clubs. They have sent their own flock of sheep into the Palestinians' fields, used a drone to scatter the Palestinians' flocks and damaged the water cistern.

According to a calculation that Kerem Navot made at B'Tselem's request, settlers from the northern farms have taken over an area spanning 3,200 dunams and are cultivating 85 of them. In the southern cluster, settlers have taken over an area of about 1,850 dunams and are cultivating three of them.

Shrinking pastureland and limited access to water cisterns due to violence from the settler farms have forced Palestinian shepherds to purchase animal feed and water, which makes shepherding, a traditional way of life in the area, unfeasible.

In addition, shepherding families now have to buy vegetables which they previously grew for domestic consumption near their homes.

**Testimony of Amin al-Khdeirat (35), a resident of the southern cluster of Khirbet Zanutah and father of four:<sup>47</sup>**

My brothers and I raise about 300 heads of sheep. We also have about 100 dunams of farmland east of the village, where we grow wheat and barley. We also cultivate other land owned by residents of a-Dahariya.

Khirbet Zanutah has been blocked off by the Meitarim industrial zone. Since then, we haven't been able to take the flocks there. Over the past year, the situation has grown worse, as the settler from the southern farm stops any resident who tries to go beyond the village, threatening to attack and shoot him. He uses a drone to track the movements of the residents and the sheep. He comes close to our homes and brings his flock to graze among our crops. Over the last few days, he's prevented us from reaching the well we use to water the flock. When I spoke with him about his violence and the damage to our crops, he threatened me and demanded I show him the Land Registry documents proving the land is mine. That shepherd, usually along with other settlers, harms our flock and drives us out of the pastureland claiming that its Israeli "state land".

I don't know what to do and what the other farmers and shepherds from the village will do. There are some who used to have hundreds of sheep and have already sold most of their flock. They now have small flocks of no more than 100. Many of them have gone to work in Israel, as did my brothers Hamed and Bassem. The shortage of pastureland will raise the cost of owning livestock

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47 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 20 April 2021.

and lower profits, especially given the rise in the price of fodder. If settlers continue to prevent us from reaching the cistern that we use to water our flock, we'll have to buy water, too. I don't know if we'll be able to retain this number of sheep in the future.

**Testimony of Maryam al-Khdeirat (55), Amin's sister, who also lives in the southern cluster:<sup>48</sup>**

I live with my brother Amin and help with grazing the flock my three brothers raise. The sheep are what the entire community lives off. All the women milk the sheep, make cheese, gather firewood and bring food to our brothers and husbands while they're out grazing the sheep. In summer, I also grow vegetables for the family in the valley by the village.

In early April, a settler established an outpost on the hilltop opposite the village, about 100 meters from our home. Since then, our lives have been disrupted and we've started worrying about our livelihood and future. The settler prevents us from taking the sheep out to graze far from the village and uses a drone to watch us. When we graze the flock, he comes over and threatens us with weapons. He also grazes his flock among our crops.

Since the settler attacked two of my brothers and threatened them, I haven't dared go far from the village to gather firewood as I've done for years. I have no choice but to boil the milk on a camping stove, which costs us a lot. A few days ago, while I was boiling the milk, the settlers' drone hovered over my head and scared me. I've also stopped taking food out to my brothers in the pasture and my nephews are scared to do it, too.

The new outpost limits our movement around the

village and our access to pastureland. I now stay in the village and focus on making dairy products. My brother Amin doesn't go far from the village with the sheep. He grazes them nearby and comes back earlier because there's nowhere to go. Last week he bought a large amount of fodder. I heard my brothers talking about how much it cost, and I know they're distraught.

We're used to living out in the open and moving about freely. We were born here and used to lead a good life with a good income. We made a living from our dairy products and relied on pastureland without buying a lot of fodder. We used dry wood for heating, cooking and boiling milk, and a rainwater cistern to water the flock. Now that's become too dangerous, as well, because settlers threaten the shepherds when they go to the cistern and steal their buckets. I don't see how we can grow the vegetables we used to rely on in summer. All these things cost a lot – fodder, gas, water and vegetables, which we now have to buy. We don't know what to do and how we'll make a living if the outpost stays here and its residents continue attacking us.

**Testimony of Muhammad Samamrah (42), a resident of the northern cluster of Khirbet Zanutah and father of eight:<sup>49</sup>**

My brother Nabil and I have a flock of 300 sheep and joint ownership of 20 cultivated dunams. We also cultivate plots that belong to residents of a-Dahariya. Shepherding is our primary source of income. In the 1990s, before the settlements in the area expanded, more than 30 families from a-Dahariya lived here, grazing flocks and cultivating the land. Back then, life was beautiful and calm. Today, there are only four families left, and only hundreds of sheep out of thousands. Life

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<sup>48</sup> Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 22 April 2021. See also, B'Tselem, [Khirbet Zanutah, south of Hebron: Settlers push Palestinian farmer escorted by Israeli activists and drive his flock out with kicks](#).

<sup>49</sup> Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 27 April 2021.

is getting harder by the day, and shepherding has become impossible.

In the 1990s, the settlement of Shim'a was established east of the community. Later on, the Eshtamoa farm was also established. Two years ago, the Yehuda farm and the Mor farm in Wadi a-Sumsum were built, and both block us to the west. About a month ago, a settler set up a new farm south of us. Shepherds who live on these farms stop our shepherds in their tracks and attack them. They also graze their flocks in our fields. The assaults, arrests, and threats are incessant and grow worse by the day. The shepherds here can no longer make a living. My brother Nabil and I are forced to buy fodder and only graze our flock near the village houses, several dozen meters away.

Settlers also use drones to track our movements. They send soldiers to drive shepherds away and arrest them. Sometimes, settlers attack the shepherds and threaten to shoot them. I've been assaulted several times while grazing my flock. Once, a settler from the Mor farm attacked the sheep, too, and beat them with sticks and pipes. In 2016, a settler from the Mor farm fired at me while I was grazing the flock in Wadi a-Sumsum.

My family used to make more than NIS 50,000 (~15,500 USD) a year from dairy products alone, and the same or even more from selling sheep. The cost of raising sheep was minimal compared to today. That was before the price of fodder went up. But raising sheep has become very expensive, and the income from the milk barely covers the high cost of fodder. I owe more than NIS 20,000 (~6,200 USD) to a merchant for fodder, and I don't know how I'll manage to pay him. I don't know how I'll be able to carry on supporting my family and living in this community. Life here is getting harder by the day. I've spent my whole life grazing sheep, but

now I don't know whether I'll be able to continue for long, and soon I'll have to look for other work. I don't know if I'll be able to keep this amount of sheep in the future.

**Testimony of Fares Samamrah (54), a resident of the northern cluster of Khirbet Zanutah and a father of 16:<sup>50</sup>**

I used to live in Khirbet a-Shuweika, three kilometers south of a-Dahariya, until settlers from the Eshtamoa farm took over our pastureland and we couldn't live there any more. I still have a house there. My sons and I have a large flock of more than 300 sheep. It's our large family's only source of income. We used to lease more than 200 dunams of farmland between Khirbet Zanutah and the settlement of Shim'a, on which we grew wheat and barley to feed the sheep.

Khirbet Zanutah is now surrounded from every direction. It's no longer possible to take the flock out to the pastureland we used to go to, which reaches the Separation Barrier and Wadi Sumsum to the west and the suburbs of Shim'a to the east. We're under siege, not only because of the outposts themselves, but also because the settlers attack the shepherds, surveil the area with drones, and send soldiers to drive shepherds out. In recent years, my sons have been attacked several times by settlers when they took the flock out to pasture, and have also been arrested by soldiers.

A month ago, my son Nasser (16) and I were in the pastureland. We saw settlers standing far away, and then soldiers arrived, attacked my son and detained him for several hours. A few days ago, a settler from the Yehuda farm tried to run my flock and me over while I was crossing the road near my house. As if that weren't enough, settlers from the Yehuda farm also bring their flocks to graze on land

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50 Testimony given to field researcher Musa Abu Hashhash on 27 April 2021.

that we cultivate between Khirbet Zanutah and Shim'a. They claim its "state land" and demand we show Land Registry documents that prove our ownership.

Raising sheep used to be profitable because we relied on natural pasture most of the year, and fodder was cheap back then. We made more than NIS 200,000 (~62,200 USD) a year selling dairy products and lambs. If there hadn't been settlers here, we could have raised an even larger flock. Our pastureland consisted of thousands of dunams in every direction. Now, we have to buy expensive fodder and can barely cover our expenses. Most of the year we rely on purchased fodder. There is only a short period in spring in which we can graze our flock where we live, far from the settlers' threats and from attacks and harassment by soldiers.

Because of this situation, some of my married sons have looked for work in Israel. Now, only my unmarried sons work with me and are continuing the profession I inherited from my father. I can't change profession at this stage.

## Halamish (Neve Tzuf)<sup>51</sup>

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The settlement of Halamish was established in 1977 on the northern edge of the settlement bloc that lies west of Ramallah – an area where Israel is striving to create a string of settlements and outposts without Palestinian presence, stretching from Halamish in the north to Dolev and Talmon in the south.

Halamish was built on land that belongs to the villages of a-Nabi Saleh, Deir Nizam and Um Safa. Part of the land had been used for a police

station under the British Mandate, and later for a Jordanian military base. Six hundred dunams of the area covered by Halamish previously served the Palestinian residents for farming and grazing, and were seized by military seizure order for the settlement upon its establishment. Between 1980 and 1983, 2,060 dunams in the area were declared "state land." They span most of the settlement's built-up area, including most of the land seized by military order, and a small industrial zone was built north of the settlement.<sup>52</sup>

In the last two decades, settlers from Halamish have taken over land beyond the settlement's territory, south of Road 465 – in the fertile Raya Valley that separates a-Nabi Saleh from Deir Nizam, and more land south of the settlement. Settlers currently cultivate about 135 dunams in this area. In 2008, settlers also took over the al-Qus freshwater spring, the largest in the Raya Valley. It had been used mainly by farmers from Deir Nizam and a-Nabi Saleh. This takeover sparked weekly protests in a-Nabi Saleh, held from 2009 to 2017.<sup>53</sup> In February 2010, the Civil Administration issued a military order declaring the spring an "archeological site" and prohibited any development in the area. This did not stop the settlers from turning it into a leisure spot for themselves.<sup>54</sup> In the past few years, settlers have also taken over the 'Ein al-Khaled spring, located several dozen meters away from the al-Qus spring and right next to the settlement's fence.<sup>55</sup>

Settlers from Halamish have also driven Palestinian farmers out of their own land north of Road 465, and block them from cultivating any land near the road or the settlement's fence. The violence peaked in March 2021, when settlers uprooted and

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<sup>51</sup> The settlement's official name was changed from Halamish to Neve Tzuf in 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Uri Blau, [Secret Israeli Database Reveals Full Extent of Illegal Settlement](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 1 February 2009.

<sup>53</sup> B'Tselem, [Background on the demonstrations at a-Nabi Saleh](#), 2 January 2013. See also, [How dispossession happens: the takeover of Palestinian water springs by Israeli settlers](#), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), March 2012, pp. 15-18.

<sup>54</sup> Amira Hass, [Foundations Laid in Palestinian Spring](#), **Haaretz**, 29 April 2012 (Hebrew).

<sup>55</sup> See Kerem Navot [post](#), 25 March 2021.

destroyed about 2,400 almond, peach, plum and nectarine saplings on land north of the road that belong to the a-Tamimi family from Deir Nizam. The land is cultivated as part of a program supported by the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Center for Development and funded by OXFAM.<sup>56</sup> In recent years, settlers from Halamish have also blocked an agricultural road south of the settlement that leads from the homes of Deir Nizam to the village's farmland. The head of the a-Nabi Saleh local council estimates the cumulative damage incurred by residents of a-Nabi Saleh and Deir Nizam as a result of settler violence and blocked access amounts to tens of millions of Israeli shekels.

When Zvi Bar Yosef, a settler registered as a resident of Halamish, set up a farm east of the settlement in late 2018, the violence grew worse. Settlers from the farm graze their cattle in the farmlands of the Palestinian villages of Jibya, Kobar and Um Safa, located east of the farm. They sometimes come with their herds all the way up to the homes in the village, as well as farmlands that residents of Deir Nizam cultivate north of Road 465. According to the Palestinian residents and to media reports, settlers from the farm have also blocked an agricultural road Jibya residents use to reach their lands located near the farm; threatened Palestinian farmers at gunpoint and beat them with steel bars; vandalized Palestinian vehicles; and driven away Palestinians visiting nature sites in the area.<sup>57</sup>

The Civil Administration issued demolition orders against the structures in the outpost, a truck used as a residence and other structures erected on "state land" in February 2020 – but has taken no action towards enforcing them.<sup>58</sup>

According to local residents, in this area too, the military works with the settlers to drive Palestinian farmers off their lands. When they refuse to leave, the soldiers drive them away with stun grenades and tear gas, and the military issues closed military zone orders to deny them access.<sup>59</sup>

According to a calculation Kerem Navot performed at B'Tselem's request, settlers from Halamish restrict Palestinian farmers' access to land spanning 671 dunams on both sides of Road 465. Settlers from Zvi Bar Yosef's shepherding farm, which was built east of Halamish, have taken over another 2,500 dunams that were cultivated by Palestinian farmers from Jibya, Kobar and Um Safa – villages that lie east of the farm – and were used by shepherds from those villages.

**Testimony of Muhammad 'Abiyat (63), a resident of Um Safa and father of 10, regarding acts of violence by settlers from the Zvi Bar Yosef farm:<sup>60</sup>**

This settler and the people who live with him treat our lands as if they were their own. He drives out any Palestinian he sees – farmers, landowners, hikers out strolling in nature, and residents picking wild herbs. They have a herd that grazes on everything: green, dry, whatever's in its path. The herd descends on the groves and fields like a

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56 B'Tselem, [Deir Nizam, Ramallah District: Settlers repeatedly drive farmers out of their land with help of soldiers and Israeli authorities](#), 12 May 2021.

57 [B'Tselem video – settlers graze cows in Palestinian farmer's field and threaten him](#), 19 March 2021. See also, Kerem Navot, [Zvi Bar Yosef goes on a rampage](#), 9 February 2021 (Hebrew); details of incidents included in Statement of Defense in CC (Expedited Procedure) 58423-08-20, [Zvi Bar Yosef et al. v. Kerem Navot \(Public Benefit Corporation\)](#); Hagar Shezaf, [For Second Time, Israeli Settler Filmed Expelling Arab Family Having a Picnic](#), [Haaretz English edition](#), 2 March 2021; OCHA, [Unprotected: settler attacks against Palestinians on the rise amidst the outbreak of COVID-19](#), 22 June 2020.

58 Letter of Lieutenant Yoav Bar Nes, Public Liaison and Freedom of Information Officer for Head of Civil Administration Office to Adv. Shlomy Zachary, 2 August 2020.

59 B'Tselem, [Israeli settlers and soldiers repeatedly attack a-Tamimi family on their farmland](#), April 2021; [Deir Nizam, Ramallah District: Settlers repeatedly drive farmers out of their land with help of soldiers and Israeli authorities](#), 12 May 2021.

60 Testimony given to field researcher Iyad Hadad on 3 May 2021.

swarm of locusts and destroys our trees and crops. It also destroys stone walls, holy burial sites and ancient ruins.

Over the last two years, settlers have showed up and chased me whenever I've tried to reach my olive groves. We haven't harvested the olives and have lost two years of income. Last year, I lost NIS 10,000 (~31,100 USD). In August 2019, I went with a relative to my olive grove to check on the trees ahead of the harvest. Suddenly, the settler Zvi appeared with a teen who was holding a stick. They were grazing cattle in my grove. When I tried to drive the cattle away, Zvi attacked me and ran after me, throwing stones. He could have killed me. Luckily, a guy from my village showed up and made them leave.

In February 2020, we were on our way to our land when settlers started chasing us. They came all the way up to our homes, a distance of three kilometers. They broke the branches of five olive trees before our very eyes. In October 2020, I went to check on my olive grove before the harvest again, and again they threw stones at me, chased me with sticks, and threatened me with firearms. Zvi told me, "You're not allowed to come here." He said we have no land there and that it's all a gift God gave them.

### **Testimony of Faraj Tamimi (75), a resident of Deir Nizam and father of 11:<sup>61</sup>**

My brothers and I own 100 dunams in an area known as the a-Nabi Saleh and Um Safa woods, 300 meters east of the settlement. After the settlement was established, Israel declared the land a nature reserve, and since then we haven't been able to go there. My family used to grow sesame in those woods, and it was our primary source of income. Now, I only have five plots left in the area of Wadi

Raya area. Two of them have olive trees and the others are near the springs, and we grow seasonal vegetables such as fava beans and fruit trees on them.

From 2004 and 2006, settlers burned down my fava bean crop and two years' worth of produce went down the drain. Every season, I would make NIS 10,000 (~3,110 USD). It was enough for us, we can live on a bare minimum and get by. But now we don't earn anything. We have to borrow money or take odd jobs to cover our losses and make a living.

In June 2009, settlers burned down 50 dunams of olive trees. They damaged 50 seedlings that were three years old and 177 mature trees that were 50 to 70 years old, all of them fruit-bearing. In January 2010, during the protests against the settlers' attempts to take over the al-Qus spring, settlers vandalized olive groves and damaged 45 fruit-bearing trees. Every tree can yield 15 liters of olive oil, and every liter costs NIS 25 (~8 USD).

The attacks have grown worse in recent years, since the settler Zvi Bar Yosef started setting his cattle loose in our fields. Last spring, he saw us working our land near the springs and told soldiers to drive us away. The soldiers detained us for four hours and then kicked us out. At the same time, I saw that the settler had set his herd loose in our olive groves and fava bean fields. The cows ate up everything, green or dry, like locusts. That kind of damage can make a tree dry up and die. I lost about NIS 12,000 (~3,735 USD). The next day, and in the days after that, the settler came back with the cattle and set them loose on our land.

As part of a project run by the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture and the Palestinian Center for Development, a group of 15 farmers including myself planted 2,400 almond, peach, plum and

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61 Testimony given to field researcher Iyad Hadad on 27 April 2021.

nectarine seedlings. The settlers didn't like that. The one with the cattle started coming to the groves almost every day and deliberately set the cows loose on our land. When we drove them away, they called the military, and then the soldiers argued with us and demanded we prove our ownership of the lands. Settlers also uprooted more than 150 meters of a fence erected as part of the project. When we tried to rebuild it, settlers arrived and tried to stop us. They called the military and the Civil Administration to stop the work. When that didn't help, they summoned antiquities inspectors to stop us on the pretext that were antiquities in the ground. Three days later, settlers destroyed all the trees. They broke or uprooted more than 2,000 seedlings. Volunteers and other good people helped us replant the seedlings that weren't completely ruined, as well as new ones.

Every time, the settlers call a different branch of the Civil Administration in Beit El. Once, it was the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA), then the Israeli Antiquities Authority, and later the Planning and Building Authority. One time, settlers even summoned INPA officials on the pretext we were harming nature! But nature's real enemy is the one who releases his cattle in the groves.

Now, all of my 11 sons and daughters are married, live here in the village and in Ramallah, and have various jobs. None of them work with me in agriculture, which used to be our primary source of income, because there's no future in it.

**Testimony of Muhammad Tamimi (47), a resident of Deir Nizam and father of eight:<sup>62</sup>**

I'm disabled and have only been able to walk very short distances, with crutches, since soldiers beat me during the first intifada and broke vertebrae in my spine. Later, I was injured again while working

in Israel. My family owns an olive grove with mature trees in an 11-dunam area near the fence of the Halamish settlement. There are 160 olive trees there that are 50 years old, and we used to produce about 40 jugs of olive oil a season.

The settlers won't leave us alone. In January 2010, they vandalized all the trees, including four olive trees that were hundreds of years old, which they burned so that they wouldn't grow back. It was a huge blow to our livelihood. Today, at best, we extract five to seven jugs of oil from the trees. One jug brings in about NIS 500 (~155 USD). We used to produce 40 jugs a season and make NIS 20,000 (~6,225 USD).

I have another plot of four dunams by Route 465. It has about 70 trees of different kinds: olive, pomegranate, peach, grapevines and prickly pears (sabra). The fruit from these trees covered our living expenses and more. Many people who drove along the road would stop by the land and eat from the fruit. Our fruit is renowned for its unique flavor. In 2010, the International Committee of the Red Cross helped me put up a fence to protect the land from settler vandalism, but they uprooted the fence twice. Not a month goes by without settlers damaging crops, and that's been especially true in the last two years.

One of the settlers, a cattle rancher named Zvi, comes to the area and sets his herd loose among our crops to destroy them. He is armed and is accompanied by youths, and he receives support from the military and the Civil Administration. In June 2020, he suddenly appeared while my son Rami and I were picking sage and hyssop on our land near the settlement fence. We'd managed to fill two large sacks that were worth NIS 200 (~62 USD). That's a lot of money for – the same as a laborer's daily wage. Zvi aimed his weapon at us

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62 Testimony given to field researcher Iyad Hadad on 4 May 2021.

and told us to put the sage and the hyssop on the ground and leave. He called more settlers to come in order to scare us. I called some people from the village for help, but when he saw me calling, he and the three settlers who were with him stole the sacks and went into the settlement.

In January 2021, the military raided the village because they claimed a settlers' car had been stoned. Soldiers raked my land that lies by the road and uprooted 14 of 35 olive trees.

In February 2021, I went with my young sons, Mu'az and Rami, to plant sage on the same land by the settlement fence. The settlement security guard came and told me to leave. I told him it's my land and that I have a right to work on it, but he didn't care and threatened me with his weapon. I was scared for my young sons.

Things like that happen all the time, about two or three times a month on average – whenever they notice we're working our land or putting up fences, especially as part of the agricultural project funded by the Europeans. Naturally, they don't like it, because it makes it harder for them to take over our land.

## Havat Gilad

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The outpost of Havat Gilad lies west of a segment of Road 60 that bypasses Nablus, southwest of the city itself and halfway between the settlements of Yitzhar and Shavei Shomron. It was built in

June 2002 by Itay Zer, who styles himself “the first hilltop youth,” on land he claims was purchased by his family. The exact size of the area to which he claims title is unclear.<sup>63</sup>

In the first decade after the outpost's establishment, Israel occasionally attempted to flex its law enforcement muscles against the outpost's residents. In October 2002, security forces evacuated the outpost, which, at the time, included structures built on lands belonging to the Palestinian village of Far'ata, which lies to its west. The settlers reestablished the outpost on the same spot that very night, without interference.<sup>64</sup> In 2011, security forces demolished a house, a tent and some foundations in the outpost, in two separate operations that included violent clashes with hundreds of settlers. Since then, the state has been considering options for retroactively approving the outpost.<sup>65</sup>

In February 2018, the government authorized the retroactive approval of the outpost on part of the area it covers, and decided to hook it up to the power grid and water system, as well as pave an access road “for security and humanitarian reasons.”<sup>66</sup> The decision was never implemented, and the outpost still has no approved master plan. The extensive construction within it has all been carried out without a permit. The Civil Administration has so far issued demolition orders for about 136 structures in the outpost.<sup>67</sup>

About 65 families reside in the outpost currently,

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63 Eyal Levy, [The first hilltop youth opens a window into complicated life in Samaria](#), *Maariv*, 7 January 2015 (Hebrew). See also, the three-episode TV documentary, [Doing God's Work](#), Kan – the Israel Broadcasting Corporation (Hebrew).

64 Baruch Kra, [Security Forces to File Charges Against 12 Havat Gilad Protestors](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 13 November 2002; Chaim Levinson, [Court Dismisses Moshe Zer Lawsuit over Alleged Damage during Havat Gilad Evacuation](#), *Haaretz*, 4 October 2009 (Hebrew).

65 Chaim Levinson, [Crowd Control Weapons used with “Restraint and Professionalism” during Havat Gilad Evacuation](#), *Haaretz*, 6 March 2011 (Hebrew); Chaim Levinson, [Israel's Defense Minister Considering Legalizing Disputed West Bank Outpost](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 19 June 2013.

66 Government Resolution No. 3515 dated 4 February 2018 regarding the Establishment of a Community in the Samaria Regional Council. See also, Section D of the Government Secretary Announcement at the end of government meeting on 4 February 2018. See also, Yotam Berger, Noa Landau and Jonathan Lis, [Israeli Cabinet Agrees to Advance Relocation of Slain Rabbi's West Bank Outpost](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 4 February 2018.

67 Civil Administration Illegal Construction Layer, received by Kerem Navot in 2020. See also, Yotam Berger, [West Bank Outpost Cannot Be Authorized Because It's Mostly Built on Private Palestinian Land, Say Security Sources](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 17 January 2018.

most of them in permanent homes. There are also a Yeshiva, a synagogue and childcare centers. As far as B'Tselem is aware, the outpost has no connection to running water or power, but residents do have a steady supply of water and use generators for electricity.

In 2019, a farm named Yetedot was set up about 800 meters southeast of Havat Gilad. It has a large sheep and goat pen and several movable structures. The farm was built in an area that had already been effectively cut off from Palestinians by residents of Havat Gilad. The Civil Administration issued demolition orders against all eight structures on the farm, but has not enforced them.

As in Havat Ma'on and other outposts built during the second intifada, in Havat Gilad land was also misappropriated through violence settlers committed against Palestinian shepherds and farmers and against Israeli human rights activists. Here too, security forces have been fully aware of the violence and helped the settlers drive Palestinian farmers away from their lands.<sup>68</sup> The violence spread to lands belonging to the villages of Tell, Jit and Sarra, which lie north of Road 60, as well as to the south and east, to lands belonging to the villages of Far'ata and Immatin.<sup>69</sup>

Complaints filed by residents regarding this violence have not been investigated by the police. For example, complaints filed by four residents of local villages regarding trespass on their lands, the erection of structures and the clearing of roads have not been investigated, with the police claiming the complainants have not proven ownership of the land in question. A petition filed with the High Court of Justice following the decision made by the police was dismissed after the judges accepted the reason cited by the police and added that law enforcement and investigation authorities enjoy broad discretion with respect to launching criminal investigations.<sup>70</sup>

Violence by settlers from Havat Gilad has included field torching, olive tree cutting, olive crop theft, tree burning, car torching and shots fired in the air. Sometimes, when a resident of the outpost is hurt by Palestinian stone-throwing, settlers attack Palestinian drivers on Road 60.<sup>71</sup>

According to a calculation prepared by Kerem Navot at B'Tselem's request, settlers from Havat Gilad have taken over 2,576 dunams in the area, 60 of which are cultivated by settlers. This land includes hundreds of plots that residents of Immatin, Far'ata and Sarra cultivated before the outpost was built.

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68 For more, see Kan – Israel Broadcasting Corporation, [Doing God's Work](#), (Hebrew); Breaking the Silence, **ON DUTY**, supra note 19, pp. 69-70.

69 For examples, see, Amira Hass, [Palestinians Expelled from Olive Grove near Havat Gilad](#), **Haaretz**, 31 October 2002 (Hebrew). Yesh Din, [Stealing with the State's Permission](#), 20 June 2013 (Hebrew); B'Tselem, [Adding insult to injury: Israel officially recognizes Gilad Farm settlement outpost after turning blind eye to land seizure and harassment of Palestinians there for 15 years](#), 27 February 2018.

70 HCJ 1252/19 **Mustafa Ibrahim Mustafa Ghanam et al. v. Shai District Commander**.

71 See, e.g., B'Tselem reports, [Settlers attack Palestinian olive harvesters in Far'ata, Qalqilyah District](#), 25 October 2006; [Testimony: Settlers from Gilad Farm assault farmers from Far'ata and steal a goat of theirs, April 2008](#), 5 April 2008; [Testimony: Settlers attack Palestinian farmers on their land, Jan. '09](#), 10 January 2009; [35 tree vandalism cases in 6 weeks, 28 October 2010](#); B'Tselem to authorities: [Deploy to protect Palestinians from expected settler violence](#), 2 March 2011; [Five attacks on olive harvesters and damaged olive groves in four days](#), 11 October 2012; [Olive harvest 2013: 27 cases of abuse of harvesters and property-damage indicate military's preparation inadequate](#), 25 December 2013; [Olive harvest, 2018: Israeli settlers injure Palestinian farmers, harm trees and steal olives](#), 6 December 2018; [Far'ata, Qalqilyah District: Farmers who came to harvest olives discovered settlers had harvested their trees and stolen the crop](#), 13 October 2020. See also Yesh Din reports, [Offender Unknown](#), 22 February 2013 (Hebrew); [With Ya'alon's Patronage](#), 25 June 2013 (Hebrew); [And Thou Shall Remain Robbed and Oppressed for All Your Days](#), 26 May 2016 (Hebrew). See also, Gideon Levy and Miki Kratsman, [Twilight Zone / Field of Nightmares](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 17 June 2011. Chaim Levinson, [Two Settlers Convicted of Setting Fire to Palestinian's Car in Plea Bargain](#), **Haaretz**, 1 December 2014 (Hebrew); Jack Khoury and Yotam Berger, [Settlers Filmed Stealing Olives from Palestinian Grove in Northern West Bank. Suspects Detained and Released](#), **Haaretz**, 18 October 2017 (Hebrew); Gideon Levy and Alex Levac, [A Palestinian Farmer Finds Dead Lambs in His Well. He Knows Who's to Blame](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 15 March 2019; Yaniv Kubovich, [Settler Suspected of Assaulting Military Commander in Demo Over Teen's Death](#), **Haaretz English edition**, 10 January 2021.

The Israeli authorities are perfectly aware of the situation. Yet instead of ensuring that Palestinians can access their lands and cultivate them safely, they designed a “coordination mechanism” and require farmers to make prior arrangements with the military in order to gain access to their lands. This same system is applied in vast farming areas north of Road 60.

**Testimony of ‘Abdallah Salman (57), a resident of Far’ata and father of six:<sup>72</sup>**

I inherited 34 dunams of land from my father east of the village of Far’ata. The plot now lies between the village and Havat Gilad. It has fruit-yielding olive trees. Before the settlers came in 2002 and took over our lands, I grew wheat and barley there, too. But because of their attacks and intimidation and the fact that they prevent us from accessing our land, we can’t use it for dryland farming. The last time I grew wheat there was in 2002. Back then, I harvested 15 sacks of wheat and 150 sacks of straw that I sold to farmers and sheep breeders as animal feed. Since then, I’ve only relied on the olive harvest. In 2001, I harvested 60 sacks of olives, which are enough to produce 660 liters of oil. Last year, I only harvested five sacks because we can’t go to the land regularly and tend to it properly.

My family and I have been attacked by settlers several times on our land. In 2004, I was working the land with my wife and our younger sons when settlers attacked us with stones and clubs. That year, settlers also cut down 40 olive trees I had planted two years earlier. We continued going to the land from time to time, sometimes accompanied by Israeli activists for protection. That went on until 2005. That year, the military decided to bar everyone who owned land near the

outpost from accessing their land without prior coordination with the Israeli DCO, and even then only at fixed points in the year.

The provocations and the attacks by settlers continue and sometimes take place in the presence of soldiers. They don’t protect us, but only support and protect the settlers.

**Testimony of Jihad Ramadan (53), a resident of Tell and father of five:<sup>73</sup>**

My brothers and I inherited 18 dunams from my grandfather’s wife in the western part of Tell, in an area called Qa’adat al-Jamus four kilometers from the village. We grew wheat and barley there, as well as vegetables. The family, including uncles and aunts on my mother’s side, used to gather on the land all year round. We helped each other. I celebrated my childhood and spent my adolescence there.

In 2003, settlers set up trailers on my land. I haven’t been there since then, because the soldiers arrive immediately and make us leave. The military is always in the area. Many residents have been attacked by settlers, and some ended up in hospital. Going there is really dangerous and only residents of Tell who have no other source of income, mostly the elderly or those who have no other land, continue to do so.

The younger generation, such as my sons, doesn’t know the land or the area. They may never set foot there. It’s the land I grew up on. I know every inch of it. It provided for the whole family and is the reason we could afford school and university.

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72 Testimony given to field researcher Abdulkarim Sadi on 30 June 2021.

73 Testimony given to field researcher Salma a-Deb’i on 1 July 2021.

**Testimony of Bassem ‘Arman (72), a resident of Jit and father of 10:**<sup>74</sup>

I have 30 dunams east of Jit, about 200 meters from the homes of Havat Gilad. We used the land to plant olive trees and grow lentils, wheat, barley and dryland farming crops. Every year, we harvested about 60 sacks of wheat, grain and straw that I sold to farmers for their livestock. The olive harvest was also very successful. Because the trees received ongoing care, I was able to produce about 50 jugs of olive oil a year. That’s how it was until the settlers came. Since then, we’ve been forbidden to be on our land.

Israel has established a coordination system that allows us and others who own land close to the settlement to access our land at set times, and even then, only for a short period. During the olive harvest, we don’t have enough time to harvest all the trees. Because of the restrictions, it’s become difficult to grow crops on the land. In the 2015 olive harvest, we were surprised to discover that settlers had broken and cut down 45 olive trees on our land, a few days before we were scheduled to harvest them according to the coordinated date.

Last olive harvest, they allowed us to enter our land for three days only, which wasn’t enough to complete the harvest and tend to the soil. This year, 2021, they allowed us entry for a single day, which, of course, isn’t enough time for to harvest, weed and prune the branches. The neglect affects the yield. Last year, I only produced four jugs of olive oil because I couldn’t tend to the trees, fertilize them and prune them.

**Testimony of Muhammad Salman (73), a resident of Far’ata and father of 16:**<sup>75</sup>

I used to have a large flock with more than 250 sheep. I relied on our pastures east of Far’ata,

which are uncultivated areas without trees. There are 500 dunams of grazing land there belonging to residents of the villages of Tell, Sarra and Far’ata. I would graze my flock there every day from morning till sunset.

In 2017, Havat Gilad expanded and settlers took over land east of the farm, too, in the area I would graze the flock. They set up shacks, tents and trailers, and they have a large flock of sheep and goats. They drove us out of the pastureland and called the military to help them. Since then, soldiers fire tear gas canisters at our flock and at us to force us out. The attacks have stopped us altogether from taking the flock to graze in the area.

We’ve had to leave the flock at home and buy fodder. The expenses were once minimal and have significantly increased, while the profits have shrunk. I had to buy eight sacks of fodder a day, each costing NIS 800 (~250 USD). After a few months of spending more than what we made from dairy products, I had no choice but to sell most of the flock. I kept only 15 sheep for my extended family’s personal use.

My children are all married with kids, and they’ve started looking for other jobs. Some have gone to work in settlements, and some in day labor in our village or in nearby villages. I helped others buy trucks to work with and support the family.

The settlers’ attacks continue. In May 2021, I took the sheep out to graze in an area east of Far’ata and three settlers attacked me. One of them threw a stone at my head. I managed to hide in a bale of straw, and the settlers thought I was dead and left. My sheep went home alone and I only went back after the settlers had gone. Then my family took me to hospital in Qalqilyah. I got seven stitches and stayed home for about two weeks.

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74 Testimony given to field researcher Abdulkarim Sadi on 14 July 2021.

75 Testimony given to field researcher Abdulkarim Sadi on 20 June 2021.

## The Um Zuqa settler farm (“Uri’s farm”)

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The Um Zuqa farm is one of six “farms” set up by settlers in the northern Jordan Valley in the past five years. This particular farm was built in late 2016 on a site that housed the Palestinian village of Khirbet al-Mzoqah, which Israel demolished after occupying the West Bank.<sup>76</sup>

As in the South Hebron Hills, Israel is working to displace Palestinian shepherding communities from their lands and homes in the area in order to achieve Israeli territorial contiguity. The state employs various means towards this end: declaring vast areas as “firing zones” or “nature reserves,” refraining from approving construction plans in Palestinian communities, destroying water and energy infrastructure and repeatedly demolishing entire hamlets. The “farms” are another tool Israel uses to swiftly take over grazing fields and water sources and block Palestinian shepherding communities’ access to them.<sup>77</sup>

The farm is located on the western edge of an area Israel declared Firing Zone 903 in 1972.<sup>78</sup> In 1983, vast areas around and including the firing zone were declared a nature reserve. The military has not trained in the area for several years, partly due to its proximity to the settlement of Hemdat.

The farm was initially set up near the military base of Um Zuqa, where a battalion of the Jordan Valley Regional Brigade is based. Its residents hooked up to the water infrastructure serving the base. It later moved about two kilometers north, to a hill inside

the nature reserve overlooking the settlement of Shadmot Mehola and the Jordan Valley to the east. The farm was hooked up to the water infrastructure serving the settlement of Hemdat.<sup>79</sup> In September, work began on a new farm near the military base.

As of June 2021, the farm had about 10 structures, including one permanent home. An unpaved access road, cleared without a permit, connects the farm to the old Jordanian road that runs between the military base and Road 90. Watering stations for the farm’s cattle herd, all connected to the settlements’ water infrastructure, were set up along the old road and to the west of it. Fences were also erected along the road to prevent Palestinian shepherds’ flocks from entering the grazing fields designated for the farm’s cattle. Farm residents have also taken over cisterns used for storing rainwater that once served the Palestinian shepherds, and have begun clearing dozens of dunams for future crop farming.

All the structures on the farm were built without permits. The Civil Administration has issued demolition orders and “orders to remove new construction” against them all, but has never enforced them.<sup>80</sup> According to a report in Israeli daily *Haaretz*, the GOC Central Command has issued an order not to evacuate the outpost.<sup>81</sup>

Documentation by human rights organizations and field activists indicates that since the farm was built, Palestinians from the shepherding communities of Khirbet Samrah and Khallet Makhul have been violently denied access to the vast pastureland inside the nature reserve, which they had used

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76 Map No. 324 in: Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, *The Atlas of Palestina (1917-1966)*, Palestine Land Society (2010 Edition).

77 About this policy, see, B’Tselem, [Dispossession and Exploitation: Israel’s Policy in the Jordan Valley and Northern Dead Sea](#), May 2011. See also, Yotam Berger, [Israel Helped Establish 14 Illegal West Bank Outposts Since 2011](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 25 December 2017.

78 The firing zone was declared by the GOC Central Command in 1972 per Order regarding Security Provisions [Incorporated Version] (Judea and Samaria) (No. 1651) – 2009. See State response in HCJ 435/19 *Dafna Banai et al. v. GOC Central Command et al.*

79 Amira Hass, [Military Camp Illegally Supplied Water to Unauthorized Outpost in Jordan Valley](#), *Haaretz*, 23 April 2017 (Hebrew).

80 Order for Removal of New Structure No. 10381, pursuant to Order for Removal of New Structures (Judea and Samaria) (No. 1797) – 2018.

81 Amira Hass, [Analysis | There’s a Different Kind of Escalation Brewing in the West Bank](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 2 March 2019.

for years. A petition filed with the Supreme Court listed more than 30 incidents of settler violence, including threats to Palestinian shepherds and their flocks by riding ATVs or horses into or near the flocks, setting dogs on flocks, damaging property, throwing stones, parading threateningly amid the tents of Khirbet Samrah, and more.<sup>82</sup> In many other cases, settlers from the farm had soldiers or Civil Administration personnel issue closed military zone orders in order to detain the shepherds and the Israeli human rights activists escorting them.<sup>83</sup>

According to a calculation prepared by Kerem Navot at B'Tselem's request, settlers from Um Zuqa "farm" have taken 14,979 dunams – roughly two-thirds of the nature reserve. Settlers from the farm are already cultivating 99 dunams of this land.

### **Testimony of 'Abed Daraghmeh (83), a resident of Khirbet Samrah and father of nine:<sup>84</sup>**

The lands of al-Mzoqah and Khirbet Samrah are ours, owned by us and by other families in the area. Each of us had a plot. People lived peacefully and could move about freely, day or night. At night, we would go to spend time in the area and could come and go without any problems.

Our suffering started with the occupation. All of a sudden, we lost our life of peace and security. Armed soldiers arrived while our food was cooking over bonfires. They destroyed everything and drove us out. We left the pots on the fires and ran. We didn't take anything with us. It was like the Day of Judgement. Everyone was running around in a panic, as if they didn't know each other. No one

understood what was happening. We went to the area of Tubas and it took us several days to recover and start to work out who was alive and who was dead.

In late 2016, settlers arrived and put up a trailer in al-Mzoqah, near the military base. A family of settlers moved in with a herd of cattle. Since there, we've suffered every day. Their cattle graze in vast areas and every time we encounter settlers, they chase us with their dogs, throw stones at us and at our flocks, and call the military. Soldiers come and help the settlers, driving us out and often detaining us for hours. Since then, the settlers started taking over more land. Every day they added something – a livestock pen, a shed, a shack – until they'd closed off the area.

In the last two years, we manage now and then to reach the pastureland with activists. But even that's no longer possible, because they've fenced off the whole area. They've taken over all the farmland in the area – land that provided the food for us and for our flocks. The land saved us a lot of money, because we didn't have to buy fodder.

We've had to sell part of our flock to pay off debts for buying fodder and water. We used to grow all sorts of crops on our lands. We produced a lot and had few expenses, because there was open pasture and the flock drank from springs and streams. Now, there's nothing. We have to buy everything. A cubic meter of water costs us NIS 25 (~8 USD), including transportation. We buy the fodder in tons, and all on credit. We're supposed to pay up by the end of

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82 See B'Tselem, [Dispossession in the northern Jordan Valley: New settlement outposts as part of the land grab process](#), 17 January 2018. See also HCJ 435/19 [Dafna Banai et al. v. GOC Central Command et al.](#)

83 Amira Hass, [Palestinian Shepherds Reportedly Assaulted by Israeli Civilians, Soldiers Near West Bank Outpost](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 11 February 2017; Amira Hass, [Israelis Attacked Activists in the West Bank. So the Israeli Army Bars the Activists](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 14 May 2017; Amira Hass, [For Uri's Farm, even a Colonel Gets Up Early](#), *Haaretz*, 23 December 2018 (Hebrew). Amira Hass, [Untamed Israeli Soldier Tells Truth. His Commanders Rush to Deny It](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 18 August 2019; Amira Hass, [In West Bank, Jewish Settlers Recruit Nature to Their Mission – With the High Court's Consent](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 19 January 2020; Nir Hasson, [Israel Impounds Palestinian's Cows Grazing on Nature Reserve, Ignores Settlers' Cows](#), *Haaretz English edition*, 18 November 2020.

84 Testimony given to field researcher 'Aref Daraghmeh on 2 June 2021.

the season, but sometimes we don't make enough to cover the debt.

The merchants don't want to come to our area any more, because they're afraid of the settlers and the military. That's why our prices, for the lambs and for dairy products, have plummeted. We sell the cheese for NIS 15 (~4.5 USD) a kilo. All because the customers are afraid to come here, because of the settler violence. Believe me, even when we go shopping in Tubas, we're nervous the whole way and just hope to get home safely.

When the settlers came here four years ago, we thought they would eventually leave. We didn't know they were here to stay and take over our land. We even thought we'd get our land back in other areas, which were taken from us years ago. But then we understood they're here for a reason and aren't acting alone but are working with the occupation authorities, including the military. From the moment they arrived, the military provided them with everything – water, electricity, roads, transportation – to allow them to settle on our lands for good, live comfortably and enjoy everything. We, who own the land, aren't allowed to enjoy a single cubic meter of water, even though the pipes run right past our land. They even forbid us from restoring a rainwater cistern to use that water.

I don't know what will happen to us. As far as we're concerned, we're staying on our land and raising our flock despite the harsh conditions imposed on us, because we have no other livelihood. Our lands and those of our families are here, but we live as though we're in prison.

**Testimony of Fawzi Daraghmeh (47), a resident of Khirbet Samrah and father of nine:<sup>85</sup>**

There used to be many families in our village, but they left in search of a better life far from

the demolitions, persecution and fear that the occupation instills in our sons and little children. The lands of Khirbet al-Mzoqah belong to us, but we're barred entry on the grounds that they're inside a nature reserve. We've been fined several times for entering our land with our flocks.

The settlers have dozens of heads of cattle that roam around without a shepherd. God help anyone who lays a finger on their cattle. They immediately call the military, and soldiers arrive and threaten us. Sometimes they also detain us for long hours for no reason, only to pressure us to leave our lands and to drive us out. They're all in it together – the military, the settlers, the police and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. Every arm invents a different punishment and drives us out of the pastureland.

A year ago, I was out grazing my flock when suddenly, a settler showed up on an ATV and drove around violently among the sheep. He ran over the shepherd dog's legs. I moved away quickly and went back to the tents in Samrah. I was afraid he'd shoot me or kill my sheep.

It's become a matter of routine. Settlers have already killed sheep in many areas throughout the Jordan Valley, attacked shepherds and beaten them. They chase us almost every day, surrounding us and attacking our sheep with stones and clubs. Every morning, the other shepherds and I go out as usual to the pastures and spread out in, and then we call to update each other what's going on and where there are settlers.

Before the settlers took over our land, our grazing areas and our wells, I had 130 heads of sheep and would buy 10 tons of fodder a year. Every ton cost me NIS 1,200 (~370 USD), and I would pay in cash. I'd buy 30 to 50 cubic meters of water a month,

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85 Testimony given to field researcher 'Aref Daraghmeh on 2 June 2021.

which cost about NIS 1,000 (~310 USD). My flock was healthy, because of the abundance and the constant movement. Now, even though I have less sheep, I've had to sell some to pay off debts. I buy 20 tons of fodder, twice as much as before, and even more water. I can't provide my flock with less food or water. It would make them fall ill, lose weight and even die.

The cost of veterinary drugs and inoculations for the flock has also gone up, from NIS 1,000 (~310 USD) to 3,000 (~930) a year. Because of my growing debt, I've had to postpone some of my sons' university studies. We go without a lot and don't buy things so we can afford fodder for the flock. The shop owners already refuse to sell us goods on credit sometimes. They don't believe we'll pay.

**Testimony of Samaher Bsharat (45), a resident of Khallet Makhul and mother of 11:**<sup>86</sup>

I live with my family in tents made of crude fabric and tin. We were always able to graze our flock in extensive pastureland. We had security and lived in dignity. We also managed to save up. Because the pasture was free and there was plenty of rainwater in the cisterns from winter, we only had to buy a little fodder and water.

We've been suffering ever since the settlers came to the area. They chase us all the way to our very doorstep, and their cattle and sheep come here and eat our winter crops. They leave us nothing. The military stands by them and protects them, and the soldiers help them chase after the shepherds.

Now, we're forced to buy double or triple quantities of fodder and water. We can't afford not to feed the sheep. We have to lock them up in pens and they barely move, maybe two or three hours a day before we put them back in the pens.

I'm afraid to tell my husband that we need things or that I want to visit someone, because he gets upset and says, "I don't have any money." He really doesn't. We live sparsely and forgo essentials so we can afford food, livestock and medicine for the flock.

Almost every day, I sit with my husband and daughters and we think about what to do. Everyone says it's pointless to continue raising livestock because of the losses, and that we have to sell the flock and find another occupation. But we have no other livelihood. Where will we go? Work for other people and be humiliated? In the meantime, we have to sell a sheep or a goat every day.

I have children who attend school and university. I can't take them out and must pay their tuition. I have a daughter who's married and lives in Nablus. I think ten times before I get in a taxi to visit her, because it's another expense. I make do with talking to her on the phone. We just want to live like everyone else. These areas have been ours for many years, and suddenly we're told we can't access them.

**Testimony of Burhan Bsharat (48), a resident of Khallet Makhul and father of nine:**<sup>87</sup>

I've lived in Khallet Makhul for decades and work in shepherding, a profession I inherited from my father and grandfather. East of Khallet Makhul is the area of al-Mzoqah, which was demolished in 1967. There are open spaces there, and that's where we would take the flock to graze after the occupation forces eased their restrictions on taking animals into nature reserves.

Up until five years ago, we grazed the flock on that land up to a distance of five kilometers east or

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86 Testimony given to field researcher 'Aref Daraghme on 29 July 2021.

87 Testimony given to field researcher 'Aref Daraghme on 3 June 2021.

west. Then disaster befell us, when new settlers came and set up a farm in al-Mzoqah. They brought cattle and sheep with them in large quantities and closed off the whole area with chain-link fences and poles. Their cattle and sheep roam the vast expanses of land that reach as far as our tents here in Khallet Makhul. They attack us daily in the pastures. They bring dogs and horses and drive us out forcefully with the help of soldiers, who always arrive according to the settlers' orders. All that has forced us to stay close to our tents and graze the sheep only near our tents and dwellings.

Our lives have become hell because of the settlers who arrived here, and because we can no longer access the pastureland. We've accumulated heavy debts because we have to buy fodder. We save wherever we can to feed the flock, which is our only source of income. I owe more than NIS 20,000 (~6,225 USD) for fodder and water. I had no such debts when the pastures were open. There were rainwater cisterns in the area that we used to water the flocks. Now we can no longer reach them and settlers use them for their cattle, even though they have water pipes coming from the military bases next to them.

The occupation forces are barbaric. They're inhumane, and their goal is to expel people by hurting their livelihood and taking over their land. They've demolished the structures in our village several times in order to drive us out of our land and away from our livelihood. They say it's because we don't have a permit, but when settlers took over thousands of dunams in al-Mzoqah and built everything, no one asked them for permits. Force is what holds sway in these parts.

We've deprived ourselves of many things to repay our debts and pay for fodder and water. We've also sold many heads of sheep for that purpose. Some families have had to sell the wife's gold jewelry to pay off debt. Our lives have become pointless. What

can we do? Where can we go? We have families and want to survive, even with bare basics. We want to live just like the rest of the world, even at a third of the standard of life provided to the children of the settlers, who have deprived us of life and enjoy all the richness that our lands in al-Mzoqah produce. We will stay; we have nowhere else to go.

# Conclusions

Settler violence against Palestinians has been taking place year-round, all over the West Bank, for many years. The violent attacks are carried out by settlers from well-established settlements, from unofficial outposts and from the newest form of settlement – “farms”. They have long since become part of daily life for Palestinian residents of the West Bank.

As this report shows, these attacks are not perpetrated by “bands of outlaws” or “bad seeds,” nor are they simply “violent outbursts” or “unusual incidents.” Settler attacks against Palestinians are a strategy employed by the Israeli apartheid regime, which seeks to advance and complete its misappropriation of more and more Palestinian land. As such, settler violence is a form of government policy, permitted and aided by official state authorities with their active participation.

The state legitimizes this reality in two complementary ways. It allows settlers to live, farm and graze livestock on land from which Palestinians have been violently ejected, and to that end pays for security, paves roads, provides infrastructure and supports financial enterprises in these outposts through various government ministries. At the same time, it gives settlers free rein to commit violent acts against Palestinians. The military does not confront violent settlers. It does not prevent the attacks, and in some cases, soldiers even participate in them. The Israeli law enforcement system does not take action against settlers who harm Palestinians after the fact and whitewashes the few cases it is called upon to address.

Meanwhile, the Israeli apartheid regime openly and formally uses a slew of violent methods to displace Palestinian communities. The state engages in actions designed to create exasperating, intolerable living conditions for Palestinians in order to push them into leaving their homes

and lands, ostensibly of their own free will. This policy includes a blanket ban on construction for residential and public purposes and any future development in these communities, a refusal to connect communities to basic infrastructure – running water and electricity – or build access roads. When, having no other choice, residents build homes, lay infrastructure or pave roads, the Civil Administration issues demolition orders, and the justices of Israel’s Supreme Court uphold them. Even when the orders are not enforced, the threat of demolition constantly looms over the residents.

The apartheid regime is based on organized, systemic violence against Palestinians, which is carried out by numerous agents: the government, the military, the Civil Administration, the Supreme Court, the Israel Police, the Israel Security Agency, the Israel Prison Service, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, and others. Settlers are another item on this list, and the state incorporates their violence into its own official acts of violence. Settler violence sometimes precedes instances of official violence by Israeli authorities, and at other times is incorporated into them. Like state violence, settler violence is organized, institutionalized, well-equipped and implemented in order to achieve a defined strategic goal.

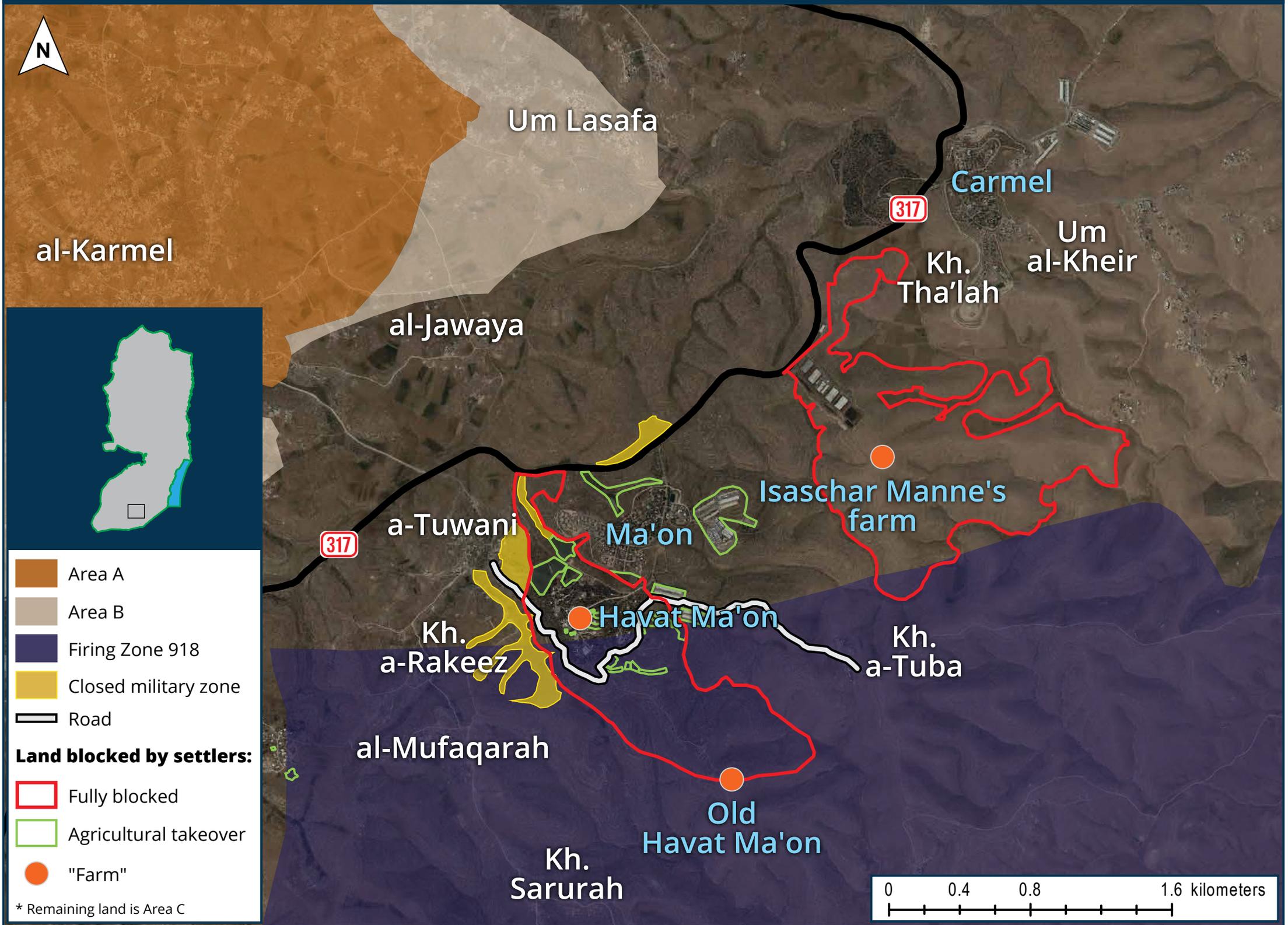
The combination of state violence and nominally unofficial violence allows Israel to have it both ways: maintain plausible deniability and blame the violence on settlers rather than on the military, the courts or the Civil Administration while advancing Palestinian dispossession. The facts, however, blow plausible deniability out of the water: When the violence occurs with permission and assistance from the Israeli authorities and under its auspices, it is state violence. The settlers are not defying the state; they are doing its bidding.

Israel’s approach to Palestinians, reflected also in the context of settler violence, is instrumental,

bereft of any sense of obligation to protect them, their property or their dignity. The frightening banality with which Israeli authorities legitimize and normalize violence against Palestinians illustrates how deeply rooted its dehumanization of Palestinians has become after decades of apartheid, occupation and dispossession.

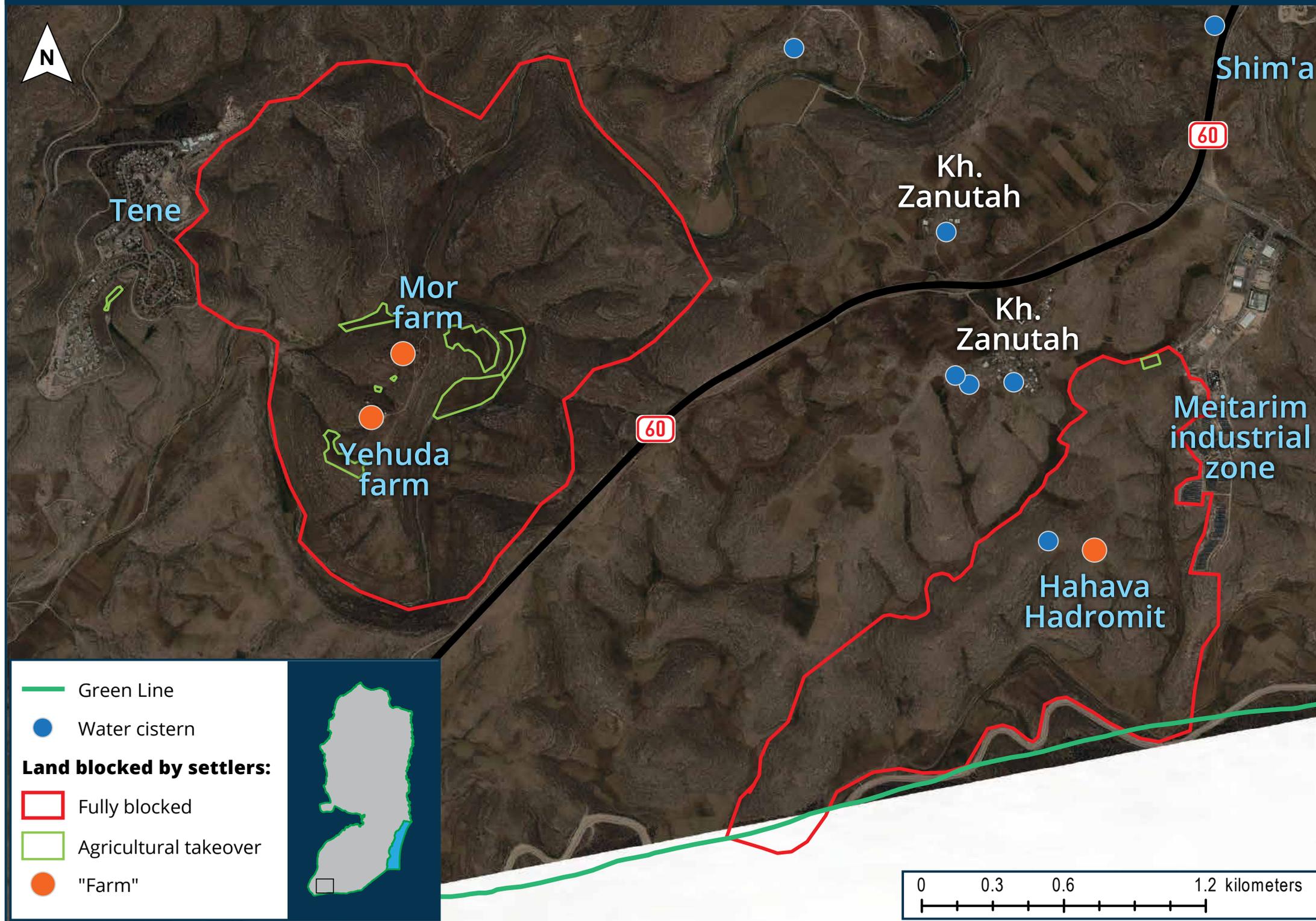


# HAVAT MA'ON - LAND ISRAEL HAS BLOCKED TO PALESTINIANS USING SETTLER VIOLENCE

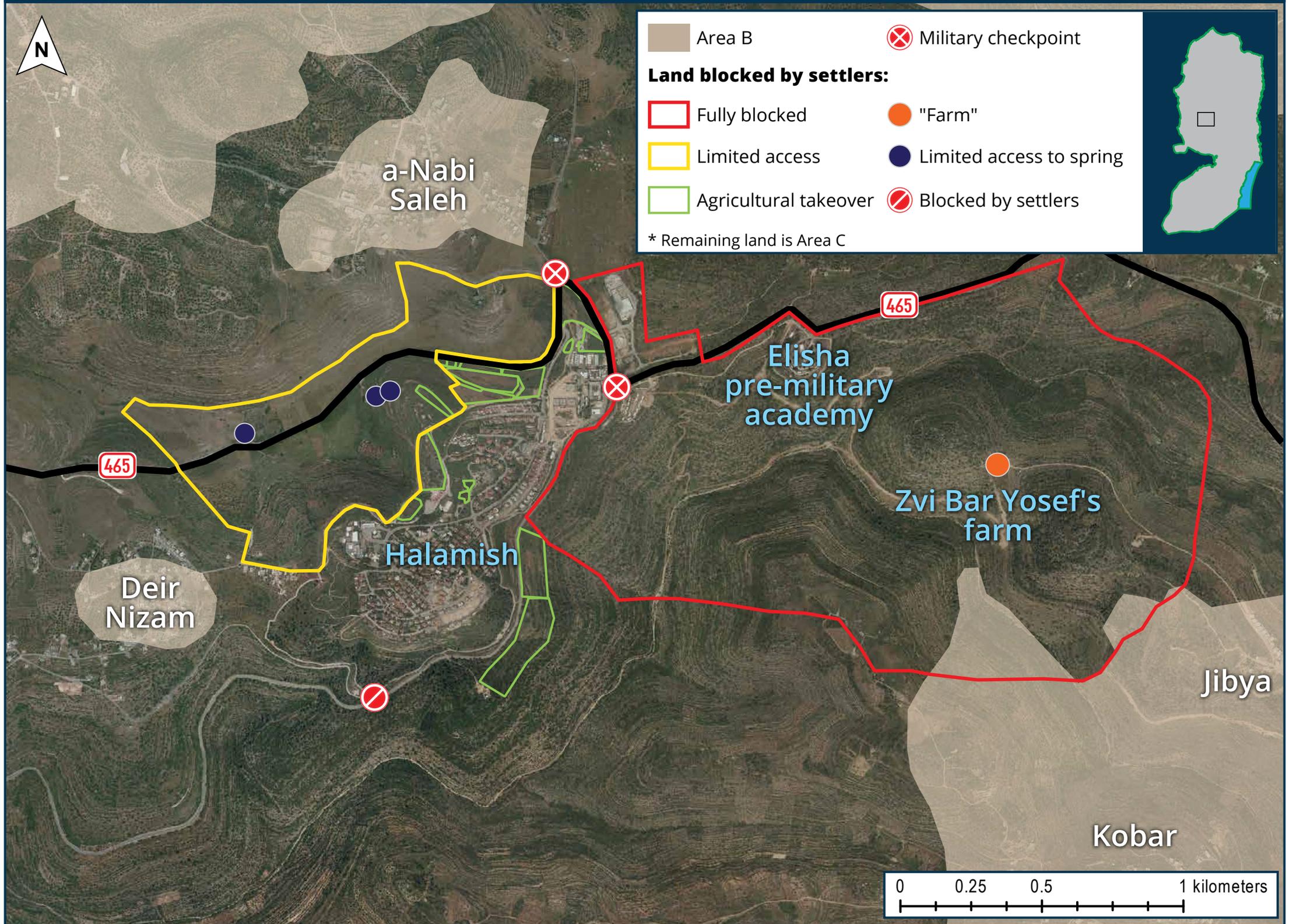


\* Remaining land is Area C

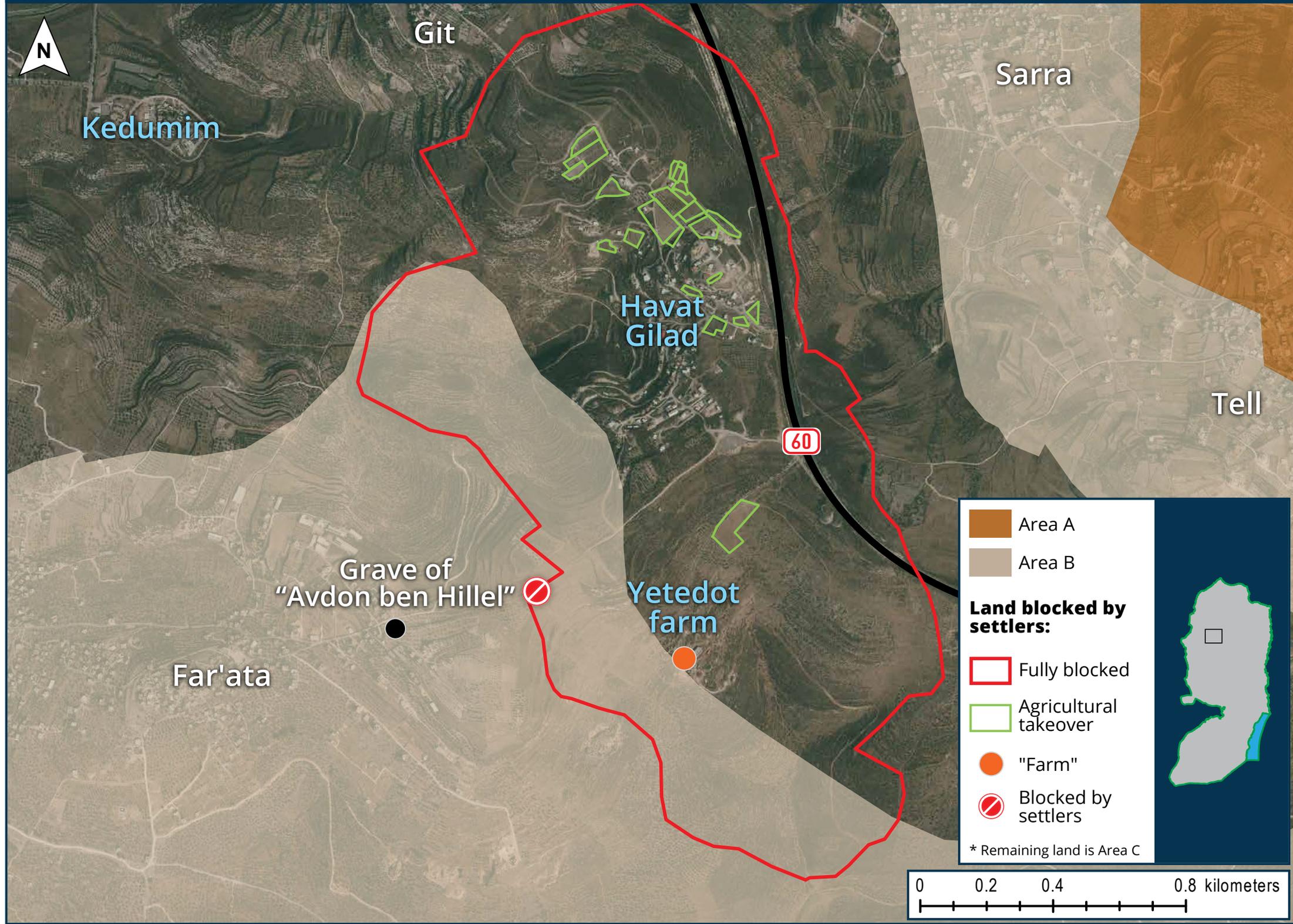
# KH. ZANUTAH - LAND ISRAEL HAS BLOCKED TO PALESTINIANS USING SETTLER VIOLENCE



# HALAMISH - LAND ISRAEL HAS BLOCKED TO PALESTINIANS USING SETTLER VIOLENCE



# HAVAT GILAD - LAND ISRAEL HAS BLOCKED TO PALESTINIANS USING SETTLER VIOLENCE



# UM ZUQA - LAND ISRAEL HAS BLOCKED TO PALESTINIANS USING SETTLER VIOLENCE

