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EUROPEAN UNION

Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA)

**2022 Report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem
Reporting period -January - December 2022**

Summary

The number of settlement plans and tenders advanced in 2022 was higher than in the previous year. In 2022, 28,208 units were advanced in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, compared to 22,030 in 2021, representing almost a 30% increase. In particular the advancement of settlement units in East Jerusalem contributed to this unprecedented number. In 2022, 23,586¹ units were advanced in East Jerusalem, compared to 4,427 in the West Bank.

The advancement, in 2022, in particular of the settlements and settlement plans E1, E2, Givat HaShaked, Har Gilo West, and the Lower Aqueduct, are a serious cause of concern. If constructed, they would disconnect East Jerusalemites from major West Bank urban areas, such as Bethlehem and Ramallah, having serious implications on Palestinian urban contiguity and posing a serious threat to a viable two-state solution.

Other trends and developments contributing to settlement expansion in the reporting period included advancements of infrastructure and road projects. The rise in settlement expansion plans by the Israeli authorities was also accompanied by a worrisome trend of rising settler violence in the oPt.

The EU has repeatedly called on Israel not to proceed with such plans and to halt all settlement activities. It remains the EU's firm position that settlements are illegal under international law. Israel's decision to advance plans for the approval and construction of new settlement units in 2022, i.a. for E1 and Har Gilo West, further undermines the prospects of a viable two-state solution.

¹ This number includes housing units advanced in plans and those which were tendered in 2022.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, there are around 230,000 Israelis living in 14 settlements constructed in East Jerusalem. Between 1967 and now, government-initiated construction in East Jerusalem benefited 99% Israelis and only 1% Palestinians. A total of 57,000 housing units were advanced in Jewish neighborhoods and only 600 in Palestinian ones.²

More than 3 Million people live in the West Bank, As of 2021, settlers made up 14% of the West Bank population (465,400) while Palestinians made up 86% (2,814,000). Settlers constitute 4,9% of the Israeli population.³

In 2022, as in 2021, the Israeli government deepened the settlements project in occupied Palestinian territories. The government furthered a number of plans that are especially limiting for Palestinian development and the contiguity of a Palestinian state, and therefore the two-state solution and chances of reaching a political agreement (see developments of concern).

In 2022, 28,208 units were advanced in different stages in the planning and implementation process in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Table 1 and 2 contains a listing of the plans and tenders in question. 23,586⁴ units concerned settlements located in occupied East Jerusalem, and 4,622 settlements located in other parts of the West Bank, including locations deep in the West Bank.⁵

2. ADVANCED SETTLEMENTS IN AND AROUND EAST JERUSALEM

As illustrated in Table 1, 489 settlement tenders and 23,097 settlement plans were advanced in 2022. Greater Jerusalem settlement advancements of E1 and Har Gilo West are not included in Table 1.

As noted by the Israeli CSO Ir Amim, many of the plans advanced in 2022 were for urban renewal⁶ (within existing built-up areas) and were therefore not necessarily involving expansion of settlements territorially. Those plans, if implemented, may however still increase the number of Israelis living on the other side of the Green Line in Jerusalem.

It is also important to underscore that during the tenure of the Bennett-Lapid government over the course of 2022, although it was comprised of a broad coalition of politicians who are committed to preserve the status quo with regard to the conflict, settlement advancements in the most sensitive locations in and around East Jerusalem accelerated. All of the aforementioned plans were advanced under their watch, including E1 (for 3412 HU) and Har Gilo West (560 HU) – both located in the West Bank in an area known as “Greater Jerusalem” – the three large blocs of settlements around the Jerusalem periphery.

² Source: Peace Now

³ Source: Israeli and Palestinian CBS

⁴ This number includes housing units advanced in plans and those which were tendered in 2022.

⁵ All the data on settlements advanced in the West Bank are based on publicly available information from the Civil Administration’s High Planning Committee, where Peace Now is present at the meetings. For detailed information about the plans see this link: www.peacenow.org.il.

⁶ Urban renewal consists of tearing down the existing buildings and constructing new buildings with a larger amount of housing units (Source: Ir Amim)

Table 1. Overview of settlement advancements in East Jerusalem in 2022

East Jerusalem Tenders		East Jerusalem Plans	
5 Jan	300 units in East Talpiot	24 Jan	332 units in Gilo
6 Jan	100 units in Ramot Alon	31 Jan	9000 units in Atarot
26 Jul	89 units in Gilo	28 Feb	730 units in Pisgat Ze'ev
		2 Mar	396 units in Gilo
		2 Mai	1027 units in Mount Scopus
		2 Mai	538 units in Mount Scopus
		2 Mai	672 units in Mount Scopus
		23 Mai	505 units in Ramot
		19 Jun	180 units in Ramot
		27 Jun	618 units in Gilo
		17 Jul	140 units in Arnona Slopes
		18 Aug	920 units in Gilo
		5 Sep	700 units in Givat Hashaked
		5 Sep	284 units in Gilo
		14 Sep	1318 units in North Ramot Alon
		19 Sep	394 units in East Talpiot
		3 Oct	328 units in Neve Yaakov
		30 Oct	109 units in Maalot Dafna
		16 Nov	1020 units in Ramot

		21 Nov	621 units in East Talpiyot
		21 Nov	517 units in East Talpiyot
		2 Dec	1465 units in The lower Aqueduct
		5 Dec	384 units in Gilo
		5 Dec	571 units in Gilo
		12 Dec	328 units in French Hill
Total	489	Total	23,097
Total	Plans and Tenders 23,586		

Source: Ir Amim

2. SETTLEMENT PLANS, TENDERS, CONSTRUCTION AND TRENDS IN 2022

Table 2. Overview of settlement advancements in the West Bank 2022 (January-December)

Date	West Bank	Housing Units
12/05/2022	Dolev	364
12/05/2022	Mitzpe Danny	114
12/05/2022	Shvut Rachel	534
12/05/2022	Talmon	168
12/05/2022	Dolev	90
12/05/2022	Mevo Horon	210
12/05/2022	Negohot	158
12/05/2022	Givat Zeev	136
12/05/2022	Beitar Illit	1061
12/05/2022	Efrat	40
12/05/2022	Efrat	0
12/05/2022	Immanuel	0

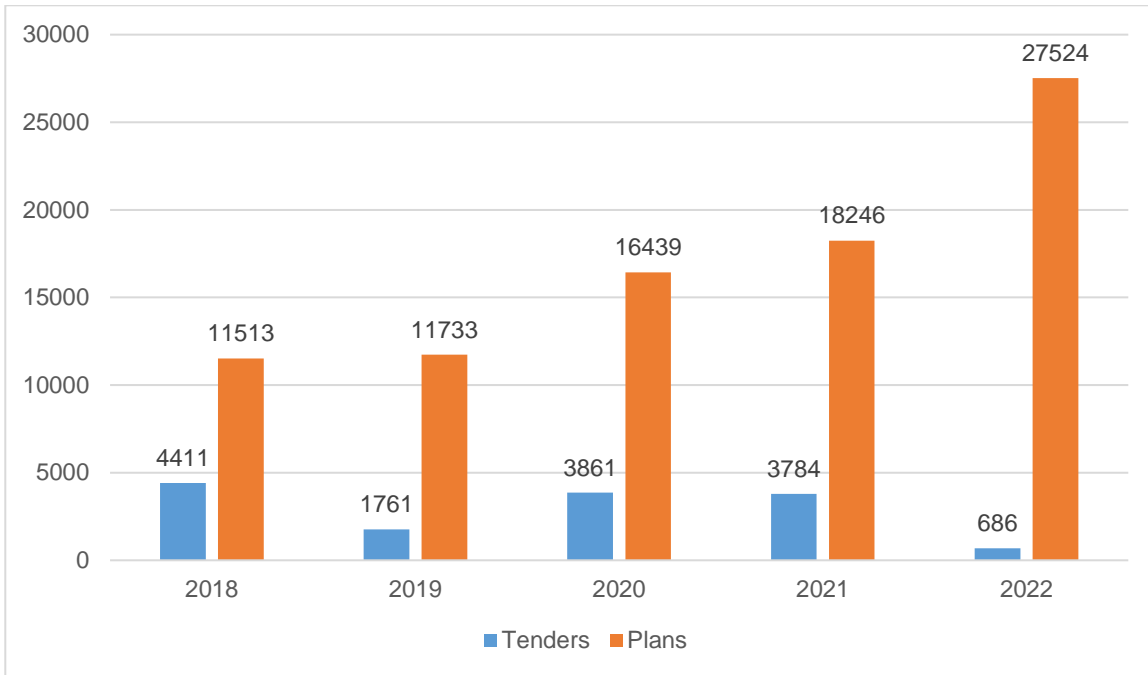
12/05/2022	Imanuel	170
12/05/2022	Elkana	500
12/05/2022	Oz Vegaon	0
12/05/2022	Nokdim	32
12/05/2022	Ariel	0
12/05/2022	Kedumim	269
12/05/2022	Maale Adumim	16
12/05/2022	Kiryat Arba	120
12/05/2022	Tzofim	92
12/05/2022	Revava	55
12/05/2022	Tal Menashe	107
12/05/2022	Hinanit	0
12/05/2022	Shaarei Tikva	191

Source: Peace Now

3. TRENDS IN SETTLEMENT PLANS AND TENDERS SINCE 2017

Table 3 illustrates that the advancement of settlement plans in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has steadily increased since 2018 – from 11513 to 27524. This represents almost a 140% increase over a period of four years. 2022 experienced the highest number of settlement plans advanced since 2018. 27524 plans were advanced, compared to 18246 in 2021, representing a 50% increase. The number of settlement tenders advanced in 2022 was 686, more than five times lower compared to 2021 (3784).

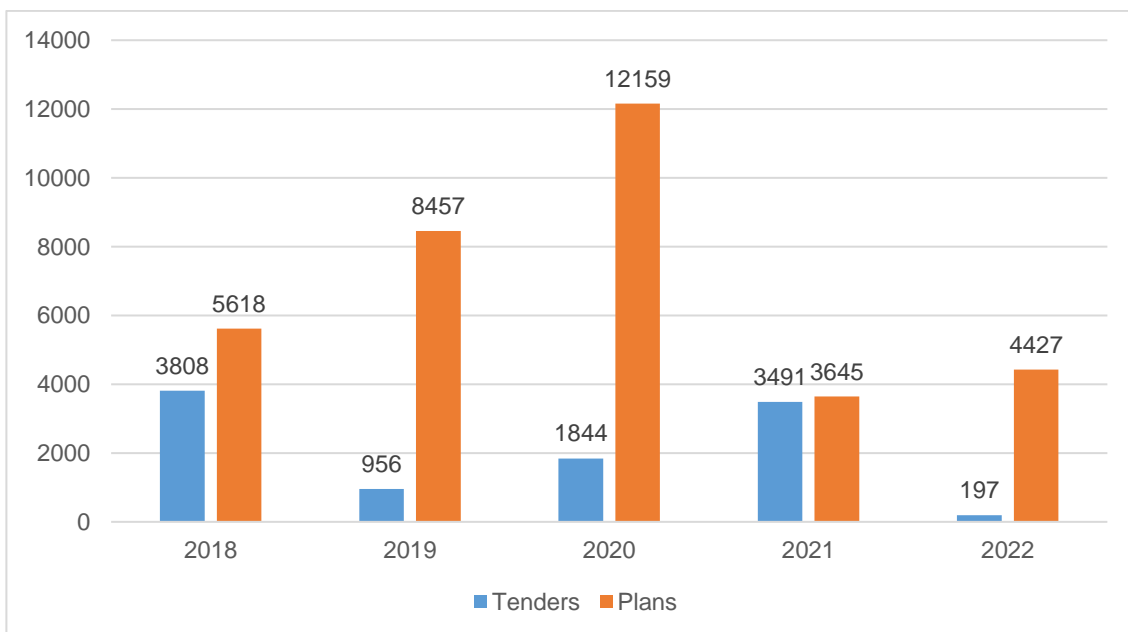
Table 3. Advancement of settlement units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, 2018 - 2022



Source: Peace Now and Ir Amim

The number of settlement plans advanced in the West Bank alone (excluding East Jerusalem) slightly increased in 2022 in comparison to 2021, from 3645 to 4427 (see table 4). The number of settlement tenders advanced on the other hand experienced a stark drawback– only 195 tenders were advanced in 2022 compared to 3491 in 2021.

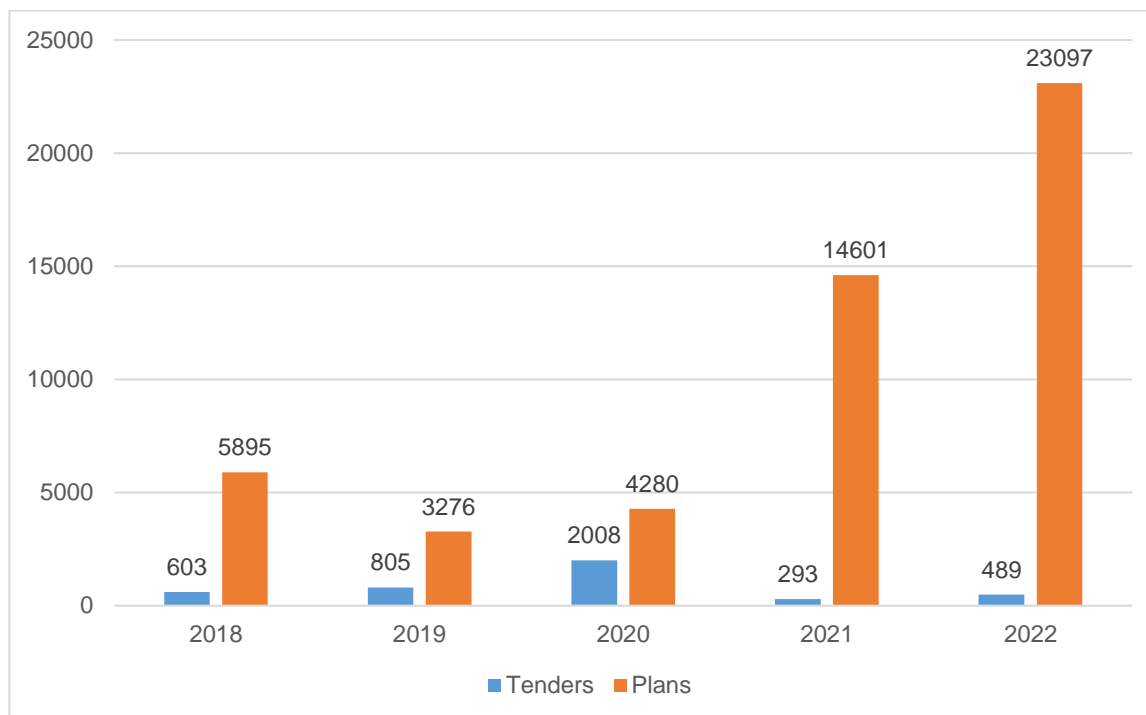
Table 4. Advancement of settlement units in the West Bank, here not including East Jerusalem, 2017-2022



Source: Peace Now

It is particularly the advancement of housing units in settlements located in East Jerusalem that is unprecedented, greatly contributing to the overall number of settlement units advanced in 2022. As illustrated in Table 5, a total of 23,097 housing units in outline plans got advanced in Israeli settlements/enclaves over the Green Line in Jerusalem.

Table 5. Advancement of settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem 2017-2021



Source: Ir Amim (these numbers do not include the settlement plans in Greater Jerusalem, for example in E1 and Har Gilo West)

The rise in settlement expansion plans by the Israeli authorities was accompanied by a worrisome trend of rising settler violence in the oPt. This rise in violent acts by settlers, according to Peace Now, is directly related to the erection and expansion of illegal outposts in the oPt⁷.

According to OCHA, 849 incidents involving settlers resulted in Palestinian casualties and/or property damage in 2022. This is the highest number since OCHA started recording incidents involving settlers in 2006. 621 of these incidents resulted in damage, 124 resulted in casualties and 104 resulted in both. In particular during the 2022 Palestinian olive harvest season, many cases of violence, theft and destruction committed by settlers against Palestinians were reported.⁸

⁷ http://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/settlers_report_eng.pdf

⁸ <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/summary-of-the-2022-harvest-season/>

Settler Attacks on Palestinians usually remain un-investigated, mainly due to the law enforcement's lack of will to deter or penalize such incidents. As Yesh Din reports, between 2005 and 2022, 93% of police investigations into these attacks were closed without indictments.⁹

4. DEVELOPMENTS OF CONCERN IN THE REPORTING PERIOD

The legalization of settler outposts in the West Bank continued to be of concern in 2022. In November 2022, Benjamin Netanyahu, at this time tasked to form a new Israeli government after his coalition won elections, pledged to legalize dozens of illegal settler outposts in the West Bank, within 60 days of the government being sworn in.

Another development of concern in East Jerusalem was the wave of touristic settler development, particularly in the Valley of Hinnom, where development was jointly undertaken by the Israeli authorities and the right-wing Elad Foundation. In October 2022, Israeli ministers attended a ceremony to lay the foundation stone for a rope bridge that will connect Mount Zion with the mainly Palestinian neighborhood of Abu Tor. The project is part of a wider initiative to turn the valley into a tourist venue.¹⁰ Such developments are part of the settlers' plan to change the landscape and character of the Old City Basin and are an integral component of the settlement enterprise in the Palestinian neighborhoods surrounding the Old City.¹¹

The advancements of the following settlement plans in 2022 are of particular concern as they harm Palestinian development and further deepen occupation of lands in the occupied territories:

- Givat HaShaked: On September 05, the Jerusalem district planning and building committee approved the plan for deposit for public review with conditions. This new settlement is designated for lands on the edge of the Palestinian neighbourhood of Sharfat, the northern section of Beit Safafa. According to the plan, around 700 new housing units will be built. The building of this new settlement will dramatically damage the development of Beit Safafa, and will seriously affect the contiguity and viability of a future Palestinian state.
- Har Gilo West: On 7 November 2022, the Higher Planning Council discussed objections to the Har Gilo West plan for 560 housing units. Although the Israeli authorities characterize it as an expansion of the existing Har Gilo settlement, it would in fact constitute an entirely new settlement located south west of the Palestinian village of Al-Walajah, a village that is already encircled on three sides by Har Gilo and the separation barrier. On 11 September 2022, the Higher Planning Council approved the plan to expand the existing Al-Walaja bypass road (385) for the purpose of promoting and validating Har Gilo West settlement plan.
- E1 Settlement: The Supreme Planning Council of the Israel Civil Administration had planned to discuss two major settlement plans within E1 on 12 September, which was ultimately postponed. The two plans within the broader settlement plan of E1 that were on the agenda for discussion were for a total of 3,412 housing units over an area of 2,100 dunams, in between East Jerusalem and the already existing Maaleh Adumim settlement. Construction in E1 is widely considered as lethal to the two-state solution, as it would essentially bisect the West Bank and detach it from East Jerusalem, making the idea of a shared capital impossible.
- E2 Settlement: On 14 November, the Israeli Supreme Court held a hearing with implications for the possibility of Israel advancing the E2 Settlement. In an unusual bid, Palestinian owners of the

⁹ <https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/law+data+dec+22/Law+data+22+ENG.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-inaugurate-work-on-contentious-rope-bridge-to-jerusalems-mount-zion/>

¹¹ <https://emekshaveh.org/en/the-valley-of-hinnom/>

land located south of Bethlehem challenged the Israeli expropriation as state land/public land and the presumption and Israeli practice that such land is then granted to settlement construction. On 23 November Peace Now informed about the judges' decision to reject the petition and allow the allocation of close to 1400 dunams for settlement development. Similarly to E1, E2 would serve to detach East Jerusalem from the West Bank, in this case Bethlehem and any urban expansion of Bethlehem and separate it from the southern West Bank including the major city of Hebron, therefore making a long-term and sustainable two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital impossible to implement.

- Lower Aqueduct Plan: On July 25, the Jerusalem District Planning Committee approved for deposit the Lower Aqueduct plan for a total of 1465 housing units. The Lower Aqueduct plan straddles the Green Line and designated for a strategic strip of land situated between Har Homa, Givat Hamatos and Ramat Rachel. In December 2022, the plan was formally deposited for public review. Such a step moves the plan one stage closer to full approval. According to Peace Now, the planned units would “prevent territorial contiguity between East Jerusalem Palestinian neighborhoods and Bethlehem.”

5. EU PUBLIC STATEMENTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

The EU issued the following statements related to settlements during the reporting period.

- On 19 January 2022, the spokesperson of the HRVP issued a statement on i.a the decision by the Jerusalem District Committee for Planning and Building on 17 January to advance a plan for the construction of more than 1,450 settlement-housing units between Har Homa and Givat Hamatos for the “Lower Aqueduct Plan”, which includes lands in occupied East Jerusalem.¹²
- On 12 Mai 2022, the HRVP issued a statement on plans for advancing over 4,400 housing units in the West Bank.¹³

¹² https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-developments-occupied-east-jerusalem_en

¹³ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-high-representative-new-illegal-settlement-plans_en