



MA'AN Development Center

# Mini Factsheet on Jordan Valley Settlements

The Palestinian Jordan Valley is the eastern section of the West Bank, running adjacent to the Jordan River. Starting at the Dead Sea and extending approximately 70 km north to the border with Israel, the Jordan Valley is approximately 15-20 kilometers wide and, at 1,700 square kilometers, covers around 28.5% of the West Bank. The rich agricultural land, temperate climate, and abundant water resources offer enormous agricultural, economic and political potential for the Palestinian people.

However, this potential has been denied to the Palestinian citizens of the Jordan Valley by the policies of the Israeli military occupation and the continuing illegal expansion of Israel's civilian settlements. In fact, the first civilian settlements in the West Bank were built in the Jordan Valley. Throughout the years of occupation, the Israeli government began actively promoting the settlement enterprise by offering a number of far-reaching economic and social benefits to those Israelis that emigrated to the illegal settlements. Consequently, Jordan Valley settlements have grown at a steady rate, aided by governmental aid that expanded important settlement infrastructure and enriched many individual settlers. In 1993, the implementation of the Oslo Accords allowed Israel to strengthen its means of oppression in the region; the Oslo Accords designated 95% of the Jordan Valley as Area C, temporarily legitimizing full Israeli military and civil control for the inhabitants of the region.

Although there are currently over 58,000 Palestinians and only 11,679 Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley, the living standards of the latter group are vastly superior. While the Israeli settlers benefit from generous aid from the Israeli government, Palestinians are nearly completely prevented from any sort of development in 95% of the Jordan Valley. Consequently, neighboring Palestinian and Israeli settler communities provide a stark and telling juxtaposition that demonstrates the racial discrimination that guides Israeli policy in the Jordan Valley. By directly subsidizing settlements' growth, expansion, and development while completely prohibiting even the most basic of services to Palestinians, Israel has ensured that Palestinians cannot overcome the discriminatory gap in the quality of life between the two populations. In addition, the fact remains that maintaining settlements and settlers' luxurious lifestyles comes at the cost of the most basic human rights of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).

The settlements in the Jordan Valley are unique in certain aspects. First, they are agriculturally based and in most cases employ a plurality or even a majority of the settlers. However, most of the settlers in the West Bank are commuters and very few actually work in their own settlement. Second, the settlements in the Jordan Valley have the highest per capita water usage of any of the Israeli settlements in the oPt. Third, these settlements, geographically speaking, are the furthest away from the Green Line. Fourth, the number of

settlers per settlement is lowest in the oPt. Fifth, the majority of these settlements were established as Nahal military camps built by the Labor party, and are still politically associated with the Labor party. Sixth, the Jordan Valley settlements have the highest per capita land access and usage rate of settlements. Seventh, these settlements rely heavily on Palestinian labor for agriculture, in addition to construction in and around the settlement. Lastly, although they are dependent on subsidies for their existence, the settlements actually produce economic output, specifically agricultural produce and agriculture related products.

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

### ***Jordan Valley Settlements by the Numbers:***

*31: Number of settlements in the Jordan Valley*

*7: Number of outposts in the Jordan Valley*

*11,679: Number of settlers<sup>1</sup> in the Jordan Valley*

*487: Daily per capita water usage, in liters<sup>2</sup>*

*>250 million: Amount in dollars of agricultural goods exported to the EU from Jordan Valley settlements<sup>3</sup>*

*>1,500,000: Number of dunums in the Jordan Valley under the direct control of settlements or the Israeli army<sup>4</sup>*

*100 million: Number of dollars invested in Jordan Valley settlements by the World Zionist Organization between 2000 and 2002<sup>5</sup>*

*80: Initial number of dunums given to settlers free of charge<sup>6</sup>*

*30: Percentage discount received by Jordan Valley settlers for attending Ariel University<sup>7</sup>*

*0.9: Percentage of settler income dedicated to paying the water bill <sup>8</sup>*

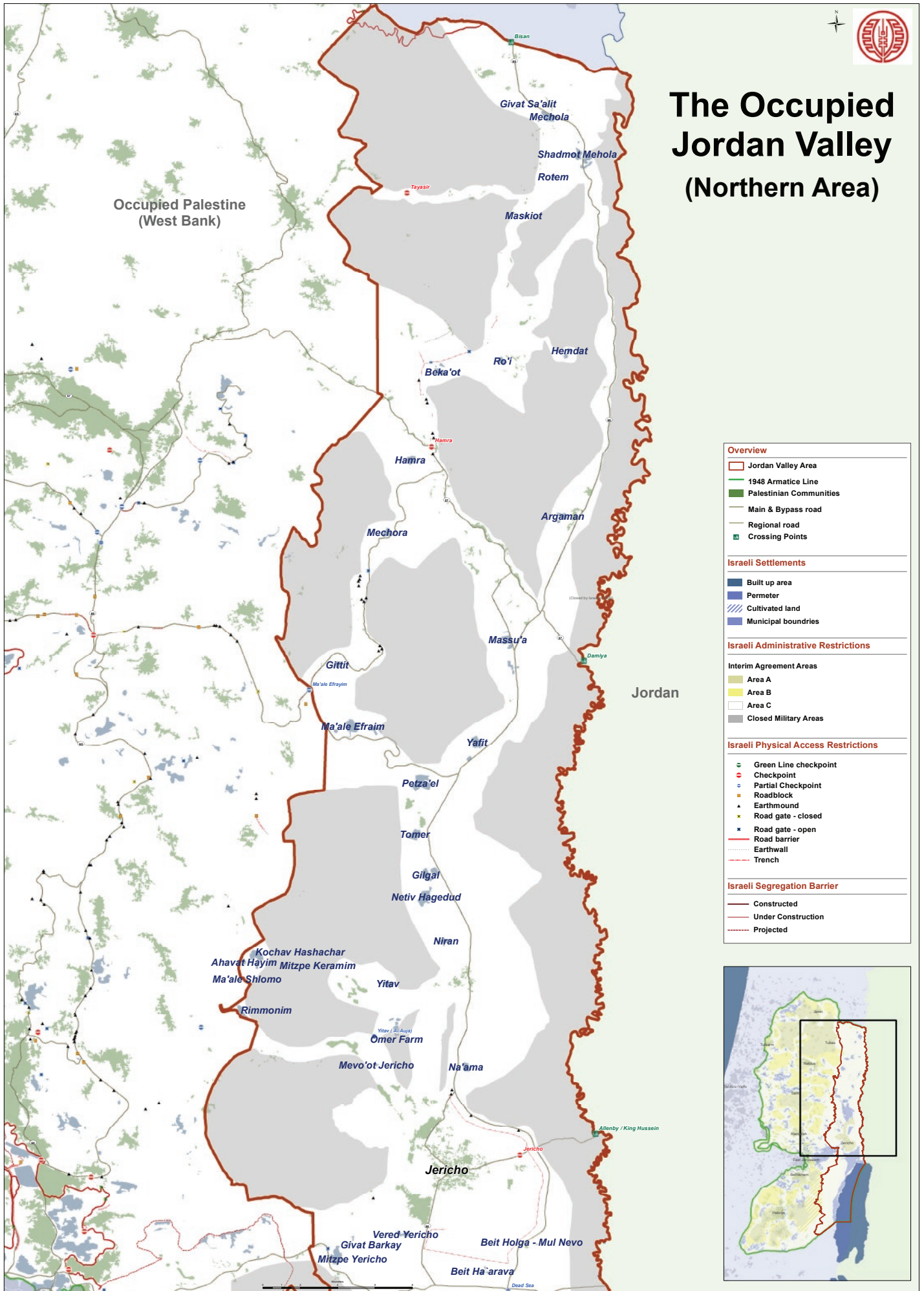
### **(Endnotes)**

1. MA'AN Development Center *Cultivating Dispossession* 2013 for number of settlements, outposts, and settlers
2. B'tselem *Dispossession and Exploitation* 2011 pg. 24
3. Israeli Foreign Ministry: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLReportFinal.pdf>, p. 13
4. B'tselem *Dispossession and Exploitation* 2011 pg. 10
5. Human Rights Watch *Separate and Unequal* 2010 pg. 55
6. Jerusalem Post *State Gives More Land to Settler Farms in Jordan Valley* 29 June 2011
7. MA'AN Development Center *Parallel Realities* 2012 pg. 18
8. B'tselem *Dispossession and Exploitation* 2011 pg. 40



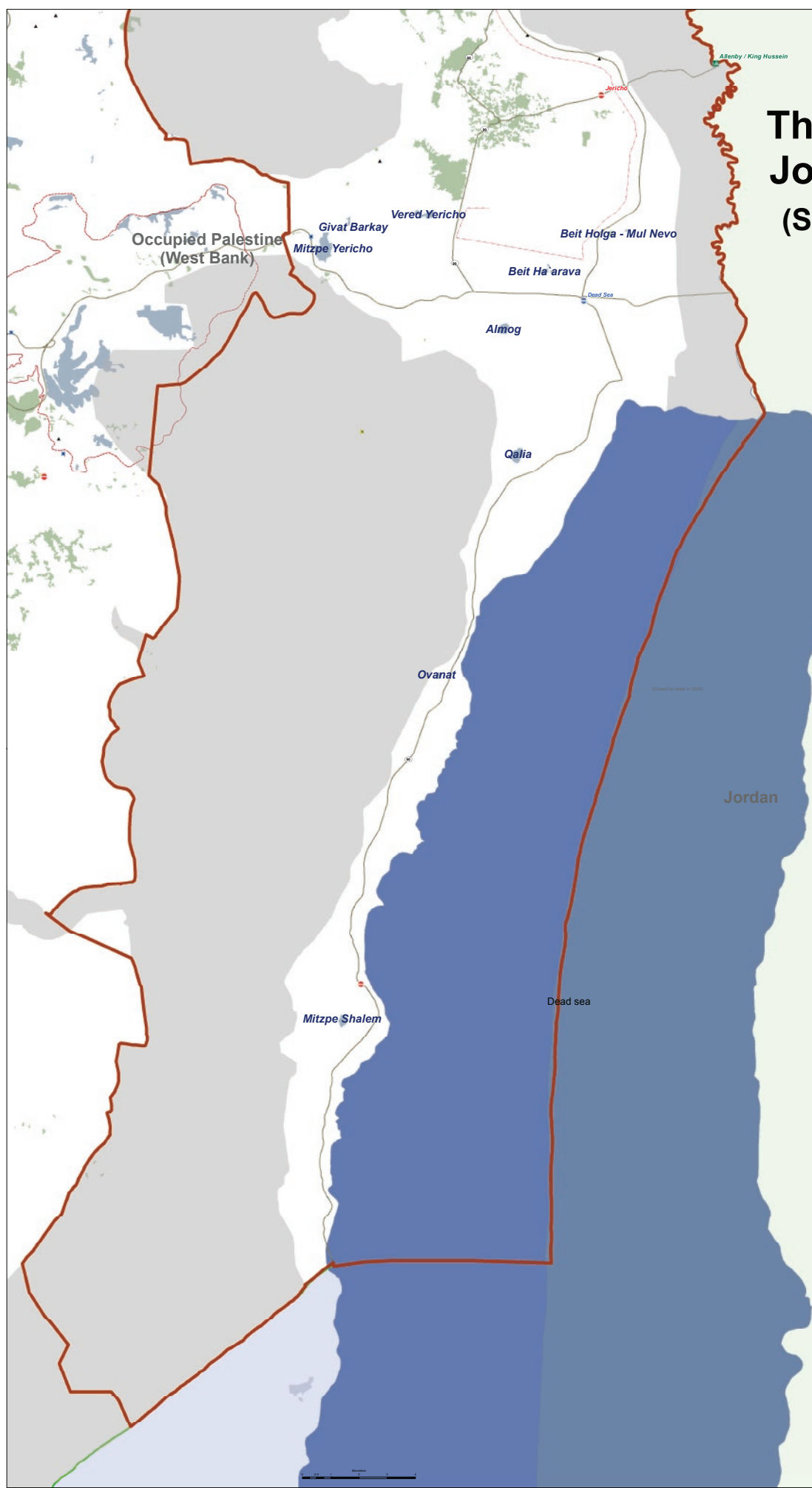


# The Occupied Jordan Valley (Northern Area)





# The Occupied Jordan Valley (Southern Area)



**Overview**

- 1948 Armistice Line
- Palestinian Communities
- Main & Bypass road
- Regional road
- Crossing Points

**Israeli Settlements**

- Built up area
- Perimeter
- Cultivated land
- Municipal boundaries

**Israeli Administrative Restrictions**

**Interim Agreement Areas**

- Area A
- Area B
- Area C
- Closed Military Areas

**Israeli Physical Access Restrictions**

- Green Line checkpoint
- Checkpoint
- Partial Checkpoint
- Roadblock
- Earthmound
- Road gate - closed
- Road gate - open
- Road barrier
- Earthwall
- Trench

**Israeli Segregation Barrier**

- Constructed
- Under Construction
- Projected

