

A map of the West Bank region, showing various towns and roads. A prominent green outline traces a path through the area, likely representing a security buffer zone. The map is overlaid with several semi-transparent shaded regions in shades of red, orange, and yellow, which likely represent different levels of security or administrative zones. The background of the map is a light tan color with some green patches representing vegetation.

# The Palestinian Authority's Conquest of the Security Buffer Zone

Report by the Regavim Movement

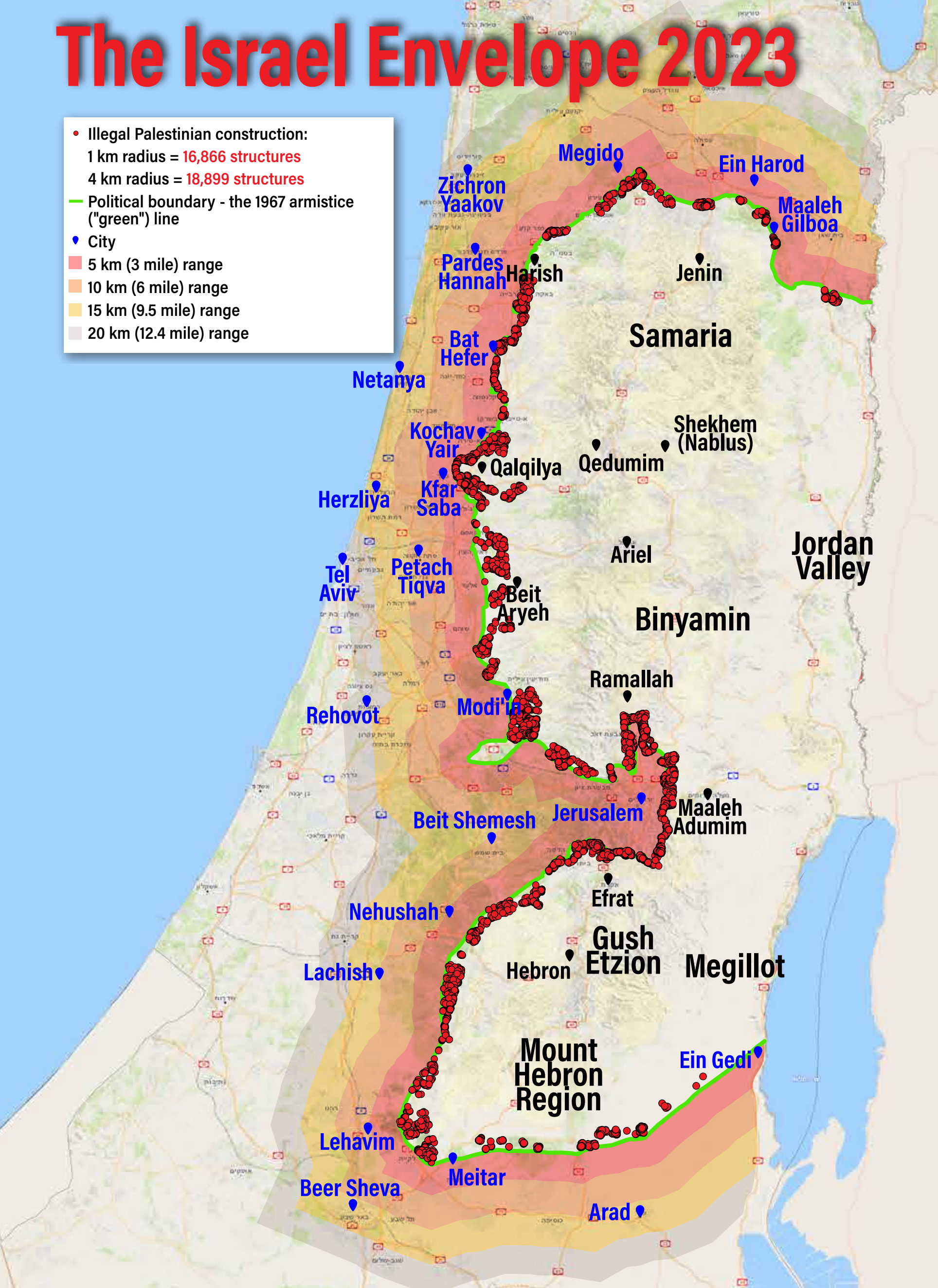
December 2023 | Kislev 5784





# The Israel Envelope 2023

- Illegal Palestinian construction:
  - 1 km radius = 16,866 structures
  - 4 km radius = 18,899 structures
- Political boundary - the 1967 armistice ("green") line
- City
- 5 km (3 mile) range
- 10 km (6 mile) range
- 15 km (9.5 mile) range
- 20 km (12.4 mile) range



## The Gaza Perimeter Security Failure

In 2021, the Israeli government completed construction of a 65 kilometer (40 mile) security barrier along its border with Gaza. The barrier, which cost the Israeli taxpayer an estimated NIS 3.5 billion, was considered a complex engineering and technological achievement -a unique security array that includes a high fence, a subterranean wall, a maritime barrier, high-tech sensors, an advanced radar system, remote-operated weapons, intelligence-gathering systems and advanced monitoring elements designed to prevent invasions from Gaza into Israel. When it was finally completed, the security barrier was touted as a game-changing transformation of Israel's security reality. In the words of then-Defense Minister Benny Gantz, "The barrier is a technological and creative project of supreme importance, which takes away from Hamas one of the capabilities it tried to develop, and places an iron wall, sensors and concrete between [Hamas] and the residents of [Israel's] south."<sup>1</sup>

**Despite the massive investment of funds, human resources, technology, iron and steel, on October 7th 2023 Israel awoke to a living nightmare: thousands of Hamas terrorists breached the Gaza barrier, killing some 1,300 people in a single day.**

## Security concepts in Judea and Samaria

**Terrorists and terrorism are not unique to the Gaza Strip. Between Independence Day 1948 and Remembrance Day 2023, terrorists, mainly from Judea and Samaria, took the lives of 3,135 Israelis in terrorist attacks throughout the country, often in unspeakable massacres.**

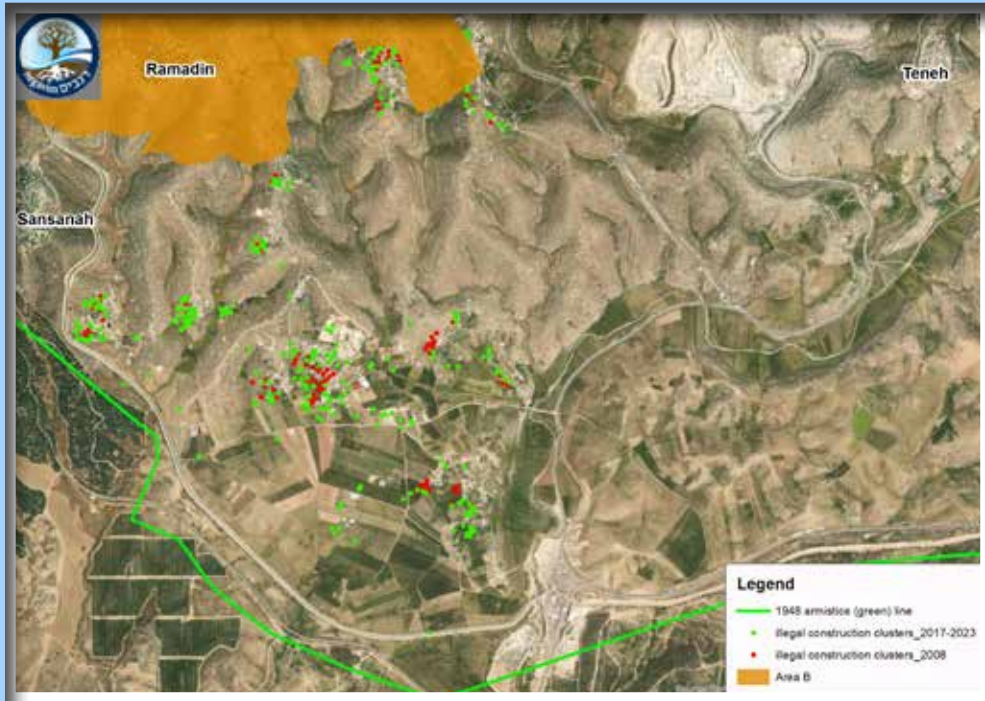
The acts of terrorism emerging from Judea and Samaria were not carried out

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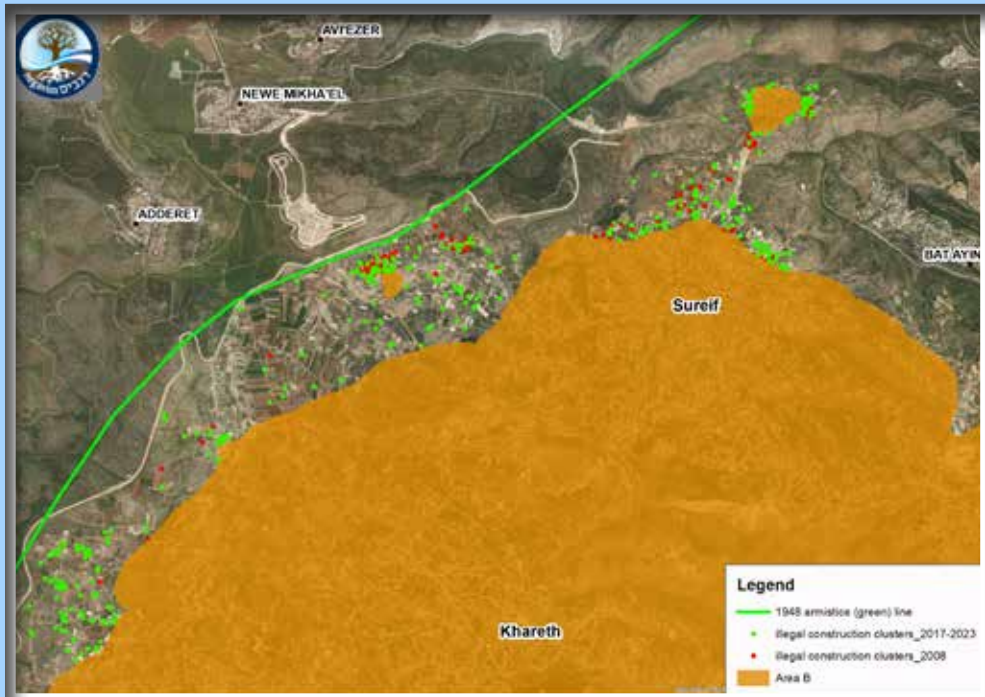
<sup>1</sup> Yaniv Kubovich, "Israel Completes Vast, Billion-dollar Gaza Barrier" (Haaretz, 7 December 2021).



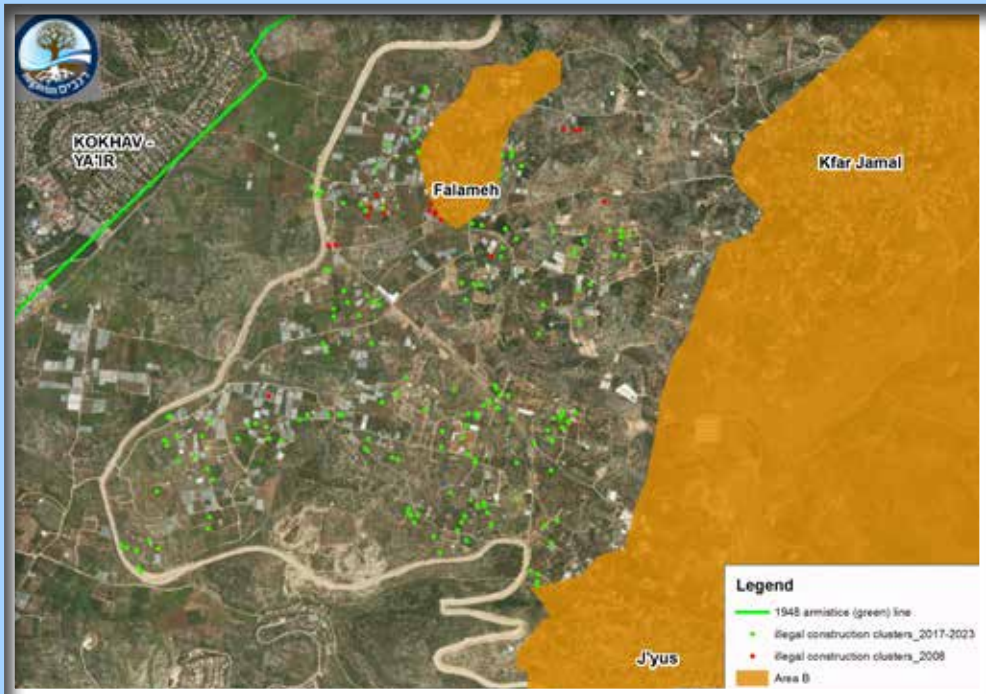
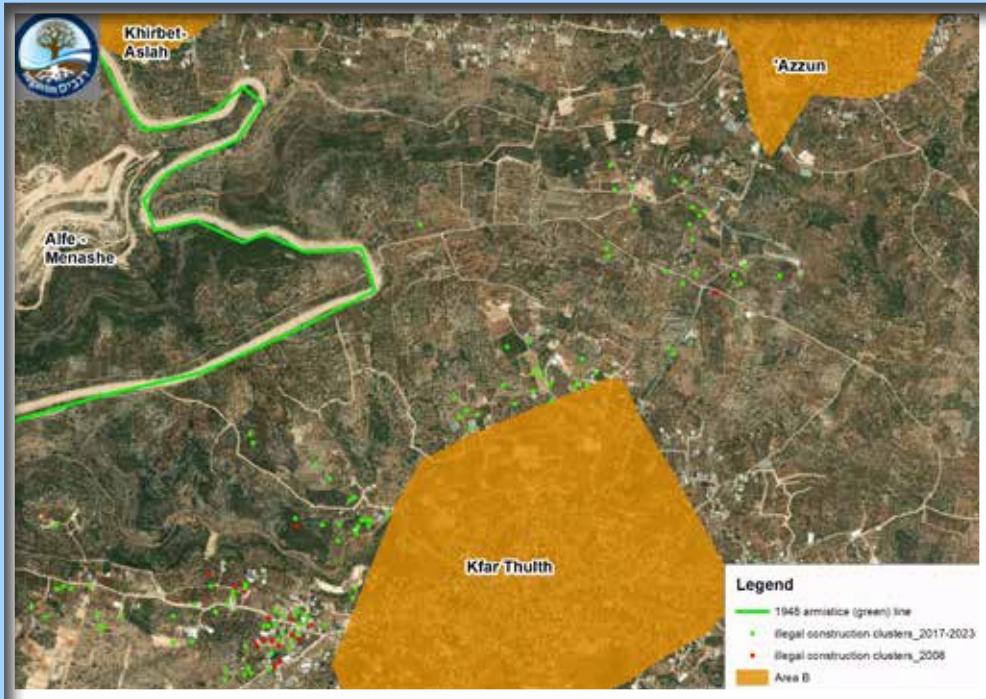
## 1. Aerial analysis: Ramadin vicinity, Hebron region



## 2. Aerial analysis: Khirbet a-Dir vicinity, Gush Etzion



### 3. Aerial analysis: Shomron region



on a whim, by random individuals; the murder of Jews is a central tenet of the PLO charter, subsumed in the foundations of the Palestinian Authority, which continues to advocate armed conflict as the only way to liberate Palestine<sup>2</sup>. Acts of terrorism that originate in Judea and Samaria are part of the mechanism established to implement the clearly enunciated policy initiative launched in 2009 by Salaam Fayyad, then Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority. The Fayyad Plan, as it now known, is a framework for the Palestinian takeover of all of Judea and Samaria through a variety of means, among them massive illegal construction. In this way, and in tandem with Palestinian terrorism, over the years **nearly 100,000 illegal structures** have been built by the Palestinians in Area C, the portion of Judea and Samaria under full Israeli jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>

In response to repeated acts of terrorism originating in these areas, in 2002 the Israeli government began construction of a barrier or “separation fence” along the seam line, in an attempt to prevent terrorist incursions from Judea and Samaria into the seamline zone and the Israeli population centers of the central and coastal plain that lay just beyond.

At the same time, the State of Israel ignored – and continues to ignore - Palestinian annexation of Area C. Not only have no active steps been taken to push back the encroachment, but no policy or strategy has been formulated to address the strategic threat.

The barrier fence that encompasses Judea and Samaria, spanning some 300 km from the northern Jordan Valley to Ein Gedi, was built over the course of nearly two decades, at a cost of NIS 8.3 billion (through 2021, excluding maintenance costs). According to the State Comptroller’s Report of 2023, **over time, and as a result of the reduction of forces in Judea and Samaria in recent years, the IDF’s ability to maintain the barrier was severely undermined, and Arabs sabotaged the fence to the point that many kilometers of the barrier have been completely demolished.**

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2 See [Articles 8 and 9 of the Palestinian National Covenant](#).

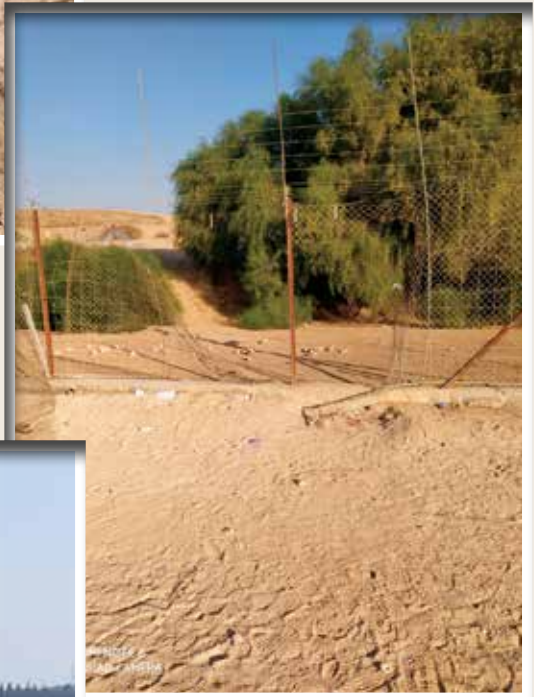
3 For a more in-depth discussion of this illegal construction and the Fayyad Plan, see Regavim’s 2022 report, “[The War of Attrition: Report on Land Status in Judea and Samaria](#).” <https://bit.ly/3NKPJq6>



In 2017, IDF Central Command decided to stop repairing damage caused by repeated sabotage; as a result, in 2021 it was possible to **infiltrate cities in central Israel and the coastal plain without setting off an alarm along almost half the length of the fence; the barrier was abandoned and all semblance of control and governance was lost.** As of March 2022, thousands of illegal infiltrators continued to cross into Israel every day either by foot or in vehicles. **In 2020, some 918,000 Palestinian Arabs from Judea and Samaria used the gaps in the fence in the Ephraim and Menashe Regions to infiltrate Israel; in 2021 the number climbed to 1.4 million.**

At the outset of the barrier construction project, objections were raised by a host of authorities, who expressed concern that the fence would quickly morph from a security asset to a political liability. It has now become clear that the barrier has not only failed to perform its stated function, it has served as a tool for the Palestinian Authority to create facts on the ground and establish a political border.





More holes than fence: In 2020, the IDF willfully ignored the fact that **every day some 1500 Arabs infiltrated Israel through holes in the "separation fence" near the Meitar crossing alone.**



## The PA Takeover of the Seamline

If the ineffectiveness of 50% of the barrier weren't bad enough in and of itself, the most recent mapping study conducted by the Regavim Movement (see above) illustrates that **the Israeli government's policy of turning a blind eye to the Palestinian annexation of Area C has resulted in particularly intensive illegal Palestinian construction adjacent to the seamline and the separation barrier.** In the first stage, Regavim's mapping division focused on 3 sample clusters of illegal construction:

- (1) The South Hebron Region in the vicinity of Ramadin, Dahariyeh and Eshkolot; .
- (2) Judea-Etzion, south of Tarkumiyeh, Khirbet Khatta, Khirbet Adir, Sureif, Wadi Phukhin, Batir, Beit Iksa, Beit Laqya, Kfar Tzaffa and Na'alim; 3
- (3) Shomron – in the northern and southern sections of IDF Firing Zone 203 near Kfar Thulth, north Tzofim and a-Ras.

Our research identified a staggering **7,675 illegal structures in these clusters alone - all in a 1 km (half a mile, 800 yards) radius of the "separation barrier," all of them in Area C.**

In the second stage, Regavim documented all illegal construction in the seamline buffer zone, stretching from the northern tip of the Jordan Valley to Ein Gedi in the south; these findings are represented by the red dots on the map, and are even more shocking: **We identified 16,866 illegal structures within 1 km radius of the barrier.**

Our findings, both on the ground and in aerial studies of the region, indicate that some of these illegal structures are virtually adjacent to homes in Israeli communities– in such close proximity that they are literally a stone's throw away, to say nothing of the range of any type of firearms – rendering whatever still exists of the "security barrier" useless. The events of October 7th leave little room for doubt, and there is no longer any need to imagine what has now become an eventuality rather than a possibility: These illegal

structures – even those slightly set back from the barrier, are an ideal launching pad for acts of terrorism; this is all the more so in the vast sections where the separation barrier has been breached, sabotaged or erased entirely.

**The phenomenon of illegal construction, currently involving nearly 100,000 structures in Area C of Judea and Samaria, presents a very serious challenge to Israel's security. The mapping project illustrates the extent to which the neglect and failure to enforce jurisdiction in this area now endangers all Israelis, and most particularly those residing in communities close to the seamline, such as Rosh HaAyin, Nehushah, Modi'in, Kfar Sabba and Bat Hefer. Every single illegal structure, no matter how isolated, presents a potential threat that can no longer be ignored; the residents of Maaleh Gilboa, whose homes are being fired at from just such structures, can testify to the results of the irresponsibly "tolerant" attitude toward illegal construction that has allowed the current reality to reach monstrous proportions.**

**The events of October 7th prove unequivocally that refurbishing the separation barrier and augmenting manpower along the fence will not suffice.**

**The policy of "containment and toleration" must be reversed, and proactive steps must be taken against all forms of illegal activity. Tens of thousands of illegal structures must be removed from the seamline area.**



**It is no longer possible to ignore the illegal construction, and it is high time that we recognize it for what it is: More than the hostile takeover of Judea and Samaria's open spaces and beyond territorial annexation, the illegal construction that has erased the security buffer zone is an immediate and undeniable threat to the security of every man, woman and child in Israel.**

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