

## **Bibi's Settlements Boom: March-November 2013**

- During these first 8 months of the new Netanyahu government, there has been a non-stop settlements construction and approval boom.
- The most recent evidence of this came with the latest round of Palestinian prisoners released by Israel, which was accompanied by **the publication of tenders for 2,258 new units in settlements, and the promotion of plans for 2,487 new units in settlements.**
- These tenders and approvals were just the latest symptoms of the longstanding trend. Overall, since the establishment of the current government on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013, **tenders have been published for 3,472 new units in settlements, and plans have been promoted for no fewer than 8,943 new settlement units.**
- These facts once again raise the very serious question about the motivations and intentions of Prime Minister Netanyahu with respect to peace, negotiations, and the two-state solution.

### **Negotiations or Settlements: What is the true policy of the Netanyahu Government?**

In recent days, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has worked to sell the narrative that he is serious about peace and that the only obstruction on the road to successful negotiations for a two-state solution is Palestinian intransigence. Whether Netanyahu honestly believes he is serious when he talks about wanting peace is something only he knows for certain. However, as Netanyahu constantly reminds the world with respect to his adversaries – particularly Iran and the Palestinians – political leaders should be judged on their actions, not their words.

By this standard, Netanyahu's actions over the past 8 months – the period since his new government took office – demonstrate the opposite of a commitment to peace and a two-state solution.

The data show unambiguously that Netanyahu, in his new term in office, and both before and after the launch of the latest peace effort, has forged ahead with settlements at a truly alarming pace. Prior to the start of the new peace effort, planning for settlement expansion continued unabated, as did construction on the ground. Since the start of talks, settlement-related approvals of every category have surged, with the evidence today pointing to the conclusion that Netanyahu elected to go with the Palestinian prisoner release option as cover for "bulk approvals" of settlement growth.

To be clear: there is nothing anomalous about these findings. The data for Netanyahu's current term in office is entirely consistent with his actions and policies during the previous four years in office, as documented exhaustively in our January 2013 analysis, "[Settlements & the Netanyahu Government: A Deliberate Policy of Undermining the Two-State Solution.](#)" At that time, we

noted that during the first four year Netanyahu's government was in office, "its policies and actions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem disclose a clear intention to use settlements to systematically undermine and render impossible a realistic, viable two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Looking ahead, the question is: can or will anyone convince Netanyahu to change course? The answer will be critical, given the damage that has already been done to the credibility of the current peace effort. It is all the more critical given that, assuming talks survive in the coming months, there is every likelihood that Netanyahu will once again seek to exploit the remaining two prisoner releases for further settlement-related provocations – provocations that represent a real threat not only to the sustainability of talks, but to the viability of the two-state solution.

- Tenders

**Over the past 8 months, tenders have been issued for 3,472 new settlement units. Of these, 1,457 are in the West Bank and another 2,015 are in East Jerusalem. Assuming a settler family size of 5 people, this means housing for more than 17,000 new Israeli settlers. (For full data/details, see tables at the end of this document.)**

Issuance of tenders is one of the final steps before a construction can get started. The tender, which is issued after the approval and validation of a plan, is actually the governmental publication of a call for proposals to buy the rights to build the project. Once the bidding process is completed, the winning bidder can apply for a construction permit from the municipality. Once that permit has been issued, work can start. In general, construction may begin several months after the issuing of the tender.

- Promotion of Plans

**Over the past 8 months, the Netanyahu government has promoted plans for 8,943 new settlement units. Of these, 6,521 are in the West Bank and another 2,422 in East Jerusalem. Assuming a settler family size of 5 people, this means housing for more than 44,000 new Israeli settlers. (For full data/details, see tables at the end of this document.)**

The planning process for settlements includes a number of steps (for details, see Peace Now's document, [Making Sense of the Planning Process](#); for details of East Jerusalem planning, see [this presentation](#) by Danny Seidemann). Each step of the planning process takes a settlement plan closer to implementation. History has demonstrated clearly that approval of planning for settlements translates to settlement construction – that is, Israeli official arguments that planning approvals should not be controversial, since construction is still theoretical or a long way off, do not pass the laugh test.

It should be noted that there has been some confusion in the media about the total number of units involved. This is because during this period, some plans have been promoted multiple times, through different stages of the planning process. When we count the total number of units that have been promoted through the various stages of planning during this period, we get

a much larger number (**11,873 units**). This number reflects the fact that some plans are being counted more than once. For example, a plan is considered as being promoted when a decision is made to take it up in the relevant planning committee, to determine if it will be deposited for public review. The plan is also counted as being promoted when a decision is taken to formally deposit the plan for public review (bureaucratically an entirely distinct step from the planning committee consideration).

In terms of timing of promotion of plans during the past 8 months, the breakdown is as follows, with some plans appearing multiple times:

- **5,577 units** were promoted during the 5 months prior to the start of talks
  - **3,053 units** were promoted in the two-week period around the first prisoners release.
  - **756 units** were promoted during the 2 months of talks.
  - **2,487 units** were promoted at the time of the second round of prisoners release.
- **The Public Domain**

**Over the past 8 months, the Netanyahu government has promoted two major plans related to the public domain in East Jerusalem – one in Silwan, the other on Mount Scopus. The impact of these plans should not be underestimated.**

Specifically, in tandem with the second prisoner release, Netanyahu permitted the promotion of the **Givati Parking Lot plan**, which involves construction of a huge settler-run visitor center outside of the Old City, near the Dung Gate. This site happens to also be the entrance to Silwan – an area targeted for years by settlers. Implementation of this project would have potentially devastating consequences for the two-state solution and for the current stability of Jerusalem.

In addition, Netanyahu permitted promotion of the **Mt. Scopus Park plan**. [As Danny Seidemann has written](#), this plan seeks “to link between the inner encirclement of the Old City and its visual basin ...and the outer encirclement in Greater Jerusalem, as disclosed by the E-1 plan between Ma’ale Adumim and East Jerusalem. The new national park will be a bridge, forging a geographical link between the Old City basin and E-1.”

In East Jerusalem, the battle to dominate the terrain is not limited to individual settler homes and housing projects. In recent years, it has increasingly focused on the public domain – parks, archeological areas and tourist facilities, etc. A large number of plans have been promoted in recent years that place huge areas of the public domain under the control of settlers and settler-linked groups, or that develop the areas of the benefit of a settler-oriented ideology. The underlying logic of such plans is to marginalize the Palestinian presence in core areas of East Jerusalem, to link up these areas to the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, and to create a contiguous Israeli/Jewish presence that anchoring Maale Adumim and the proposed E-1 settlement to Israel.

- **Benefits to Settlers**

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In addition to continued construction and approval of planning for more construction in settlements, on August 4, days after the start of new Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, the Israeli Government approved a new list of Israeli localities eligible for special benefits as national "priority development areas." The **2013 list designated 90 settlements as national priority development areas**, including some settlements located deep inside the West Bank. These special benefits are designed to attract Israelis to move into the designated areas, and to entice those already living there to stay put.

- **Construction without Tenders**

As [Peace Now documented](#), the first six months of 2013, bridging between the two Netanyahu governments, saw a 70% increase in new construction starts in settlements, as compared to the same period in 2012. This comprised starts on 1,708 new settlement units, 180 of which were in illegal outposts (compared to 995 for the same period in 2012). Peace Now documented, too, the completion of 1,794 settlement units. In total, 2,840 housing units were started, under construction, or completed during this period. Assuming a family of five, this translated to more than 14,000 new settlers.

Notably, 86% of the construction that was started during this period did not involve any tenders. This is why construction was able to surge ahead at a time when popular wisdom held that Netanyahu, in a show of good faith and generosity toward President Obama's new peace effort, was quietly "freezing" new settlement projects by [ceasing to issue tenders](#) for settlement construction. What few people understood, then or now, is that Israeli planning regulations grant authority over a great deal of settlement construction to settlement municipalities – meaning that decisions over construction in many settlements is in the hands of the settlers themselves.

## The Data: West Bank Tenders, March 18-November 7, 2013

Publication Date	Location	Units	Tender No.	Plan No.	Side of Barrier	Comments	Time
8/11/2013	Beitar Illit	36	YS/346/2012	426/8	East*		1st Prisoners Release
8/11/2013	Maale Adumim 07	92	YS/91/2013	420/1/7/11	East*	Re-publication of 2012 failed tender	
8/11/2013	Ariel	117	YS/365/2012	130/2/3/1	East*	Re-publication of 2005 failed tender	
8/11/2013	Efrat (Hadagan)	149	YS/96/2013	410/5	East*		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>394</b>					
10/24/2013	Beit El	30	No. 04/08/13		East	A special tender as part of the Ulpana deal	During Talks
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>30</b>					
11/3/2013	Maale Adumim 07	2	YS/39/2013	420/1/7/2	East*		2nd Prisoners Release
11/3/2013	Ariel	18	YS/162/2013	130/2/3	East*		
11/3/2013	Adam (Geva Binyamin)	80	YS/252/2013	240/2/14/1	East		
11/3/2013	Givat Zeev	102	YS/103/2013	220/9	West		
11/3/2013	Maale Adumim 06	112	YS/274/2013	420/1/16/4/1	East*		
11/3/2013	Karnei Shomron	196	YS/90/2013	117/6, 117/6/1	East*		
11/3/2013	Beitar Illit	238	YS/275/2013	426/8	East*		
11/3/2013	Elkana	283	YS/38/2013	125/13/3	West		
11/7/2013	Alfei Menashe	1	YS/302/2013	115/3/ב	West		
11/7/2013	Elkana	1	YS/303/2013	125/13/2	West		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>1033</b>					
<b>Total</b>		<b>1457</b>	<b>*outside barrier as currently built, inside planned barrier</b>				

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## The Data: East Jerusalem Tenders, March 18-November 7, 2013

Publication Date	Location	Units	Tender No.	Plan No.	Comments	Time
8/11/2013	Pisgat Zeev North	23	YM/86/2013	4430A	Re-publication of 2012 failed tender	1st Prisoners Release
8/11/2013	Har Homa C	80	YM/84/2013	10310	Re-publication of 2012 failed tender	
8/11/2013	Har Homa B	130	YM/85/2013	7509	Re-publication of 2008 failed tender	
8/11/2013	Pisgat Zeev North	160	YM/82/2013	11647	Re-publication of 2012 failed tender	
8/11/2013	Gilo - Western Slopes	397	YM/108/2013	13157		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>790</b>				
11/3/2013	Har Homa B	130	YM/299/2013	7509	Re-publication of 2008 failed tender from 2008	2nd Prisoners Release
11/3/2013	Gilo - Western Slopes	311	YM/273/2013	13157		
11/3/2013	Ramat Shlomo	387	YM/293/2013	11085		
11/4/2013	Gilo - Western Slopes	397	YM/300/2013	13157	Re-publication of August 2013 failed tender	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>1225</b>				
<b>Total</b>		<b>2015</b>				

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## The Data: West Bank Settlement Plans Promotion, March 18-November 7, 2013

Date	Settlement	Units	Plan No.	Side of barrier	Stage	Comments	Time	
4/17/13	Yakir	160	2/118	East*	Discussion of Depositing		Before Talks	
4/17/13	Efrat	6	28/5/410	East*	Discussion of Validation			
4/17/13	Sansana	325	522	West	Discussion of Depositing			
4/17/13	Maale Adumim	112	1/4/16/1/420	East*	Discussion of Validation			
4/29/13	Rotem	170	322	East	Discussion of Validation			
5/8/13	Tkoa	24	5/1/4/412	East	Discussion of Validation			
5/8/13	Beit El	296	18/218	East	Discussion of Depositing			
5/12/13	Alei Zahav	694	6/132	East*	Publication of Depositing			
5/19/13	Modiin Illit	212	2/8/210	West	Publication of Depositing			
5/19/13	Maale Adumim	112	1/4/16/1/420	East*	Publication of Validation			
5/22/13	Modiin Illit	48	23/1/208	West	Publication of Depositing			
5/23/13	Tkoa	24	5/1/4/412	East	Publication of Validation	Publication on the Web		
5/23/13	Karnei Shomron	22	13/117	East*	Discussion of Validation			
5/23/13	Kfar Adumim	25	15/227	East*	Publication of Depositing			
5/31/13	Beitar Illit	48	8/3/1/1/426	East*	Publication of Depositing			
6/5/13	Itamar	675	4/3/163	East	Publication of Depositing			
6/5/13	Alfei Menashe	14	8/8/115	West	Discussion of Validation			
6/8/13	Shilo	30	12/205	East	Publication of Depositing			
6/9/13	Kiryat Netafim	19	3/129	East*	Publication of Depositing			
6/9/13	Bruchin	550	150	East*	Publication of Depositing			
6/17/13	Givat Zeev	29	220/13/1	West	Discussion of Validation			
6/17/13	Modiin Illit	732	3/6/210	West	Discussion of Validation			
6/24/13	Sansana	325	522	West	Publication of Depositing			
6/24/13	Carmel	97	1/1/507	East	Publication of Depositing			
7/2/13	Alfei Menashe	14	8/8/115	West	Publication of Validation	Publication on the Web		
7/3/13	Alei Zahav	450	4/132	East*	Discussion of Depositing			
7/3/13	Bracha	90	2/114	East	Discussion of Depositing			
7/14/13	Kfar Adumim	255	2/10/227	East*	Publication of Depositing			
7/17/13	Kfar Adumim	19	3/10/227	East*	Discussion of Depositing			
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>5,577</b>	<b>*outside barrier as currently built, inside planned barrier</b>					

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**(Continued: West Bank Settlement Plans Promotion, March 18-November 7, 2013)**

Date	Settlement	Units	Plan No.	Side of barrier	Stage	Comments	Time
8/1/13	Maon	230	1/508	East	Publication of Depositing		1st Prisoners Release
8/1/13	Tene	48	5/515	East	Publication of Depositing		
8/1/13	Nokdim	40	5/411	East	Publication of Depositing		
8/7/13	Almog	31	604/4	East	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Talmon	255	235/10	East	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Shilo	17	205/14	East	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Talmon	304	235/2/4	East	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Alon Shvut	60	405/6/6/1	East*	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Kfar Adumim	30	227/21	East*	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Kochav Yaacov	38	242/1/3	East	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Gilgal	234	2/317	East	Discussion of Depositing		
8/7/13	Beitar Illit	48	426/1/1/3/8	East*	Discussion of Validation		
8/7/13	Shilo	95	205/13	East	Discussion of Validation		
8/12/13	Modiin Illit	732	3/6/210	West	Publication of Validation	Publication on the Web	
		<b>1,162</b>					
9/9/13	Elmatan	37	5/116	East*	Publication of Depositing	Publication on the Web	During Talks
9/10/13	Alei Zahav	694	6/132	East*	Discussion of Validation		
9/10/13	Kfar Adumim	25	15/227	East*	Discussion of Validation		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>756</b>					
10/30/13	Yakir	160	2/118	East*	Publication of Depositing	Publication on the Web	2nd Prisoners Release
10/30/13	Shilo	95	13/205	East	Publication of Validation	Publication on the Web	
11/4/13	Bracha	90	2/114	East	Publication of Depositing	Publication on the Web	
11/4/13	Almog	31	4/604	East	Publication of Depositing		
11/6/13	Beit El	296	18/218	East	Publication of Depositing		
11/7/13	Talmon	255	10/235	East	Publication of Depositing		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>956</b>					
<b>Total</b>		<b>9451**</b>	*outside barrier as currently built, inside planned barrier **This includes some double-counting for plans promoted more than once; controlling for this factor, the actual number is 6,521				

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## The Data: East Jerusalem Settlement Plans Promotion, March 18-November 7, 2013

Date	Settlement EJ	Units	Plan No.	Stage	Comments	Time
8/16/2013	Southern Gilo Slopes	891	13261	Publication of Validation		1st Prisoners Release
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>891</b>				
9/8/2013	Ramat Shlomo	1531	11085	Publication of Validation	Published on the Web	2nd Prisoners Release
10/29/2013	Ramat Shlomo	See comments	14000	Publication of Depositing	Published on the Web. Allows expansion of 2,200 existing units.	
11/1/2013	Givati Parking	See comments	13542	Publication of Depositing	Tourist Center	
11/14/2013	Mt. Scopus Slopes	See comments	11092A	Discussion of Depositing	National park, scheduled for 14/11/13	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>1531*</b>	<b>*Plus two major public domain development projects</b>			
<b>Total</b>		<b>2422*</b>	<b>*Plus two major public domain development projects</b>			

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