

Israeli National Security Council

Feasibility Study Relocating settlements from Gaza Strip area

1	Introduction	2	
2	Size of Gaza Region settlement	2	
2.1	Settlements and population	2	
2.2	Agricultural Settlement in the Gaza Region	4	
2.3	Industrial zones in Gaza Strip	6	
3	Assumptions for examining feasibility	6	
3.1	Personal preference vs. public initiative	6	
3.2	National priority areas	7	
3.3	Adjusting the proposal to the settlers' characteristics	7	
4	Settlement alternatives	7	
4.1	Reinforcing settlements or building new settlements	7	
4.2	The government plan to build new settlements	8	
4.3	The possibilities for absorbing agricultural settlement	9	
4.3.1	Reinforcement and supplementation of agricultural settlements in Shalom Region	9	
4.3.2	Reinforcement and supplementation of agricultural villages in Ramat Hanegev	10	
4.3.3	New agricultural settlement in Shalom Region	11	
4.4	The possibilities of absorbing communal settlements	11	
4.4.1	Nisanit	11	
4.4.2	Neveh Dekalim and other communal settlements	12	
4.5	The stock of plans in the Negev settlement expansions	13	
4.6	Availability plan of new residential neighborhoods in Negev cities	13	
4.7	Alternatives for industrial zones	14	
5	Availability and timetable	15	
6	An administration for organizing, planning and developing the alternative settlements	16	
7	Cost and budget estimate	16	
8	Government decisions, regulations and law amendments	16	

1 Introduction

The Gaza Strip area has 16 Jewish settlements with a population of 7800 people. Out of 1,200 households, about one third are organized in cooperative societies in agricultural settlements and two thirds are in suburban settlements.

A feasibility study of relocating the settlements from the Gaza Strip area is presented to the Israeli government as background for a policy decision to dismantle Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip area. The process of disengagement and dismantling settlements is difficult and painful, and the very act of addressing it raises complex and controversial questions. The removal of settlers from their homes, built lawfully according to the policy of Israeli governments over many years, if it does take place, is a very sensitive process with national, social, economic and personal consequences. Those consequences are very significant. The process of dismantling and removing the settlements has to be undertaken with great sensitivity and out of respect to the settlers and their years of activity.

Assuming the government decides to evacuate the settlements from the Gaza Strip, the settlers will face one of three options:

- Using the compensation funds the government determines as part of the dismantlement plan and choosing an alternative place of residence according to the settlers' wishes and possibilities;
- Resettling in settlements or neighborhoods that will be relocated as part of government plans to encourage development and settlement in the Negev;
- Resettling in settlements or neighborhoods that will be relocated as part of government plans to encourage the development of other parts of the country.

At this point, before the government has made its decision and before it has presented the resettlement options, there is no information and it is impossible to estimate how the settlers will behave, and whether they will seek "personal solutions" or whether they will want an organized relocation of their place of settlement in a public framework. The goal of the feasibility study is to present the government authorities and the settlers who choose public programs the possibilities and alternatives of resettlement. Likewise the study will present the institutional decisions requiring legislation, regulation and authorities that can determine the availability of the proposed solutions in the framework of organized settlement. On the other hand, the feasibility study also includes the stock of settlement possibilities in existing settlements and in private frameworks for their personal choice.

2 Size of Gaza Region settlement

2.1 Settlements and population

According to Central Bureau of Statistics figures from December 31, 2003, the population of the 16 Gaza Strip settlements is 7254 people. A little more than half the population is under the age of 17. Of the 16 Gaza Region settlements the largest urban settlement is Neveh Dekalim in the Katif area. A smaller urban settlement is Nisanit in the northern Strip. The other settlements include five moshavim (collective settlements), two cooperative moshavim and five communal settlements. The area of the farmed land inside the Gaza Region according to various assessments is between 3000-3200 dunums. In addition the Gaza Region settlements possess 26,474 dunums of lands leased from the Israel Lands Authority, mostly in the Eshkol regional council. The number of families in agricultural settlements is 430. An estimated 800 families live in communal and urban settlements, and according to CBS statistics from 2000, the employment profile of the residents of the Gaza Strip shows that the

number of salaried workers is 1677 and the number of self-employed is 378. The percentage of salaried workers who earn less than minimum wages is 46.9 percent. The average monthly income for a self-employed worker in an average year was NIS 4569. In 2001 86 people were receiving unemployment allowances. 60 individuals were receiving old age and survivor pensions. 176 individuals were receiving welfare allowances and another 56 were receiving allowances for nursing, general disability, mobility, labor disability and dependents.

According to the reports from the last quarter of 2003 by the local councils to the Ministry of the Interior, submitted for purposes of municipal taxation, the Gaza Strip has 144,435 m/sq of buildings for residence; 5,911 m/sq for offices and commercial services; 266 m/sq for banks; 2,612 m/sq for industry, and 6552 m/sq for hotels. Following are figures about the Gaza Strip settlements:

Settlement	District	Form of settlement	Organizational Affiliation	Year of settlement	Residents 31.12.2003
Elei Sinai	Gaza	Communal	Amana	1982	347
Bdolah	Rafah	Moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1986	189
Bnei Atzmon	Rafah	Cooperative moshav	Amana	1979	566
Gadid	Khan Younis	Moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1982	298
Gan Or	Khan Younis	Moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1983	374
Ganei Tal	Khan Younis	Moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1979	273
Dugit	Gaza	Communal	Amana	1990	65
Kfar Darom	Deir al-Balah	Communal	Amana	1970	324
Morag	Khan Younis	Moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1972	170
Neveh Dekalim	Khan Younis	Urban		1980 (?)	2470
Nisanit	Jabaliya	Other rural		1982	1000
Netzer Hazani	Khan Younis	Moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1973	316
Netzarim	Gaza	Communal	Amana	1972	386
Pe'at Sadeh	Rafah	Communal	Farming center	1993	110
Katif	Khan Younis	Cooperative moshav	Hapoel Hamizrahi	1978	338
Rafiah Yam	Rafah	Communal	Farming center	1984	128
Slav	Rafah	Place		1987	
Total					7254

The distribution of ages of the population of the Gaza Region at the end of 2001 was as follows:

Total population	7000
Men	3,700
Women	3,500

Distribution of population by age in percentage points:	
0-4	16.5
5-9	16.3

10-14	13.1
15-19	10.0
20-29	14.5
30-44	18.8
45-59	9.4
60-64	0.4
65+	0.9
0-17	50.7
75+	0.3

According to National Insurance Institution figures for 2001 1078 families received child allowances according to the following breakdown:

	Total	Number of children per family		
		1-2	3-4	5+
Families	1078	392	415	271
Children	3721 (?)	625	1429	1667

According to CBS figures in 2001 there were nine schools in the Gaza Region with 1511 students according to the following breakdown:

2001	Schools	Classes	Students	Average number of students per class
Total	9	79	1911 (?)	19
Primary (including special education)	6	62	1130 (?)	19
Secondary	4	17	361	21
Middle school		11	245	22
High school		6	116	19

According to CBS 2001 figures, 69.8 percent of 12th graders were entitled to matriculation certificates and 56.0 percent of 12th graders met university admission requirements.

In the cooperative moshav Atzmona there is a high school that provides haredi education with 300 students, some studying in residential conditions. In addition Atzmona has 215 students in a pre-military framework.

2.2 Agricultural Settlement in the Gaza Region

In the Ministry of Agriculture's program for the construction and settlement of the Gaza Strip seven agricultural settlements with 740 farming lots were approved. Out of those, 430 were established and populated. The main farming lands of the Katif Region settlements are in the Eshkol regional council and are tilled in the framework of a joint economic company called the Gaza Region Farms. The GRF has 6600 dunums of orchards, 1800 dunums of jojoba, 740 dunums of avocado and 200 dunums of persimmons. The rest of the land is used for growing potatoes, peanuts, sunflowers and wheat.

The agricultural lands adjacent to the Gaza Region settlements are designated for intensive crops in greenhouses. The Gaza farmers have specialized in producing organic vegetables, which are in high demand especially among observers of the Jewish dietary laws and consumers of toxin-free vegetables. The Gaza farmers have also specialized in growing special species of greenhouse tomatoes, flowers for export and ornamental plants. The nursery for ornamental plants in the cooperative moshav Atzmona (Bnei Atzmon) is considered one of the biggest and most sophisticated in the country. The cooperative villages Atzmona and Katif have a modern dairy farm with a production capacity of some 4,000,000 liters of milk per year. The joint dairy is in Katif. The central packinghouses for handling the vegetables are in Netzer Hazani and Kfar Darom. In addition, there are local packinghouses adjacent to the greenhouses in the settlements. Following are concentrated figures about the Gaza Strip agricultural settlements.

Settlement	Planned lots	Populated lots	Planned area	Actual area	Of which:	
					Gaza Region	Israel Lands Authority
Bdolah	100	41	4000 d.	4061 d.	800 d.	Total 20874 (Gaza Region Farms)
Gadid	100	60	4000	4061	800	
Gan Or	100	59	4000	4061	800	
Ganei Tal	100	74	4000	4161	900	
Katif	100	62	4000	3861	400	
Morag	40	35	1600	1804	200	
Atzmona	100	25	4000	4000	400	
Total	740	433	29600	32170	5000	26474

Following is a detailed list of farming lands in the Gaza Region:

Settlement	Greenhouses (regular)	Organic crops	Total
Bdolah	485	60	545 (?)
Gadid	580	100	680
Gan Or	580	10	590 (?)
Ganei Tal	545	165	710
Netzer Hazani	404	111	518
Katif	65		65
Morag	138		138
Atzmona	70		70
Total	2867	446	3313

The agricultural settlements in the Gaza Region enjoy a supply of potable water from the National Water Carrier in the amount of 5.3 million m³ per year. In addition the agricultural settlements have quotas of treated sewage water and saline water in the amount of 13 million m³ per year. Most of that water is provided to the joint areas inside the Green Line. Following are figures on water quotas for the Gaza Region settlements in thousands of cubic meters:

	In ILA areas (Eshkol Regional Council)					Potable water in Gaza Region
	Basic potable water	Additional potable water	Reservoir	Saline	Total	
Bdolah	869	638	620	80	2007	643
Gadid	790	639	416	84	1928	800

Gan Or	800	639	416	84	1938	870
Ganei Tal	621	639	416	84	1739	1021
Netzer Hazani	590	638	416	84	1728	1027
Katif	1113	638	416	84	2351	283
Morag	401	569			1387	251
Atzmona	1816				5216	400
Total	7000		2500	580	19214	5295

2.3 Industrial zones in Gaza Strip

There are two industrial zones inside the Gaza Strip: One at Neveh Dekalim and the other at Erez. The Erez industrial zone was developed on the principle of combining Israeli enterprise and market connections with employment solutions for the local population of the Gaza Strip. In this way strategic partnerships of Israeli know-how and markets can be combined with a competitive workforce compared with the cost of the Israeli labor force. Following are figures on the industrial zones in the Gaza Strip:

Name of zone	Gross area in dunums	Net area in dunums	Number of factories	Jewish employees	Palestinian employees
Neveh Dekalim	226	132	18	90	120
Erez	744	372	201	330	4900

Following is a list of industrial plants at Neveh Dekalim:

Industry	Number of plants	Area in m/sq	Israeli employees	Palestinian employees
Hi-tech	1	214	6	
Metal	4	2850	30	85
Carpentry	3	400	3	7
Garages	2	1400	8	17
Food	3	2008	20	11
Printing	1	214	5	
Other	4	2101	18	
Total	18	9187	90	120

3 Assumptions for examining feasibility

3.1 Personal preference vs. public initiative

The basic assumption of the feasibility study of the resettlement of the people being evacuated from the Gaza Region is that there must be a distinction between urban, rural or suburban resettlement options, which are solely a matter of the settlers' personal preferences, and a plan whose execution depends on public and government involvement. A settler's choice of a place of residence to buy an apartment or business in an existing settlement does not require public involvement. On the other hand, building a new agricultural settlement or a new residential neighborhood in a city, a communal settlement or expanding villages especially designed for the communal resettlement of the Gaza Region settlers requires public involvement, without which the project cannot be carried out or will be postponed for many years.

3.2 National priority areas

The State of Israel has an interest in offering the Gaza Region settlers to reintegrate in public projects in national priority areas, with a hierarchy of three settlement areas:

- Resettling in the western Negev near the Gaza Strip;
- Resettling in the Negev including Beersheba, the Negev development towns, new settlements in the Yatir and Negev Mountain areas;
- Resettlement as part of plans to build new settlements by government decision in national priority areas in the Galilee, Mt. Gilboa and along the Seam Line.

At this point, as wide a range as possible of options for alternative settlement in national priority areas is offered, with an emphasis on resettlement in the Negev. At this point the residents and settlers of the Gaza Region have not been consulted.

3.3 Adjusting the proposal to the settlers' characteristics

From the demographic and community points of view, the 16 Gaza Region settlements are not of a cloth. The great majority of the settlers, especially those in the regional center of Neveh Dekalim and the Gush Katif and Atzmona settlements, are of a religious, communal type. The settlers in the northern Strip including Nisanit and Dugit are mostly secular. The employment of the Gaza Region settlers is described by the following features:

- Agricultural settlements in Gush Katif that have developed special expertise in greenhouse and intensive crops. It may be advantageous for the settlers who engage in farming to resettle in areas of similar ecological features in the western Negev (from the Shalom Strip to Nitzana) while using the reserves of agricultural means of production (land and water) that the state has made available to the agricultural settlements in the regional councils of Eshkol and Merhavim;
- Educational institutions at the center of the communal settlements at Neveh Dekalim and Atzmona, that serve the residents of the Gaza Region council and educational institutions that draw students from all over the country. It can be assumed that the relocation of the settlements that are tied to the educational institutions that draw students from all over the country (yeshiva high schools, seminaries that combine military service and religious studies, pre-military education and so on) will involve an organized relocation of the educational institutions;
- Employment in crafts, commerce, municipal services and security;
- Employment outside of the Gaza area, especially in regard to Nisanit, which is the largest settlement in the northern Gaza Strip.

Therefore, the range of relocation proposals relates to the demographic and communal features as well as to the features of the "human capital" unique to the Gaza Region settlements.

4 Settlement alternatives

4.1 Reinforcing settlements or building new settlements

The planning tendency, as it emerges from the discussions of the planning authorities and the decisions of the National Planning and Construction Council, is to prefer the reinforcement or even crowding of existing settlements to building new settlements. On the other hand, the decisions of the Government of Israel actually support building new settlements in national priority areas, in the Galilee, the Gilboa, along the Seam Line, on the country's eastern border

and in the Negev. Many settlements and especially settlements in development areas have not yet reached such a size that can sustain a community. In the rural settlements including in the areas that are within the proposals for the resettlement of the Gaza Region settlers, there are settlements that are nearly empty or that have only a handful of families (Retamim, Kerem Shalom, Telalim and others) and settlements in the Shalom Region that were planned to house about 100 lots but have so far been populated by less than half that number (Yated, Yevul, Sdei Avraham, Kadesh Barnea, Kmehim and others). In the broader circle of resettlement proposals, in the Lower Galilee and Mt. Gilboa, a similar discussion is taking place about the need to build new settlements based on government decision in Hohit and Michal, on Mt. Gilboa, even though Meirav and Ma'aleh Gilboa are only very partially populated, or placing the settlement Shibolet on Mt. Tor'an, even though the nearby settlement Beit Rimon is only very sparsely settled, and there are other examples.

4.2 The government plan to build new settlements

Based on the government policy to act to develop the Negev and the Galilee and to strengthen the periphery, and in accordance with the recommendations of the inter-ministerial committee to build new and renewed settlements, the Government of Israel has decided, since 1998, to build 38 new settlements. A substantial number of plans for new settlements have so far been rejected by the planning and construction committees because of the desire to maintain open areas and the position of the planning and construction committee to prefer increasing the population of existing settlements to building new settlements. Following is the list of settlements approved by the government since May 1998:

Cabinet decision		Settlement	Regional council	Capacity	Type	Responsible body	Outline per regional
Number	date						
3683	23.4.98	Mirsham	Lakhish	400	Communal	Housing Ministry	Objections
3951	26.6.98	Yatir	Galilee		Communal		
3951	24.6.98	Sansana	Bnei Shimon		Communal		Approved
3981	28.6.98	Magar	Lakhish		Communal		
3931	23.6.98	Haruv	Lakhish	250	Communal	Ministry of Housing and Construction	Temporary
3951	28.6.98	Anah	Lakhish	150	Communal	Ministry of Housing and Construction	IDF objection
3951	28.6.98	Arkuvit	Lakhish		Communal		
4278	10.9.98	Be'er Ora	Eilat Region	400	Communal	ILA	Approved
4445	5.11.98	Nitzana	Ramat Hanegev		Communal	ILA	Approved
4445	5.1.98	Be'er Malka	Ramat Hanegev	100	Communal	Jewish Agency	Approved
5007	25.4.99	Shibolet	Lower Galilee	275	Communal	ILA	Code
5007	28.4.99	Kadita	Marom Galil		Communal ecological		
5007	25.4.99	Katef	Misgav				
5007	25.4.99	Tel Katzir C.	Jordan Valley		Communal		
5007	25.4.99	Merhav Am	Ramat	500	Communal	Ministry of	

			Hanegev			Housing and Construction	
444	15.7.01	Halutzit 1	Ramat Henegev	500	Communal	ILA	
1917	2.6.02	Nachal Iron			Outpost	World Zionist Organization	
1918	2.6.02	Yatzfur (Michal)	Gilboa	120	Communal	Ministry of Housing	
2265	21.7.02	Haruv Hagalil	Zevulun	600	Communal	Ministry of Housing	Environmer
2265	21.7.02	Issasschar	Zevulun	600	Communal	Ministry of Housing	No progress
2265	21.7.02	Ramat Arbel	Lower Galilee		Private	Private	
2265	21.7.02	Kidmat Kinneret	Jordan Valley	500	Communal	Ministry of Housing	Objections
2265	21.7.02	Hohit	Gilboa	290	Communal	Ministry of Housing	No progress
2269	21.7.02	Sdeh Bar	Gilboa		Educational village	Ministry of Housing	
2265	21.7.02	Nurit	Gilboa	168	Communal	Ministry of Housing	Approved
2265	21.7.02	Iron 3	Meggido	250	Communal	Ministry of Housing	No progress
2265	21.7.02	Givat Avimor	Matteh Yehuda		Communal	ILA	
2265	21.7.02	Hiran	(Yatir)		Communal	ILA	Approved
2268	21.7.02	Ira	(Yatir)		Communal	Ministry of Housing	Firing area
2265	21.7.02	Gvaot Bar	Bnei Shimon	600	Communal	Ministry of Housing	Approved
2265	21.7.02	Faran B.	Middle Arava	350	Communal	Ministry of Housing	No progress
		Tzukim	Middle Arava	150	Communal	Jewish Agency	Under deve
		Shlomit	Eshkol	1800	Urban	ILA	Theoretical
		Halutzit 2	Eshkol	1000	Urban	ILA	Theoretical

4.3 The possibilities for absorbing agricultural settlement

In the absence of figures about the settlers' demand for relocating their settlements to other suitable locations, we assume that nearly 400 families will wish to relocate their farms to alternative sites. That is an optimal solution but it is doubtful whether it will be fully exhausted. The figure that indicates that most of the agricultural settlements' farming lands and means of production are located inside the Eshkol regional council points to the possibility of relocation in that area.

4.3.1 Reinforcement and supplementation of agricultural settlements in Shalom Region

In 1982, as part of the plan to dismantle the settlements from the northern Sinai, nine settlements were built inside the Eshkol regional council: Moshav Ein Habsor in the area of Bsor River and another eight settlements, including two kibbutzim (Sufa and Holit) and six family farming settlements: Prigan, Sdei Avraham, Talmei Yosef, Dekel, Yated, and a neighborhood in the regional center Avshalom. Later a quasi-military settlement called Amitai was added on the Egyptian border (it no longer exists). According to ILA figures, except for Moshav Ein Habsor which was fully populated (145 farming units), all the rest of the settlements in the Shalom Strip appear to have 285 available lots, of which 107 are immediately available, according to the following specifications:

Settlement	Number of lots				
	Planned	Planning authority's program	Actual lots	Immediately available	Planned availability
Yevul	96	60	43	17	53
Yated	96	60	36	24	60
Dekel	96	74	74		
Prigan	96	60	34	26	62
Sdei Avraham	96	60	40	20	56
Talmei Yosef	96	60		20	56
Total				107	285

In addition, the kibbutzim in the Shalom Region are not well-populated either. Kibbutz Kerem Shalom has a small number of families, and the kibbutzim Holit and Sufa lack population. Adjustment in small settlements is a delicate issue because of the special behavior of small communities. Consultation with experts on communal absorption about the possibility of relocating the Gaza Region settlers to available lots in veteran settlements will be necessary. The absorption may come against the problem of integrating religious communities with secular communities. The settlements will prefer a gradual absorption of a small number of families each year to ensure their integration in the old settlement's community fabric rather than creating a conflict by combining two communities of different characteristics and backgrounds.

4.3.2 Reinforcement and supplementation of agricultural villages in Ramat Hanegev

The regional council Ramat Hanegev, near the Egyptian border, is home to the settlements of Kadesh Barnea and Kmehin, which specialize in greenhouse crops. The agricultural settlement at Be'er Malka north of Kadesh Barnea is taking its first steps. The availability of absorption in these settlements depends on the development of water resources near the settlements. For that purpose a reservoir has been built to improve the ground water in the area and a water desalination plant has been built. Under the constraints of adjustment and communal integration in these settlements, the absorption possibilities are as follows:

Settlement	Number of lots				
	Planned	Planning authorities' program	Actual lots	Immediate availability	Planned availability
Kadesh Barnea	105	100	36		60
Kmehin	120	100	24		70
Total					130

The Ramat Hanegev regional council also has two sparsely populated kibbutzim. Kibbutz Retamim with only a few settlers was planned for 100 agricultural lots. Kibbutz Telalim too was planned for 100 lots and has a large absorption potential. The matter of absorption of the Gaza Region settlers in these kibbutzim requires thorough study of the social, communal and economic implications before it is brought up for discussion.

4.3.3 New agricultural settlement in Shalom Region

As part of the regional outline plan for the southern region, Regional Outline Plan 14/4, six as-yet unbuilt settlements were marked for the Bsor area, north of the dunes of Halutza, and as a supplement to the plan for the Shalom region (see blueprint of regional outline plan). None of the settlements approved in the regional outline plan has a local outline plan or a detailed plan. The location of the settlements according to the plan requires examination and coordination with the security authorities. The examination will be undertaken if possible before raising the possibility of settlement in the Shalom region for cabinet discussion. The degree of flexibility in relocating settlements north of IDF training grounds also requires further examination with the Ministry of Interior's legal advisors.

On the initiative of the ILA, the planning of three settlements along the border with Egypt was ordered. The settlements are Halutzit 1, in the Ramat Hanegev regional council north of Be'er Malka, and Halutzit 2 and 3 are planned between Amitai and Be'er Malka in the Eshkol regional council. These plans have not yet come up for discussion and approval at the regional committee or the National Planning and Construction Council.

4.4 The possibilities of absorbing communal settlements

4.4.1 Nisanit

About two thirds of the Gaza Region settlers live in communal settlements, the largest of which are Neveh Dekalim and Nisanit. Geographically, there is a large distance between Neveh Dekalim, that serves as an urban center for the Gaza Region settlements, and Nisanit, that is a rather distant suburb south of Ashkelon. Nisanit, most of whose residents are secular, depends for services and employment on the cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod and on the settlements of the nearby Sha'ar Hanegev regional council. In the geographical space near Nisanit no new communal settlements are planned. The closest urban absorption possibilities to Nisanit are in the boundaries of Ashkelon, that has a stock of approved plans for thousands more housing units. In a radius of 30 km from Nisanit there are two communal settlements in advanced stages of construction or planning. One is Gvaot Bar between Mishmar Hanegev and Lehavim, which is in the infrastructure development stage, and the other is the settlement of Haruv between the villages of Amatzia and Shekef.

Gvaot Bar is being developed by the Ministry of Housing and Construction. The settlement was built according to a cabinet decision from 11.7.2002 and is slated to be populated in January 2005. The settlement was planned for a secular population of 600 housing units. At this stage infrastructure work has been carried out for a temporary neighborhood for the immediate housing of 18 families.

Haruv was approved as a communal settlement in a cabinet decision from 28.6.1998. The building of the settlement is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing and Construction. The settlement is planned for 250 housing units without defining the communal nature of the target population. The Ministry of Housing and Construction is promoting the outline plan towards the approval of the National Planning and Construction Council for the

location of the settlement in the regional outline plan. According to the Ministry of Housing and Construction the settlement is planned to be populated in August 2005.

In eastern Lakhish, between Moshav Shekef and Kibbutz Eshkolot, the Ministry of Housing and Construction is planning another settlement at Mirsham. The plan, according to a cabinet decision from 5.4.1998, is for a religious population. At this stage the planning of the settlement is being held up by objections of the Antiquities Authority to the location of the settlement, and because of the lack of regional infrastructures.

4.4.2 Neveh Dekalim and other communal settlements

The assumption is that the communal settlements on the Gaza Coast should be offered alternative places where the population is religious and that suit the nature of the community and the educational requirements of the Gaza settlers. Neveh Dekalim serves as a cultural and spiritual center for the neighboring settlements in addition to its role as a neighborhood or city that serves the community of its residents and gives them a special quality of community life. Those features can be offered to the Neveh Dekalim settlers in a number of communal settlements in the Negev. Here too we will present only settlements whose construction has been approved by the National Planning and Construction Council and whose construction in a timetable that is possible in relation to the disengagement plan is highly likely.

Avshalom is the closest communal center to Neveh Dekalim. Avshalom has an approved plan for the immediate construction of 154 housing units with potential for expansion to 500 housing units. If the agricultural settlements decide to relocate to the Shalom Strip Avshalom could serve as a communal center and a focus of educational services for the settlements in the area. Adjacent to Avshalom there is a small industrial area which can easily be expanded as necessary. The development of Avshalom is under the responsibility of the ILA. For the residents of Neveh Dekalim who are currently employed inside the Green Line, Avshalom constitutes the most accessible alternative. Developing Avshalom along with the addition of agricultural settlements of former Gaza residents will give the development of the western Negev a significant advantage.

In the southern region there are additional plans to build communal settlements that could be of interest to the residents of the Gaza Region. They are in a number of plans being promoted by the Ministry of Housing and Construction and the ILA. We will focus here on the plans for communal settlements that have been approved by the National Planning and Construction Council and located on the regional outline plan for the southern region, and of those, only on the settlements designated for the religious community, or which are next to religious settlements with appropriate education systems.

The Yatir area: Mt. Yatir is inside the Green Line on the southern margins of the Mt. Hebron regional council. Three large communal settlements are in the planning at Mt. Yatir with 1500-2600 families each. Of those, the most advanced is the settlement Hiran on Mt. Hiran. The settlement has been approved by the National Planning and Construction Council and its location was marked on the regional outline plan for the southern region. The approved capacity for the village is currently 1600 housing units. The ILA was assigned by the government as the body responsible for building the settlement. It is expected to be populated in 2006.

Merhav Am. A communal settlement that the government decided to build in 25.4.1999. Its location is north of Kibbutz Sdeh Boker. It is designated for a religious population. The settlement's capacity is for 500 housing units. The planned target date for population is January 2005. Today it is home to 21 families in a temporary camp.

Communal settlement in the Sdot Negev regional council: The regional council Sdot Negev (formerly "Azata") is adjacent to the Gaza Strip. The council's settlements lead a religious lifestyle. Most of them are moshavim, two are kibbutzim (Sa'ad and Telamim) and there is a populated regional center at Ma'agalim. All of the settlements are slated for "expansions" for communal neighborhoods of religious Jews who are not members of the cooperative agricultural association. 138 housing units are planned in the communal neighborhood of Kibbutz Sa'ad and 167 housing units are planned for the communal neighborhood of Alumim. The availability of the plans is high. The moshavim of the regional council plan expansions mainly for the local residents. It can be assumed that some of the Gaza Region settlers will find their ways to these expansions.

4.5 The stock of plans in the Negev settlement expansions

ILA figures show that the communal "expansions" of the Negev settlements have a stock of 3100 available plots for immediate marketing. The Negev Development Authority has just launched a national advertising campaign to sell these plots. Here is a summary of the figures on the plots available for marketing:

Regional council	Settlement	Number of plots	Regional council	Settlement	Number of plots
Mt. Hebron	Shani	100	Merhavim	Ranen	54
Eshkol	Ohad	125		Sdeh Zvi	29
	Yevul	100	Talmei Bilu	44	
	Yesha	38	Tifrah	106	
	Yated	110	Sdot Negev	Givolim	32
	Kissufim	138		Zimrat	70
	Ein Habsor	21		Zruah	46
	Sdeh Nitzan	90		Yoshiviya	69
	Bnei Shimon	Beit Kama		135	Kfar Maimon
Brosh		60	Melilot	57	
Nevatim		127	Shibolim	43	
Taashur		69	Shuva	56	
Tidhar		100	Shokeda	62	
Merhavim	Eshbol	133		Sharsheret	24
	Bithat	64		Tekuma	60
Ramat Negev	Telalim	98			
	Naalim	350			
	Ben-Gurion Conservatory	370			
Merhavim	Gilat	100	Sha'ar Hanegev	Gevim	138
	Maslul	30		Kfar Aza	108
	Nir Moshe	21		Miflasim	100
	Nir Akiva	94		Bror Chayil	138
	Patish	61		Or Haner	138
	Pa'amei Tashaz	62		Ruhama	138
	Kelahim	56			

4.6 Availability plan of new residential neighborhoods in Negev cities

Urban settlements in the Negev have stores of valid available plans for building thousands of housing units in new urban neighborhoods. In terms of stores of available plans for urban development, there is no restriction of land availability for the absorption of the Gaza Region settlers. Assuming that the average duration of construction of an apartment in Israel is 15-18 months and another 4-5 months will be needed for development and infrastructure work, the sooner the settlers select their future place of residence, the easier it will be to meet the tight timetable slated for the relocation. According to ILA figures, the marketing potential of land in southern cities, with immediate availability, is in the following localities:

Name of settlement	Housing units slated for marketing – ILA	Neighborhoods	Valid housing units according to Negev Development Authority
Ashdod	920	Southern coast	
Ashkelon	1100	Barnea and southern neighborhoods	
Kiryat Gat	1200	Bnei Yisrael quarter	
Kiryat Malachi	320	Tzaddikim	
Sderot		Southern neighborhoods	1200
Netivot		New west	3244
Beersheba	380	Southern entrance, Neot Lon, Nahal Beka	13164
Dimona	166	Mamshit neighborhood	3722
Meitar	625	Rabin neighborhood	695
Arad	736	Arad south – Neurim	3073
Ofakim		Eastern city	2765
Mitzpeh Ramon			945
Eilat			2412

4.7 Alternatives for industrial zones

The Erez industrial zone operates while exploiting the advantages of Israeli enterprise and the possibility of employing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip according to the working conditions prevailing in the Strip. Moving the plants into Israel, even along the Gaza Strip fence, without a legislative change regarding labor in Israeli territory, does not provide a solution as an alternative. This applies to three industrial areas adjacent to the Gaza Strip:

- The industrial zone next to the Sufa crossing (the Agranat terminal);
- Oz Leshalom – an industrial zone between Kibbutz Nachal Oz and the Karni terminal;
- The border intersection – south of Kerem Shalom, where the borders of Egypt, Israel and the Gaza Strip meet. According to this plan, the Rafah terminal will be relocated at the border intersection.

Alternatives to the industrial zone at Neveh Dekalim are possible at any of the settlements to which the residents of the Gaza Region relocate, including the Avshalom industrial zone, which is approved in the plans.

5 Availability and timetable

The working assumption is that the relocation is planned for October 2005, that is 18 months after the government decision. That is enough time to identify alternatives for settlement in existing settlements by acquiring apartments or farms or entering existing apartments or available farms.

When it comes to building neighborhoods to reinforce existing settlements, and moreover, building new settlements, the time until the planned evacuation is very short and nearly impossible. As for new settlements, the evacuation timetable requires presenting proposals that are within the boundaries of approved plans, at least at the level of regional outline plan, and that building permits can be obtained within six months at the most. Even under a short and accelerated timetable it can be assumed that there will be a demand for interim solutions of temporary housing (for residence, educational institutions and other services) until final arrangements are made. The experience gained in building alternative settlements for the settlers removed from Sinai (Ein Habsor, Netiv Ha'asarah, Kadesh Barnea and the Rafah Region settlements) shows that the time needed then to develop infrastructures in the new settlements to allow housing in temporary buildings was three years. Since then, building timetables have shortened, but the time required for planning approval has lengthened. Therefore, presenting the possibilities of relocating the Gaza settlements requires also presenting interim solutions.

Estimated timetables of accelerated work, without administrative delays (budget approval and so on) from the time of a government decision to evacuate until housing in the alternatives that were presented, show that any organized settlement solution, such as rural or urban settlement, would require a longer time than the deadline that was stated for the pullout. That means that interim solutions and a special deployment will be required to relocate the agricultural settlements, the educational institutions and the industrial plants. The experience of the Sinai pullout shows that moving the agricultural facilities and especially the greenhouses took a short time, right after the farming infrastructures were finished, within a few months before the permanent houses were built for the farmers. Following is an preliminary estimate of the timetables for providing a settlement solution in a new settlement or neighborhood:

Time needed for required additional activity	Time for the activity	Cumulative – from time of government decision
Purchase of available apartment	Immediate	Immediate
Building house, with approved plan and available infrastructures	12-14 months	12-14 months
Addition for planning and execution of infrastructure work	4-8 months	16-22 months
Addition for preparing detailed local outline plan	6-10 months	22-32 months
Addition for amendment of regional outline plan	6-10 months	28-42 months

The conclusions that emerge from the timetables are:

- We suggest that the working assumption regarding the disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip be that new settlements will be built to accommodate the Gaza Region settlers only when the reinforcement of existing settlements is inapplicable or

unsuited to the wishes of the Gaza settlers and when the result of rejecting new settlements will be the dispersion of the settlers to areas that are not of national priority. The working assumption will hold even without expressing at this stage of presenting the subject support for either of the two approaches, new settlements or reinforcement of existing ones.

- Likewise we propose a working assumption that a settlement which at this stage has not yet been approved by the regional council and the national planning and construction council will not be included in the list of available settlement alternatives. That assumption holds considering the figure that of 38 new settlements approved by the cabinet in the last years only a few have reached the stages of approval and the beginning of development.
- The alternatives for new settlements that will be floated as part of the plan are only ones that were approved as part of an approved local outline plan.
- Alternatives for which immediate permits for development work and building permits can be obtained.
- Immediate action is required, even before a decision on the disengagement plan, to focus on accelerating planning procedures in a limited number of selected places that have reasonable chances of being approved, with the goal of shortening the timetables after the decision is made. If the disengagement plan is not decided upon, then the promotion of the plans is still in accordance with previous government decisions.

6 An administration for organizing, planning and developing the alternative settlements

Organizing alternative places of settlement on short notice requires an administration with the authorities and tools to effectively execute the building of the settlements, the neighborhoods, the industrial zones and organizing the public infrastructure involved in carrying out the plan. The theoretical alternatives to organizing such an administration are:

- Separating handling the management of candidates for relocation to existing settlements and the management of building new settlements. Creating places of absorption in existing settlements will be under the responsibility of the active body that was involved in building those settlements and neighborhoods (the Ministry of Housing, the ILA, the Jewish Agency's settlement department). The administration's job will be supervision and monitoring to report to the government on the progress of the plan and immediate intervention to remove obstacles.
- Assigning the administration with the project of executing the disengagement plan including the preparation of alternative places of resettlement. The administration's authorities would be established by legislation like the Trans-Israel Highway Law or on the basis of a government decision to create a binding coordination body like the ministerial committee on the Negev Bedouin.
- Assign a government ministry, the Ministry of Housing or the ILA, with the overall responsibility for organizing the pullout and relocation activities.

7 Cost and budget estimate

8 Government decisions, regulations and law amendments

The subjects for government decision:

- Creating a civil administration to coordinate the activities of evacuation and resettlement;

- Setting a cutoff day for entitlement;
- Setting principles of compensation: money or money equivalent in housing, agricultural farm and business;
- Distribution of funding for relocation in national priority areas:
 - Physical and organizational infrastructures funded by government;
 - Educational institutions, religious seminaries, pre-military and other, funded by government;
 - Direct cost of housing, means of production and alternative employment from compensation funds;
- Setting cutoff date for negotiations over alternative settlement in priority areas with government funding;
- Recommendation to exempt from tender in land allocation for alternative housing and production means;
- Assigning responsibility to ministry or other body for building alternative settlements;
- Legislation: balance between relocation for worthy cause and compensation while maintaining principle of proportion, and compensation by relocation of settlements and reconstruction in the framework of priority areas and according to the choice of the relocated settlers.