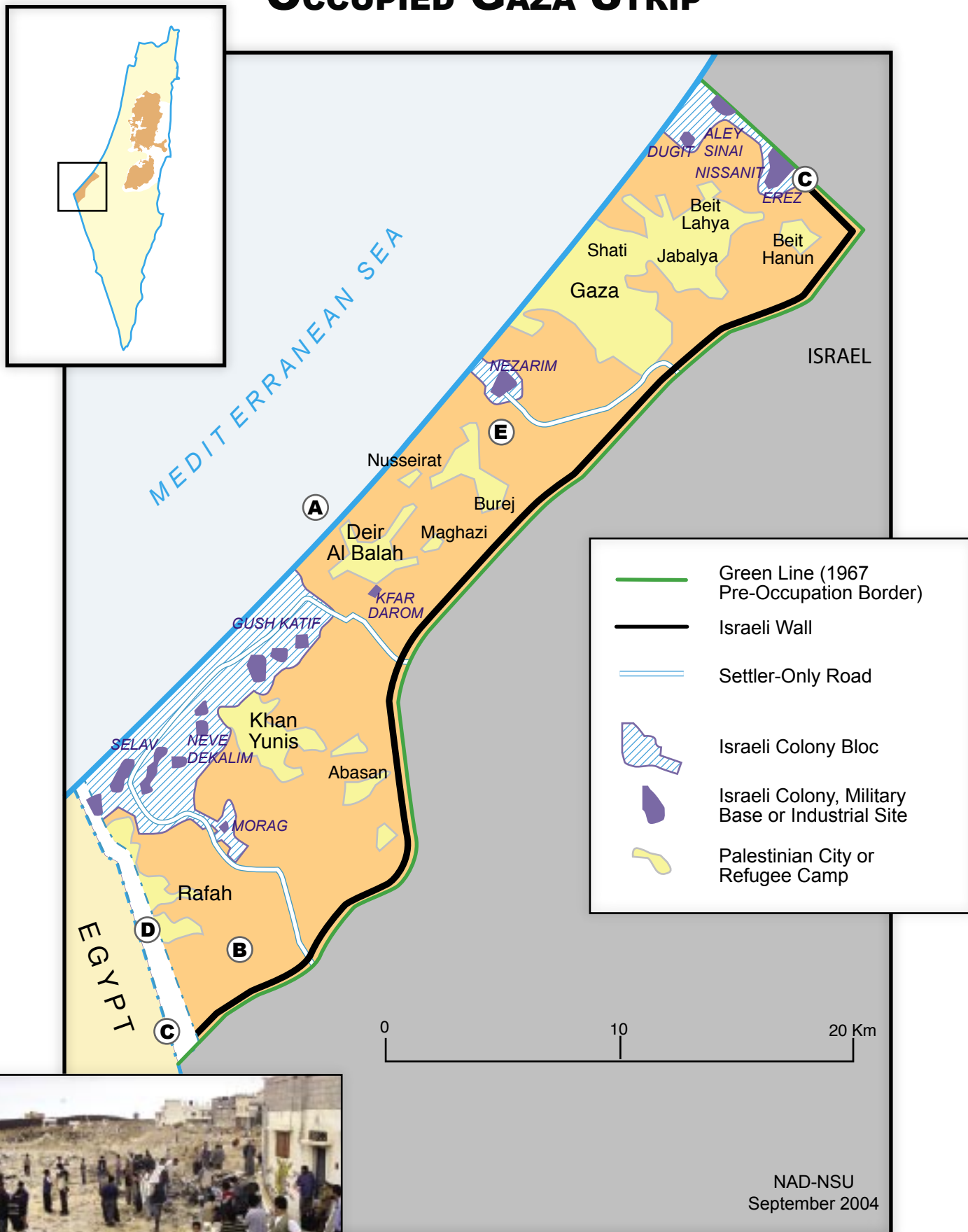


ISRAEL'S "DISENGAGEMENT" PLAN OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP



Population: 1.3 million Palestinians (80% of whom are registered refugees)
7,300 illegal Israeli settlers

Area: 365 km² – 45 km long and 12 km wide at its widest point
This is approximately twice the size of the District of Columbia.

Population Density: 25,400 persons per km² of built up area (making the Occupied Gaza Strip one of the most densely populated places in the world)

Israel's "Disengagement" Plan (even as revised on May 30, 2004) repeats the mistakes of the Oslo Accords: Israel redeploys from heavily populated Palestinian areas while still maintaining military and economic control over those areas. At the same time, Israel expands colonies and infrastructure in other parts of Occupied Palestinian Territory in order to prejudice final status negotiations. Under the Plan:

Illegal Israeli Colonies to be Evacuated: Israel claims that it will eventually evacuate all illegal colonies in the Occupied Gaza Strip. The total settler population of the Occupied Gaza Strip is approximately 7,300¹ (only 0.5% of the Gaza population) although 17 Israeli colonies, related roads and military installations control approximately 15% of the Strip.² In exchange for partially complying with its obligations under international law in the Occupied Gaza Strip, Israel expects to retain larger colony blocs in the Occupied West Bank.

Israel has stated that it intends to evacuate the Gaza colonies in four stages, but there is no guarantee that a complete evacuation will take place. This staggered four-phase approach is similar to the failed Oslo approach: "temporary" interim phases become long-term realities as Israel "evacuates" from some densely populated Palestinian areas while simultaneously expanding colonies throughout the rest of Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Israeli Military Control to Remain: The Gaza Strip will remain "occupied territory" under international law because Israel will maintain effective control even after "disengagement." Under the terms of the plan itself, Israel will retain control over Gaza's airspace, borders, and international relations. Israel will continue military operations in Gaza's territorial waters and will prevent the Palestinians from opening an airport or seaport in Gaza. Therefore, Israel will remain bound by its duties as an Occupying Power for as long as such control is exercisable.

- A** **Palestinian Coastal Waters to Remain Controlled by Israel:** Israel will continue to militarily control Palestinian coastal waters, thereby denying Palestinians sovereignty over their own coastal zone. The Plan states that Israel "will continue its military activity along the Gaza Strip's coastline" and states that Israel will prevent Gaza from opening a seaport until such time as Israel deems appropriate.
- B** **Palestinian Airspace to Remain Controlled by Israel:** Israel will retain exclusive control over Palestinian airspace, thereby impacting not only the use of airspace for import and export of goods but also the development of services requiring Palestinian airspace such as mobile phone service and satellite technology. Israel has demolished the only Palestinian airport in Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- C** **Border Crossings to Remain Controlled by Israel:** Israel will continue to impede the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty over their territory by remaining in control of the international border crossings between Egypt and the Occupied Gaza Strip and between the Occupied Gaza Strip and Israel (controlling not only entry into Israel, but the entry of persons into the Occupied Gaza Strip). Accordingly, Palestinians will continue to need Israeli permission to leave and enter their own territory. Palestinian exports and imports (and hence a great proportion of the Gaza Strip's economy) will remain subject to Israeli military dictates, thereby ensuring that the Palestinian population remains a captive market for Israeli goods that are not subject to the same military restrictions. Furthermore, Israel will continue to divide the Occupied West Bank from the Occupied Gaza Strip as Israel refuses to establish a territorial link between these areas.
- D** **Palestinian Homes to be Demolished by Israel:** Israel will continue to control the Rafah area, near the Egyptian border where it is currently building a "buffer zone" between the Occupied Gaza Strip and Egypt to ensure that the Gaza Strip does not border a sovereign country. This "buffer zone" (which is several kilometers in length and up to 200 meters deep) has already resulted in the demolition of more than 2,500 homes in the area, making more than 17,000 Palestinians homeless. Israel reserves the right to "enlarge" the area, thereby making more Palestinians homeless. See photo at <http://www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt/maps/thematic/rafah0304.pdf>.
- E** **Water, Electricity, Gas and Fuel to Remain Controlled by Israel:** Israel states that it will maintain the existing arrangements regarding water, gas, electricity, and fuel. Taken together with provisions of the "Disengagement" Plan, these existing arrangements ensure that Israel will maintain economic control over Palestinians.

Water: Israel controls Palestinian access to the Coastal aquifer. Israel has over-extracted this aquifer to the extent that it has fallen below sea level and has been contaminated by salt water.

Gas: Since Israel will continue military operations in Gaza's territorial waters and since Israel will maintain control over Gaza's borders—thus precluding Palestinian ability to export gas—Gaza will likely remain unable to profitably extract the natural gas resources located off its coast.

Electricity: Due to Israel's control of borders, Palestinians must purchase most of their electricity from the Israeli monopoly, instead of connecting to the electricity grids of neighboring countries. The rates Israel charges Palestinians are among the highest in the world. If Israel permits Palestinians to freely export their natural gas, Palestinians will be able to develop their own electricity infrastructure. However, the Gazan market alone is too small to make gas extraction economically viable.

Fuel: Israel has effectively ensured that Palestinians can only purchase fuel from Israel.

1. Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Population by District, Sub-District and Area, 2003, www.cbs.gov.il/population/new_2003/tab_1.pdf

2. According to the Ministry of Planning, under the Oslo Accords, Israel was only to exercise control over 15% of the land of the Occupied Gaza Strip. This figure has substantially increased since September 2000 and some estimates are as high as 38%.