



The Blue Line Team's Work in "Gush Etzion"

December 2016

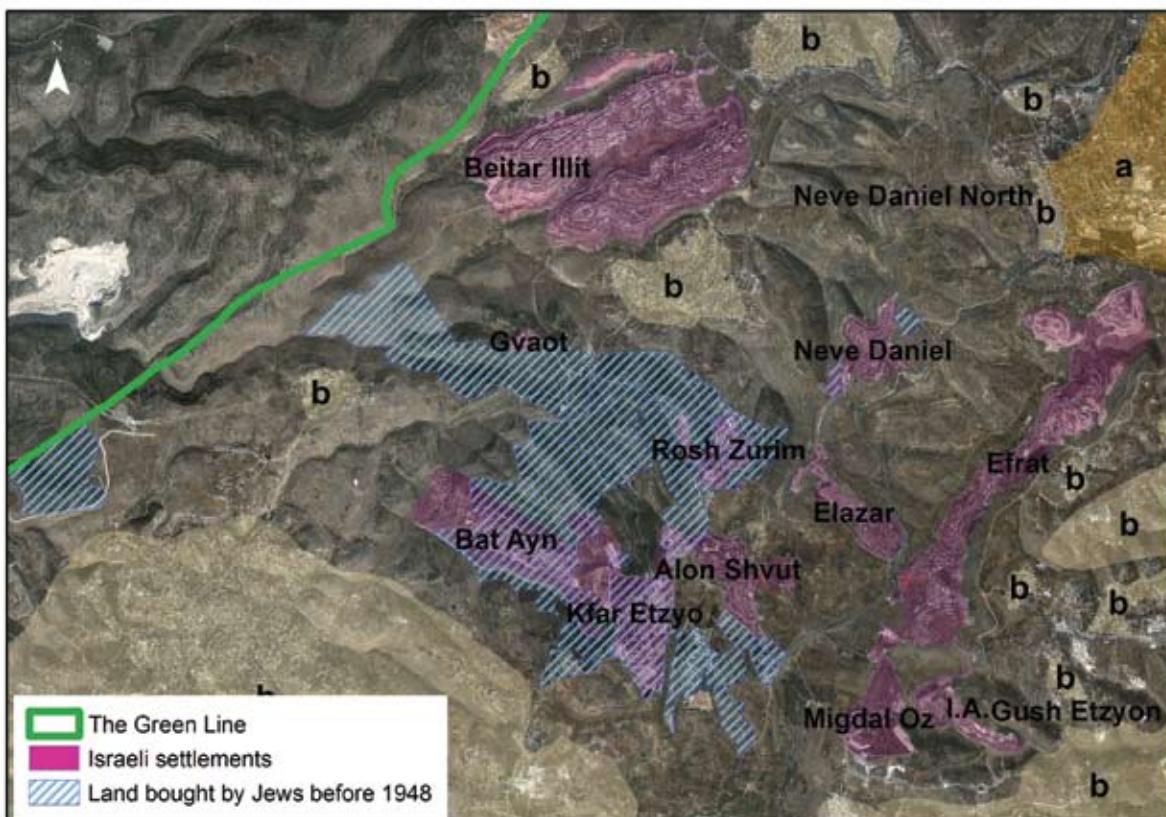
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During the years 1943-1948, four Jewish localities were established in the area located approximately ten kilometers southwest of the heart of the city of Bethlehem. On the eve of the 1948 War, there were several hundred residents (including children) living in these communities.¹ Prior to the establishment of these four localities, there had been three attempts to establish Jewish localities in the area, none of which succeeded. This is described (in idealizing language) on the website of the Gush Etzion Regional Council's website:

On three recent occasions, Jews have tried to settle Mt. Hebron. They were greeted by a rocky, dry, hostile, stormy and snowy mountain. On three occasions they were uprooted from the land and then returned on the fourth. They - like the nation of Israel in its homeland; three times they ascended to Eretz-Israel, struggled with its multitude of limitations, were uprooted from it, and returned and clung to it on the fourth.²

The Jewish localities present in this area until 1948 were established on lands bought by Jews beginning in the second half of the 1920s from Palestinian farmers [fellahin], mainly from the villages of Beit Ummar, Nahhalin, Al Jab'a and Surif. A map we received from the Civil Administration reveals that the size of the area purchased by Jews prior to 1948 in the area south and southwest of Bethlehem is approximately 10,500 dunam.³

Over time, with the occupation of the West Bank by the Jordanian army, these four localities were conquered and destroyed. In September 1967, a few months after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the settlement of Kfar Etzion was founded, the first settlement to be established in the West Bank.



Approximately 10,500 dunam were purchased by Jews in the area southwest of Bethlehem prior to 1948

¹ Kfar Etzion – 1943, Masuot Yitzhak – 1945, Ein Tzurim – 1946, Revadim – 1947.

² See website of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, <http://www.baitisraeli.co.il/?CategoryID=866&ArticleID=963>.

³ Included in this calculation is also the area of the Duheisha Refugee Camp, most of which was established on approximately 300 dunam purchased by Jews prior to 1948 and registered as absentee land during the period of Jordanian rule. This area is today located within Area A, which includes Bethlehem and nearby towns and villages.

The Gush Etzion Regional Council was established by a military order in 1980, and its spokespeople invest considerable efforts in the attempt to convey to the Israeli public and to the world the impression that this settlement movement is a continuation that draws from a “unique consensual legitimacy,” based on the claim the settlements in its boundaries were established on lands purchased by Jews.⁴ Mythology is one thing, and facts, another. Suffice it to say in the present context that the official area of the Gush Etzion Regional Council is now seven times larger than the area purchased by Jews in this area prior to 1948. The regional council includes today approximately 20 settlements and a number of outposts, the overwhelming majority of which were established on lands that were never purchased by Jews. The mechanism that has enabled the establishment of these settlements is the same method of land takeover that Israel uses in all other parts of the West Bank – namely, land seizure for ostensible security needs, expropriations for public needs, declarations of state land, and of course, countless pirate takeovers carried out against the law but enabled by the state’s turning a blind eye time and again, and sometimes, with its outright support.

It is sufficient to simply mention in this context that to this day, approximately 22,250 dunam of state lands have been declared to the west and southwest of Bethlehem (the area customarily called Gush Etzion) and this is, as stated, is in contrast to 10,500 dunam purchased in the area by Jews in this area prior to 1948. The process of declaring state lands in this area began in the early 1980s and continued until 2014, in which year only 5,000 dunam of state lands were declared (on two separate occasions).⁵

In this appendix, we will focus on examining the lands history only of those settlements located in the western portion of what is defined today as the area of the Gush Etzion Regional Council which includes, in effect, all of the settlements west of Road 60, as well as the settlements of Efrat and Migdal Oz, nearby and east of it.⁶

In what follows, we present a summary table and maps displaying the land history of each of these settlements. It is important to note that we received all of the information presented in these maps from the Civil Administration under the Freedom of Information Law, and therefore, it should be viewed as official information.



⁴ See the article by the Head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council: Davidi Perel, “The Truth about Gush Etzion,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 3, 2015 <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/The-truth-about-Gush-Etzion-392613>.

⁵ See Chaim Levinson, “Israel Set to Legalize West Bank Outpost, Taking Over Private Palestinian Land,” *Haaretz*, April 13, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.585377>.

⁶ Efrat and Beitar Illit are larger settlements, and therefore, they are independent municipal entities and not part of the Gush Etzion Local Council. However, since they are in this area, we have included them in the present appendix.

| Settlement | Actual area ⁷ (in dunam) | Jewish lands before 1948 (in dunam) | Percent Jewish lands of total actual area | Declaration of state lands (in dunam) | Percentage that declared lands comprise of total actual area | Seizure for military needs (in dunam) ⁸ | Percentage of area under military seizure of total actual area |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Gush Etzion Industrial Zone | 428 | 0 | 0 | 384 | 89.7% | 0 | |
| Alon Shvut (including the Giv'at Ha-Hish Outpost) ⁹ | 797 | 118 | 14.8% | 495 | 62.1% | 0 | |
| Elazar (including the Derekh Avot Outpost) | 466 | 0 | 0 | 61 | 13% | 405 (based on a 1975 seizure order) | 86.9% |
| Efrat | 2,802 | 0 | 0 | 1971 | 70.3% | 0 | |
| Beitar Illit | 4,034 | 0 | 0 | 3,922 | 97% | 0 | |
| Bat Ayin (including the Masuot Yitzhak Outpost and Bat Ayin B) | 1,672 | 1,132 | 67.7% | 182 | 10.8% | 0 | |
| Geva'ot | 134 | 20 | 14.9% | 114 | 85% | 0 | |
| Har Gilo | 495 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 15.1% | 166 (based on a 1977 seizure order) | 33.5% |
| Kfar Etzion | 934 | 792 | 84.8% | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Migdal Oz | 588 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 5.6% | 527 (based on a 1976 seizure order) | 89.6% |
| Neve Daniel | 534 | 163 | 30.5% | 253 | 47.3% | 0 | |
| Rosh Tzurim | 419 | 419 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Sde Boaz (Neve Daniel north) | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 ¹⁰ | 0 | 0 | |
| Total | 13,335 | 2,644 | 19.8% | 7,490 | 100 | 1,099 | |

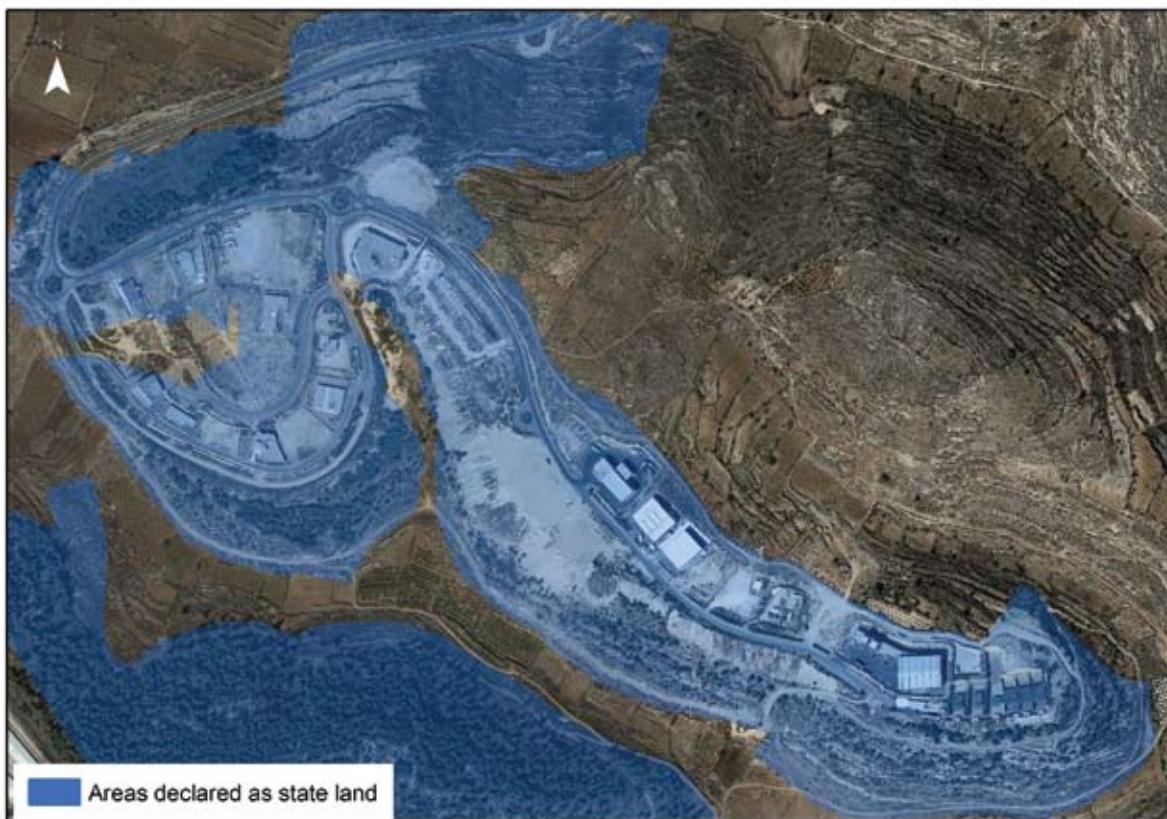
In summary: In contrast to the manner in which the spokespeople of the settlement-right seek to present matters, only a less than one fifth of the de facto territory of all of the settlements in the area that is today called “Gush Etzion,” are lands purchased by Jews prior to 1948. The settlements in this area were established over the years, mainly through a combination of institutionalized and pirate land theft, familiar to us from additional places in the West Bank, and including: seizures for military purposes, declarations of state lands and takeovers of private Palestinian lands whose owners are denied access to them.

⁷ Mapping of the actual area of the settlements was carried out based on the distribution of construction, and the routes of the fences and service roads of all of the settlements.

⁸ In this table we did not take into account seizure orders in the settlements of Alon Shvut, Kfar Etzion, Rosh Tzurim and Efrat, which were established based on seizure orders that overlapped with Jewish lands purchased before 1948 or lands later declared as state lands.

⁹ According to the IDF's Spiegel Database, the subsidiary of the JNF – ‘Himanuta,’ claims that the lands of Giv’at Ha-Hish were purchased. If the claim is true, the purchase in question is in any case relatively recent and unrelated to the lands purchased prior to 1948.

¹⁰ The Civil Administration is currently conducting a survey in the area of the outpost, but to this day, it has not been declared state land.



Gush Etzion Industrial Zone



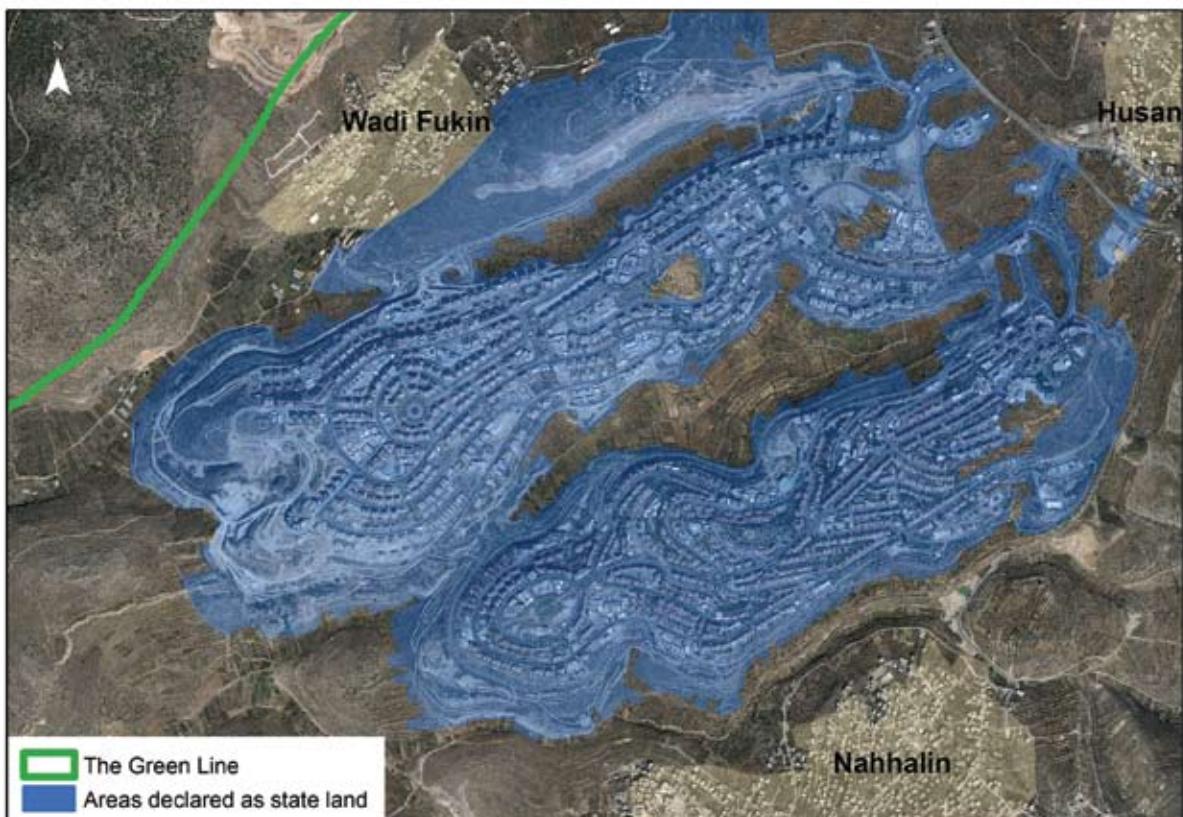
Settlement of Alon Shvut



Settlement of Elazar

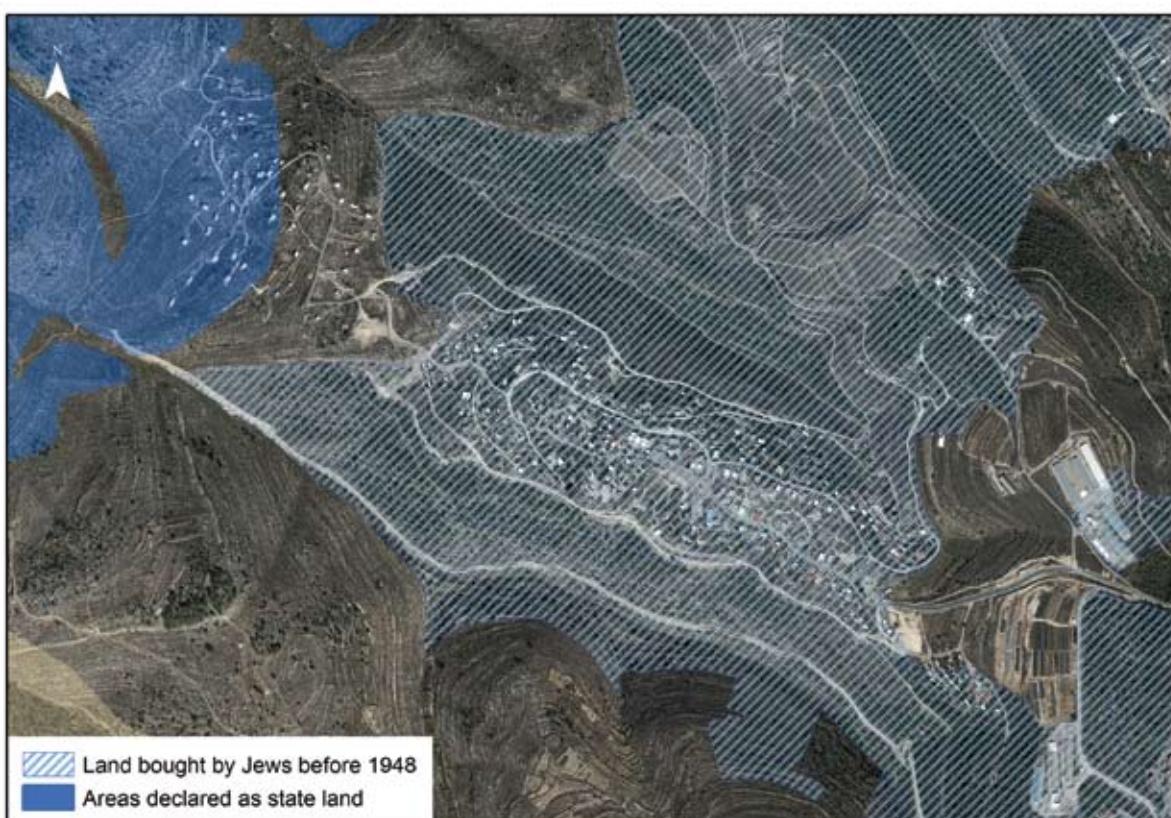


Settlement of Efrat



Settlement of Beitar Illit

0.00 0.06 0.12 0.18 0.24 Miles



Settlement of Bat Ayin

0.00 0.04 0.08 0.12 0.16 Miles



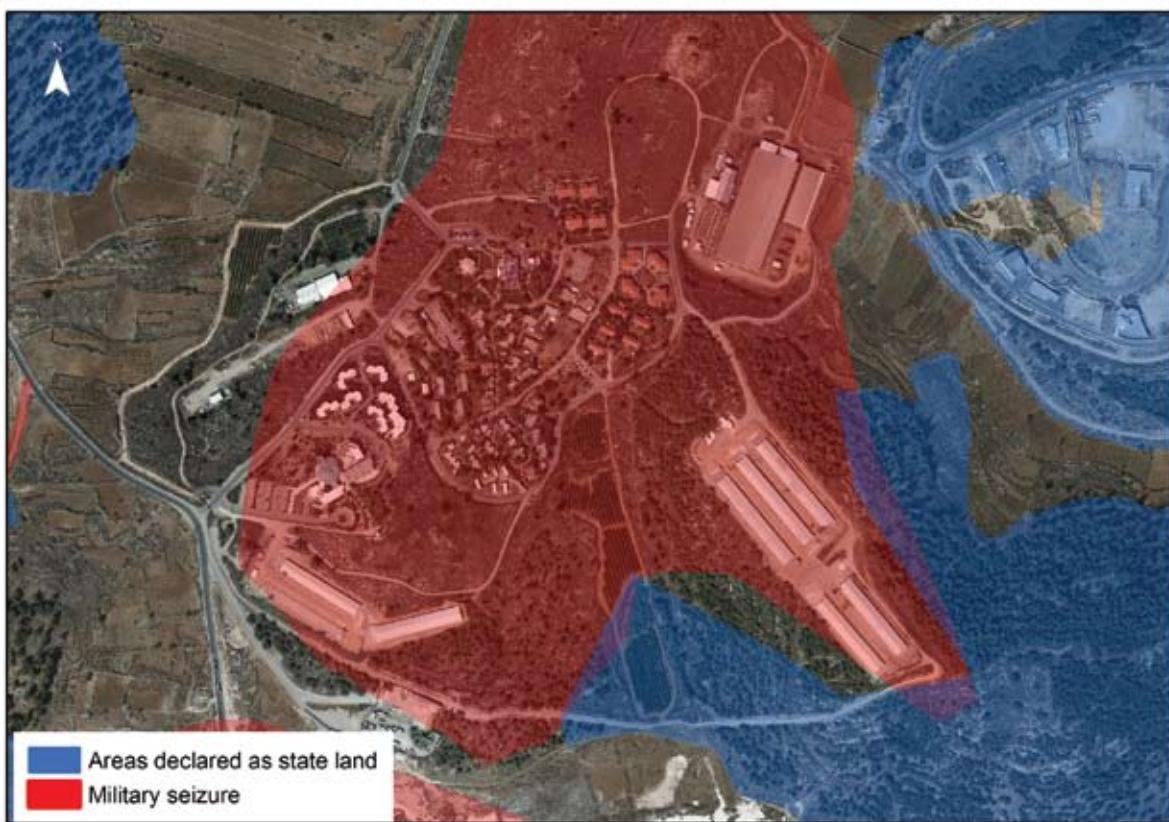
Settlement of Geva'ot



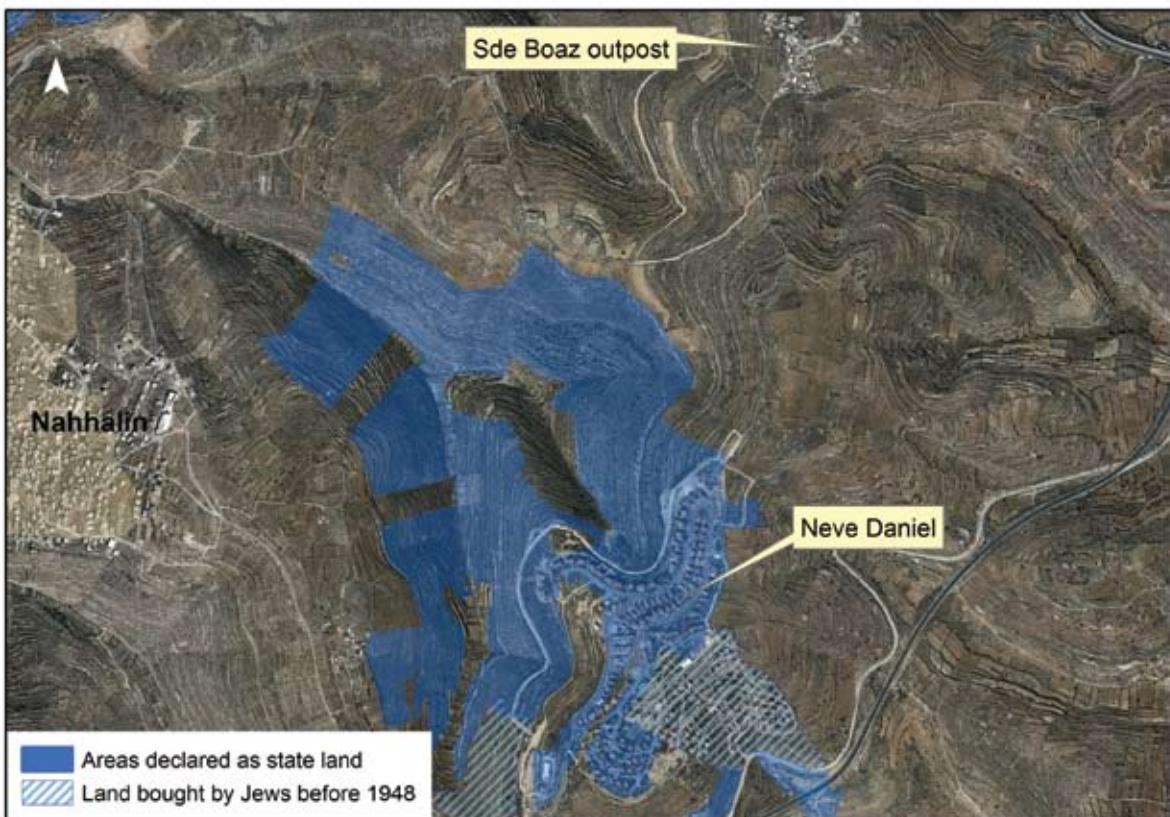
Settlement of Har Gilo



Settlement of Kfar Etzion

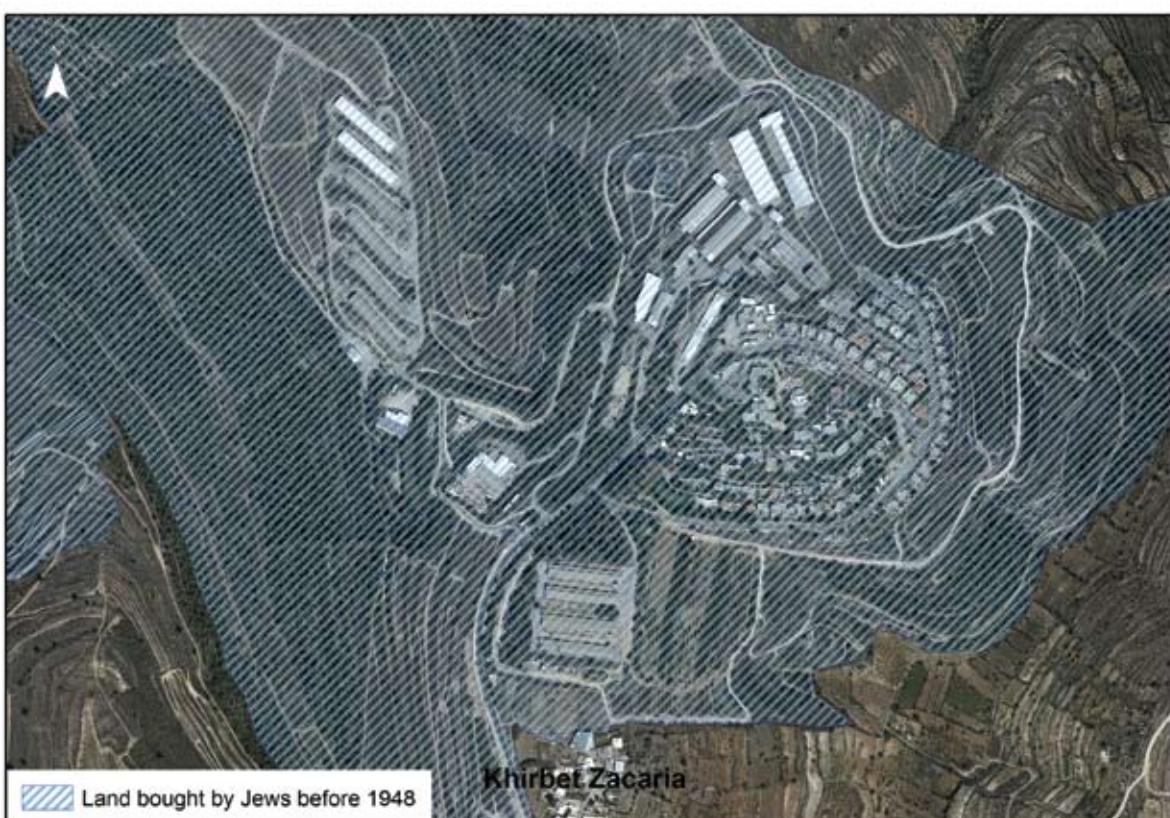


Settlement of Migdal Oz



Settlement of Neve Daniel with Sde Boaz outpost

0.0005 0.1 0.15 0.2 Miles



Settlement of Rosh Tzurim

0.0002 0.04 0.06 0.08 Miles

