Around 210,000 Palestinians currently live in Bethlehem governorate, including some 6,000 in 17 residential areas located in Area C, which is directly controlled by Israel.

There are over 100,000 Israeli settlers residing in 19 settlements and settlement outposts across the governorate, including in those parts de facto annexed by Israel.

More than 85% of Bethlehem governorate is designated as Area C, the vast majority of which is off limits for Palestinian development, including almost 38% declared as “firing zones”, 34% designated as “nature reserves”, and nearly 12% allocated for settlement development.

Less than 1% of Area C in Bethlehem has an outline plan approved by the Israeli authorities allowing Palestinians to build legally.

Since 2009 the Israeli authorities demolished 118 Palestinian structures in Area C of Bethlehem governorate, citing lack of building permits, displacing 174 people; around half of the structures demolished were funded by donors.

56 km of the Barrier’s route are located within Bethlehem governorate, of which 42% are complete and 20% under construction. If completed, 12 communities, will be physically separated from the rest of the governorate.

Farmers in at least 22 communities across the governorate require visitor permits or prior coordination to access their privately-owned land located behind the Barrier or in the vicinity of settlements.

From 2009 through 2014, OCHA recorded 162 settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage, as well as 73 Palestinian attacks resulting in Israeli casualties or damage to property throughout the governorate.

In 2014, four Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli forces in clashes that erupted during protests and military operations across Bethlehem, and another 1,292, including 614 children, were injured.

A range of restrictions on the access of Palestinian farmers to land that was not seized for settlement development or military training have undermined the agricultural livelihoods of many families. Access to private land located within the outer limits of settlements, in areas where settler violence is recurrent, or behind the Barrier, is subject to a permit system or to prior coordination with the Israeli authorities. The limited number of days allocated via these mechanisms and the related restrictions on the entry of vehicles and machinery to these areas have been negatively impacting productivity.

The Israeli authorities fail to effectively enforce the rule of law in regard to acts of violence and takeover of land by Israeli settlers, further undermining the safety, mental health, and livelihoods of Palestinians. Israeli forces often fail to stop attacks and follow-up afterwards is inadequate or poorly conducted. The policy to retroactively ‘legalize’ settlement outposts built on public land taken over without any official authorization contributes to an atmosphere of impunity.

As the occupying power, Israel is obligated to ensure that the humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Bethlehem are met and that they are able to exercise their human rights, including their right to enjoy their natural resources and to be free from discrimination. Israel also has an obligation to ensure that those responsible for violence and takeover of land are held accountable. The transfer of Israeli population into the occupied territory is prohibited.

1. These figures include areas designated as “nature reserves” in the context of the 1998 Wye River Agreement between Israel and the PLO, which are de facto administered as Area C. The three categories within Area C partially overlap (see map).
**Bethlehem Governorate Fragmentation: Main Developments in 2014**

- **25 Aug:** Israeli Civil Administration declares 3,799 dunums as "state land".
- **12 June:** Palestinians kidnap and subsequently kill three Israeli youths.
- **24 Sept:** Israeli authorities promote plan to build 2,610 housing units in Giv'at HaMatos settlement.

**Settlements' Municipal Boundaries**

- **12%**
- **34%**
- **38%**
- **85%**

**Nature Reserves**

- **12%**
- **34%**
- **38%**
- **85%**

**Closed Military Zone for Training**

- **12%**
- **34%**
- **38%**
- **85%**

**Area C**

- **12%**
- **34%**
- **38%**
- **85%**

**Legend**

- Area A/B
- Area C
- Israeli Nature Reserve
- Settlement municipal area
- Israeli closed military area
- Governorate Boundary
- Barrier
  - Constructed
  - Under Construction
  - Planned Route
  - Planned Route

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**June 2013**

- **6 July:** Settlers opened a road through Palestinian lands connecting Efrata settlement to Giv'at Ha'Etam agricultural farm.
- **4 July:** Settlers take over forest and announce the establishment of a 'tourist site'.
- **6 April:** Israeli Civil Administration declared 1,000 dunums of land as 'state land', part of which has been already allocated for settlement development.

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**Note:** This information is based on the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) report. For the most current and detailed information, please refer to the official sources.