



MA'AN Development Center

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Israel's Wall: Another Manifestation of Israeli Occupation

The Case of Rantis



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Location and Population

Rantis is a small Palestinian village located to the north-west of the West Bank city of Ramallah, on the Green Line. The population of the Palestinian village is 2,992¹ inhabitants; most of them depend on agriculture as their main source of income.

The landscape of the village is a mixture of mountainous and plain fields cultivated with abundance of Old Roman Olive trees that go back to some 3,000 years ago(63 BC); traces of Roman heritage are embedded through the village ranging from the Deir Arabe (Arabe Monastery), to Barra'esh and Omar Bin Alkattab mosque, in addition to many Roman wells and cisterns. In addition, the village lacks recreational sites and community-based institutions.

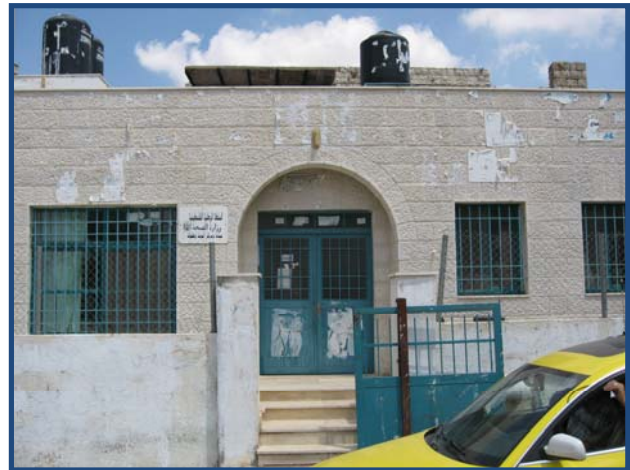
Facilities in Rantis Village

The village of Rantis lacks most of the vital facilities, such as medical and public services. The village lacks minimum medical service facilities, such as specialized clinics (maternity and children's), and emergency, residents of the village have to access hospitals and medical centers located in Ramallah in order to receive proper medical services. The village has Electricity, Water and telephone networks but lacks a Sewage system; residents rely on septic tanks instead.

Medical services

In situations of medical emergency, patients have to access hospitals and medical centers in Ramallah, which is more than 50km away. Prior to the checkpoint placed at the village's entrance, this trip took 30 minutes; now the trip to Ramallah more than 1.5 hours, depending on the arbitrary delays by soldiers at the checkpoint.

There are two health clinics and one medical station in Rantis which should meet the daily needs of the village residents, especially children. However, Rantis residents suffer shortage in daily medical care as the following table explains:



Rantis public health center

¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics "Projected Mid -Year Population for Ramallah & Al Bireh Governorate by Locality 2006 - 2010" unpublished data

No.	Clinic	Doctor attendance days	hours	Remarks
1	UNRWA medical clinic	1 day/ month	9am-2pm	-----
2	Private medical clinic	2 days/ week	9am-2pm	-----
3	Ministry of Health medical station	3 days/week	8am-1:30pm	Other times only a nurse is available

Community-based organizations

In 2001, active parents in Rantis banded together to convert a rundown former mosque into a bustling children’s center. It was the first of its kind in an area sorely lacking organized enrichment and recreation for children. A diamond in the provincial rough, the renovated quarters were soon host to pinhole camera workshops, theatre performances, folk art lessons, and barrels of laughter.

Rantis Child Club is currently unfunded and faces many challenges; from lack of equipment damage of facilities by Israeli forces. There is also a high demand among Rantis residents for computer courses, but the center is unable to meet these demands due to financial constrains.



The Israeli colonization activities in Rantis

Since the early days of occupation, Israel confiscated thousands of dunums of Rantis land as the following table indicates:

Year	Area confiscated
1948	12,000 dunums of agricultural land were confiscated by the occupation
1967	10,000 dunums were confiscated after 1967 war
1978	3,000 dunums were confiscated on the eastern edge of the village and declared a closed military zone
1980	Israeli occupation erects a fence on agricultural land between the 1948 and 1967 borders and the area was declared a military training zone
2004 - 2005	3,500 dunums were confiscated for the construction of the wall

In 1980s, Israel intensified its colonization activities in the village by Establishing Bet Arye settlement (pop'l. 3457) in 1981 and Ofarim settlement which was established in 1989, and then joined with Bet Arye in 2004.



Ofarim settlement



Agricultural land confiscated and declared as military zone

The construction of the Wall in Rantis

In November 2003, The Israeli occupation forces handed Rantis villagers military order number (03/ 69/T Judea & Samaria 2003) stating the confiscation of 862 dunums of their agricultural land for the construction of the Segregation Wall. In Reality, this military order means the actual confiscation of about 3000 dunums of the village lands.²

The Wall now runs 6.5km around the village and ranges between 500m and 1km inside the Green Line, destroying the rest of the Rantis agricultural land and turning the village into an enclave, surrounded it by Wall and full Israeli control in the main village entrance.



The wall on the south-eastern side of the village

With the construction of the wall, the occupation unearthed the present day hardship of a community which has lived off the land for centuries. Costs to meet family needs are too much for the parents. Some of them are fathers who were formerly employed in the nearby areas of 1948. They are now looking elsewhere for jobs, forbidden from stepping foot in that land. Confined to a Palestinian economy crippled by military occupation, a number of them have risked imprisonment by slashing the wall in hope of securing a morsel of wealth from the Israeli employers. In common speak; their efforts may keep their children out of want for another day.

² The Segregation Wall threatens the practice of territorial expansion in Rantis village, ARIJ, June 26-2004

Movement and access restrictions

The main road entrance located north-west of the village was closed by the occupation forces in 2000, and remains closed to this day. Rantis villagers worked to open an alternative entrance to the west of the village. However, this road is unpaved and the occupation was quick to place cement blocks across the road and to station its forces at the entrance controlling every movement in and out of the village. On July 2007 the Israeli authorities placed an iron gate across this sole entrance and exit point, which can now be closed and locked by the occupation at any time.

There have already been several instances of denied access and entry into and out of the village, causing severe consequences. Some women in the village have been forced to give birth while waiting at the checkpoint. In 2002, a young man died at the Rantis checkpoint (located on the village entrance) after being denied passage to receive emergency medical care in Ramallah.



The gate (in ellipse) placed by the occupation on the alternative unpaved entrance

As mentioned earlier, the village formerly sustained itself on its own agricultural produce. However, given much of the village's land confiscated by the Israeli occupation, unemployment rates have soared to 70%³. Families are forced to buy food they often cannot afford. Now there are many cases of extreme hardship and poverty. As a result, many parents are unable to meet the daily needs of their children. Family economic problems have also forced many university students to cease their university education as they cannot afford the tuition.

Rantis villagers employed in Ramallah or other villages often face long delays at the village exit and are denied passage at the checkpoint by Israeli forces. For many of these workers, the option of finding accommodation near their jobs is not an option as it is too expensive for their small salaries of around \$15 per day. Thus, the daily travel to their jobs becomes an ordeal.

³ Source: Rantis Child Club

Academic and university education to both students and teachers; teachers who live outside of Rantis village are often delayed for many hours at the checkpoint at the village's entrance, making them late for classes along with students who study in nearby villages.

University students have also faced similar problems in being delayed at the checkpoint and are unable to get to their classes or examinations on time.

During the 2006 – 2007 final exams (*tawjihi*) for 12th Grade students, Rantis students had to take their exams in nearby Shuqba village. Every day, the students were late for their exams due to the arbitrary delays at the Rantis checkpoint. Fortunately, the supervisors at the Shuqba School were cooperative and allowed the Rantis students to take their exams when they arrived.

CASE STUDY: A Checkpoint Delivery

On a snowy winter's day in January 2001, a Palestinian child named Sabrine, was born. Her mother, Amina, was not in the warm safety of a Ramallah hospital with nurses to take care of her. In this most critical time of giving birth, Amina was in her husband's car, with her mother, sister and sister-in-law and husband, waiting at the Israeli checkpoint which was the only exit from her small village of Rantis. It would take more than one hour to drive to the nearest hospital, and, with the occupation restrictions on the village entrance, Amina did not know how Sabrine would be born.

The Israeli soldiers at the checkpoint made that decision for Amina and Sabrine. The soldiers decided that Amina was not in labour, that she was not pregnant. The soldiers decided that there was no baby present in the car and no urgent need of a hospital. The soldiers decided to stop the car at the checkpoint and refused to speak to her husband.

There was no nurse or doctor to help Amina as she lay in the back of her husband's car. Sabrine was born into her family's arms on the floor of the car. Only when the Israeli soldiers opened the car door, exposing mother and baby to the snow and wind, did they decide that they could finally see a baby and allowed the car to pass through the checkpoint.



The mother Amina (left) and her 6 year old daughter Sabrine (far right)

As there were no blankets, the baby was wrapped in the clothes Amina and her family were wearing. With the umbilical cord still attached, Amina and Sabrine arrived at Ramallah hospital to receive the care that they needed at this most crucial time in their lives.

Fortunately, Amina and Sabrine survived the experience. Since the beginning of the second uprising on September 28 2000, more than 60 women have been forced to give birth at Israeli checkpoints – five women and 39 babies have died¹. For Palestinians, pregnancy and childbirth under occupation has become a critical health ordeal.

¹ Palestine Monitor, *The Effect of Closure on Health Care in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, http://www.palestinemonitor.org/nueva_web/facts_sheets/health.htm