FACT SHEET: **THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF 20 YEARS OF THE BARRIER**

DECEMBER 2022

### KEY FACTS

1. In 2002, the Israeli authorities started to build a Barrier with the stated aim of preventing violent attacks by Palestinians inside Israel. Most of the Barrier’s route is located within the West Bank, rather than on the 1949 Armistice ‘Green’ Line. The area between the Green Line and the Barrier is referred to as the ‘Seam Zone’.

2. The Barrier is one element of a range of restrictions that Israel has imposed on Palestinians since 1967, which include physical obstacles, bureaucratic constraints such as permit requirements and the designation of areas as restricted or closed. The Barrier consists of concrete walls, fences, ditches, razor wire, sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, a buffer zone and several military checkpoints.

3. The Barrier’s total length, constructed and projected, is 713 km, more than twice the length of the Green Line. About 65 per cent of the approved route is complete.

4. Eighty-five per cent of the Barrier’s route runs inside the West Bank. If finished, as planned, it will isolate 9 per cent of the territory of the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

5. Seventy-one Israeli settlements and over 85 per cent of the settler population, are in the ‘Seam Zone’.

6. Approximately 150 Palestinian communities living in the rest of the West Bank have farmland located in the ‘Seam Zone’, forcing them to seek special permits or ‘prior coordination’ to access their crops and flocks.

7. Farmers can only reach their land through 69 designated gates which are controlled by the Israeli authorities and are typically closed. Most agricultural gates only open during the October-November olive harvest for a limited time each day.

8. Around 11,000 Palestinians living in the ‘Seam Zone’ and who hold West Bank ID cards also depend on the granting of permits or special arrangements to live in their own homes.

9. Palestinians with West Bank ID cards require special permits from the Israeli authorities to enter East Jerusalem; they may do so through four of the 14 Barrier checkpoints.

10. On 21 June 2022, following a series of attacks in Israel, the Israeli authorities began repairing and fortifying a 45-km stretch of the Barrier in the northern West Bank, replacing segments of the Barrier with unregulated openings.

11. Farmers can only reach their land through 69 designated gates which are controlled by the Israeli authorities and are typically closed. Most agricultural gates only open during the October-November olive harvest for a limited time each day.

12. The arrival of aid workers, including ambulances and fire brigades, is likewise impaired.

13. Checkpoints. Access of service providers to these communities, including ambulances and fire brigades, is likewise impaired.

14. Agriculture-based livelihoods of thousands of families have been undermined due to the gate-and-permit regime, which hinders farmers from accessing their farming and grazing lands in the ‘Seam Zone’. Permit applications are regularly rejected on grounds that farmers failed to prove their ‘connection to the land’ to the satisfaction of the Israeli authorities, as well as citing security concerns. The almost permanent closure of all agricultural gates, with limited exceptions, has forced permit-holders to stop cultivation or to shift from labour-intensive to rain-fed and lower-value crops.

15. Between 2014 and 2021, the number of permits requested by landowners and agricultural workers dropped by 77 per cent. This drop is largely attributed to the high rejection rates of permit applications, cumbersome application procedures, the issuance of permits for short periods, and limited gate opening times amongst other factors. The limitations in accessing land has resulted in a 60 per cent reduction in yield in land beyond the barrier.

16. The Barrier has transformed the geography, economy and social life of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, as well as the lives of those residing in the wider metropolitan area. Neighbourhoods, suburbs and families have been divided from each other and separated from the urban centre, and rural communities have been separated from their land.
Data collected by OCHA in the northern West Bank since 2010 shows that the olive trees in the area between the Barrier and the Green Line have approximately 60 per cent less yield than the equivalent on the ‘Palestinian’ side of the Barrier, where essential agricultural activities such as ploughing, pruning, fertilizing and pest and weed management can be carried out on a regular and predictable basis.