

OCHA

occupied Palestinian territory

humanitarian

UPDATE

01 SEPTEMBER – 15 OCTOBER 2003



www.reliefweb.int/hic-opt ■ ochaopt@un.org

Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

OCHA oPt, MAC House, PO Box 38712, East Jerusalem ■ Tel +972-2-582 9962 | 582 5853 ■ Fax +972-2 582 5841

United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

OCHA oPt, MAC House, PO Box 38712, East Jerusalem ■ Tel +972-2-582 9962 | 582 5853 ■ Fax +972-2 582 5841

INSIDE

Overview ■ New IDF Restrictions for Wall Enclave Areas ■ Mass House Demolitions ■ Closed Gates in Wall During Harvest Causing Agricultural Crises ■ Israel Approves Expansion of Wall ■ Heightened Closures and Curfews ■ Israeli Pilots Protest Assassinations ■ Statistics

Overview:

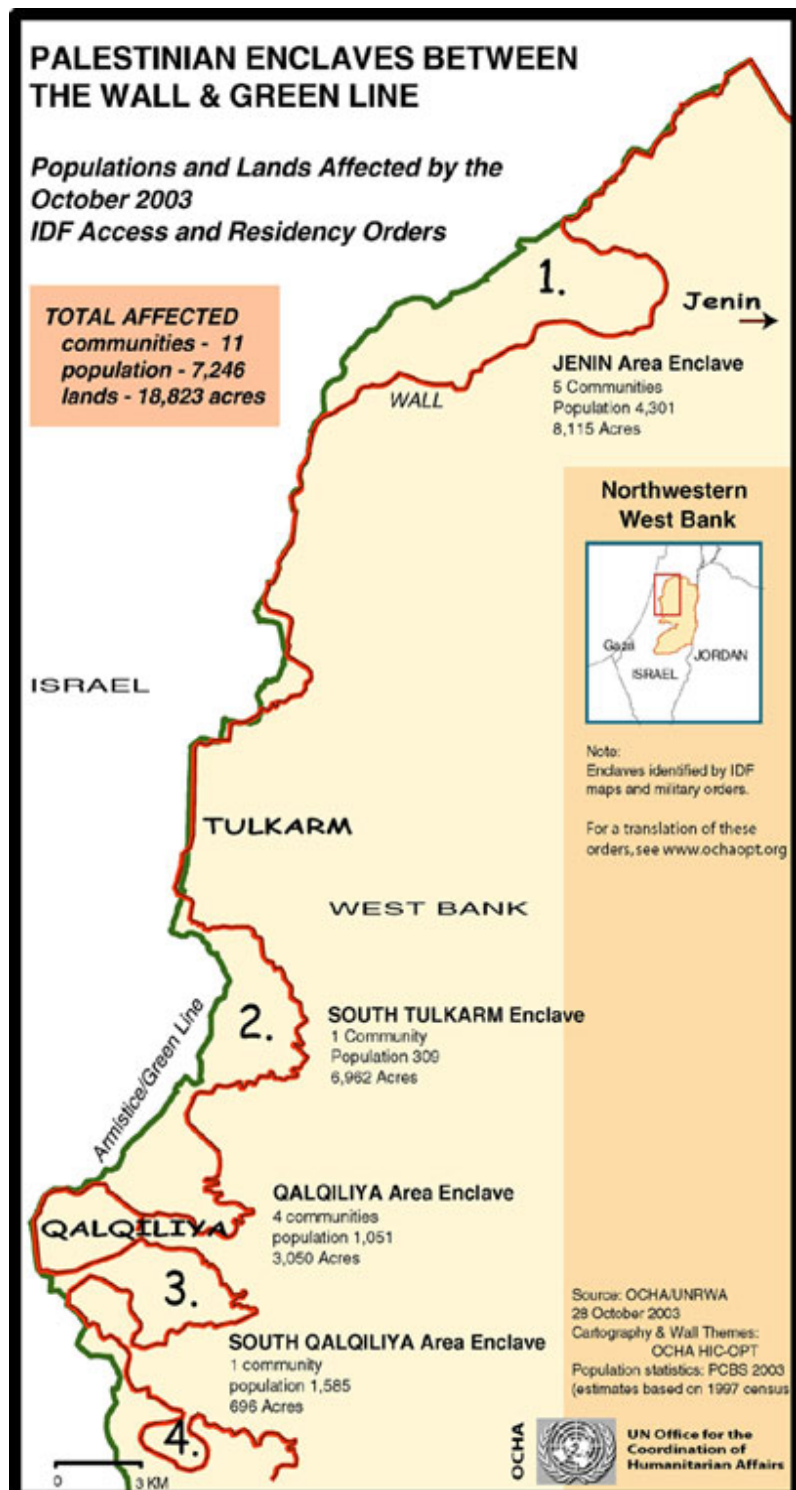
The humanitarian situation deteriorated seriously in the last month. The total death rate rose significantly as a result of IDF incursions into densely populated areas and Palestinian attacks and suicide bombs against Israeli civilians. The freezing of political negotiations has meant an absence of any meaningful steps to end the cycle of violence, leaving little optimism for the humanitarian situation to improve any time soon.

The Wall – New IDF Orders, possible migration and annexation ...

The IDF issued four extensive military orders on 2 October 2003 that establishes a closed zone of 18,000 acres of Palestinian land located in enclaves between the Wall and the "border" Green Line (1949 armistice line). More than 7,000 Palestinians reside in these areas in the northern West Bank. See attached map.

The orders prohibit any person from entering or exiting these areas without a special or general permit. Exempted from any permit requirement are Israeli citizens and internationals of Jewish descent. The requirements to obtain a permit are rigorous and extensive. Even the Palestinians villagers residing in this area, must now apply for special permits in order to continue living there and to be able to exit and re-enter the area.

This step marks the deepening of restrictions against Palestinians who live in these enclave areas between the Wall and the Green Line. The introduction of an added permit system turns a right to reside in one



own's home and with one's family into a revocable privilege allotted on a case by case basis. But the prohibitive effect of the permit system also raises serious concerns of effectively causing thousands of Palestinians to leave these areas, meaning that these areas would be effectively annexed to Israel.

For a translation of these orders, see www.ochaopt.org

At Least 1200 Palestinians Made Homeless From IDF House Demolitions ...

More than 40 IDF tanks entered the city of Rafah on Friday October 10. The IDF stated that this operation was meant to uncover tunnels believed to be used for smuggling goods and weapons from Egypt and also to arrest wanted Palestinians. In the ensuing fighting, eight Palestinians, including two children, were killed. At least 70 Palestinians were wounded, most of them when a helicopter fired a missile into a crowd. IDF bulldozers destroyed around 120 houses, clearing out an entire land area of Palestinian civilians. As a result of this operation, more than 1200 Palestinians are now homeless.

During the operation, the IDF forces cut off the electricity as well as the telephone lines and water supply for the Palestinian residents of Rafah. For prolonged periods during the operation ambulances and medical teams faced severe difficulties in evacuating injured people to hospitals in Khan Younis because the main road was closed by the IDF. There was also widespread destruction to the water and wastewater networks in some of the areas.

Collective Punishment: 7-Storey Building Demolished in Nablus

A shootout on 5 September, in Nablus between Mohammed Al-Hanbali, an alleged Hamas militant, and the IDF in Nablus, resulted in al-Hanbali's death, and also an IDF soldier. Four other IDF soldiers were injured. Shortly after the shootout, the IDF blew up and destroyed the entire 7-storey building in which Al-Hanbali had sought cover. The 74 residents (nine families) of the newly built apartment building were not believed to have been involved in any way in the incident.

The approximate value of the building was between \$500,000 and \$700,000 USD (the full value of the building including the personal belongings of the families is still to be established). Another three families who were waiting for their apartments to be completed, also lost their future homes. The neighboring 'Al Afouna' building was partially destroyed during the demolition incurring damages ranging between \$10,00 and \$15,000 USD as were a number of other buildings in the area.

There is no evidence to suggest the destruction of the building was necessary on security grounds. Under international humanitarian law - Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention - an occupying force is prohibited from punishing a person for an offence he has not personally committed. "Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism of prohibited."

The Wall Gates Remain Closed for Farmers During Harvest- Crops Dying...



The Wall in the northern West Bank has cut off tens of thousands of Palestinians from reaching their land or accessing humanitarian services. The response from the IDF has been to install crossing gates along the length of the Wall. In the Tulkarm and Qalqilya Districts, only four gates – three for pedestrian/agriculture and 1 for service vehicles have been installed. Strict procedures

have been established by the IDF to use the gates. Villages have been required to submit lists of all farmers for registration and security clearance. The gates operate sporadically and in some cases have been open for only 15 minutes a day.

Last month, the IDF announced that in conjunction with the harvest (October – November), it would extend the opening hours of the gates to facilitate the harvest.

But as of the date of publication, all agricultural gates are now closed in the Tulkarem and Qalqilya districts, seemingly a result of the suicide bombings in Haifa and Tulkarm. And, according to the DCL in Qalqilya, the gates will remain closed indefinitely. This has had a devastating effect on farmers and the whole area. Approximately 40 million kilograms of agricultural

Jayyous village – Facing Economic disaster due to the Wall

The 1-15 August 2003 OCHA update, reported on the hardships Jayyous village was facing because of the construction of the Wall. Since then, their situation has seriously deteriorated. The Wall has separated some 2,300 acres of extremely fertile land in Jayyous village and six groundwater wells from the farmers of the village. This land area produces annually 7 million kilograms of vegetables and fruits. It also creates about 65,000 working days per year.

All the irrigated areas in Jayyous (nearly 400 acres) according to PHG, including 120 greenhouses, are now deteriorating. Continued gates closure will result in complete loss of all vegetable products, especially inside the greenhouses.

The livelihoods and jobs that have sustained around 300 farming families for generations are now seriously threatened as a result of the presence of the Wall dividing their farmland.

products (olives and vegetables) are produced per year in the Qalqilya district alone according to the Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG).

Farmers, prohibited from reaching their land are becoming desperate. This has led to clashes in front of the Wall gates between farmers and the IDF in the past couple of weeks.

Other farmers have resorted to taking major detours to reach their land or have chosen to camp over night in their fields on the other side of the Wall. Neither of these alternatives ensure continued access to the farmland. On the night of 13 October for example, the IDF entered Jayyous farmland and escorted out to the other side of the Wall, some 50 farmers who had been living on their land for 11 days to complete the harvest. Unable to access their land, these farmers have little chance of completing their harvest.

The Wall - Israeli Government Authorizes The Next Two Phases...

The Israeli government authorized on October 1, 2003 the next two phases of the Wall – phase three from Elkana settlement to Jerusalem and phase four south of Jerusalem. The estimated cost to complete the Wall is between \$1-2 billion.

The Israeli government chose not to heed international pressure to exclude the Ariel settlement, located deep in the West Bank. As a compromise, it was eventually decided that the Wall would be constructed to encircle Ariel but a 3 km “hole” in the Wall would be left in place temporarily.

Intensified Closures And Curfews For Palestinians ...

As in previous years, with the onset of the Jewish holidays, the IDF completely sealed the entire West Bank, prohibiting all entry and exit and movement on most roads, for over one and a half million Palestinian civilians. During the Jewish holiday of Sukkoth on 8 October 2003, the IDF issued an order prohibiting movement for four days of all Palestinian cars in C area of the entire northern area of the West Bank. Area C contains the only open roads without roadblocks for vehicular travel between the major Palestinian urban centers.

Work permits for West Bank residents were suspended indefinitely following the attack in Haifa at the beginning of October. Increased difficulties for UN movement were seen in the checkpoints throughout the West Bank, when the IDF increased its insistence to carry out car searches.

All the major cities in the northern West Bank -Qalqilya, Tulkarem and Nablus and Jenin were also placed under curfew within the last month – affecting hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians.

The IDF divided Gaza into four sections, prohibiting movement between each section for over one million Palestinians. Exit from Gaza Strip for permit holders into Israel for work was forbidden for more than 60% of the time.

Israeli Pilots Protest Extra-Judicial Killings ...

Last month's OCHA update reported on six missile attacks on suspected Palestinian militants in residential areas in Gaza by Israeli fighter aircraft, and the international humanitarian law position prohibiting such acts. In October, 27 Israeli air force pilots issued a public letter denouncing this policy and notifying the Israeli authorities that they will refuse to participate in any future attacks of this kind.

Statistics Box: 01 September – 15 October 2003

Number of Palestinian Deaths	57
Number of Palestinian Injuries	369
Number of Israeli Deaths	40
Number of Israeli Injuries	163
<i>Ambulance incidents</i>	
Delay 1hr to 4 hrs	22
Denial of access	21
Verbal/Physical Abuse on medical crew	4
Shooting at ambulances	4