



## The Barrier Gate and Permit Regime Four Years on: Humanitarian Impact in the Northern West Bank

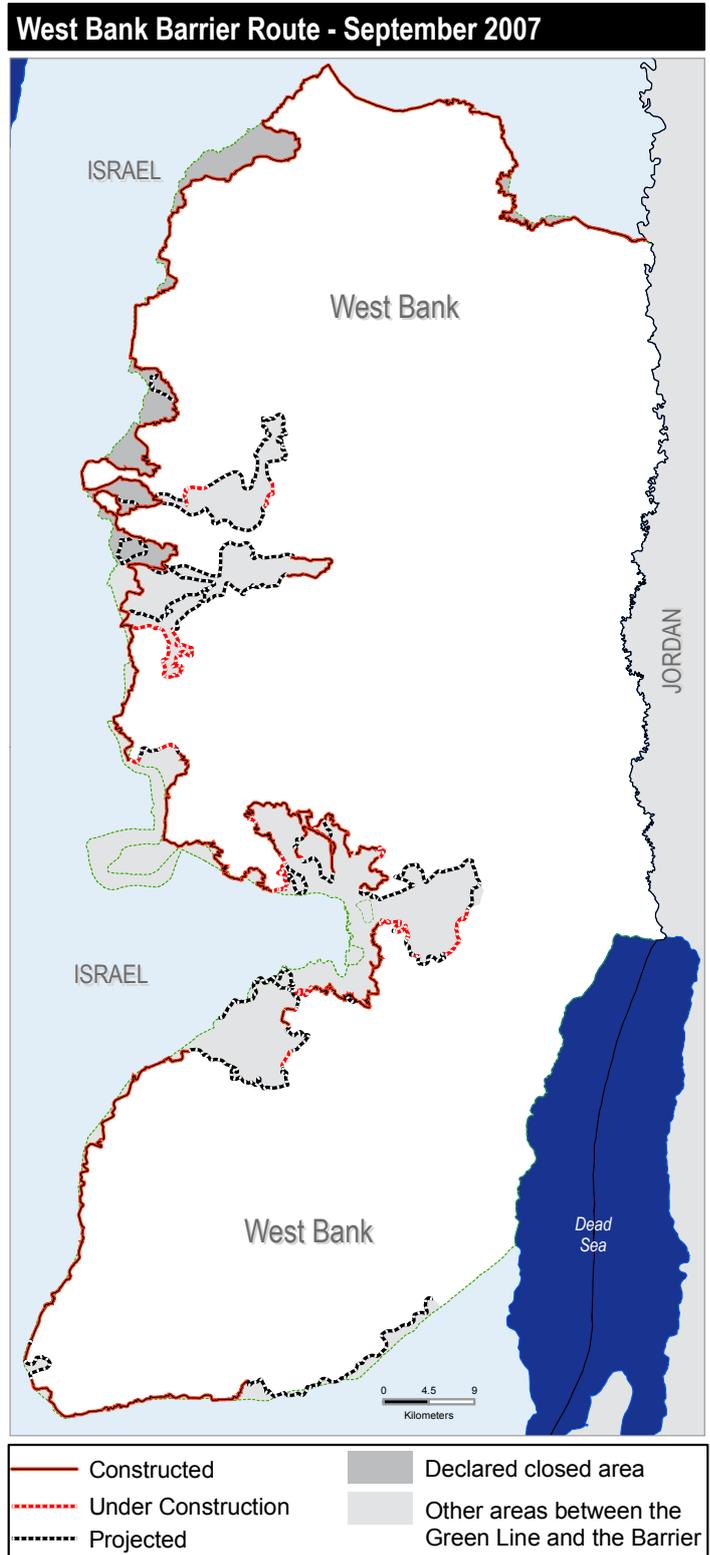
By deviating significantly into the West Bank, the Barrier has already created a new geographical and bureaucratic reality for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the northern West Bank. In the Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya, Salfit districts, the land between the Barrier and the Green Line was declared closed by military order in October 2003.

All Palestinians aged 16 and above living in the closed area now require 'long term' or 'permanent resident' permits to continue to reside in their own homes.

The Barrier also isolates the land and water resources of a far greater number of Palestinians, principally farmers who, while residing to the east of the Barrier, now require 'visitor' permits to access their lands through designated gates<sup>1</sup>.

As part of regular Barrier monitoring, OCHA and UNRWA carried out a pilot survey of some 57 communities affected by the Barrier in the Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya and northern Salfit districts in 2006<sup>2</sup>. Between February and May 2007, a more comprehensive study was carried out in the same affected districts in the northern West Bank. Representatives from some 67 communities were interviewed, including municipality/village council officials and local farmers, to gather data and identify trends.

A comprehensive report outlining the methodology, detailed findings, case studies and tables will follow as part of the regular OCHA-UNRWA updates on *The Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier*. This Special Focus presents the preliminary findings regarding communities and populations affected; permit allocation; gate restrictions; closed area communities; displacement; and ill-treatment at the gates.



## The OCHA - UNRWA Survey (2007): Main Findings

- Of the 67 communities surveyed in the northern West Bank, 52 are located to the east of the Barrier and 15 in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line.
- 67 Barrier gates have been recorded by the UN in the Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya and north Salfit districts in the northern West Bank.
- Of these, 19 are currently open to Palestinians on a daily basis with appropriate permits.
- A further 19 are open to Palestinians on a seasonal/weekly basis.
- 29 are never open to Palestinians to access land in the closed area.
- The total population is 218,556, including 77,403 refugees. Of these, 208,627 (including 75,534 refugees) reside to the east of the Barrier and 9,929 (including 1,969 refugees) live in the closed area.
- Only about 18% of those who used to work land in the closed area before completion of the Barrier receive 'visitor' permits today.
- Approximately 3,000 people have stopped applying for permits, discouraged because of repeated refusal.
- Approximately 1,800 families do not have an able-bodied member with a permit.
- 26 men, 81 women, and 4 children residing in the closed area have not received 'permanent resident' permits, restricting their freedom of movement outside of the closed area.
- 7 communities in the closed area have no access to local primary health care and only 1 community has access to 24-hour-emergency healthcare.
- 9 communities in the closed area report that expectant mothers leave the closed area weeks before delivery to ensure access to proper care.
- Communities in the closed area reported that relatives and friends experience difficulties in obtaining 'visitor' permits to attend weddings (14), funerals (15) and religious festivals (13).
- All 15 closed area communities also reported that proposed marriages have been prevented or married couples separated because of the Barrier and the attendant permit regime.
- 29 out of 67 communities reported that households have left because of the Barrier, representing about 1,200 households – just over 3 percent of the population surveyed.
- 36 communities reported that heads of households have left to find work elsewhere, representing about 1,100 additional individuals.
- 42 of the communities complained of regular harassment or verbal abuse, 17 reported incidents of physical violence and 13 complained of seizure, confiscation or destruction of produce.





The Government of Israel (Gol) began construction of the Barrier in the West Bank in June 2002. The Gol has stated that the purpose of the Barrier is to reduce the number of terrorist attacks inside Israel, although Israeli officials have also stated that the Barrier could have political implications. In July 2004, the International Court of Justice declared that the Barrier, where it encroaches into the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – some 90 percent of the route – is illegal. The ICJ called on Israel, *inter alia*, to cease construction of the Barrier ‘including in and around’ East Jerusalem; dismantle the sections already completed; and repeal or render ineffective ‘all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto’. Disregarding the advisory opinion, the Gol has continued with construction and the current projected route is 724.5 kilometres, of which some 56.5% is completed<sup>4</sup>.

### Communities and Population affected

All 67 communities surveyed have land under the Barrier and/or isolated in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line in the northern West Bank. The communities included one city (Qalqiliya), towns, villages, *khirbehs* (hamlets) and Bedouin communities.

Of the 67 communities, 52 are located to the east of the Barrier and 15 are in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line. The majority of communities are rural and highly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. The area affected includes some of the most agriculturally productive land and richest water resources in the West Bank.

The total population, as reported by community officials, is 218,556, including 77,403 registered refugees. Of these, 208,627 (including 75,534 refugees) reside to the east of the Barrier and 9,929 (including 1,969 refugees) live in the closed area.

### Visitor Permits (for those residing east of the Barrier)

Non-resident Palestinians needing to access the closed area, in particular farmers, must apply for a ‘visitor’ permit to access farmlands and water resources through designated gates. These permits are issued for fixed periods of between six months to two years, and eligibility requirements have become increasingly stringent.

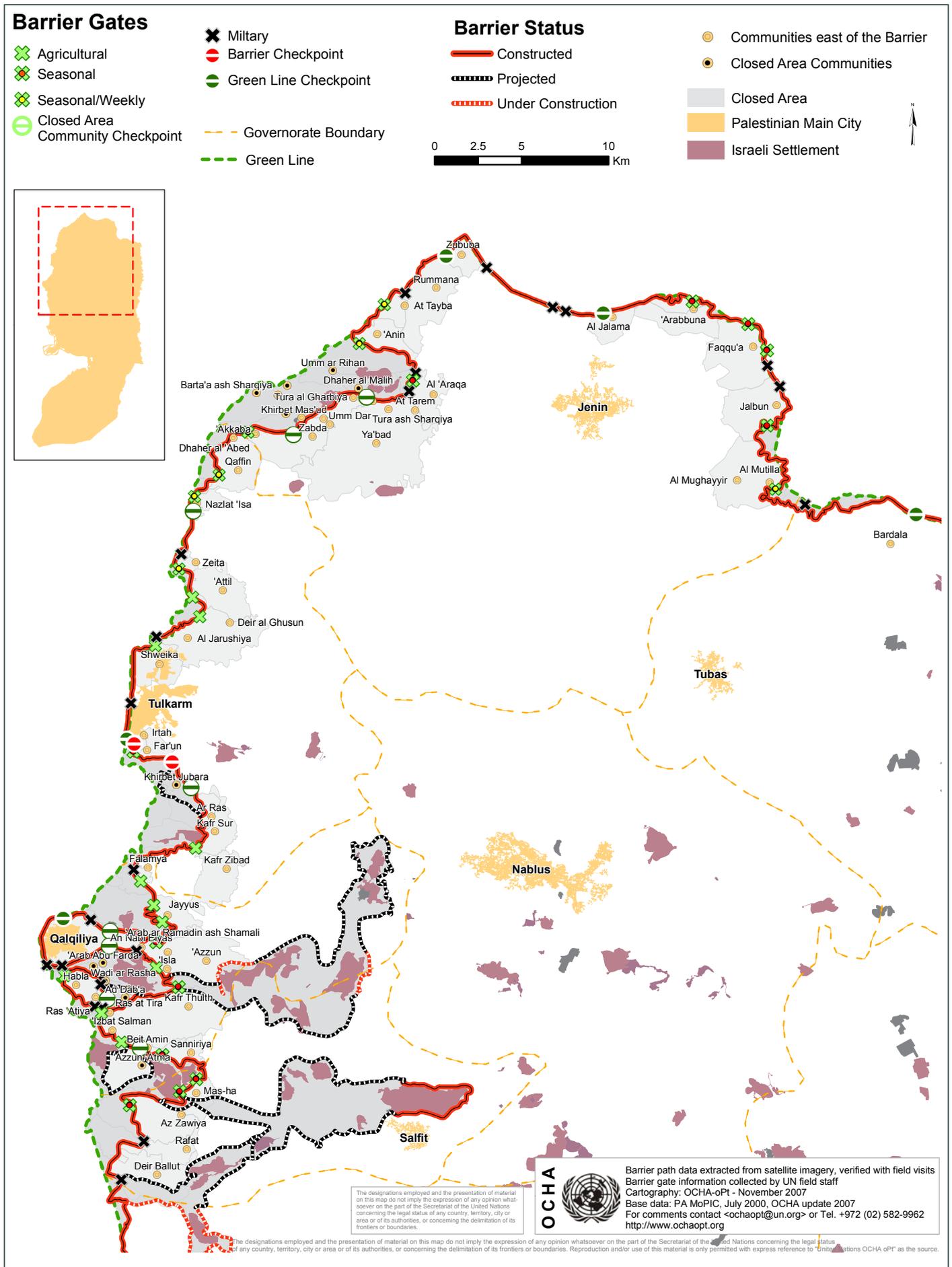
Only 18% of the approximately 30,000 people who used to work land in the closed area before completion of the Barrier receive ‘visitor’ permits today, according to village representatives. Approximately 3,000 people have stopped applying for permits, discouraged because of repeated refusal. Permits are not always issued to the most appropriate family member and the survey revealed that approximately 1,800 families do not have an able-bodied member with a permit.

### Barrier Gates

Those granted visitor permits can only enter and access the closed areas through designated gates. In the 200-kilometre length of the Barrier surveyed, the total number of gates is 67. Gates may have multiple functions: and OCHA/UNRWA have divided them into seven categories, depending on their main function:

- Closed Area Community Checkpoint: Primarily designed to allow communities in the closed area access to the wider West Bank for essential services, schools etc. Generally open during the day: closed at night. (8 gates)
- Agricultural: Officially open daily, generally for a short period, early morning, noon and late afternoon; to allow farmers holding valid permits access to their land in the closed area. Farmers are not allowed to stay on their land overnight. (11)
- Seasonal/weekly: Open seasonally, usually for the olive harvest, to allow farmers access to olive groves in the closed area; and one or two days weekly, to allow for ploughing, weeding, pruning etc. (7)
- Seasonal. Only open for between 10 days to 8 weeks during the olive season, October – December. (12)
- Military: Never open to Palestinians. (22)
- Barrier Checkpoint (located within the West Bank): does not allow Palestinian access to closed area. (2)
- Green Line Checkpoint: does not allow Palestinian access to closed area. (5)

Of the 67 gates recorded, only 19 are open on a daily basis, a further 19 are open seasonally or seasonal/weekly, and 29 are never open for Palestinians to access the closed area.



Map 2: Barrier Gates in the northern West Bank. The gates identified on this map reflect the situation at time of writing.



Table 1: Comprehensive list of Barrier Gates in the northern West Bank arranged sequentially along the Barrier from the Jordan Valley.

Gate Name	Main Status
Bisan	Green Line Checkpoint
Ibziq	Military Gate
Al Mutilla	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
Jalbun S	Seasonal Gate
Jalbun N	Military Gate
Faqqu'a S	Military Gate
Faqqu'a E	Seasonal Gate
Faqqu'a N	Seasonal Gate
'Arrabuna Door	Seasonal Gate
Al Jalama	Green Line Checkpoint
Muqebila	Military Gate
Al Yamun	Military Gate
Ti'nnik	Military Gate
Salem	Green Line Checkpoint
At Tayba N	Military Gate
At Tayba W	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
Anin	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
Khirbet Suruj	Military Gate
Al 'Araqa N	Seasonal Gate
Al 'Araqa S	Military Gate
Tura	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Reikhan Barta'a	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Dhafer Al 'Abed	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
Qaffin	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
Nazlat Isa N	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
Nazlat 'Isa S	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Zeita N	Military Gate
Zeita S	Seasonal and Weekly Gate
'Atil	Agricultural Gate
Deir al Ghusun	Agricultural Gate
Al Jarushiya	Military Gate
Shweika	Agricultural Gate
Tulkarm Factories	Military Gate
At Tayba	Green Line Checkpoint

Gate Name	Main Status
Ephraim	Barrier Checkpoint
Far'un	Seasonal Gate
Kafariat	Barrier Checkpoint
Jubara	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Sal'it	Agricultural Gate
Falama N	Military Gate
Falama S	Agricultural Gate
Jayyus N	Agricultural Gate
Jayyus S	Agricultural Gate
An Nabi Elyas	Seasonal Gate
Zufin	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Qalqilya NE	Military Gate
Qalqilya North	Green Line Checkpoint
Qalailya SW	Military Gate
Qalqilya South	Military Gate
Jaljoulia	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Arab Abu Farda	Military Gate
Isla	Agricultural Gate
Kafr Thulth	Seasonal Gate
Izbat Jal'ud	Military Gate
Ras 'Atiya	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Wadi Rasha	Military Gate
Habla	Agricultural Gate
Ras 'Atiya W	Military Gate
'Izbat Salman N	Agricultural Gate
'Izbat Salman S	Agricultural Gate
'Azzun 'Atma	Closed Area Community Checkpoint
Beit Amin	Seasonal Gate
Masha North	Seasonal Gate
Masha West	Seasonal Gate
Az Zawiya	Seasonal Gate
Rafat	Military Gate
Deir Ballut West	Military Gate

Type	Description	No
Closed Area Community Checkpoint	Primarily designed to allow communities in the closed area access to the wider West Bank for essential services, schools etc. generally open during day: closed at nights.	8
Agricultural Gate	Officially open daily, generally for one hour early morning, noon, late afternoon to allow farmers holding valid permits access to their land in the closed areas. Farmers are not allowed to stay on their land overnight.	11
Seasonal and Weekly Gate	Open seasonally, usually only in olive harvest, to allow farmers access to olive groves in closed areas; and one or more days weekly, to allow for ploughing, weeding, pruning etc.	7
Seasonal Gate	Only open for a brief period during the olive season, October – December.	12
Military Gate	Never open to Palestinians.	22
Barrier Checkpoint	Located within the West Bank, does not allow Palestinian access to closed area.	2
Green Line Checkpoint	Located on the Green Line, does not allow Palestinian access to closed area	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>67</b>

### Gate Opening Restrictions

Even in the case of the 38 gates allowing some degree of restricted access to Palestinians, communities report additional movement and time restrictions. Gates can be closed without warning on Saturdays, for major Israeli holidays, and for security reasons. There are also restrictions on vehicles and materials crossing through the gates, affecting tractors and cars; agricultural equipment and materials; construction materials; pack animals such as donkeys and horses; and livestock.

Ten communities are not allowed to take agricultural vehicles through the gates and 31 are prohibited from taking private vehicles across. The irregular pacing of crossing points means that farmers and labourers have to travel greater distances on the east side of the Barrier to reach designated gates. In addition, once through the gates, movement is also impeded and delayed by the Barrier's severing of traditional agricultural roads, particularly as an individual's land may be located a long distance from the gate over difficult terrain. In all, 57 of the communities surveyed reported that such traditional roads have been cut in their communities. The negative impact on agricultural practice and rural livelihoods of restrictive gate openings and permit allocations will be addressed in the full report.

### Closed Area Communities

In 14 of the 15 communities located in the closed area, residency is governed by the need to obtain 'permanent resident' permits for those aged 16 and above. As reported by community officials, 26 men, 81 women, and four children have not received these permits, restricting their freedom of movement outside of their enclaves to the rest of the West Bank for fear of not being allowed to go back to their homes.

For closed area communities, services are generally located on the east side of the Barrier, with the result that patients, children and workers have to pass through Barrier gates to reach health services, schools and workplaces. Seven communities have no access to local primary health care and only one community has access to 24-hour-emergency healthcare. Seven communities reported medical emergencies occurring as a result of restricted gate openings. In nine communities, it was reported that expectant mothers leave the closed area weeks before delivery to ensure access to proper care<sup>3</sup>.

Closed area status also results in a severing of social relations. Communities reported that relatives and friends experience difficulties in obtaining 'visitor' permits to attend weddings (14), funerals (15) and religious festivals (13) in the closed areas since the gate and permit regime was established. All 15 communities also reported that proposed marriages have been prevented or married couples separated because of the Barrier and attendant permit regime.

### Displacement

The survey also attempted to address the issue of displacement as a result of the negative impact of the Barrier on movement and livelihoods. Some 29 communities reported that households have left because of the Barrier, representing about 1,200 households, or three percent of the population surveyed. As reported by respondents in 36 communities, heads of households have also left to seek employment elsewhere in the West Bank, representing about 1,100 additional individuals.

### III Treatment at the Gates

The survey also attempted to address complaints of harassment, ill treatment and violence at Barrier gates, although this is obviously difficult to quantify. In all, 42 of the communities surveyed complained of regular harassment or verbal abuse, 17 reported incidents of physical violence and 13 communities complained of seizure, confiscation or destruction of produce since the gate and permit regime was established.





## End Notes

1. See OCHA, January 2006: Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier, Update No. 6: *Crossing the Barrier: Palestinian Access to Agricultural Land*, <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/OCHABarRprt-Updt6-En.pdf>
2. See OCHA Special Focus, November 2006: *Barrier stops Palestinians accessing lands*, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/OCHA\\_Special\\_focus\\_8\\_Nov\\_2006\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/OCHA_Special_focus_8_Nov_2006_Eng.pdf)).
3. See OCHA Special Focus, July 2007: *Three years later: the Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier since the International Court of Justice Opinion*, ([http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ICJ4\\_Special\\_Focus\\_July2007.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ICJ4_Special_Focus_July2007.pdf))
4. This projection is based on the official route approved in April 2006 and published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense website <http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/default.htm>. A new barrier route, approximately 780 kilometres in length, was posted on this website in April 2007 but has since been removed.