

# WEST BANK MOVEMENT AND ACCESS IN THE WEST BANK

## KEY FACTS

- By the end of 2016, there were 572 fixed movement obstacles, including 44 permanently-staffed checkpoints, 52 partially-staffed checkpoints, and 376 roadblocks, earthmounds and road gates.<sup>1</sup>
- More than 100 additional obstacles, including 18 permanent checkpoints, segregate part of the Israeli-controlled area Hebron city (H2) from the rest of the city.
- While the number of obstacles has remained largely constant in recent years, the types have changed: dozens of roadblocks were turned into road gates and some checkpoints are only occasionally staffed, allowing greater mobility when tension declines.
- In 2016, Israeli forces deployed an average of 107 ad-hoc 'flying' checkpoints along West Bank roads each week.
- Over 400 kilometres of roads are prohibited or highly restricted for Palestinian-plated vehicles, excluding military roads and roads inside settlements.
- About 88,000 Palestinians living in 23 localities are forced to use detours, which are two to five times longer than the direct route, to reach the closest city or service centre, excluding East Jerusalem.
- Some 85% of the 712 kilometres-long Barrier's route runs inside the West Bank rather than along the "Green Line". Where the Barrier is complete, currently 65% of the route, most Palestinian farmers must obtain special permits or 'prior coordination' to reach their land isolated between the Barrier and the Green Line.
- Palestinians holding West Bank IDs require permits to enter East Jerusalem, except men over 55 and women over 50. Between 2011 and 2015, on average, 17% of the permit applications by patients seeking access to East Jerusalem or Israeli hospitals were rejected.
- Access to 20% of the West Bank is prohibited by military order on the grounds that the area is designated as a 'firing zone' for military training, or as a border buffer zone.
- Palestinians access to the over 10% of the West Bank lying within the municipal boundaries of Israeli settlements, is prohibited by military order; farmers can reach their private land within or around settlements twice a year at most, subject to 'prior coordination'.

- 1. Hundreds of movement obstacles deployed by the Israeli army, citing security concerns, impede traffic flows and contribute to the fragmentation of the West Bank.** The detours needed as a result, as well as the delays at checkpoints, impede the access of Palestinians to livelihoods and services, and undermine economic activity. Some checkpoints have become flashpoints for friction and clashes. Occasionally, following attacks against Israelis, the military also block the main entrances to the localities where the perpetrators lived.
- 2. The Barrier, along with its permit and gate regime, has undermined the agricultural livelihoods of Palestinian families owning land in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line, while those residing in that area face reduced access to services.** The construction of the Barrier followed a wave of Palestinian attacks inside Israel and has the stated aim of preventing such attacks.
- 3. The permit regime imposed in the early 1990s, and the construction of the Barrier in the 2000s, have progressively isolated East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, transforming its geography, economy and social life.** Consequently, Palestinians living elsewhere in the oPt face severe restrictions in accessing specialized hospitals and holy sites, or visiting their relatives in the city. The Barrier

also severs densely populated Palestinian neighbourhoods located within the municipal boundary of Jerusalem from the urban core, forcing their residents to cross checkpoints to access the rest of the city.

- 4. Access restrictions to grazing land along the Jordan Valley, as well as to Palestinian privately-owned land within and around settlements, have undermined herding and agricultural livelihoods and increased the dependency of affected communities on humanitarian assistance.** Palestinians living in the settlement area of Hebron city also face severe restrictions in moving in and out of their homes, maintaining a family life and accessing services. As such, access restrictions contribute to the generation of a coercive environment placing affected families and communities at risk of forcible transfer.
- 5. Under international law, Israel has the obligation to facilitate the free movement of Palestinians within the oPt, including East Jerusalem.** Exceptions to this obligation are recognized only for imperative reasons of security and only in response to specific security threats. The sections of the Barrier running inside the West Bank, together with the associated gate and permit regime, are unlawful under international law.<sup>2</sup>

1. Excluding checkpoints on the Green Line, ad-hoc 'flying' checkpoints, and closures within Hebron city.

2. International Court of Justice, Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 9 July 2004.

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### JAYYUS

Access of Jayyus' farmers to most of their agricultural land, which is isolated behind the Barrier, is subject to a restrictive permit regime, and is possible only through a designated gate, undermining the village's main source of livelihood.



### HIZMA

Citing the need to prevent stone throwing at Israeli vehicles, in 2016, the army blocked the main entrances to Hizma village (6,500 residents) for 37 days, hampering people's access to services, as well the commercial life in the village.



### KAFR AQAB

Kafr Aqab falls within the municipal boundary of Jerusalem but is separated from the rest of the city by the Barrier. Residents must cross a checkpoint to access services and places of work in the rest of the city, and the municipality has effectively stopped delivering services in the area.



### BANI NA'IM

Since the end of 2015, the army has blocked some or all of the main entrances to Bani Na'im (26,500 people) for prolonged periods, following attacks against Israelis carried out in other locations by residents of the town, disrupting access to services and livelihoods.



### HEBRON H2

Over 100 checkpoints and roadblocks separate the settlement area of Hebron city, from the rest of the city. Several streets within this area are designated for the exclusive use of settlers and Palestinian traffic is banned.



### NABLUS BYPASS ROAD:

The Nablus bypass road, which connects Elon Moreh settlement to the south, has been largely banned for Palestinian use since 2000, blocking the main route into Beit Dajan village (4,200 people) and impeding access to farming land by six Palestinian villages.

