



Special Focus: Closure Count and Analysis

The West Bank closure system comprises a series of checkpoints and physical obstacles placed by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to control and restrict Palestinian pedestrian and vehicle traffic. The Israeli government states the system is designed to protect Israeli citizens from Palestinian militant attacks. The types of obstacles include permanently and temporarily-manned checkpoints, road blocks (consisting of rows of 1-metre concrete blocks), metal gates, earth mounds, earth walls (a long series of earth mounds) and trenches.

The closure system is a primary cause of poverty and economic depression in the West Bank. It restricts Palestinian access to health and educational services, employment and social and religious networks and impedes trade and economic movement. For this reason, OCHA has monitored the closures during the past two years.

Main findings

(See map on page 6)

As of 1 August 2005, 376 closure obstacles were recorded in the West Bank. This compares to a count in February of 605, which was reported in OCHA's April update – a decrease of 229 closure obstacles representing a decline of 37%.

The number of manned checkpoints remained unchanged – with 52 permanently-manned and seven partially-manned checkpoints around the West Bank. The decline has occurred in the unmanned physical obstacles.

The changes followed the positive political events notably the Sharm el Sheikh leaders summit in February 2005.

The IDF numbers – accounting for differences in closure definition – are approximately the same. A series of discussions over numbers and type of closure between the IDF and OCHA were held over the past three months.



OCHA – Steve Sabella | Children crossing earth mound, Beit Jala, Bethlehem Governorate, June 2005

Why the decline?

(See map on page 7)

1. **The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) removed more than 100 closures.**
2. **The IDF have not reacted to the flattening of earth mounds:** Many closure obstacles – mainly earth mounds – were not removed per se by the IDF but have been eroded due to Palestinian commuters driving over them. The IDF has not taken action to reinforce them or to stop this movement hence they were no longer recorded. The erosion of earth mounds has largely eased movement between villages and between villages and urban centres.
3. **Counting methods were refined:** OCHA refined and narrowed its closure definitions accounting for approximately 40 of the obstacles removed.¹

Other closure trends

Other trends observed in the August count include:

1. **'Flying' – or random – military checkpoints**, which are swiftly erected without warning, have increased in number. On average, approximately 60 flying checkpoints have been observed each month in the West Bank since May 2005, although they are difficult to count because of their temporary nature. Flying checkpoints are most frequently present on roads connecting Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm and Qalqiliya governorates and in Jerusalem Governorate. Their frequency and unpredictability stymies any journey planning.
2. **In many areas the Barrier replaced the need for closures:** Movement within the northern West Bank, for example, is less restrictive where the Barrier has been constructed. Physical obstacles have also been removed in Ramallah and Jerusalem governorates where the Barrier is under construction.
3. The number of **concrete military towers** has increased to 50 in August. Although not included in the count of physical obstacles, these elevated military towers are used to monitor and control Palestinian pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
4. **New road 'protection' barriers** were observed on Israeli bypass roads – that is, West Bank roads linking settlements to each other and to Israel which Palestinians are frequently restricted from using. Kilometres of fencing and concrete barriers align Route 60 near Beit Jala in Bethlehem Governorate and on the Modi'in Road (Route 443), for example. These prevent unregulated Palestinian access onto these roads.
5. Obstacles near **settlements and Israeli bypass roads** have remained.
6. The obstacles encircling major **Palestinian urban hubs**, particularly Nablus and Hebron, have remained.
7. In the southern West Bank, **Palestinian traffic is being increasingly channelled eastward** onto the longer and inferior Route 356 and away from the more direct Route 60 to Jerusalem. Route 60 runs through the Gush Etzion block where Barrier construction is imminent.

Analysis of closure dynamics

- Further analysis of the humanitarian and socio-economic impact of this decline is ongoing, but the impact is most felt by the easing of movement between villages and between villages and the urban centre. This is likely to improve Palestinian access to services such as education and health. Movement between major West Bank urban centres has not changed significantly.
- The closure regime appears to have become more streamlined and physical obstacles that were seen by Israel as being superfluous to security needs were either removed or left to erode. Physical obstacles located in strategically important locations – for example, near settlements, at junctions between Palestinian roads and Israeli bypass roads and at the entrances to large West Bank urban hubs – remain in place. Israel has upgraded some of these checkpoints, the Tappuha / Zatarah Junction in northern West Bank for example, and other crossings through the Barrier, suggesting a more permanent presence.

Israel has made efforts to improve transport contiguity for Palestinians travelling in the West Bank. It has done this by constructing underpasses and bridges (28 of which have been constructed and 16 of which are planned) that link Palestinian areas separated from each other by Israeli settlements and bypass roads.²

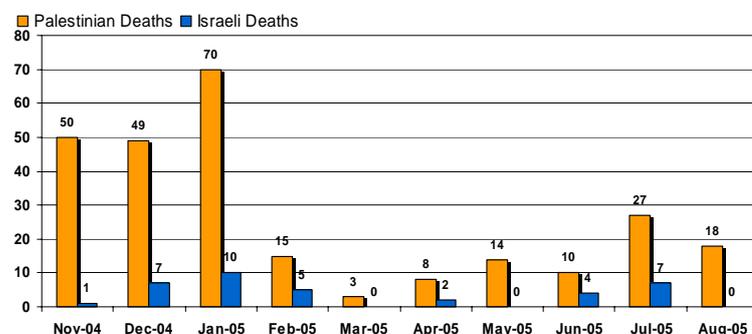


OCHA – Steve Sabella | Huwwara checkpoint, Nablus Governorate, June 2005

The pattern of closures indicates a more solid west-east 'line' at two points in the West Bank (See map on page 8). Tighter restrictions appear to be associated with crossing these 'lines.'

II. Monitoring Issues

Casualties: Palestinian and Israeli Deaths



Line 1. Ariel – Tappuha / Zatarah – Jordan Valley

This line is defined from Ariel settlement, along a new road being built from Ariel to Tappuah and the road to the Jordan Valley (the new Route 5). Palestinians face restrictions from using any of these roads. North of this line, Palestinian movement is relatively easy. It is possible to move freely from Qalqilya to Jenin and across to Tubas. The removal of four Israeli settlements from this area during disengagement has further enhanced movement. The exception is a ring of closures around Nablus. Entering and exiting Nablus (with the notable exception of the Al Badan road north to Tubas) remain tightly controlled.

Palestinian movement in the region south of this line has also eased. Movement to Ramallah from western areas is easier as is movement from Jericho to Ramallah.

Line 2. Mod'in – Route 443 – Jerusalem – Jordan Valley

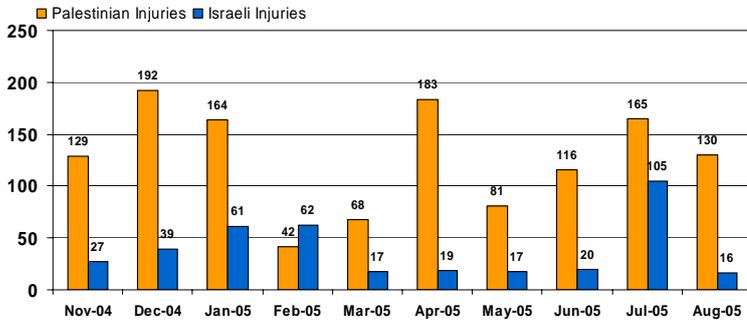
The construction of the Barrier in and around East Jerusalem and issuance of requisition orders by the IDF for land around the Ma'ale Adumim settlement block on 16 August 2005 indicate that East Jerusalem is increasingly being cut off from the remainder of the West Bank. All West Bank Palestinians not residents of Jerusalem need a permit to enter the city and access for Jerusalemites to other parts of the West Bank is becoming more problematic. A new series of crossing points are being constructed to regulate movement through the Barrier in and out of Jerusalem. For further information, see www.ochaopt.org. Movement into Jerusalem has also become increasingly difficult for international agencies.

The requisition orders for Ma'ale Adumim risk further bisection of the southern and northern West Bank. How these two parts will be connected in the future is unclear.

In the southern region it is likely that Palestinian movement will be increasingly directed eastward from Hebron, through Beit Sahur, via the eastern side of the Barrier around Jerusalem and past Ma'ale Adumim to the northern West Bank. Movement south of Hebron remains difficult for Palestinians travelling on roads passing settlements in the south.

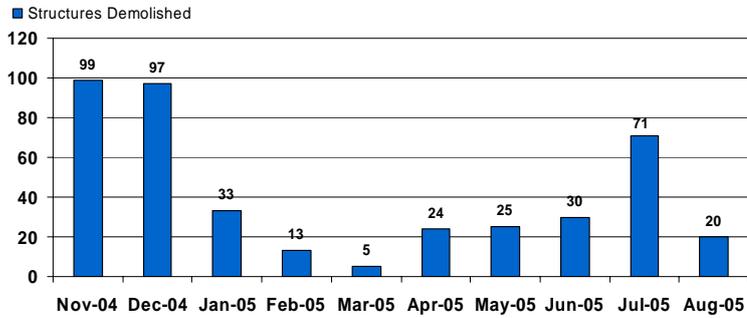
Casualties

From 27 July to 30 August, 18 Palestinians were killed, including seven children, and 130 were injured. Sixteen Israelis were reported injured. One international was also reported killed and four injured. These figures are among the highest reported in 2005, among them are four Palestinian workers who were shot and killed by an Israeli settler from Shvut Rakhel settlement in Ramallah Governorate; and four Palestinian brothers (three of them children) from Halaweh, in the area of Masafer Yatta south Hebron Governorate, who were injured by Israeli unexploded ordnances.



These casualties also include two Palestinian deaths and nine Palestinian injuries that were a result of Palestinian militant activity; two Israelis were injured by the IDF; and one Israeli was injured in clashes between the IDF and Israeli settlers.

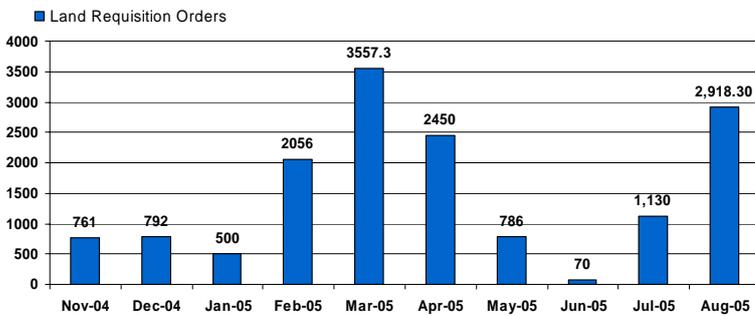
Structure demolished



Structures demolished / people affected

During the August reporting period, at least 20 structures were demolished, affecting 129 people.

Land Requisition Orders

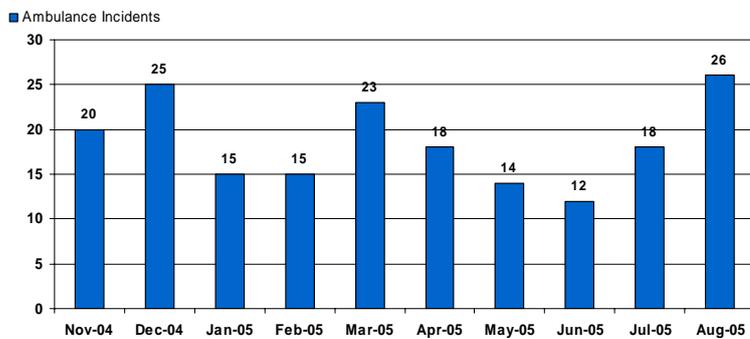


Land levelling/requisition/trees destroyed

At least 2,918.3 dunums (291.83 hectares) of land were requisition by the IDF in August.

This number includes four military requisitions orders for Barrier construction near and around Ma'ale Adumim settlement: T/150/05 requisitioning 87 dunums (8.7 hectares), T/151/05 requisitioning 477 dunums (47.7 hectares), T/152/05 requisitioning 809 dunums (80.9 hectares) and T/153/05 requisitioning 212 dunums (21.2 hectares). There were also large amounts of land requisitioned in Bethlehem, Hebron and Ramallah/AI Bireh governorates.

Ambulance Incidents

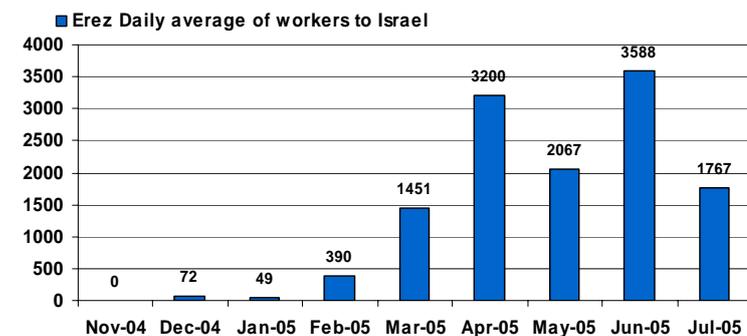


Ambulance incidents

In August 2005, ambulance operators reported a total of 26 access incidents: 15 denials and 11 delays of 30 minutes or more. The majority of reports were from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank where Israel imposed additional movement restrictions during the disengagement.

Source: PRCS

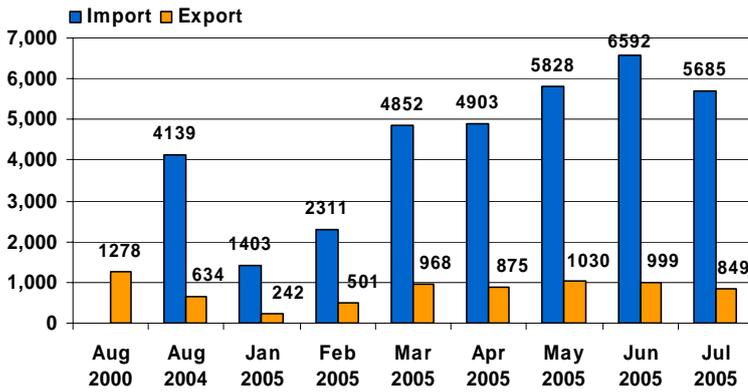
Erez Crossing: Average Daily Labour Movement



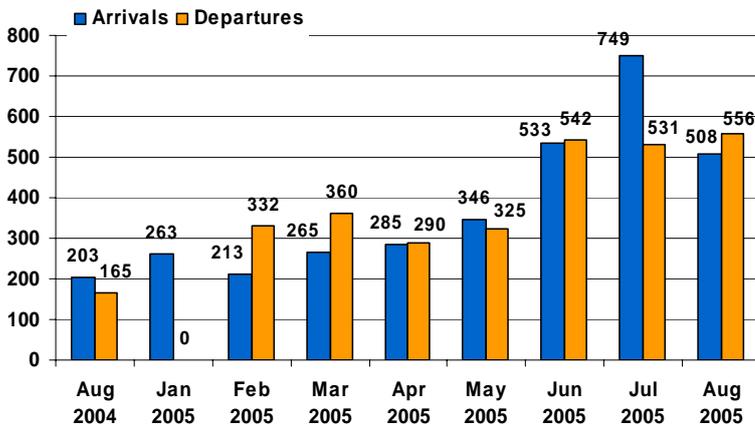
Access for Palestinian workers and traders into Israel

In July, the number of workers crossing for work in Israel and Erez Industrial Zone (E12), dropped from June due to the closure of Erez and EIZ from 13 to 30 July following the suicide attack in Netanya on 12 July, killing four Israelis.

Source: 2004 data from UNSCO. Jan 05 onwards, OCHA
All data received from NSF/UNRWA

Karni Crossing: Truckloads of Imports / Exports

Source: Data Nov 04 -May 05 UNSCO. Jun 05 onwards OCHA. All data received from Ministry of National Economy

Rafah Passenger Crossing: Daily average crossing

Source: Data Nov 04 -May 05 UNSCO. Jun 05 onwards OCHA. All data received from Ministry of National Economy

Access for Gazan trade movement through Karni crossing

Most goods imported into the Gaza Strip and all exported goods pass through Karni crossing.³ Truckloads of imported goods to Gaza fell in July 2005 compared with the previous month although they are higher than the same month the previous year and pre-*intifada*. Exports have remained fairly stable since March this year. Nevertheless, the volume of exported goods remains lower today than pre-*intifada*.

Palestinians' access internationally from the Gaza Strip

In July, arrivals to Gaza increased with the influx of people returning from holidays. This increase was in spite of the renewed restrictions on travelers passing in and out of Gaza. On 16 July, the Israeli authorities re-imposed restrictions on Palestinian men aged between 16 to 35 years leaving the Gaza Strip and on 20 July, the x-ray machine was re-installed.

III. New humanitarian reports**PCBS: Food still represents main priority for Palestinians**

The need for food still represents the first priority of Palestinian households, followed by job opportunities and money, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Main Findings of the Survey on the Impact of Israeli Measures on the Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Households, April-June 2005. More than 63% of Palestinian households indicated that their income has dropped during the last five years, of which 62% lost more than 50% of their usual income. Military checkpoints, Israeli closure, and high cost of medical care still represent the main obstacles of access to health services, according to the PCBS. *For more information, see: [http://www.pcbs.org/]*

Amnesty International: Administrative detention cannot replace justice

According to Amnesty International, in virtually all the cases known to the organisation involving attacks by Israeli settlers, whether against Palestinians and their property or against Israeli and international human rights and peace activists, "the thorough investigations have not been carried out and the perpetrators have not been prosecuted. Such widespread impunity has undoubtedly encouraged further attacks by Israeli settlers." *For more information, see: [http://www.amnesty.org/]*

Amnesty International: Concerns at growing lawlessness in the Gaza Strip

In a 12 August press release, Amnesty International said it was concerned at the loss of civilian lives, frequent abductions and other abuses, a result of violent clashes between Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces and armed groups.

In the past two months, some 15 Palestinian civilians, five of them children, have been killed and some 25, including six children, have been injured in armed attacks and clashes between Palestinian armed groups and PA security forces, according to Amnesty International. Some 40 members of the PA security forces and some 25 gunmen have also been injured in the clashes. *For more information, see: [http://www.amnesty.org/]*

International Crisis Group: The Jerusalem Powder Keg

With recent steps, Israel is attempting to solidify its hold over Jerusalem, according to a new report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Jerusalem Powder Keg". Israel established new urban settlements outside the municipal boundary surrounding the city, breaking the contiguity between East Jerusalem and the West Bank. *For more information, see: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/]*

Report of the Secretary-General: Assistance to the Palestinian people

Internal and external closures and other measures taken by Israel, although moderately alleviated toward the end of the reporting period (from May 2004 to April 2005), continued to create economic hardship for Palestinians and restrict the delivery of necessary emergency aid supplies, according to a report by the secretary-

general on assistance to the Palestinian People. *For more information, see General Assembly Sixtieth Session Item 74*

UN Committee: Gaza Strip pullout must lead to West Bank, East Jerusalem exit

A United Nations committee on Palestinian rights has called for Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip to be followed by similar steps in the whole of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, leading to a just and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict. The Bureau of the Committee also stated that the construction and operation of a seaport and an airport, as well as a permanent geographical link to the West Bank are vital for the Palestinian economy. *For more information, see: Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People GA/PAL/990 and 991*

United Nations Commission on Human Rights: Halt Barrier Construction

The eight undersigned special procedures mandate holders of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights issued an appeal shortly after the one-year anniversary of the International Court of Justice 9 July 2004 opinion. The United Nations experts again called on Israel to halt construction of the Barrier. The ICJ opinion stated that Barrier violates Israel's obligations under international human rights law and particularly violates freedom of movement, as well as the rights to adequate housing, food, family life, education and health.

IV. Humanitarian assistance to the oPt

E USAID to transfer \$50 million to Palestinian Authority

Palestinian Minister of Finance and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) signed an agreement for the transfer of US \$50 million in direct assistance to rehabilitate new housing for 6,000 families, roads, water facilities, schools and health clinics in the Gaza Strip. It is expected that more than 700,000 person days of employment will be generated in the Gaza Strip by the direct assistance. *For more information, see: [http://www.usaid.gov/]*

EU makes largest donation to WFP's new food aid project for poor Palestinians

On 1 August, the European Union donated €8 million to the World Food Programme to provide food assistance for almost half a million poor Palestinians. In September 2005, WFP plans to launch a new two-year operation aimed at providing 154,000 tonnes of food assistance to 135,500 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and 344,500 in the West Bank. *For more information, see: [http://www.wfp.org]*

New school year

UNICEF is supporting the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education with a 'Back to School' campaign. The campaign aims at getting 1.2 million Palestinian children back to school on time and to encourage qualitative learning. There are an estimated 15,000 children in oPt who have dropped out of school. The campaign also aims at equipping 40,000 school children with school bags, improving the quality of education and increasing the awareness of the community to the importance of education. *For more information, see: [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/]*

UNICEF: New safe play areas for worst affected kids in Gaza

Fifteen safe-play areas are being established in Gaza Strip and the West Bank, of which four are already active. The play areas were set up with assistance from UNICEF and with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency. The play areas are typically established in existing facilities and provide children alternative places to play and learn, keeping them away from dangerous areas where they could be exposed to live fire or unexploded ordnance.

Unexploded ordnance, left behind in the Gaza Strip by both sides in the conflict are a threat to children. Between September 2000 and end of May 2005, 26 children were killed and 120 injured by such objects. Three children were killed and 13 injured in the first four months of 2005 alone, according to UNICEF. In addition to the safe-play areas, UNICEF is supporting a mine risk education project. *For more information, see: [http://www.unicef.org/oPt/]*

US funds water pipeline for the Gaza Strip

The launching of the regional water carrier project that is planned to ensure a steady supply of fresh water to more than 1 million people in the Gaza Strip was announced in August. Construction of the 38-kilometre-long pipeline will be funded by USAID. The initial funding is \$30 million, with an additional \$36 million to be allocated in 2006. The water carrier is planned to improve water distribution in the area between Gaza City at the northern end of the Gaza Strip and the southern city of Khan Younis. *For more information, see: [http://www.usaid.gov/]*

V. Humanitarian events

Secretary-General appoints Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA

On 25 August, the secretary-general appointed Filippo Grandi of Italy as deputy commissioner-general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Grandi has been serving since May 2004 as the deputy special representative of the secretary-general responsible for political affairs at the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

¹ OCHA refined its definitions in two primary ways. First, OCHA removed from its total count all checkpoints located in H2 - accounting for eight checkpoints - because their impact was of a different order compared to major West Bank checkpoints. A separate survey of H2 physical obstacles is available: www.ochaopt.org. This survey counted 101 physical obstacles in H2, of which 17 were checkpoints. These 101 obstacles are not included in the 376 total.

Second, the reduction of earth mounds frequently led to a 'double drop' in the number of physical obstacles. Typically, when an earth mound was erected by the IDF, Palestinians would take create an alternative route around the earth mound. In response, the IDF would block the alternative route to reinforce the closure. The earth mound and second block were counted as two physical obstacles. With the removal of the earth mound, the second block became redundant. Two removals were counted, hence a 'double drop'.

² Following the Oslo Accords, the West Bank was divided into areas A, B and C. Israel assumed direct administrative and security control of Area C, a contiguous block comprising approximately 60% of the West Bank. Areas A and B that came under Palestinian Authority administrative control consist of more than 60 non-contiguous areas. Palestinians wanting to commute between Areas A and B, need to cross Area C which contain roads subject to different restrictions. As a result, Palestinian commuters have relied on longer secondary roads, many of which are unpaved. However, recently a number of underpasses have been constructed under these restricted roads to link Areas A and B without Palestinians needing to travel on Israeli restricted roads.

³ The other three commercial crossings are Rafah, Sufa and Nahal Oz.

West Bank Closures

August 2005

Closures Summary

Checkpoints

-  Permanent Checkpoint
-  Partial Checkpoint

Other Closures

-  Observation Tower
-  Road Gate
-  Roadblock
-  Earth Mound
-  Earth Wall
-  Trench

Oslo Agreements

-  Area (A) Civil and security control transferred to Palestinian Authority (PA)
-  Area (B) Civil control transferred to PA; Security jointly shared by PA & Israel.
-  Area (C) Civil and security authority remain under Israeli control.

Barrier as of July 05

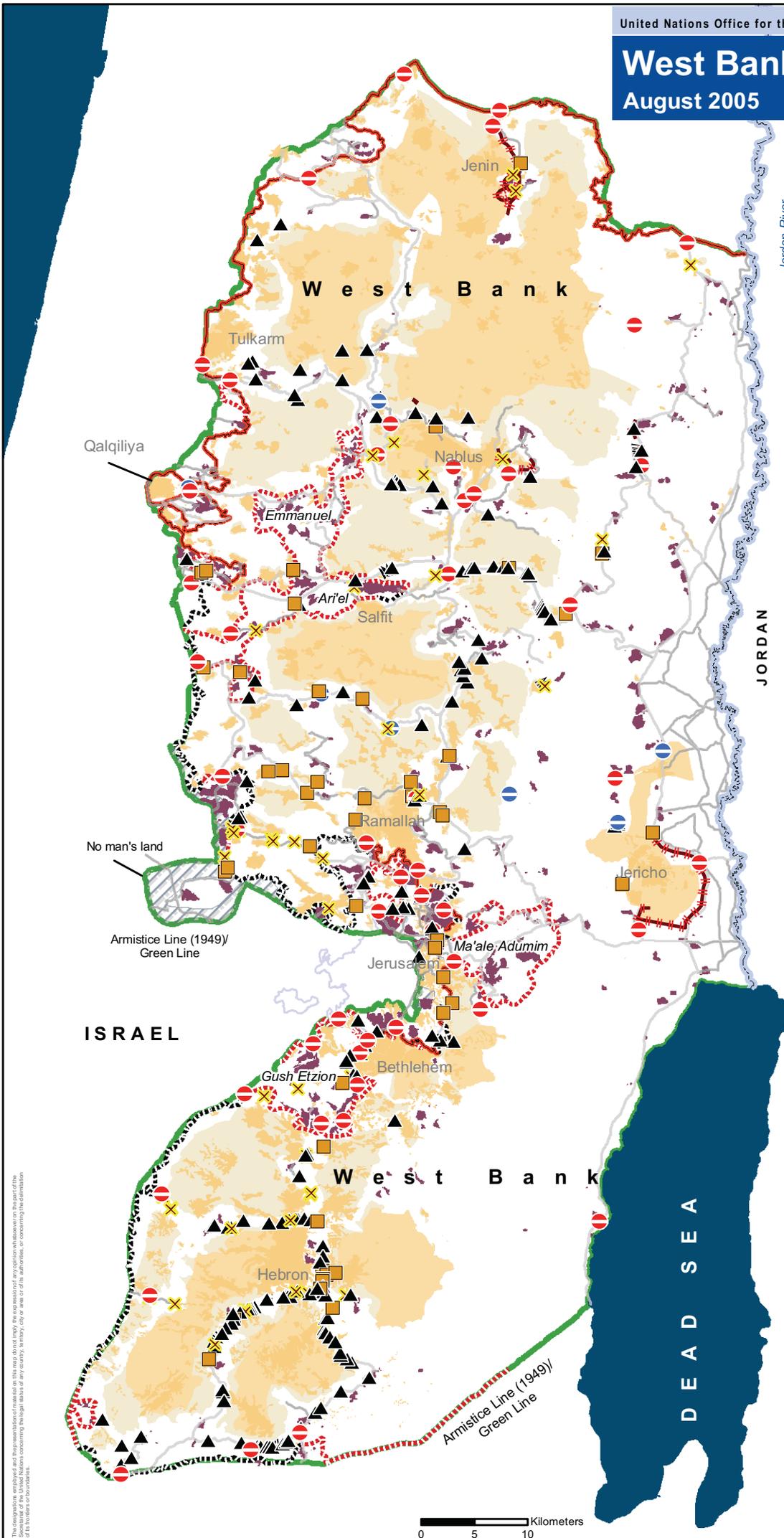
-  Constructed
-  Underconstruction
-  Projected

Residential Areas

-  Palestinian Community
-  Israeli Settlement

Road Network

-  Prohibited Road
-  Restricted Road



0 5 10 Kilometers



Cartography and Barrier Themes: OCHA-oPt August 2005
 Base data: MoPIC (2000), IDF, OCHA (2005)
 For comments contact <ochaopt@un.org> or Tel. +972 (02) 582-9962, http://www.ochaopt.org

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Removed Closure Obstacles

OCHA April 05 - OCHA August 05

Closures Summary

Removed closures since 1 April 2005 up till 1 August 2005

Total 229

- OCHA Closure (Roadblocks, Earthmounds, etc) **159**
- OCHA Closure (Trench or Earth Wall) **70**

Barrier as of July 05

— Constructed and Projected

Oslo Agreements

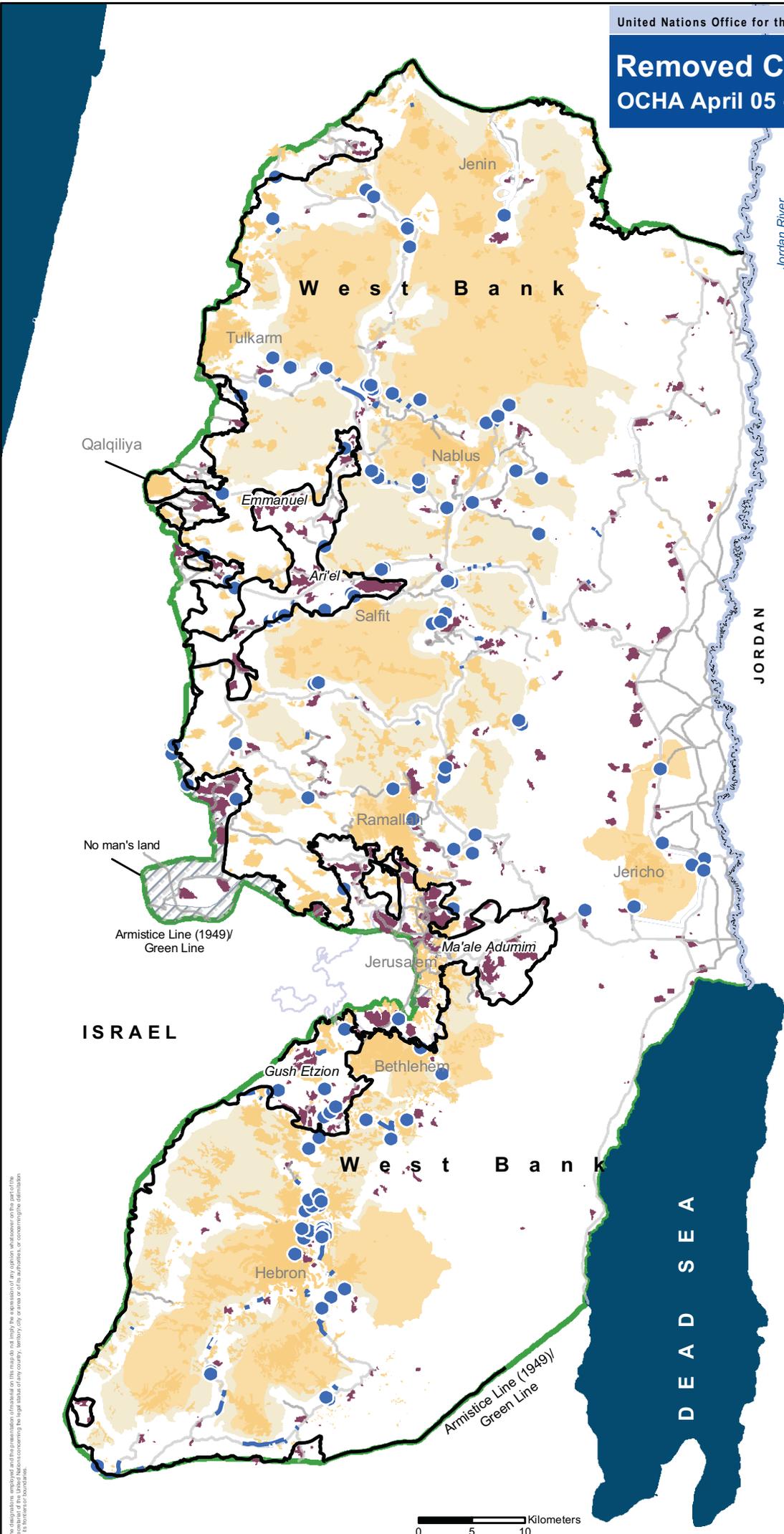
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Residential Areas

- Palestinian Community
- Israeli Settlement

Road Network

- Prohibited Road
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Wider Trends of Closure

Closures Summary

OCHA observed closures as of 1 August 2005

Total 376

- ▲ OCHA Closure (Roadblocks, Earthmounds, etc) **354**
- OCHA Closure (Trench or Earth Wall) **20**

- Existing Passages
- Planned Passages

Barrier as of July 05

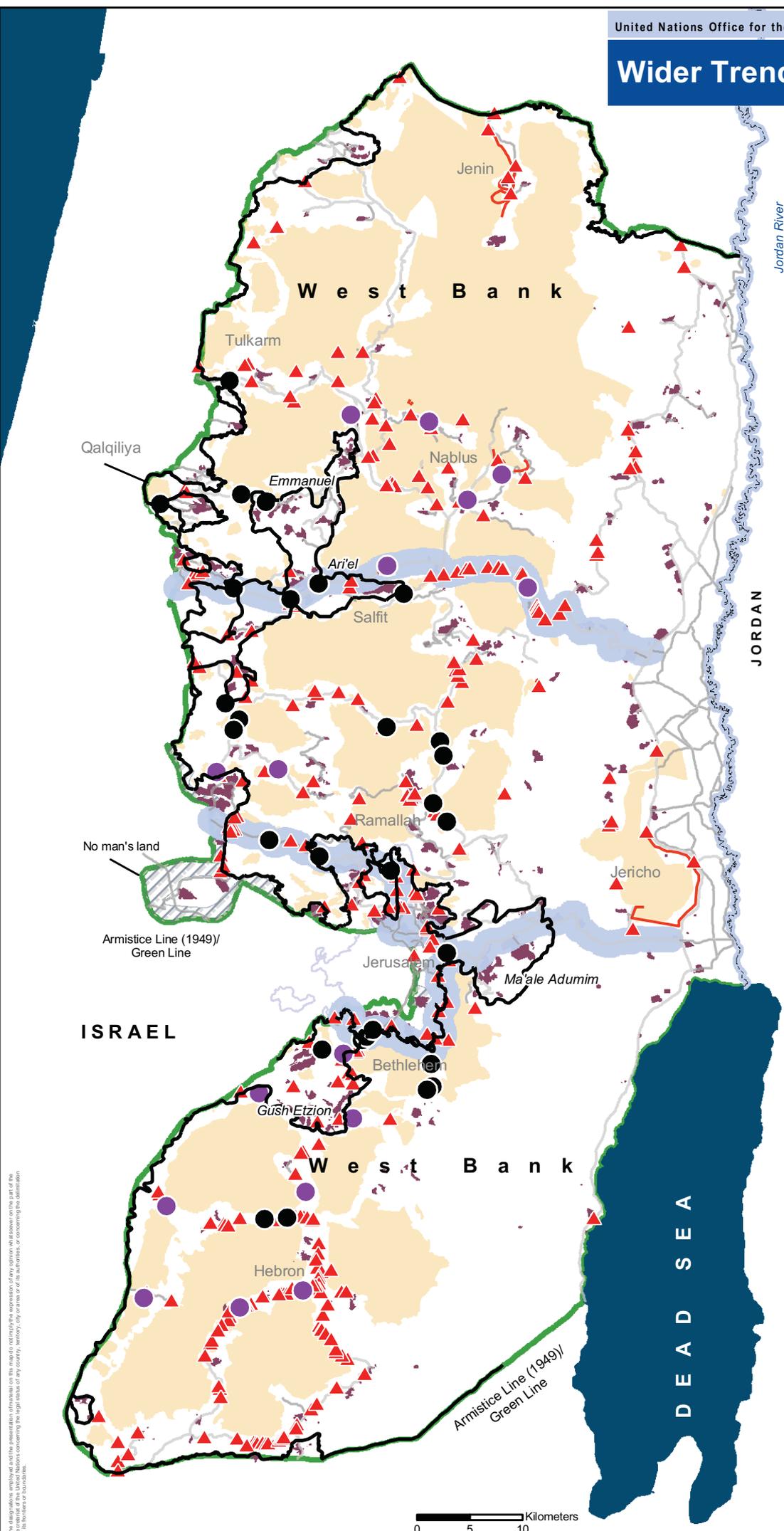
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Oslo Agreements

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Road Network

- Prohibited Road
- Restricted Road



0 5 10 Kilometers

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