



'Atara partial checkpoint (only occasionally staffed) : controls Ramallah northern entrance

WEST BANK MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

The present report provides data and analysis on the main trends concerning the system of internal movement and access restrictions within the West Bank that took place between April 2009 and the end of March 2010. Measures implemented by the Israeli authorities during this period reduced the travel time between most urban centers, particularly in the north of the West Bank, thus improving

access to services and livelihoods. However, no significant improvement took place in the access of Palestinians to land and communities behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, in the Jordan Valley, and in the vicinity of Israeli settlements. The latter, constitute the single major factor configuring the system of movement and access restrictions in the West Bank.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present report provides data and analysis on the main trends concerning the system of West Bank internal movement and access restrictions implemented by the Israeli authorities between April 2009 and the end of March 2010, when OCHA concluded its comprehensive closure survey.

During the period covered by this report the Israeli authorities implemented a series of measures that improved the freedom of movement of Palestinians between most urban centres, particularly in the north. These measures included the removal of obstacles; the transformation of six key checkpoints into “partial” checkpoints staffed on an ad hoc basis; the relaxation of controls at some permanent checkpoints; the lifting of permit requirements for vehicles driving to and from Nablus City; and the opening of three sections of roads for Palestinian use. These measures, along with similar ones implemented since early 2008, have significantly reduced the travel time between many cities and towns, as well as the level of friction between Palestinians and Israeli forces at checkpoints. As a result, large segments of the Palestinian population enjoy better access to services, places of work and markets.

The total number of closure obstacles documented by OCHA at the end of the reporting period stood at 505, down from 626 on March 2009 (a 19 percent decrease).

On 24 May 2010, the Israeli authorities announced a package of measures which included, among others, the opening of a key route east of Jerusalem for Palestinian traffic and the removal of 60 roadblocks. Once implemented, these measures are likely to further improve Palestinian movement between urban centers and reduce the total number of obstacles to its lowest level since 2005.

However, no significant improvement took place in the access of Palestinians to areas behind the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, and to land and rural communities in the Jordan Valley. Moreover, the ability of Palestinians to use and develop land resources in these areas, as well as in other areas designated as Area C has remained extremely limited.

Access to East Jerusalem for Palestinians holding West Bank IDs, who obtained an entry permit, remained limited to three of the 16 checkpoints along the Barrier. As has been the case in the last few years, overcrowding, along with the multiple layers of checks and security procedures at these checkpoints have made entry into East Jerusalem a long and difficult experience. Restricted access to East Jerusalem has had a particularly negative impact on patients and medical staff trying to reach the six specialized Palestinian hospitals located in the city, as well as on Muslims and Christians willing to access Jerusalem’s holy sites.

As of the end of the reporting period, approximately 60 percent of the Barrier was complete; 85 percent of its entire route runs inside the West Bank, contrary to the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2004. While Barrier construction came to a halt in most areas, its associated permit regime restricting access to the closed areas behind the Barrier (the “Seam Zone”) was expanded to the Ramallah, Hebron and parts of the Salfit, Bethlehem and Jerusalem governorates. In the northern West Bank this regime was in place since 2003. Farmers, who were previously able to access agricultural areas behind the Barrier on the basis of a relatively-simple coordination procedure, have gradually been required to apply for visitors’ permits. The onerous demands of the permit system, coupled with the poor yield of the 2009 olive season,

resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of people accessing land in the newly declared “Seam Zone”, compared with the previous year.

During the reporting period, the Israeli military removed some 80 roadblocks that impeded vehicular access for limited numbers of farmers to agricultural land in Area C. However, no improvement was observed regarding access to much larger agricultural areas in the Jordan Valley. The routes leading to the latter have remained tightly controlled by four permanently staffed checkpoints, which prohibit access of Palestinian private vehicles, with the exception of Jordan Valley residents. The resulting detours and delays have continued to undermine the livelihoods of farmers, who face higher transportation costs and reduced quality and value of their fresh produce. Additionally, the Israeli authorities have intensified the enforcement of access restrictions to areas designated as “firing zones” and “nature reserves”, which cover approximately 26 percent of the West Bank. Measures adopted in this context targeted primarily vulnerable herder communities who reside in such areas or who use them to graze their livestock.

Lack of improvement also characterized access to agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, due to fences erected around such land by settlers, as well as due to settler intimidation. For the past few years, the Israeli authorities have implemented a “prior coordination” system, which allows limited access to these areas for Palestinian farmers, primarily during the olive harvest season. Information collected by OCHA indicates that such a system is currently in place in 57 Israeli settlements and settlement outposts.

Israeli settlements and their continuous expansion have the single largest impact on the configuration of the system of access restrictions applied to the Palestinian population. For example, one of the

frequent justifications given by the Israeli military for maintaining the closure of key roads into Palestinian towns and villages is that, if opened, these roads may serve as rapid “escape routes” for perpetrators of attacks against nearby settlements, or against Israelis travelling along the adjacent roads. Regardless of the security considerations that led to their imposition, these restrictions have reduced or eliminated Palestinian traffic along certain routes, which, as a result, have been transformed into rapid “corridors” easing the commute of Israeli citizens between the settlements and Israel, and, in some cases, between various areas within Israel via the West Bank.

This phenomenon has led to the gradual funneling of Palestinian traffic onto a secondary road network. During the reporting period, new roads have been paved and poor quality ones upgraded in the process of developing this secondary network. These roads have created or reinforced alternative routes that “compensate” for the loss of access to main routes. As such, they have complemented other measures that improved access to services and livelihoods. At the same time, by creating or reinforcing an alternative, this secondary network entrenches the exclusion of Palestinians from significant sections of the primary road network, now utilized mainly by Israelis and Israeli settlers.

The facilitation of Palestinian movement between urban centres is a welcome step. However, further measures are required to restore to Palestinians their right to freedom of movement, as well as their control over West Bank space. Initial steps must include the removal of additional obstacles blocking key routes into urban centers, the revocation of the permit regime associated with the Barrier, the opening up of “firing zones” and “nature reserves” for Palestinian use, the lifting of the access restrictions to the Jordan Valley and within Hebron City, and the permanent freeze of all settlement activity.

INTRODUCTION

Following the beginning of the second Intifada (September 2000), the Israeli authorities began implementing a comprehensive system of restrictions to the freedom of movement of Palestinians within the West Bank. This system is comprised of physical obstacles (e.g. checkpoints, roadblocks, the Barrier) and administrative restrictions (e.g. prohibited roads, permit requirements, age restrictions). The Israeli authorities have justified it as a temporary measure to contain violent confrontations with its military and to protect Israeli citizens, both in Israel and in the West Bank, from attacks by Palestinians. This system came in addition to pre-existing policies implemented by the Israeli authorities in the context of its prolonged occupation, which included restrictions on the access of Palestinians to large and important areas, such as East Jerusalem, areas designated as “closed military zones” and land allocated to Israeli settlements. The term “access” is used here in its broadest sense, which includes reference not only to the ability of people to reach a given area, but also to use and develop available resources there, primarily land.

This report provides data and analysis on the main developments and trends in the system of movement and access restrictions for the year between 1 April 2009 and 30 March 2010. It is based

on the regular monitoring carried out by OCHA field teams, culminating in a comprehensive survey documenting and mapping all closure obstacles. Significant developments that took place between the end of the reporting period and the publication of this report are mentioned in the relevant sections.

The report comprises seven sections. The first presents the findings of the comprehensive obstacle survey. The following four sections focus on developments and trends regarding movement and access between urban centers (section 2); to East Jerusalem (section 3); to other areas isolated by the Barrier (section 4); and to land and rural communities in Area C (section 5). Section 6 addresses the phenomenon of the alternative roads, which are aimed at “compensating” for some of the movement restrictions applied to Palestinians. The last section discusses the planning regimes, which constraint the ability of Palestinians to build in East Jerusalem and in Area C.

The report does not address the access constraints affecting people at risk of deportation from the West Bank by the Israeli authorities, on the grounds that their registered address is in the Gaza Strip, or that their entry visas expired.¹

SIGNIFICANT DROP IN THE NUMBER OF OBSTACLES

In the comprehensive closure survey completed by the end of March 2010, OCHA field teams documented and mapped 505 obstacles blocking internal Palestinian movement and access throughout the West Bank. These include 65 permanently staffed checkpoints, 22 partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad-hoc basis) and 418 unstaffed obstacles, including roadblocks, earthmounds, earth walls, road gates, road barriers, and trenches.²

While this figure includes 11 checkpoints within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2),

it excludes approximately 80 other obstacles in this area, which were not counted in the past and therefore are not aggregated here to preserve the continuity of the data. This figure also excludes 63 crossing points along the Barrier, also known as “Barrier gates”, leading into isolated agricultural areas.

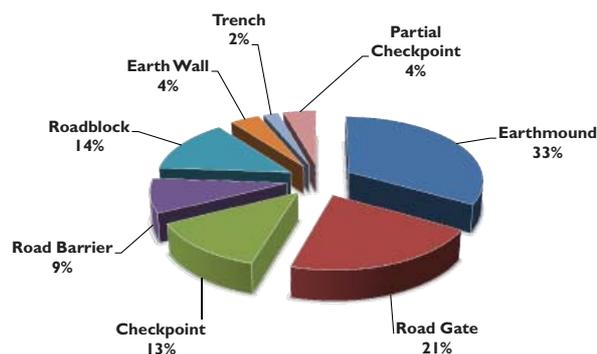
The findings of the closure survey were submitted to the IDF Central Command for review. Of the total, the IDF confirmed the location and status of 366 obstacles or 72 percent of those identified by

OCHA. The difference is mainly due to discrepancies in definitions, as the IDF does not consider certain types of infrastructures as internal movement obstacles, including permanent checkpoints with ad hoc checks only, checkpoints in the H2 area of Hebron, partial checkpoints, road barriers, trenches, and road gates that are usually open. By contrast, the IDF does count 50 obstacles that were not included in OCHA's findings, as they do not meet OCHA's criteria for "obstacles" (mostly those leading into settlements and military bases, which do not impede access to communities or agricultural land).

The total of 505 obstacles represents a net reduction of 121 obstacles (19 percent), compared to the equivalent figure at the end of the previous reporting period in March 2009 (626).³ This decrease occurred as the result of the removal of 246 obstacles, alongside the installation of 125 new ones at other locations.

Nearly 70 percent of the net decrease (84 obstacles) occurred in the southern West Bank (Bethlehem and Hebron governorates), the bulk of which affected access to agricultural land. However, in terms of impact, the most significant improvement during the reporting period affected movement between urban centers, rather than access to land,

Chart 1: Distribution of obstacles by type

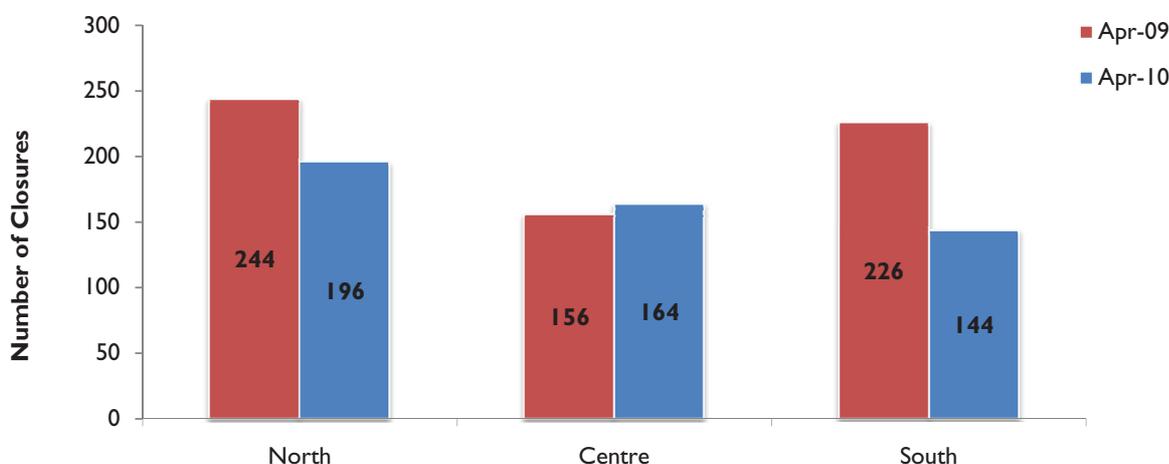


and took place in the northern areas following the implementation of measures not reflected in the total number of obstacles (see next Section).

In late May 2010, the Israeli authorities announced a package of additional easings to Palestinian movement, which included, among others, the removal of 60 roadblocks, to be implemented over the course of June 2010. These removals may reduce the total number of obstacles to its lowest level since late 2005.

The total number of permanently staffed checkpoints decreased in the course of the reporting period by seven (65 compared to 72). More than

Chart 2: Change in the number of obstacles by region*



*The southern region includes Bethlehem and Hebron governorates; the central region, Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Jericho governorates; and the northern region Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Nablus, Salfit and Qalqiliya governorates.

half of the current checkpoints (36) are located along the Barrier and used by the Israeli authorities to control access to East Jerusalem and Israel, as well as to Palestinian enclaves surrounded by the Barrier. Regardless of their current use, all of these checkpoints restrict Palestinian access to areas of the West Bank on the other side of the Barrier.

While checkpoints (including partial checkpoints) comprise only 17 percent of all obstacles they constitute a key component of the closure system, due to the fact that most of the remaining obstacles (roadblocks, earthmounds, etc.) are designed to channel Palestinian traffic into the checkpoints. As a rule, fluctuations in the number of checkpoints provide an only partial indication of a trend regarding Palestinian freedom of movement. Indeed, the ability of Palestinians to pass through a given checkpoint varies depending on the practices

Latest developments

Along with the limited opening of Road 443 for Palestinian use in May 2010 (see next Section), the Israeli authorities began operating three new staffed checkpoints; two of them control Palestinian access into this road, and one prevents Palestinian access from Road 443 into East Jerusalem. Following the operation of the latter, the Israeli authorities ceased the permanent staffing of three Barrier checkpoints located further south in the way into East Jerusalem (Ramat, Atarot and Qawasmi checkpoints), transforming them into partial checkpoints. In addition, following the rerouting of a section of the Barrier in Qalqiliya governorate, a Barrier checkpoint controlling access to and from a Barrier enclave (Ras Atyia checkpoint) was entirely removed. As a result of these developments, the total number of partial checkpoints increased by three (currently 25), while the number of fully staffed checkpoints decreased by one (currently 64).

Table 1: Permanently staffed checkpoints within the West Bank (after latest developments)

Checkpoint type	Checkpoint description	Number
Israel and East Jerusalem	Located along the Barrier (except one) and controlling access into Israel and East Jerusalem for Israelis (mostly commuting settlers); Palestinian holding Jerusalem IDs; and a limited number of other Palestinians holding special permits. Some of them are also used to control commercial traffic into Israel.	20
Communities isolated by the Barrier	Located along the Barrier and controlling access of Palestinians holding special permits to and from communities isolated by the Barrier; ⁴ some of them also allow access of permit holders to farming land isolated by the Barrier, as well as to workplaces within Israeli settlements.	11
Israel and East Jerusalem + Isolated communities	Combines the two categories detailed above.	4
Main route	Located on a main West Bank route on the eastern side of the Barrier and controlling vehicular movement of Palestinians from one area to another; some of them are also used to prevent entry of Israelis into Areas A.	16
Hebron City	Located within or next to the Israeli controlled area of Hebron City (H2) and controlling movement of Palestinians into or within that area; some of them are also used to prevent entry of Israelis into the PA controlled area of Hebron (H1).	11
Agricultural area	Located at the entrance of an Israeli settlement and controlling access of Palestinian farmers into significant agricultural areas within or next to that settlement; such access requires prior coordination with the Israeli Civil Administration.	2
Total		64

of the Israeli authorities at that checkpoint at any given moment; movement through a specific area may significantly improve or worsen due to changes

in those practices regardless of the overall number of checkpoints (see next Section).

MOVEMENT BETWEEN URBAN CENTERS IMPROVED

Over the course of the reporting period the Israeli authorities implemented a series of measures that improved the freedom of movement of Palestinians between urban centres in the West Bank. These measures follow a relaxation trend that began in the second quarter of 2008.

Cumulatively, they have resulted in a significant reduction in the travel time between many cities and towns, as well as in the level of friction between Palestinians and Israeli forces at checkpoints. This has facilitated the access of large segments of the Palestinian population to services, places of work and markets, as well as improved social and family ties. To a lesser extent, these measures have also contributed, along with other factors, to a growth in economic activity and a small reduction in the unemployment rate.⁵

Despite this progress, the vehicular movement of Palestinians between some West Bank cities, towns and villages remained impeded by hundreds of obstacles and checkpoints and other access restrictions. The protection of Israeli settlements and Israeli citizens travelling along West Bank roads is the main justification given by the Israeli military for the maintenance of some of the key obstacles and restrictions currently impeding movement between Palestinian urban centers.

Removal of obstacles and easing of checks

The city of Nablus experienced the largest improvement. The two checkpoints that controlled the main routes into the city from the north, one permanent (Asira Ash Shamaliya) and another “partial” (Al Badhan, staffed on a part time basis), were entirely removed, thus ensuring unrestricted

access to and from the city for a large number of towns and villages in northern Nablus and Jenin governorates. Two additional checkpoints located on the main routes into the city from the east and the west, Beit Furik and Beit Iba checkpoints, were turned into “partial” checkpoints and are now staffed only occasionally. While the checkpoint controlling the southern access to the city, Huwwara, remained permanently staffed, checks by Israeli soldiers are carried out only randomly, allowing the smooth flow of traffic most of the time. Finally, Nablus residents younger than 50 are no longer required to obtain special permits to drive their vehicles out of the city. These measures followed the lifting of the “back-to back” regime applied to trucks entering or leaving Nablus through the ‘Awarta checkpoint, during the previous reporting period.

With six specialized hospitals, over 5,700 operating businesses,⁶ and the largest university in the West Bank, Nablus City serves as a health, economic and academic hub for the entire population of the northern West Bank. Following the breakout of the second Intifada in 2000, all routes leading to the city were blocked, while certain categories of people and vehicles were required to obtain permits to enter or leave the city. Given its importance, the gradual relaxation in access to the city that began in early 2008 has therefore been significant.

Similar, albeit less dramatic, relaxation measures were implemented in other cities in the northern and central areas of the West Bank. The checkpoints that controlled the southern entrance into the city of Qalqiliya (‘Izbat Jal’ud checkpoint) and the southern entrance into the city of Jericho (Jericho DCO checkpoint) were removed. Another four

checkpoints located on key access routes to the cities of Ramallah ('Atara checkpoint), Salfit (Deir Ballout checkpoint), Qalqiliya (Qalqiliya DCO checkpoint), and Tulkarm (Enav checkpoint) were transformed into "partial checkpoints", which maintain their infrastructure but are staffed on an ad-hoc basis.

The frequency of the staffing and performance of checks at these checkpoints varies and is usually linked to military operations being carried out in this area, or a "security alert" being declared by the Israeli military. For example, since it became a partial checkpoint in June 2009, 'Atara, which controls the main route into Ramallah City from the north, operated on at least 45 days, or about 15 percent of the relevant period, according to OCHA's field records

A relaxation of checking procedures and a reduction in delays was also observed at two key checkpoints, one controlling the single route between the south and center of the West Bank available for Palestinians holding West Bank IDs (Wadi Nar checkpoint) and another controlling the main route between the central and northern areas (Tappuah / Za'atra checkpoint).

Although of smaller significance compared to the northern areas, the Israeli authorities implemented a number of steps that eased the movement of Palestinians between some of the main cities and towns in the southern West Bank. These included the removal of roadblocks and earthmounds that blocked direct access from eight communities south of Hebron City, with a total population of 7,500, to Road 60, the main traffic artery in the area. Overall, some 25 unstaffed obstacles blocking access to and from communities in the southern West Bank were removed during this period. In addition, three partial checkpoints in the Hebron and Bethlehem governorates (Umm Salamuna, Ras Al Joura and Halhul Bridge) were dismantled, while most of the remaining partial checkpoints were staffed less frequently.

A major exception to the widespread relaxation trend taking place in the northern areas, affected the main route (Road 60) between the Jenin governorate and the central West Bank, following the closure of the checkpoint controlling this route (Shave Shomron) for all traffic since December 2009. This measure obliges a large segment of the population to make a 25 kilometer-long detour to bypass the inaccessible portion of the road. According to the Israeli military, this closure is due to the ongoing upgrading of a section of this road; however, according to the company implementing the project on the ground, such a measure is not required to carry out the rehabilitation.

Three prohibited roads opened up; additional opening expected soon

During this period the Israeli military opened up for Palestinian use two road segments in the northern and southern West Bank that were previously restricted for Palestinian-plated cars and reserved for the exclusive use of Israeli settlers.

The first opening occurred in November 2009 allowing Palestinian access to a six kilometer-long section of Road 585, the main traffic artery connecting the governorates of Jenin and Tulkarm. This section, which allowed Israeli settlers from the Mevo Dotan and Hermesh settlements (about 520 residents) to commute with Israel, was closed for Palestinian-plated cars (with limited exceptions) in 2005, forcing the Palestinian population of Jenin and Tulkarm areas to make detours along inferior routes.⁷

The second opening took place in January 2010 allowing access to a three kilometer-long segment of Road 3265 in the western Hebron governorate, which prior to the prohibition was used by the residents of 12 villages (approx. 25,000 people) to reach service centres in Hebron and Dura. According to the Israeli army, the prohibition was imposed to protect Israeli settlers living in the

nearby settlement outpost of Negohot (approx. 200 people). The opening was the result of an Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) ruling, which found that the harm stemming from the travel ban on the Palestinian population was “disproportionate” compared to the relevant security considerations.⁸

In December 2009, the Israeli HCJ issued a similar ruling, declaring unlawful the prohibition on the use by Palestinians of a 25 kilometer-long segment of Road 443.⁹ This road is the main east-west traffic artery in the Ramallah area and has been used since the Israeli military banned Palestinian-plated cars in 2002, almost exclusively by Israelis commuting between Jerusalem and the coastal area of Israel, as well as by settlers living in settlements along the road.

The Israeli authorities have carried out a number of works towards the expected opening of the Road 443, including the deployment of razor wire along the road; the installation of infrastructure for two new checkpoints controlling access to the road; and initial steps for the construction of a new checkpoint at the eastern end of the road (next to the ‘Ofer’ prison) that will control access into East Jerusalem. More than 170 dunums of private Palestinian land were so far requisitioned for the performance of these works. While the ban has affected the access of nearly 30,000 Palestinians living in eight nearby villages to Ramallah city, its negative impact was

Latest developments

On 28 May, the Israeli authorities began implementing the limited opening of Road 443 for Palestinian plated cars, as described above, including the operation of the three new checkpoints. Additionally, as part of the latest package of easings, the Israeli authorities announced the opening for Palestinian use of a six kilometer road running from the Wadi Nar checkpoint, east of Jerusalem, to the main road leading to the Ramallah area (also known as the (“Qedar settlement road”).

mitigated in the past two years by the opening of three alternative roads “compensating” for the loss of access to the main road (see also section below on “Funneling of Palestinian traffic”). Additionally, as access to Ramallah or East Jerusalem through this road will not be allowed, the impact of the expected opening is likely to be minimal, improving mainly the vehicular movement between the villages.

“Flying” checkpoints

In addition to permanent and partial checkpoints, the movement of Palestinians along West Bank roads is controlled by checkpoints deployed on an ad hoc basis in places without pre-existing infrastructure, also known as “flying” checkpoints. These entail, most commonly, the positioning of a military jeep on a key junction for a number of hours, during which cars are stopped for checking; some of the checks end up in the arrest of persons wanted for questioning by the Israeli Security Agency (previously the General Security Services [GSS] or Shin Bet). The scope of disruption caused by these checkpoints, is often larger compared to that of permanent checkpoints, due to their unpredictability and longer delays.

While the total number of flying checkpoints recorded during the reporting period was nearly the same as the previous 12 months (approximately 310 on a monthly average), their distribution over time differs. Following a decrease in the first eight months of this period (a monthly average of 263), the last four months (December 2009 - March 2010) witnessed a significant increase of more than 50 percent (a monthly average of 403).

This increase can be attributed to two main factors. One is the attempt to continue controlling Palestinian movement in areas previously controlled by a removed checkpoint or roadblock. On the southern route leading to Jericho City, for example, the number of flying checkpoints recorded between January and March 2010, following the removal of the DCO checkpoint was 20 percent higher

that during the previous nine months. The other factor is the attempt to disrupt or control regular protests in Jerusalem and Ramallah governorates. For example, following the launching of the weekly demonstrations against the expansion of the Hallamish settlement (Ramallah) in December 2009, the number of flying checkpoints recorded next to An Nabi Salah village reached 26 between January and March 2010, up from zero during the previous three months.

Another location where flying checkpoints were frequently recorded is on sections of roads experiencing frequent stone-throwing incidents at Israeli vehicles. In Qalqilyia governorate, for example, approximately one third of the flying checkpoints recorded during this period were deployed on Road 55, on the section next to 'Azzun village, where incidents of stone throwing occur on a weekly basis.¹⁰

Israeli settlements: the key factor behind the remaining restrictions

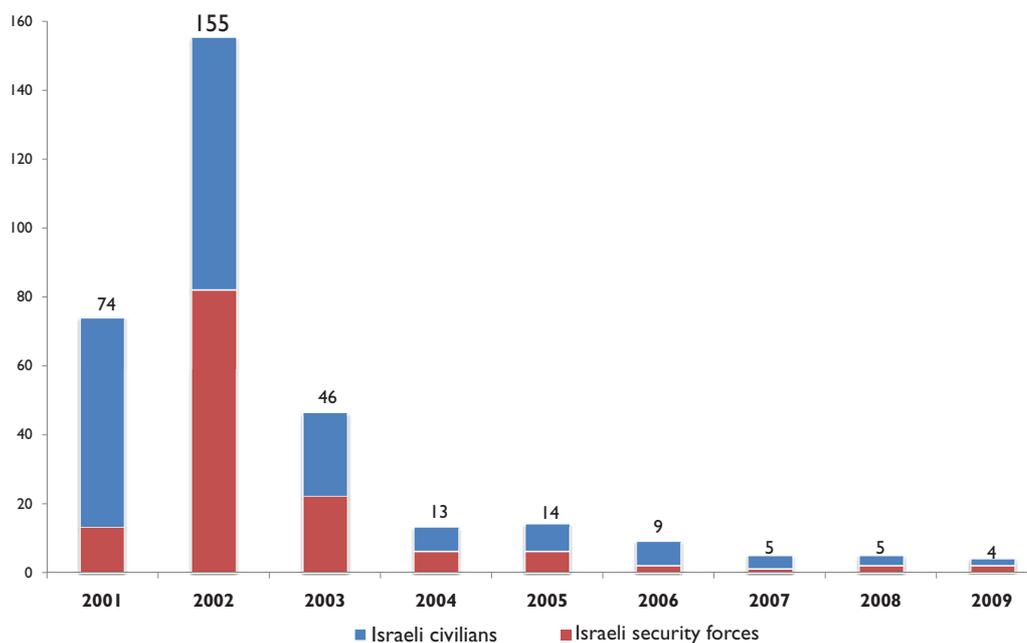
Despite the overall improvement in the movement of Palestinians between urban centers, this ability continued to be impeded by hundreds of

obstacles and other restrictions. These movement impediments channel Palestinian traffic into longer and lower quality routes, through areas that are often built-up, resulting in longer travel times, increased transportation costs and poorer access to services, markets and places of work.

Currently, the protection of Israeli settlements and of Israelis travelling along West Bank roads is the main justification given by the Israeli military for maintaining some of the key obstacles and restrictions impeding movement between Palestinian urban centers. One of the frequent arguments cited in this regard is that the blocked roads leading to Palestinian towns in the vicinity of settlements may serve, if opened for Palestinian use, as quick "escape routes" for perpetrators of attacks against these settlements, or against Israelis travelling along the adjacent roads.

Overall, parallel to the general decrease in Israeli-Palestinian violence, the frequency of armed attacks against Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces within the West Bank has sharply decreased, compared to the first years of the second Intifada, when the obstacles were originally installed (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: Israelis killed by Palestinians in the West Bank by year¹¹



Regardless of the considerations that led to their original imposition and their current maintenance, the access restrictions have resulted in a significant reduction and in some cases a total elimination, of Palestinian traffic along key routes used by Israeli citizens. As a result, these routes were transformed into rapid “corridors” easing the commute of Israeli citizens between the settlements and Israel, and in some cases between various areas within Israel via the West Bank.

The following three examples illustrate the linkage between settlements and access restrictions:

Southern access to Hebron

Road 60 is the principal north-south traffic artery through the West Bank. The volume of Palestinian traffic along the section running from Hebron City southwards is, despite the removal of some roadblocks during the last two years, significantly smaller of what it used to be before the breakout of the second Intifada. This situation is largely due to the maintenance of two key closure obstacles blocking access to it. One blocks the entrance to the town of Adh Dahariya and adjacent villages (approximately 50,000 people), directing the traffic to and from Hebron City to a longer and lower quality road through a densely populated area east of Hebron City (Dura town area). The Israeli army has justified this closure as a measure needed to protect the settlement of ‘Otniel (pop. 760), located opposite the entrance of Adh Dahariya. This closure operates in conjunction with another one (a road gate) blocking the southern entrance to Hebron City, which directs an additional 70,000 Palestinians living in the villages adjacent to Hebron to the city through the abovementioned alternative and longer route from the east.¹² In this case, the security needs of the Bet Haggai settlement (pop. 550), located next to the blocked entrance, had been given as a justification for this closure. This section of Road 60 is one the main routes connecting settlements in the Hebron governorate to Israel and to each other.

Latest developments

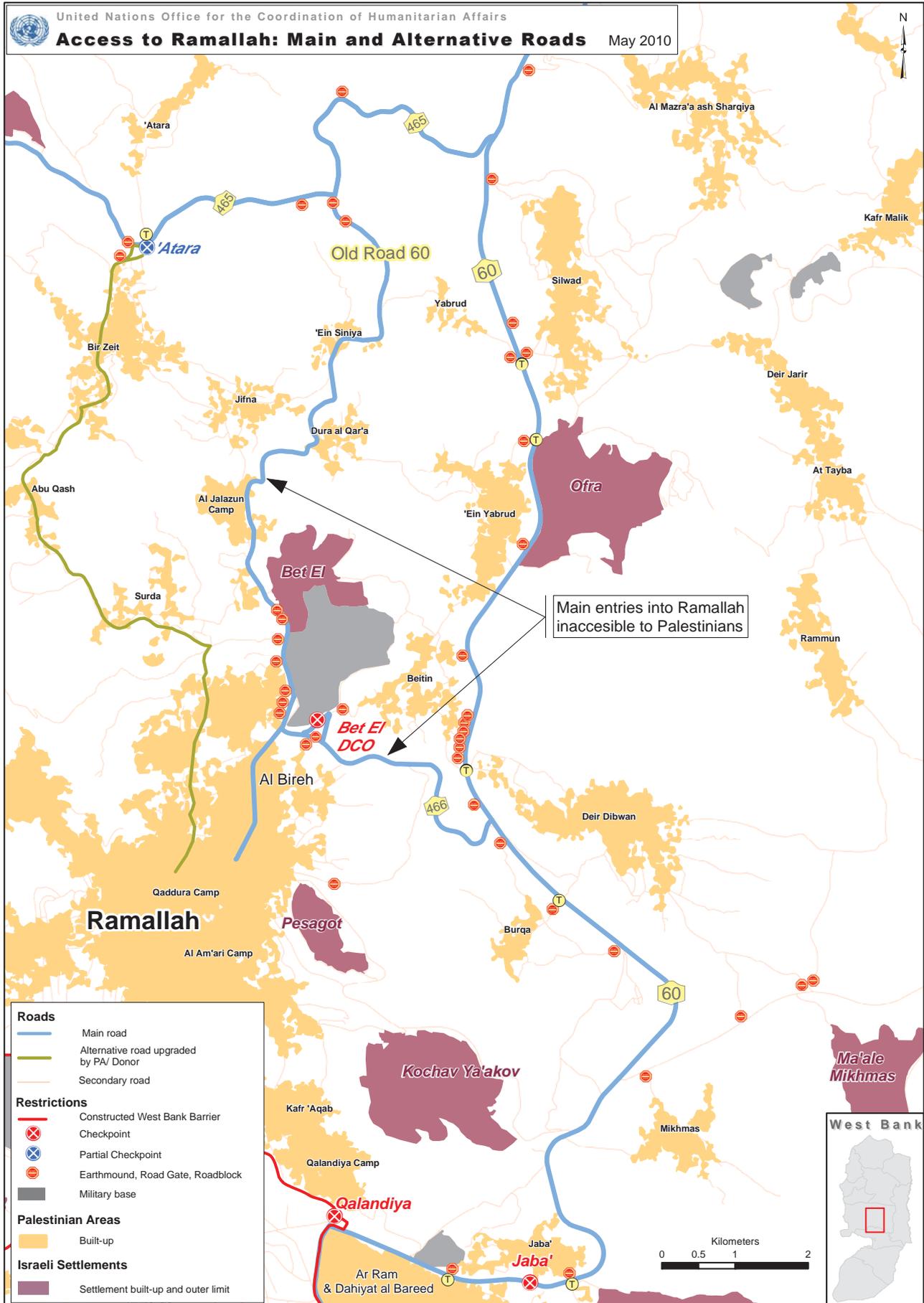
As part of the last package of easings, the Israeli military removed the earthmound blocking access from Adh Daharriya to Road 60, and replaced it with a road gate that has remained open. However, as the southern entrance into Hebron City, next to Bet Haggai settlement, is still closed, the impact of this opening remains limited.

Eastern and northern access to Ramallah

Similarly, access of Palestinian traffic to the section of Road 60 running through Ramallah governorate is largely restricted; of the 11 villages located along this section of the road, only two, at its southern and northern extremes (Mikhmas and Turmus’aya respectively), have direct access, while the rest remain blocked. By contrast, all seven Israeli settlements located along this section enjoy direct access to Road 60. Moreover, the road leading from Road 60 to Ramallah City (the single entrance from the east), continues to be blocked for Palestinian-plated cars, which are not allowed to cross the checkpoint controlling this route (Beit El checkpoint), with the exception of ambulances and VIP-card holders. As a result, more than 40,000 people living in the eastern Ramallah villages must take longer routes to reach Ramallah. Additionally, the old path of Road 60, leading into Ramallah from the north is also blocked at various points, funneling a large volume of traffic to and from the north into a local road controlled by the ‘Atara partial checkpoint (see Map 1, and section below on “Funneling of Palestinian traffic”).

The Israeli army justified the closure of these two entrances based on the need to provide security to the Beit El settlement and the adjacent military base, located at the intersection of these two roads. Regardless of the concerns that led to the imposition of these restrictions, these facilitate speedy access into and out from the area by Israeli settlers and military.

Map I



HEBRON H2

During the reporting period, no improvement has taken place on the freedom of movement of Palestinians within the Old City of Hebron, which remains under full Israeli control (part of H2 area). The Israeli authorities have justified the access restrictions on Palestinians as a means of protecting three Israeli settlements established in the heart of this area. Currently, there are over 90 closure obstacles, including 11 permanently staffed checkpoints, impeding movement within this area. Palestinian traffic, and on one section also pedestrian movement, is prohibited along the main street of this area (Ash Shuhada); many shops along this street are closed by military order. The severe access restrictions, compounded by years of systematic harassment by Israeli settlers, forced a significant part of the Palestinian population to relocate in other areas of the city.¹³ While the situation in the Old City did not change, in early August 2009 a minor easing was implemented on a street leading into this area (the Kiriya Arba street), which entailed allowing Palestinians living along this street to travel in their vehicles after obtaining a special permit. To implement this measure, two new permanently staffed checkpoints were installed at both ends of the street.¹⁴

Northern access to Salfit

Salfit City is the main service center for 12 villages located north of it (33,000 people). The sole entrance into the city from the north, however, was blocked by Israeli settlers in 2001 and has been kept closed since then due to security considerations, according to the Israeli military. The road leading into this entrance (Road 4775) leads also to one of two entrances into the Israeli settlement of Ari'el (pop. 16,700), whose residents have become the exclusive users of this road. As a result, Palestinian villagers

are obliged to use a long detour to reach Salfit, from the east. For example, residents of Kifl Haris village (pop. 3,200), located five kilometers north of Salfit, have to make a 20 kilometer detour around Ari'el settlement, through the built-up area of Yassuf and Iskaka villages, to access the city. In addition to the security concerns, the likelihood that opening this road to Palestinians would slow down the traffic to and from Ariel settlement along Road 4775 is probably contributing to the maintenance of this restriction.

ACCESS TO EAST JERUSALEM REMAINS HIGHLY RESTRICTED

In contrast to the trend regarding movement between other West Bank urban centers, no improvement has taken place regarding access of Palestinians holding West Bank IDs to East Jerusalem, which continued being severely restricted by the Barrier, the checkpoints and the permit system in place. This situation has had a particularly negative impact regarding access to specialized hospitals by patients and staff, as well as to places of worship.

The Barrier, the checkpoints and the 'dislocated' communities in East Jerusalem

For West Bank ID holders, entry into East Jerusalem has been prohibited since 1993, unless they possess

an entry permit issued by the Israeli authorities. Access to East Jerusalem for this population has been further restricted following Barrier construction around the city, the majority of which was complete by 2007. Since then, access of permit holders has been limited to three of the 16 checkpoints functioning along the Barrier, which have become increasingly crowded as a result. Permit holders are allowed to cross these checkpoints only on foot. The remaining 13 checkpoints are used by Israelis, internationals and Palestinians holding Jerusalem IDs.¹⁵

As a rule at these checkpoints, after waiting in line for their turn, permit holders must cross a remotely

Latest developments

As the new checkpoint preventing Palestinian access to East Jerusalem via the recently opened Road 443 became operational (see Section 2), the Israeli authorities ceased the permanent staffing of three Barrier checkpoints located further south (Ramot, Atarot and Qawasmi checkpoints), transforming them into partial checkpoints. These developments have reduced the total number of checkpoints controlling access into East Jerusalem from 16 to 14, without any impact on the Palestinian population.

controlled revolving gate, scan all their belongings through an x-ray machine, pass through a metal detector, show their ID and permit to the Israeli security staff standing behind a bullet-proof glass, swipe their magnetic card, and, if cleared, cross another revolving gate and exit the checkpoint. In addition, since the beginning of the reporting period, permit holders are required to have their fingerprints scanned. The entire process may consume up to two hours during the rush hours in the morning and is widely perceived by the affected people as a long and difficult experience.

In addition to separating large parts of East Jerusalem and its population from the rest of the

West Bank, the Barrier compounds the already difficult situation of the communities left on the “wrong side” of the Barrier. People living in these “dislocated” communities include:

- Approximately 1,500 West Bank ID holders on over ten different sites on the “Jerusalem” side of the Barrier, who face access restrictions to services on the “Palestinian” side of the Barrier (see the Surkhi-Qunbar case below).
- Approximately 50,000 Jerusalem ID holders living within the municipal boundaries but left on the “West Bank” side of the Barrier. They have to cross through checkpoints to access services in other areas of the city and fear that an eventual redrawing of the municipal boundary in future would threaten their residency status (e.g. Kafr ‘Aqab and Shu’fat Refugee Camp).
- Over 140,000 people living in the Jerusalem governorate in communities historically connected to Jerusalem, which are now physically separated by the Barrier. As a result they face economic decline and restricted access to services and places of work in East Jerusalem, among others (e.g. Abu Dis and Ar Ram). These areas have also seen a sharp fall in the number of Jerusalem ID holders who have re-located to areas within the Israeli-defined municipal boundary.

CASE STUDY: THE SURKHI - QUNBAR ENCLAVE

The Surkhi-Qunbar community is located in the vicinity of the Ras al Amud neighborhood, within the Israeli-defined municipal boundary of Jerusalem, and comprises approximately 300 people, 40 of whom hold West Bank IDs and the rest Jerusalem IDs. Due to the topography of the area, following the completion of the Barrier in 2005, the community became an enclave isolated from the rest of the city and from other areas of the West Bank. Only those registered as residents of this community are automatically allowed through the checkpoint controlling access to other parts of the city. Visitors are allowed entry but only if transported by one of the enclave residents with a yellow-plated vehicle. Service providers need to coordinate their entry with the Border Police in advance, in order to access the enclave with their vehicles. Since the removal of the “Lazarus” checkpoint in September 2009, which controlled access to the “West Bank side” of the Barrier, West Bank ID holders must use another more distant Barrier checkpoint (Al Sawahira Al Sharqiya), part of the way only on foot, creating a particularly difficult hurdle for the most vulnerable members of this community. Israeli settlers are currently occupying two structures in this enclave, while a larger settlement (“Kidmat Zion”) is at a planning stage.

During the reporting period, one Barrier checkpoint (Lazarus) used by Palestinians dislocated on both sides of the Barrier was removed and the remaining gap in the Barrier closed (see case study below). In addition, a partial checkpoint located on an incomplete section of the Barrier in the northwest of the city (Beit Iksa checkpoint) became a permanent checkpoint, further restricting access to three dislocated communities on the “Jerusalem” side of the Barrier.¹⁶

Finally, following the expansion of the “Seam Zone” regime to include some areas located between the Barrier and the municipal boundary of Jerusalem in February 2009, West Bank ID holders residing in these areas are obliged to obtain permits to continue living in their homes (see also next Section).

Longer closures and delays in accessing East Jerusalem

Access of permit holders into East Jerusalem is affected by additional factors. Over the course of the reporting period, the Israeli authorities imposed a “general closure” on the West Bank for a total of 50 days, three days more than the previous year, due to Israeli holidays (43 days) and “security alerts” (7). During “general closures”, permit holders are not allowed to access East Jerusalem or Israel, except for some categories of people, including urgent medical cases and staff of international organizations.

In addition, and similarly to elsewhere in the West Bank, checkpoints into East Jerusalem can be closed on an ad hoc basis during, or in the aftermath of, a violent incident at that checkpoint. While precise and comprehensive data is unavailable, field observations by OCHA suggest that interruption of movement due to this type of closure significantly increased compared to the previous year. This was particularly evident at Qalandiya checkpoint, which controls the main access route into East Jerusalem through the Barrier from the north. For example, during the last quarter of 2009, OCHA recorded the ad-hoc closure of this checkpoint for a total of 47 hours (excluding general closures) compared to none in the first quarter of 2009. The main triggers for

these closures were clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinian youth throwing stones at, or in the vicinity of, the checkpoint; the checking of suspect objects; and incidents involving the stabbing of Israeli soldiers staffing the checkpoint by Palestinians. Most of these incidents were linked to a general rise in tension, following a series of decisions, reports and statements concerning the expansion of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, the Israeli cabinet’s decision to add two sites in Hebron and Bethlehem to a list of Israeli “national heritage sites”, and calls by some Palestinian leaders to defend Al Aqsa Mosque.¹⁷

Regular field observations also indicate that during the reporting period there was a general increase in delays and queues at the three Barrier checkpoints accessible to Palestinian permit holders, Qalandiya in particular. A significant factor in the case of the latter, contributing to longer delays and queues for vehicles leaving the city, was the closure of an opening in the Barrier used as an alternative route from East Jerusalem to Ramallah (via Ar Ram), in February 2009, which increased the number of vehicles crossing Qalandiya checkpoint northwards.

Expansion works at Qalandiya checkpoint, carried out during the reporting period, included the paving of two additional vehicular lanes that, once open, will serve Jerusalem ID holders travelling on public buses. According to the Israeli DCL (District Coordination Liason), since the latter will be allowed to cross in buses instead of by foot, the new lanes will reduce pressure at the existing pedestrian lanes that will primarily serve permit holders and potentially reduce crossing times.

Access to hospitals in East Jerusalem continue to be impeded

A lack of significant improvement characterized also the access to the six East Jerusalem non-government hospitals, which are critical for the entire West Bank population, particularly in regard to tertiary care, including dialysis and oncology, open-heart surgery, neurosurgery and eye surgery,

and neonatal intensive care. Patients continue to require permits and have their entry limited to the three most crowded checkpoints, on foot. The process of obtaining a permit and crossing one of these checkpoints adds significant stress to people already vulnerable due to illness or disability.

Permission for emergency cases can be obtained the same day through the auspices of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS). However, this involves coordination with the Israeli DCL, the authorizing of a specific checkpoint for the patient to cross, and a back-to-back ambulance procedure (the transfer of the patient from one vehicle to another), as West Bank license-plated ambulances are not allowed to enter Jerusalem. Patients and staff have raised concern about the impact of this procedure on the dignity of patients. In 2009, PRCS recorded a total of 289 incidents of delay or denial of access to East Jerusalem by its ambulances, representing a 27 percent decrease in such incidents compared to 2008 (397 incidents).¹⁸

The limitation of entry to the three most crowded checkpoints continued to apply to staff of East Jerusalem hospitals who hold West Bank identity cards, excluding doctors. This restriction has been implemented since mid-2008 and has resulted in

chronic lateness and absence of staff, which makes managing consultations and operations - already a delicate task for any hospital - additionally difficult. Following extensive follow up by the World Health Organization and hospitals' representatives, in November 2009 the Israeli authorities agreed to allow hospital staff to use any of the checkpoints; however this improvement was short lived and two months later, the previous situation was reinstated.

Additionally, during the reporting period the Israeli authorities began implementing a decision adopted in February 2009 prohibiting East Jerusalem hospitals from importing medical equipment from the West Bank, which, according to these authorities, does not meet Israeli standards. This has created logistical problems for the hospitals and has also led to higher costs for equipment purchased through Israeli dealers. This followed a similar decision implemented a year before regarding pharmaceuticals.¹⁹

Access to Holy Sites in East Jerusalem

The Barrier and permit system have also impeded the access of Muslims and Christians holding West Bank IDs to places of worship in East Jerusalem. As in previous years, during the month of Ramadan (22



Qalandiya checkpoint. People attempting to access Al Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan (September 2009). Photo by Patrick Zoll

August - 19 September 2009) the Israeli authorities only allowed men over 50 and women over 45, as well as boys and girls under the age of 12 and 16 respectively, to access the Friday prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque without permits; married men between 45 and 50 years of age and married women between 30 and 45 years of age need to apply for an entry permit.

Overall, the movement of eligible people during these Fridays proved more difficult than the previous year, particularly at Qalandiya checkpoint, due to inadequate arrangements made by the relevant authorities, such as the lack of “humanitarian lines” outside the checkpoint and the shortage of space at the women’s side of the checkpoint; at least 100 Palestinians, predominantly women and children, were injured at Qalandiya checkpoint due to the crowding, compared to two injuries in the equivalent period in 2008.

The access of Christian worshipers to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher during the week preceding

the Easter holiday (March 2010) was also severely disrupted. This occurred despite the fact that the Israeli authorities issued thousands of “special permits” for this population, which were valid even though a “general closure” was declared that week due to the Jewish Passover.²⁰ Factors contributing to this disruption included the arrest of worshipers marching from Bethlehem to the Holy Sepulcher on Palm Sunday without permits, after a Barrier gate was left unstaffed; the complete closure of the checkpoints on the first two days of the Jewish Passover; and the deployment of flying checkpoints within and around the Old City. As a result, many families with special permits opted to attend Easter celebrations in Ramallah or elsewhere in the West Bank. Moreover, as under the current regime, a person can be issued only one permit at a given time, Christian workers, businessmen and patients, with valid permits were not eligible for the “special permits” and were therefore denied access to East Jerusalem due to the general closure.

THE EXPANSION OF THE BARRIER PERMIT REGIME

The Barrier, in conjunction with its gate and permit regime, continues to be the single largest obstacle to Palestinian movement within the West Bank, including to and from East Jerusalem. Approximately 60 percent of the Barrier’s route is currently complete. During the reporting period, however, with a few exceptions, construction of new sections came to an almost complete halt as a result of a number of factors, including financial constraints, concerns raised by the international community and lack of demand by Israeli society. Most of the construction that took place during this period was rerouting ordered by the Israel H CJ, in addition to a few sections in northern Jerusalem. Following changes in the route, the total number of people living in the closed areas behind the Barrier (the “Seam Zone”) experienced a slight decrease. By contrast, the permit regime restricting access to

farming land expanded to areas where the Barrier was complete, further undermining the livelihoods of farmers living on the eastern, “West Bank side” of the Barrier.

The 2002 decision to construct the Barrier came following a deadly campaign of suicide bombings perpetrated within Israel by Palestinians from the West Bank. However, the route of the Barrier does not follow the Green Line, and approximately 85 percent of the current route runs inside the West Bank, leaving some 9.5 percent of the West Bank territory (including the No Man’s Land) on the western, “Israeli”, side of the Barrier. The protection of Israeli settlements, including areas planned for their future expansion, constituted the major factor for the deviation of the Barrier’s route from the Green Line.²¹ The area left on the western side of

the Barrier includes 80 of the 149 settlements and over 85 percent of the total settler population in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem).

In an Advisory Opinion issued in July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) established that the sections of the Barrier, which ran inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, together with the associated gate and permit regime, violated Israel's obligations under international law.²² The ICJ called on Israel to: cease construction of the Barrier 'including in and around East Jerusalem'; dismantle the sections already completed; and 'repeal or render ineffective forthwith all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto.'²³

Access to farm land behind the Barrier further restricted

In the northern West Bank, since October 2003, Palestinians have been obliged to obtain 'visitor' permits to access farming land between the Barrier and the Green Line, which was declared a "closed military area" or "Seam Zone". To obtain a permit, applicants must satisfy the security considerations necessary for all Israeli-issued permits and to submit land documents to prove a 'connection to the land.' The majority of the Barrier gates providing access to this area only open during the olive harvest season and usually only for a limited amount of time during the day. This is insufficient to allow farmers to carry out essential year-round agricultural activities, such as ploughing, pruning, fertilizing, and pest and weed management, which improve the quantity and quality of the olive oil yield. UN monitoring in the northern West Bank has revealed that the combination of the restricted allocation of 'visitor' permits and the limited number and opening times of the Barrier gates have severely curtailed agricultural practice and undermined rural livelihoods. Data submitted by the Israeli State Attorney to the HCJ indicated that the number of permits issued to Palestinian farmers to access the "Seam Zone" in the northern West Bank between 2006 and mid-2009 has sharply decreased.²⁴

In January 2009, the "closed area" designation was extended to the Ramallah, Hebron and parts of the Salfit, Bethlehem and Jerusalem governorates, and Palestinians wishing to access these areas have gradually been required to apply for visitors' permits. Prior to that, farmers were only required to register with the Israeli authorities and show their IDs at the relevant gate (also known as the "prior coordination" system). In the Hebron district, for example, 470 farmers applied for permits to access their land through the Khirbet Al Dier gate during the 2009 olive harvest, of which 370 (79 percent) were granted. By contrast during the 2008 olive harvest, under the "prior coordination" system, an estimated 1,500 farmers accessed their olive groves through the same gate. The sharp decrease in the number of applicants (nearly 70 percent decrease) is partly attributable to the poor harvest in 2009,²⁵ but also due to the onerous demands of the permit system. In the Ramallah governorate most farmers have refused to apply for permits. As a result, six of the ten Barrier gates and checkpoints now requiring permits have remained virtually deserted due to this refusal. A similar situation has evolved in those areas of the Jerusalem governorate where the "seam zone" regime has been implemented.²⁶

Also during the reporting period, the Israeli authorities completed the rerouting of a five kilometer long section of the Barrier to the northeast of Qalqiliya city and the removal of the old Barrier, including the asphalt of the military patrol road. This development, which follows an HCJ decision issued three years ago, has restored the access of farmers from nearby villages to some 1,500 dunums of land; the new route, however, runs up to five kilometers from the Green Line, encircling the settlement of Zufin (1,000 people) and isolating thousands of dunums of fertile agricultural land belonging to local Palestinian villages.

By the end of 2009, following another HCJ ruling, the Israeli authorities began work (currently ongoing) in the Ramallah governorate aimed at rerouting the

Barrier next to Bil'in village. Once complete, this re-routing will restore Palestinian access to about 650 dunums of land, while still leaving 1,300 dunums isolated by the Barrier. Since 2006, residents of Bil'in, along with Israeli and international peace activists, have been holding weekly demonstrations protesting the Barrier's route, which usually evolve into violent confrontations with Israeli forces. In this context, in February 2010 the Israeli military declared the area between the Barrier and the built-up area of the village (and the nearby Ni'lin village) as closed military areas on Fridays, from 8 am until 8 pm, for a period of six months; the orders place non-residents who enter the area without permission from the Israeli military at risk of arrest.

Slight decrease in number of Palestinians living in closed areas

In the northern areas, since 2003, some 10,000 Palestinians residing in the closed area are required to obtain permanent resident permits to continue to live in their own homes. As their centre of life is located on the 'Palestinian' side of the Barrier, children, patients and workers have to pass through checkpoints to reach schools, medical facilities and workplaces and to maintain family and social relations. Relatives and service providers living elsewhere must obtain 'visitor' permits to access these communities.

The new areas declared as "Seam Zone" in February 2009 included only a limited number of people: a few areas between the Barrier and the municipal boundary of Jerusalem with a total population of approximately 500, and a community of three families in southern Hebron, beyond the Beit Yattir Barrier checkpoint (around 100 people).

Conversely, most of 'Azzun 'Atma (population 2,000) in the Qalqiliya governorate was "released" from the "Seam Zone", as the checkpoint controlling access between it and the rest of the West Bank was transformed in March 2010 into a partial

checkpoint, allowing unrestricted access to the village. Previously, and during more than six years, the checkpoint was closed daily from 22:00 to 06:00, effectively confining the entire community during night hours. This proved especially problematic for expectant mothers in labour, as the only medical facility available was a basic primary health care clinic which operates for two hours a day, twice a week.²⁷ This development follows the completion of a secondary barrier around the village during the reporting period, which prevents access from the village to other "Seam Zone" areas or to Israel, de-facto constituting a rerouting. The new route isolates nine families from the rest of the village; a checkpoint along this secondary barrier, which closes between 22:00 and 05:00, remains fully staffed.

Also in the Qalqiliya governorate, following another HCJ ruling dating from September 2005, the Israeli authorities completed the rerouting of a section of the Barrier around the settlement of Alfe Menashe. This rerouting, and the subsequent removal of the former Barrier and Barrier checkpoint controlling access to the enclave (the Ras Atiya checkpoint), "released" three communities (pop. 800) from the "Seam Zone". However, under the new route, vital agricultural land from these communities, as well as two Bedouin communities (pop. 400), will remain in the "Seam Zone", within the Alfe Menashe enclave.²⁸

Therefore, despite the expansion of the "Seam Zone" further south, the total number of people living in the closed areas behind the Barrier saw a net decrease of 22 percent, from approximately 10,000 to 7,800.

Concerns about Barrier expansion in the western Bethlehem governorate

In late February 2010, following a freeze of over three years, the Israeli authorities resumed land leveling for Barrier construction on two small

sections of the Barrier's route in the northwest area of Bethlehem governorate.²⁹ This development has raised concerns about an overall resumption of Barrier construction in the remaining sections across western Bethlehem governorate.

The officially-approved route of the Barrier in western Bethlehem governorate surrounds ten Israeli settlements in an area known as the "Gush Etzion block", separating approximately 64,000 dunums from the rest of the West Bank (see Map 2). This area includes some of the most fertile land in the governorate, as well as nine Palestinian communities with approximately 21,000 residents. If the Barrier is complete and the "Seam Zone" regime is expanded to this area, this will constitute the largest such area in the West Bank in terms of land size and the number of residents.

Residents of the nine communities in this area, whose livelihoods have been gradually decimated during the past decades due to settlement expansion, are

likely to face reduced access to Bethlehem City, the major service centre for health, education, markets and trade. The closed area designation, if and when implemented will also affect Bethlehem residents from Al Khader, Artas and nearby communities residing on the eastern, "Palestinian" side of the Barrier, who will require 'visitor' permits to access their land on the other side. If completed, the Barrier will also prevent any development of the main urban block in Bethlehem westwards, after the constructed sections have prevented urban expansion towards the north.

Additionally, completion of the Barrier in this area is expected to result in the loss of access by Palestinians to the section of Road 60 on the western, "Israeli", side of the route. Works carried out during the reporting period on roads providing alternatives to this section of Road 60 (see also section below on "Funneling of Palestinian traffic") have reinforced the concern about an overall resumption of Barrier construction in this area.

ACCESS TO LAND AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN AREA C REMAINS HIGHLY CONSTRAINED

Area C covers approximately 60 percent of the West Bank and is the only contiguous area within this territory; unlike areas A and B, in Area C the Israeli authorities exercise exclusive and direct control on security and law enforcement matters, as well as over planning and construction. The Area C population, estimated at 150,000, has been identified by the humanitarian community as a priority area for humanitarian assistance, due to a high level of hardship stemming from the access restrictions, compounded by years of neglect and isolation from other areas of the oPt.³⁰ As with other access restrictions addressed in this report, Israeli settlements are a key factor shaping the restrictions on Palestinian access to land and communities in Area C.

During the reporting period the Israeli authorities removed approximately 80 closure obstacles along

main roads in the southern and northern West Bank, which blocked vehicular access to dirt roads leading to farming land, mostly in Area C. These removals have had a positive, albeit limited, impact on the livelihoods of previously affected farmers.

With that exception, no significant improvement was observed in regard to Palestinian access to agricultural land and rural communities in Area C, the bulk of which are located along the Jordan Valley (including the eastern sections of Bethlehem and Hebron governorates). The main components of the system restricting access to these areas include: checkpoints and permit requirements; the designation of large tracks of land as "firing zones" and "nature reserves"; and the obstruction of access to agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements by means of fences and intimidation.

Map 2

United Nations Office
for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Access to the Jordan Valley
May 2010



Roads

- Main road (used primarily by Israelis)
- Main road (used primarily by Palestinians)
- Secondary roads

Restrictions

- Checkpoint
- Partial Checkpoint
- Earthmound, Road gate, Road block
- Constructed West Bank Barrier
- Planned West Bank Barrier
- Israeli military base
- Israeli closed military area

Palestinian Areas

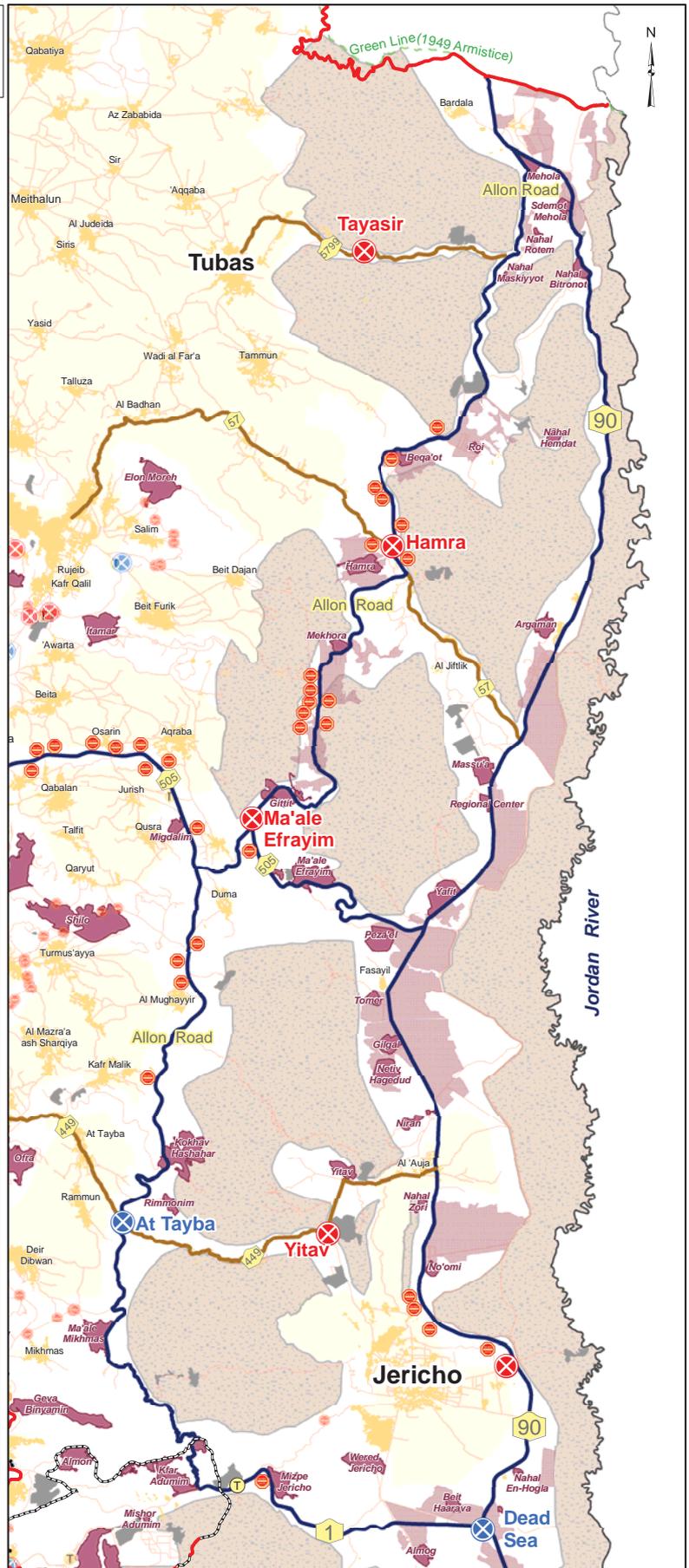
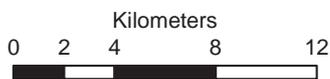
- Built-up

Israeli Settlements

- Settlement built-up and outer limit
- Land cultivated by settlers

Oslo Interim Agreement(1994-1999)

- AREA (A),(B)
- AREA (C)



Access to and from the Jordan Valley

All movement to and from the section of the Jordan Valley north of Jericho remains tightly controlled by four permanently staffed IDF checkpoints, Tayasir, Hamra, Ma'ale Efraim and Yitav. With the exception of around 56,000 people who are registered in their IDs as residents of the Jordan Valley (including Jericho), the majority of Palestinians remained prohibited from crossing these checkpoints with their private vehicles, unless they have obtained a special permit. Moreover, those who obtain these permits are required to have the vehicles licensed in their names before being able to drive them through the checkpoints, further constraining the ability to move. Only Israelis and foreign nationals are allowed to cross the Ma'ale Efrayim checkpoint.³¹ The single positive development regarding access to the Jordan Valley took place in June 2009, when the IDF extended the opening hours of Tayasir and Hamra checkpoints to 24 hours a day, compared to 15-17 hours prior to that.

Despite the above restrictions, Palestinians can access the Jordan Valley with their private vehicles via Road 1, south of Jericho City, and then Road 90, without having to cross any checkpoint. However, due to the long detour required to take this route, it is of little benefit for the bulk of the population. For example, while the distance between the town of Tubas and the Jordan Valley village of Bardala through the restricted Tayasir checkpoint is 24 km, the distance through the alternative route along Roads 1 and 90 is more than seven times longer - 176 km.

Similarly to other geographical areas, the Israeli military has justified the restrictions on the checkpoints along the Jordan Valley by reference to the security needs of the Israeli population living in the settlements established in this area (approximately 9,000) or travelling on Road 90. As a result of these restrictions, Road 90 is used mostly by Israeli settlers commuting with Israel, as well as other Israelis travelling between the area of

Jerusalem and northern Israel, as an alternative to Highway 6 inside Israel, which is a toll road.

The checkpoints and permit requirements have had a significant impact on the livelihoods of farmers living in the Jordan Valley, as well as in nearby towns in the Tubas, Nablus and Jericho governorates, who own and cultivate land in this area. This is primarily due to the higher transportation costs incurred by farmers and traders to market their agricultural produce in the rest of the West Bank, due the long detours they are forced to make and the limited number of authorized transporters. In addition, the quality and price of fresh produce is often reduced, when marketed after long delays at the checkpoints. Finally, farmers are also affected by restrictions imposed at checkpoints on the entry of agricultural inputs, primarily fertilizers and metal pipes.

Access restrictions are also affecting many residents of small rural communities across the Jordan Valley, primarily Bedouins, whose ID cards indicate an address elsewhere in the West Bank and who, therefore, are not allowed to drive their vehicles in and out of that area. The impact of this restriction on some of these communities was further compounded in the course of the reporting period, following its stricter enforcement by the Israeli military. For example, since November 2009, most members of Al Ka'abneh Bedouin clan living in various sites in Al 'Auja area (Jericho governorate), who are registered as Hebron and Ramallah residents, have been denied vehicular access northwards through the Yitav checkpoint. This checkpoint controls the direct route into Jericho City, on which they totally depend for their health, water, education and shopping needs. Prior to that, they were allowed to use the checkpoint following regular coordination between the Palestinian and Israeli DCLs.

“Firing zones” and “nature reserves”

Since 1967, Israel has designated some 18 percent of the West Bank as a closed military zone for the



Concrete slab installed in May 2009, next to the “Allon Road” (Tubas). Photo by Patrick Zoll

purposes of military training. The bulk of such areas are located in the Jordan Valley and southeast Hebron governorate. While Palestinian access to these areas is prohibited by military order, except for those recognized by the Israeli military as “permanent residents”, the exact boundaries of the closed areas are not clearly demarcated on the ground and the enforcement of this prohibition is irregular. In addition, approximately 13 percent of the West Bank is designated as “nature reserves”, in which any Palestinian land use, including for herding, is prohibited. These areas include land in the Bethlehem governorate that was intended to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority (PA), under the Wye River Memorandum of 1998.

Accounting for overlaps between the categories, “closed military areas” and “nature reserves” cover some 26 percent of West Bank land.

While difficult to quantify, there are consistent indications that during the reporting period the Israeli authorities have invested more efforts to enforce restrictions on Palestinian access to these areas. In May 2009, for example, the Israeli military installed dozens of cement slabs across the Jordan Valley and southeast Hebron with a “Danger, Firing Zone, Entrance Forbidden” warning in Arabic, English and Hebrew. Moreover, approximately 80 percent of the Area C structures demolished in 2009 due to lack of building permits (see last section on

CASE STUDY: KHIRBET SAMRA

On 24 January 2010, a Palestinian shepherd from the community of Khirbet Samra (Jordan Valley) was approached by an Israeli Environmental Authority inspector while he was grazing his flock in an area ostensibly declared a “nature reserve” and was requested to leave. The shepherd objected arguing that he has been using that area for years, and that there are no signs on the ground indicating an access restriction. Following a verbal confrontation, the shepherd was hand-cuffed and taken to an Israeli police station in a nearby settlement for questioning. Later on, the shepherd was forced to pay a 1,700 NIS fine and summoned to appear before a military court.

planning constraints) were located in such areas. This trend continued in January 2010, when the Israeli authorities demolished 16 structures in the community of Khirbet Tana, entirely located within a “firing zone”.

In addition, inspectors from the Israeli Environmental Authority have informed the Palestinian DCL Office in Jericho that herders grazing their animals in areas designated as nature reserves will be subject to fines. According to Palestinian residents, however, most such areas lack clear demarcation making it extremely difficult to comply.

The increasing enforcement of the access restrictions to closed “firing” zones and nature reserves has exacerbated the hardship of small herding communities, already affected by ongoing water scarcity. In some cases, these restrictions have obstructed the implementation of emergency programs by humanitarian agencies, aimed at alleviating this hardship. For example, in August 2009, an international NGO was prevented from distributing water and fodder to three communities located in a “firing” zone in south Hebron (the “Massafer Yatta” area) due to a series of earthmounds blocking the access of water trucks to these communities.³²

Access to private land next to settlements

Similarly, the reporting period recorded no significant change regarding access of Palestinian farmers to agricultural land within, or in the vicinity of, Israeli settlements. Such access has remained restricted due to physical barriers and settler intimidation, and continues to undermine the livelihoods of many families.

The outer limits of Israeli settlements are physically demarcated by electronic fences and/or patrol roads; some were erected by the Israeli authorities, while others were set up by the settlers, with or without the formal approval of the authorities. A large number of the settlements include within their outer limits

“islands” of private Palestinian land, which have not been expropriated or seized for the construction of the settlement or its expansion. The area within the municipal boundaries of settlements, which in most cases does not coincide with the outer limits, was declared as a “closed military area” for Palestinians (the order does not apply to Israelis and foreign nationals).³³

Access of Palestinian farmers to their private land “locked in” within the settlements’ fences and patrol roads has been conditioned for the last few years on the performance of “prior coordination” with the Israeli DCL offices. Farmers included in the “coordination list” for a given settlements must usually show their ID cards to the security personnel staffing the settlement entrance or gate. This regime is also implemented by the Israeli authorities in cases where the Palestinian land was fenced in by Israeli settlers without authorization and lies outside the official boundaries of the settlements, despite the fact that the military order banning Palestinian access does not apply.

In November and December 2009, farmers from the villages of Jaba’ and Silwad (Ramallah) filed two separate petitions with the Israeli HCJ requesting the removal of the fences installed by Israeli settlers around the Geva Binyamin and Ofra settlements respectively, which prevent them from accessing their private land.³⁴ While the fencing of these areas was carried out, in both cases, without any authorization, the Israeli authorities have refrained from taking any measure to remove the fences. The affected area in the case of Ofra covers, according to the petitioners, over 3,000 dunums planted with olive and fig trees. During past years, limited numbers of farmers were allowed access to this area only twice a year, following “prior coordination” with the Israeli DCL. In the case of Geva Binyamin, the area addressed in the petition, which covers nearly 400 dunums out of some 1,000 dunums fenced in the settlement, was used in the past to grow seasonal crops (mostly vegetables, wheat and barley); however, unlike land in Ofra,

no “coordination system” is in place for farmers to access this land, resulting in a halt to cultivation.

In its response to the court, the Israeli State Attorney explained that following the filing of a large number of complaints about similar illegal fencing in other settlements throughout the West Bank, the authorities have decided to carry out a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon, before any action is taken. On these grounds the State Attorney called on the court to reject the petition.³⁵

In a larger number of cases, Palestinian access to agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements is prevented or restricted not by physical barriers but by means of systematic intimidation by Israeli settlers. Following a landmark judgment issued by the Israeli HCJ in 2006, the Israeli authorities began to gradually expand the “prior coordination” regime to agricultural areas where settler intimidation was recurrent. This type of coordination, which is designed to allow the deployment of Israeli forces in the relevant areas in advance of any violent incident, is implemented almost exclusively during the olive harvest season (October-November). Access to land during other times of the year has

therefore remained limited due to the risk of settler violence.

According to information collected by OCHA from the different Israeli and Palestinian DCL offices, a “prior coordination” system is currently in place regarding access to land within, or in the vicinity of, 57 Israeli settlements and settlement outposts, for farmers residing in some Palestinian communities (for a detailed list see Annex II). The top three governorates in terms of the number of villages and towns with such a system in place are Nablus (32), Ramallah (18) and Hebron (15). In 26 of the 57 settlements (46 percent) the Palestinian land is fenced and requires farmers to cross a gate or checkpoint, while in the remaining 31 (54 percent) access is affected exclusively by settler intimidation.

While the precise scope of the phenomenon of restrictions on access to farming land within or in the vicinity of settlements is unknown, it is clear that these figures provide an only partial picture. As indicated in the petition to the HCJ filed by farmers from Jaba’, there are many other farmers who own land next to settlements where no access coordination system is in place, and therefore are totally prevented from accessing their land.

CASE STUDY: AN NABI SALEH AND DEIR NIDHAM VILLAGES

Since early December 2009, villagers from An Nabi Saleh and Deir Nidham (Ramallah), together with Israeli and international activists, have held weekly protests against the persistent restrictions by Israeli settlers from Hallamish settlement on their access to farming land. Since 2000, Israeli settlers have taken over approximately 3,000 dunums of land privately owned by 20-25 Palestinian farmers from these villages by planting various crops and trees and continuously obstructing the access of Palestinian farmers. As in similar cases elsewhere, the Israeli DCL requires that farmers coordinate every access in advance, a requirement that the farmers have rejected. Most demonstrations have evolved into clashes with the Israeli army, which, as of the end of the reporting period, resulted in the injury of nearly 80 Palestinians, mostly with rubber-coated metal bullets, and the injury of two Israeli soldiers with stones.

FUNNELING TRAFFIC TO AN ALTERNATIVE ROAD NETWORK

The restrictions on access to certain key roads throughout the West Bank have gradually funneled Palestinian traffic into a secondary road network. During the reporting period, new roads have been paved and poor quality ones upgraded in the process of developing this secondary network. These roads have created or reinforced alternative routes that “compensate” for the loss of, or reduced access to, main routes that were totally or partially blocked. As such, these roads have complemented other measures discussed in Section 2 above, improving access to services, markets and places of work. At the same time, by creating or reinforcing an alternative, these roads entrench the exclusion of Palestinians from significant sections of the primary road network, now utilized mainly, and sometimes exclusively, by Israelis and Israeli settlers.

“Fabric of life” roads

One category of alternative routes comprises new roads opened and paved across agricultural areas, usually including tunnels and underpasses built under the Barrier or under a main road restricted for Palestinians. Construction of this type of roads, which often requires the seizure of private Palestinian land, has been undertaken exclusively by the Israeli authorities, who have labeled them “fabric of life” roads. The quality and route of these roads is, at least in some cases, inferior to that of the original restricted road due to lower building standards and the need to cross built up areas in order to reach the entrance of the new road. For example, during the reporting period, one “fabric of life” road linking the villages located south of Road 443 with Ramallah (Beit Ur Al Fauqa – Beituniya) collapsed twice as a result of heavy rains; since the second collapse (March 2010) the road has remained closed for repair, while Palestinian traffic is diverted through a longer detour.

In November 2009 the Israeli military opened for Palestinian traffic an underpass it had constructed

two years before under Road 60, connecting the villages in the western section of Bethlehem governorate with the urban area of Bethlehem. As of the end of the reporting period, the road was being paved. Upon completion of the Barrier along Road 60, this “fabric of life” road is expected to be the sole route linking these villages with their service center in Bethlehem area (see Barrier section above).

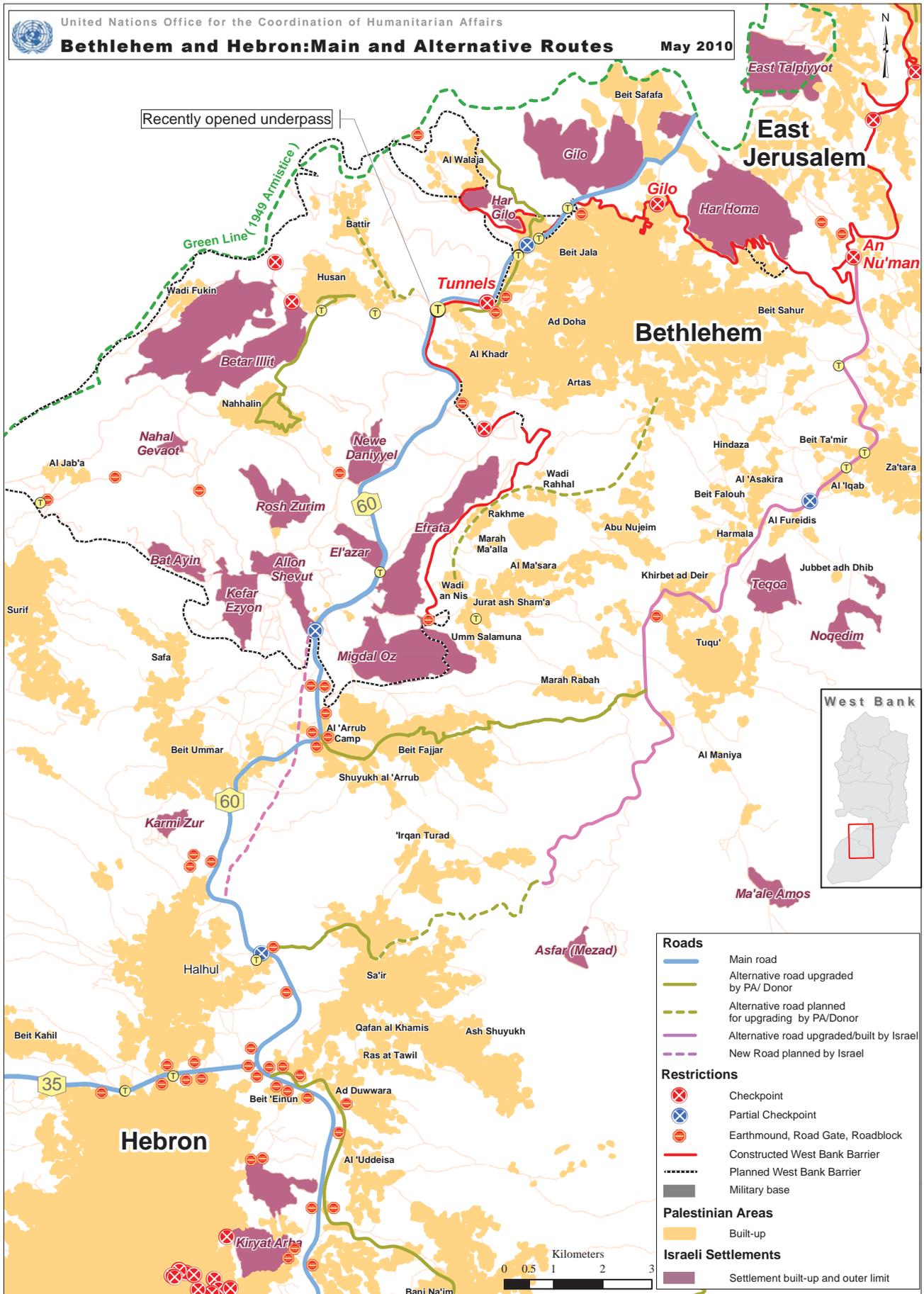
Also during this period, the Israeli authorities completed a road connecting Ni’lin village (Ramallah) with the nearby Ni’lin checkpoint, used primarily by workers employed in the nearby settlement block (Modi’in Illit) and Israel. This road, in conjunction with two underpasses built earlier further north, has minimized the volume of Palestinian traffic on Road 446, which now serves almost exclusively Israeli settlers commuting between the settlements of Nili and Na’ale, and Israel. To date, the Israeli authorities have paved and opened throughout the West Bank approximately 50 kilometers of such roads, including 44 tunnels and underpasses.

Upgrading of existing routes

This category of alternative routes includes pre-existing but poor quality roads rehabilitated and upgraded at the request of the Palestinian Authority and, in most cases, with the approval of the Israeli authorities.³⁶ Most of them had functioned in the past as local routes connecting communities to a main road or to each other, serving a limited number of people. Following the access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities, these roads were transformed into regional traffic arteries handling a significantly larger volume of traffic; their upgrading is aimed at adapting the road infrastructure to its new function. Unlike the “fabric of life” roads, this type of road usually does not require land expropriation.

The following are just some examples of roads whose upgrade was completed or ongoing during the reporting period, and which compensate for the

Map 3



current or expected lack of access to Road 60, the main north-south traffic artery:

1. South Hebron: the southern portion of Road 60 (the original route) runs from the town of Adh Dhahariya to the Meitar checkpoint located on the Green Line. The latter checkpoint is the main access point for thousands of Palestinian workers, as well as other permit holders, commuting between the southern West Bank and Israel. Following the blocking of this road next to the settlement of Tene, all Palestinian traffic was diverted to a dirt road through the village of Ar Ramadin, whose upgrading was complete during the reporting period.
2. North Hebron/Bethlehem (see Map 3): the upgraded road may serve as an alternative to Road 60, if and when the latter is blocked by the Barrier around the Gush Etzion settlement block. The alternative road links Road 60, next to the eastern entrance to the town of Halhul (Hebron), with the Wadi Nar road east of Jerusalem (see next item). The northern section of this alternative road (also known as Road 356) was upgraded in the past by the Israeli authorities and is currently used mainly by Israeli settlers to commute to Israel. The Palestinian Authority

is currently upgrading the southern section of this alternative route (from Road 60 to the Sa'ir village), while the middle section will be upgraded in the future.

3. Jerusalem: also known as the 'Wadi Nar road', this alternative road bypasses the traditional route between the southern and central West Bank, which runs through East Jerusalem and has been prohibited for West Bank ID holders (see Jerusalem Section above). The widening and renovation of a section of this alternative route, from the Wadi Nar checkpoint to the town of Abu Dis, began during the reporting period and is currently ongoing.
4. East Ramallah: this alternative road connects the city center of Ramallah to the 'Atara (now-partial) checkpoint and the town of Birzeit (see Map 1). Following the blockade of most access points into Road 60 through the Ramallah governorate, including the main entrance into Ramallah from the east (see section on "Movement between urban centers" above), the alternative road became the main route to and from Ramallah for the whole northern, and part of the central, West Bank.

BUILDING IN EAST JERUSALEM AND IN AREA C LARGELY BLOCKED

The ability to use and develop available land resources is a key dimension to be considered when assessing the degree of access to a given area. In East Jerusalem and in Area C, where planning and building powers lie entirely with the Israeli authorities, such ability has remained largely blocked due to the restrictive planning regimes implemented in those areas. These regimes have particularly undermined the ability of the affected populations to address their housing needs.

East Jerusalem³⁷

Since its annexation to Israel in 1967, over one third of East Jerusalem has been expropriated for the construction of Israeli settlements. Only 13 percent

of the annexed area is currently zoned by the Israeli authorities for Palestinian construction, within which Palestinians have the possibility of obtaining a building permit. However, much of this land is already built-up, the permitted construction density is limited and the application process is complicated and expensive.

Moreover, the number of permits granted per year to Palestinians does not meet the existing demand for housing. The gap between housing needs based on population growth and the legally permitted construction is estimated to be at least 1,100 housing units per year. As a result, Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem find themselves confronting a serious

housing shortage caused by Israel's failure to provide Palestinian neighborhoods with adequate planning. This shortage has been exacerbated in recent years by the reported influx of Palestinian Jerusalemites into the city due to Barrier construction and the threat of losing residency status in the city if they move outside the Israeli-defined municipal borders of Jerusalem.

Because of the difficulties Palestinians encounter trying to obtain building permits from the Israeli authorities and the lack of feasible alternatives, many Palestinians risk building on their land without a permit. At least 28 percent of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem have been built in violation of Israeli zoning requirements. Based on population figures, this percentage is equivalent to some 60,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem, who are at risk of having their homes demolished by the Israeli authorities.

In the first eight months of the reporting period (April- November 2009) a total of 60 structures were demolished in East Jerusalem, displacing 178 people; in the remaining four months, following concerns raised by the international community and the intervention of Israel's Premier, demolitions came to an almost complete halt.

The demolition of houses causes significant hardship for the people affected. Not only must displaced families overcome the psychological distress of losing their homes, they are usually burdened with debt after the loss of their primary asset, the demolished house, and, if they have retained a lawyer, the payment of legal fees.

Area C

Similar to the situation in East Jerusalem, the ability of Palestinians to build on their own land located in Area C has remained largely constrained due to the restrictive planning regime implemented by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA).³⁸ Under this regime, Palestinian construction is effectively prohibited in some 70 percent of Area C, given

these areas' allocation for use by Israeli settlements or the Israeli military, including the "firing zones" mentioned above.

In the remaining 30 percent of Area C (approximately 18 percent of the West Bank), there are a range of other restrictions that greatly reduce the possibility of obtaining a building permit. In order to obtain a building permit, a proposed construction must be consistent with an approved planning scheme - regional, outline or detailed. In practice, however, the Israeli authorities generally allow Palestinian construction only within the boundaries of a detailed or special plan of the ICA, which cover less than one percent of Area C, much of which is already built-up. Such plans have been approved for only a minority of Palestinian villages in Area C and these fail to meet the needs of Palestinian communities. In addition, most private or community-owned lands located on the margins of these communities, which are needed for their development, are excluded.

In the majority of Area C villages, which have no ICA plans, limited Palestinian construction is theoretically permitted, but must conform to the narrow building possibilities allowed by the Mandatory Regional plans of the 1940s. These plans designate the majority of lands today in Area C as an 'agricultural' zone and are inadequate to deal with current needs. The Israeli authorities' restrictive interpretation of these plans makes it virtually impossible for a Palestinian to obtain a permit.

As a result of this restrictive planning regime, tens of thousands of Palestinians wishing to build in most parts of Area C are left with no choice other than to carry out unauthorized construction on their land to meet their housing needs and risk demolition of their structures and subsequent displacement. During the reporting period, OCHA oPt has recorded the demolition of 223 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, displacing 381 people, a 54 and 124 percent increase respectively, compared to the figures during the preceding 12 months.

In addition to the difficulties faced by those displaced by home demolitions, the inability to carry out legal construction has a direct impact on the provision of basic services as well as livelihoods. For example, while the responsibility for the provision of education and health services to Palestinians in Area C was transferred in the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement to the PA, the difficulties in obtaining building permits from the ICA for the construction or expansion of schools and clinics significantly impede the fulfillment of this

CONCLUSION

The series of measures implemented by the Israeli authorities during the reporting period have continued to improve the ability of Palestinians to move between urban centers. These measures included the removal of dozens of obstacles; the transformation of some key permanent checkpoints into partial checkpoints; the relaxation of controls at other checkpoints; the lifting of permit requirements to and from Nablus City; and the opening of three sections of road for Palestinian use. Yet, key routes into some of the Palestinian cities and towns are still blocked. Moreover, in large areas of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Barrier's "Seam Zone", the Old City of Hebron, and extensive rural areas in Area C (mainly in the Jordan Valley and around settlements), Palestinian access has remained highly restricted.

Over the past few years, a secondary road network, which "compensates" for the loss or reduced access by Palestinians to the main road network, has gradually emerged. The further development of this secondary network has contributed to the easing of Palestinian movement between urban centers. However, despite the immediate respite they provide to the affected populations, these alternative roads entrench the exclusion of Palestinians from main roads and contribute to the fragmentation of the West Bank.

responsibility. For herders and farmers, livelihoods are undermined by the inability to construct animal shelters and agricultural infrastructure, along with restricted access to land designated as military training zones and nature reserves. For the international community, difficulties in obtaining building permits, including for very basic infrastructure projects, impede attempts to provide basic humanitarian assistance to some of the most vulnerable communities in the West Bank.

The Israeli settlements established in the West Bank are illegal under international humanitarian law.³⁹ Their continued presence and expansion is the single largest factor shaping the system of access restrictions applied to the Palestinian population. Over the course of 2009, the settler population continued to grow and reached approximately half a million; in settlements outside East Jerusalem the rate of growth was more than 2.7 times higher than the equivalent growth rate among the general Israeli population, 4.9 compared to 1.8 percent respectively. In 2009, more than 1,700 housing units began to be built in settlements outside East Jerusalem, while nearly 2,800 other housing units were under active construction and over 2,000 were completed.⁴⁰ While in November 2009 the Israeli Cabinet announced a 10 month partial freeze on new settlement construction, excluding East Jerusalem, according to official sources there have been widespread breaches of this decision.⁴¹

Israel is responsible under international humanitarian and human rights law for ensuring that the humanitarian needs of people under its occupation are met, and that these people are able to exercise their human rights, including the right to freedom of movement, work, housing, health, education, and to be free from discrimination, among others. The easing of Palestinian movement

between urban centres is a welcome step. However, further measures aimed at restoring Palestinian control over West Bank space are required in order to make progress towards the fulfillment of the above obligations. Initial steps must include the removal of obstacles blocking key routes into urban centers; the revocation of the permit regime associated with

the Barrier; the opening up of closed military zones and nature reserves for Palestinian use; the lifting of the access restrictions to the Jordan Valley and within the Old City of Hebron; the enforcement of the law on violent settlers; and the permanent freeze of all settlement activity.

ANNEX I: METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS OF THE OBSTACLES SURVEY

Methodology

OCHA monitors and maps closure obstacles in the West Bank on a regular basis. Teams of experienced staff, with extensive and detailed knowledge of the West Bank travel along every paved road, all significant unpaved roads and the majority of minor tracks in their area of operations. The monitoring survey takes approximately ten full working days for three teams. Each team is equipped with a GPS (global positioning system) unit and a camera.

Each time a significant obstruction is located, the team records its position with the GPS unit for future mapping and takes a photograph of it. The obstacle is then categorized according to pre-determined definitions as described below and given a unique identifying name based on a combination of the nearest main road, nearest village or town, and the governorate and the field office identifying it. Next, the type of access blocked is described, e.g. access of a village to main road, connection between two towns or access from an agricultural road to an olive grove. Records, including the code of the photograph, are entered on a file in the GPS, relying on pull-down menus to reduce the risk of error.

Only obstacles that effectively block vehicular access along a clear paved or unpaved road are counted. Obstacles within 50 metres of another obstacle on the same route are recorded as one.

The GPS files are down-loaded on a daily basis into a computer using geographic information system (GIS) software to render the information into maps. Maps are printed and crosschecked against other field data jointly by the GIS specialist and a member of the field team. If there is any query, further field checks are carried out to ensure a complete and accurate data set.

It should be noted that the OCHA survey is extensive, but not necessarily exhaustive, as some of the smaller routes may be missed. Thus, the figures produced by OCHA should be considered a minimum number and not reflective of the total number of obstacles.

Definitions



Checkpoints: are composed of two elements - an infrastructure which inhibits vehicular and pedestrian traffic and permanent presence of Israeli security personnel (e.g. the IDF, the Border Police, the civil Police, a private security company). Security personnel usually check the documentation of persons crossing the checkpoint and conduct searches on their vehicles and their belongings.



Partial Checkpoints: are made up of similar infrastructure as checkpoints but are not permanently staffed. Frequently, the partial checkpoint infrastructure is installed on roadsides and, therefore, does not directly obstruct the traffic. When staffed, partial checkpoints function as the full checkpoints described above. When unstaffed, the traffic may flow relatively freely along the route.



Earthmounds: are mounds of rubble, dirt and/or rocks put in place by IDF bulldozers to prevent vehicular movement along a road or track. Several mounds less than 50 meters apart, blocking the same route, are only counted as one closure. If a mound is pushed to the side (by IDF or Palestinians) or if a route around it is created and vehicle access is possible, the mound is not recorded as an obstacle. Earth mounds are often removed or circumvented and then re-built and/or enlarged. Therefore, some of them appear on one map, disappear from the next and then subsequently reappear.



Roadblocks: are constructed from one or more concrete blocks about one cubic meter and, like earthmounds, are used to prevent vehicle access to land or roads. In all other respects, they are the same as earthmounds.



Trenches: (or ditches) are dug across flat land or along the side of a road to prevent vehicles from going around a closure obstacle on the road.



Road Gates: are metal gates used to block access to a route. All road gates are marked on the maps as closures, including those which were open when recorded by OCHA, until the infrastructure is removed.



Road Barriers: may be composed of a fence or a concrete barrier running along the side of a road. To be classified as a road barrier, this type of infrastructure should be at least 100 metres long and obstruct free passage of people, vehicles or livestock, onto, off or across the road.



Earthwalls: are Road Barriers, as defined above, composed of a series of earthmounds.

ANNEX II: PALESTINIAN LAND IN THE VICINITY OF SETTLEMENT REQUIRING “PRIOR COORDINATION” FOR PALESTINIAN ACCESS

Governorate	Settlement name	Village affected	Access obstacle
Nablus	Havat Gil'ad outpost	Jit, Far'ata, Immatin, Tell, Sara	Settler intimidation
	Yitzhar	'Asira Qibliya, 'Einabus, Urif, Huwwara, Burin, Madama	
	Gid'onim outpost	Aqraba and Yanoun	
	Elon Moreh	Deir Al Hatab, Salem, Azmut	Fence & Settler intimidation
	Eli	Qaryut, Talfit, Al Luban As Sharqya, As Sawiya	Fence
	Shave Shomron	Deir Sharaf, Sabastiya, An Naqura, Zawata, Beit Iba	
	Scali outpost	Salim	Settler intimidation
	Itamar	Awarta	Fence
	Bracha	Kafr Qalil, Burin, Burin, Madama	Settler intimidation
	Rechelim	As Sawiya	Fence
		Yatma, Iskaka	Fence & Settler intimidation
	Migdalim	Qusra, Majdal Bani Fadil	Settler intimidation
Tulkarm	Enav	Beit Lid, Kafr el Labad, Ramin	
	Avne Hefez	Shufa, Kafr el Labad, Al Haffasa	
Qalqiya	Qarne Shomron	Jinsafut, Kufr Laqif	Fence
	Sha'are Tiqwa	Azzun 'Atma	
	Oranit	Azzun 'Atma	
	Qedumim	Kafr Qaddum	Settler intimidation
Jit			
Salfit	Ari'el	Salfit, Marda	Fence & Settler intimidation
	Revava	Deir Istiya	
	Kfar Tappuah	Yasuf	
	Elqana	Azzawya, Mas-ha	
	Yaqir	Deir Istiya	
Jenin	Mevo Dotan	Yabad, Imreha, Arraba	Settler intimidation
	Hermesh	Qaffin, An Nazla Ash Sharqya	
	Hinnanit	Daher AL maleh, Um Ar Rihan, Tura Al Gharbyia	
	Rehan	Um Ar Rihan	
	Shaqed	Daher AL maleh, Tura Al Gharbyia	
Ramallah	Ofarim	Abud	Fence
	Beit Arye	Abud	
	Hallamish	An Nabi Salih, Deir Nidham	Settler intimidation
	Nehali'el	Abu Shukheidim	
	Talmon	Al Mazra'a Al Qibliya	Fence
	Talmon and Niria outpost	Al Janiya and Ras Karkar	
	Talmon and Dolev	Ein Qinya	Settler intimidation
	Beit Horon	At Tira	Fence
	Ma'ale Levona	Sinjil	Settler intimidation
	Shilo	Turmus'aya Qaryut	
	Adei Ad outpost Migron outpost	Al Mughayyir, Mikhmas and Beitin	
	Ofra	Yabrud, Ein Yabrud, Silwad	

Hebron	Penei Hever	Bani Na'eim	Fence
	Beit Yattir	Yatta, Imneizel, Hribat an Nabi	
	Susiya	Suseya	Settler intimidation
	Otniel	Umm Al Amad Karma	
	Telem	Tarqumiya	Fence
	Adora	Taffuh	
	Karme Tzur	Beit Ummar Halhul	
	Negohot	Deir Al Asal, Fqiqis	Settler intimidation
	Asfar	Qanoob	Fence
	Kiryat Arba	Hebron	
	Tel Rumeida	Hebron	
Bethlehem	Nokedim	Fredis, Jubbet Adh Deib	Settler intimidation
	Teqo'a	Tuqu	
	Bat Ayin	Safa	
	Betar Illit	Husan	Fence
	Efrata	Al Khader	Settler intimidation
	Ma'ale Amos	Kisan	

ENDNOTES

1. The risk of deportation has increased since April 2010 following the entry into force of two new military orders, which expand the ability of the IDF to forcibly transfer or deport Palestinians from their homes in the West Bank. For further details see OCHA, *The Humanitarian Monitor*, April 2010, p. 13.
2. For the methodology used in the survey and a definition of the different types of obstacles, see Annex I.
3. The figure reported in the report issued in May was 634, however, following further crosschecking with the Israeli military this figure was amended to 626.
4. Checkpoints controlling access to East Jerusalem for communities isolated from the rest of the city by the Barrier are marked as "Isolated communities."
5. According to the World Bank, economic growth "is being driven by a combination of large sustained inflows of donor assistance, PA government reforms that have increased investor confidence, and the loosening of some Israeli security restrictions." The World Bank, *Towards a Palestinian State: Reforms for Fiscal Strengthening*, April 2010, p. 9.
6. Nablus has the highest concentration of businesses vis-à-vis the rest of the governorate than any other West Bank city; one-third out of 42,884 businesses in the governorate are located in Nablus City, compared to, for example, Ramallah and Hebron cities, which host less than 10 percent of the businesses in their respective governorates. See OCHA, *The Humanitarian Monitor*, June 2009, p.5.
7. Access to this section from the north is controlled by a permanent checkpoint (Mevo Dotan) and from the south by a road gate. While both have remained in place, checks at the checkpoint are performed only randomly and the gate has been opened.
8. HCJ 3969/06, Head of the Deir Samet Village Council and others vs Commander of the IDF forces in the West Bank and others. The petition was filed by ACRI (Association for Civil Right in Israel) on behalf of the affected villages.
9. In a two-against-one decision, the HCJ ruled the current situation illegal on the grounds that under international humanitarian law, the military commander in an occupied territory has no authority to totally preclude the protected population from using a public resource for an indeterminate period of time to the exclusive benefit of the occupying power's population. In addition, the HCJ found that the harm of the current prohibition to Palestinians is disproportionate, relative to its security value, particularly taking into account that in 1980 the HCJ had rejected an appeal by local residents against the expropriation of some of their land for the road's expansion and upgrading on the grounds that it would serve the general public. Those whose lands

- were expropriated were later denied use of the road. HCJ 2150/07, 'Ali Hussein Abu Saffia and other vs Minister of Defense. The petition was filed by ACRI on behalf of the affected villages
10. In response to this type of incident the Israeli military closed the main entrance of the village for all vehicular movement for two months (18 August-12 October 2009).
 11. The source of figures for the years 2001-2004 is B'Tselem (available at: <http://www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Casualties.asp>); 2005-2009 figures are based on OCHA oPt Protection of Civilians database.
 12. While a nearby route leading to the southern industrial area of Hebron (Al Fahs junction) has been opened in 2008, this route does not provide easy access to the city center, since it crosses the Old City of Hebron, where Israeli settlements were established (H2) and Palestinian traffic is prohibited.
 13. The Israeli human rights groups B'Tselem and the ACRI found in late 2006 that more than 40 percent of Palestinian apartments in the City Center had been vacated and over 75 percent of Palestinian businesses had closed. See, Ghost Town: Israel's Separation Policy and Forced Eviction of Palestinians from the Center of Hebron, May 2007.
 14. Only Palestinians living along the street who have legally-registered vehicles are allowed access. Their names are placed on a list present at the checkpoints. Currently, there are between 22 and 25 Palestinians who are listed and their entrance is permitted.
 15. Qalandiya CP (north), Zeitoun CP (east) and Gilo CP (south). Only Palestinian staff of UN agencies and international organizations and, recently, doctors can enter through any checkpoint. Until now, access through Shu'fat Camp CP is permissible for permit holders only if they are residents of Anata and Shu'fat Camp. Following the completion of Barrier construction near Shu'fat Camp and the expansion of the checkpoint, it will operate like the above-mentioned "crossing points" designated by the Israeli authorities for entry into occupied East Jerusalem.
 16. These communities include Beit Iksha, Nabi Samuel and Khalayla. Palestinians who are not registered as residents, with a few exceptions, must obtain permits to reach these communities.
 17. For further information see OCHA, The Humanitarian Monitor, March 2010.
 18. PRCS, Humanitarian Duty Report, 2009.
 19. See, Paltrade, Movement of goods from West Bank to East Jerusalem and Israel, January 2010.
 20. The number of permits issued, however, remains disputed. While the Israeli authorities claim that as much as 10,000 were issued, Palestinian sources argue that there were no more than 3,000.
 21. See Shaul Arieli and Michael Sfard, The Wall of Folly (2008), Chapter 4; B'Tselem and Bimkom, Under the Guise of Security: Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable the Expansion of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank, December 2005.
 22. ICJ, Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004.
 23. Although this is a non-binding advisory legal opinion on 20 July 2004, the General Assembly overwhelmingly approved Resolution ES-10/15 which demanded that Israel comply with the ICJ opinion.
 24. HCJ 639/04, The Association for Civil Rights in Israel vs IDF Commander of Judea and Samaria, Response from August 2009.
 25. The 2009 olive harvest ended, throughout the oPt with an extremely low yield. Adverse weather conditions earlier in the year, along with the fact that this was the off year of the two year cycle, resulted in the poor yield, estimated to be only 10 percent of the peak season. See OCHA, The Humanitarian Monitor, January 2010.
 26. Out of 15 access points to land behind the Barrier in the Jerusalem Governorate (including three Barrier checkpoints and 12 gates), five require permits. During the 2009 olive harvest, only seven farmers were granted permits to cross through the gates that require seam zone permits, while the bulk of farmers refused to apply.
 27. See OCHA oPt, "Five Years After the International court of Justice Advisory Opinion, July 2009, p. 17.
 28. The communities "released" are Ras At-Tira, Ad Daba, and Wadi Rasha. Those that remained in the closed area are Arab Ar Ramadin, and Arab Abu Farda.
 29. One section is located between the village of Wallaje and the settlement of Har Gilo, and the other west of Beit Jala town. The latter will require the seizure of some 300 dunums of land and the uprooting of some 2,000 olive trees, according to the municipality

- of Beit Jala. Following the resumption, Palestinians held a protest and clashed with Israeli forces.
30. For additional information on Area C issues and humanitarian needs, see the December 2009, January 2010 and March 2010 issues of the Humanitarian Monitor. Also see, OCHA oPt, "Restricting Space: the Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank," December 2009.
 31. Ma'ale Efraim checkpoint was shortly opened for Palestinian traffic in late August 2009 however the restriction was re-imposed within less than two weeks.
 32. For additional details, see OCHA oPt, Humanitarian Monitor, August 2009. In late September 2009, several Israeli and international human rights organizations organized a demonstration and succeeded in partially removing one of the road closures, allowing water tankers to pass and the affected villages to receive the planned water distributions.
 33. Order Regarding Security (Judea and Samaria) (No. 378), Declaration of the Closure of an Area (Israeli Communities), 2002.
 34. The petitions were filed by the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din on behalf of the villagers.
 35. Dan Izenberg, "Illegal barriers deny access to Palestinian fields", The Jerusalem Post, 11 April 2010.
 36. Approval by the Israeli authorities is required when the road, or part of it, crosses an area designated as Area C.
 37. For further elaboration on this subject see, OCHA, The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem – Understanding the Phenomenon of 'Illegal' Construction, April 2009.
 38. For further elaboration on this subject see, OCHA, Restricting Space in the oPt: The Planning and Zoning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank, December 2009.
 39. Settling an occupied territory is illegal under international law. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War explicitly prohibits the transfer of the Occupying Power's civilian population into the territory. The illegal status of Israeli settlements has been confirmed by the United Nations Security Council (Resolution 466 of 22 March 1979) and the International Court of Justice (Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, of 9 July 2004).
 40. The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, Construction Statistics.
 41. See OCHA, The Humanitarian Monitor, March 2010.



UNITED NATIONS

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory**

**P. O. Box 38712
East Jerusalem 91386
www.ochaopt.org**

**Tel. +972 (0)2 582 9962
Fax +972 (0)2 582 5841
ochaopt@un.org**