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Photo by John Torday

Palestinian showing his special permit to access East Jerusalem for Ramadan prayer, while queuing at Qalandiya checkpoint, August 2010.

WEST BANK MOVEMENT AND ACCESS UPDATE

The period between July 2010 and June 2011 was characterized by the absence of significant changes in the system of movement restrictions implemented by the Israeli authorities within the West Bank territory. There are currently some 70 villages and communities, with a combined population of nearly 200,000, compelled to use detours that are between two to

five times longer than the direct route to the closest city, undermining access to basic services. Some of the main traffic arteries have been transformed into rapid 'corridors' used by Israeli citizens to commute between the settlements and Israel, and, in some cases, between various areas within Israel via the West Bank.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The period between July 2010 and June 2011 was characterized by the absence of significant changes in the system of movement restrictions implemented by the Israeli authorities within the West Bank territory to address security concerns. This system has continued to hinder the access of the Palestinian population to livelihoods and basic services, including health, education and water supply.

In a comprehensive survey completed by the end of this period, OCHA documented and mapped a total of 522 obstacles (roadblocks, checkpoints, etc) obstructing Palestinian movement within the West Bank, a four percent increase from the equivalent figure recorded in July 2010 (503).¹ Similarly, almost no changes were observed in the other components of the system of movement restrictions, including the Barrier, the permit and 'prior coordination' regimes to access the 'Seam Zone' or settlement areas, and the closure of areas for military training.

Regarding access to and from the main towns and cities (excluding East Jerusalem), the lack of improvement observed during this period contrasts with the previous two years. Between July 2008 - June 2010 the Israeli authorities implemented a relatively large number of relaxation measures, which contributed to reducing travel time and resulted in less friction between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers at checkpoints.

Despite the easings implemented in previous years, nine of the ten governorates main cities have one or more of their historical entrances currently blocked, resulting in traffic congestion and frequent delays through those entrances that are open. Access to the main traffic arteries leading from the villages to the cities also continues to be limited to select junctions. As a result, much of the Palestinian traffic between the villages and the main service centers is funneled along secondary and often lower-quality routes.

Palestinians holding West Bank IDs continued to require special entry permits to access East

Jerusalem. Those who obtained an entry permit, were limited to using four of the 16 checkpoints along the Barrier. 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 wishing to access Jerusalem's holy sites.

The Old City of Hebron is an additional urban area severely affected by movement restrictions. This area is segregated from the rest of the city by 122 closure obstacles (most of them not included in the abovementioned count), while Palestinian movement by car, and in some cases also by foot, remained banned along certain streets. As a result, thousands of Palestinians who abandoned this area in previous years were unable to return; hundreds of shops and businesses have remained closed; and many of those still living in the area have continued to suffer from poor access to basic services.

Additionally, Palestinian movement into and within large rural areas of the West Bank, designated as Area C, has remained banned or significantly restricted. These include a strip of land between the Barrier and the Green Line along the western side of the West Bank; the Jordan Valley (including the Dead Sea coast) along the eastern side; and agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements:

- Nearly 62 percent of the Barrier was complete by the end of this period. The majority of the Barrier route lies inside the West Bank. The agricultural livelihoods of thousands of families owning land between the Barrier and the Green Line (the 'Seam Zone') continued to be undermined by the permit and gate regime regulating access to this area. While one small segment of the Barrier was rerouted during this period (Bil'in), as in similar cases in the past, the new route is still located within the

West Bank. Also during this period, the Israeli Supreme Court issued a ruling upholding the legality of the Barrier permit regime, in defiance of the Advisory Opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2004.

- Over three-quarters of the land in the Jordan Valley area (78.3 percent), designated in the past as 'firing zones' and 'nature reserves', or allocated to Israeli settlements, has remained off-limits for Palestinians. Additionally, entry of Palestinian-plated vehicles into the Jordan Valley remained prohibited through four of the five possible routes, except for residents of the Jordan Valley and a few other exceptions. Combined, these restrictions have had a particularly devastating impact on the living conditions of Bedouin and other herder communities. This is reflected, among others, in an extremely high food insecurity rate (55 percent), despite extensive food assistance.
- Access to private agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements has remained significantly constrained due to the fencing off of those areas, or due to settler violence. The Israeli army implements a 'prior coordination' procedure allowing limited access of farmers to land within or in the vicinity of at least 55 Israeli settlements. The 'prior coordination' system, however, usually allows access only during the olive harvest season therefore preventing the conduct of essential agricultural activities during the rest of the year.

As a result of all types of movement restrictions, there are some 70 villages and communities, with a combined population of nearly 200,000, compelled to use detours that are between two to five times longer than the direct route to the closest city.²

Most of the movement restrictions addressed in this report are related, in one way or another, to the Israeli settlements established throughout the West Bank in contravention of international humanitarian

law. This includes restrictions aimed at protecting the settlements, securing areas for their expansion, and improving the connectivity between settlements and with Israel itself. Palestinian movement along some of the main traffic arteries in the West Bank, (including Road 60, 90 and 443) has been gradually reduced in past years by means of physical obstacles and administrative restrictions, transforming these roads into rapid 'corridors' used by Israeli citizens to commute between the settlements and Israel, and, in some cases, between various areas within Israel via the West Bank.

As the occupying power, Israel is responsible for ensuring that the humanitarian needs of the local population in the oPt are met, and that Palestinians are able to exercise their human rights. While Israel is allowed under international law to restrict the right to freedom of movement of Palestinians to address legitimate security needs, it can do so only "to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation", in a non-discriminatory manner and taking into account other legal obligations. Given the illegality of settlements under international law, and the close relationship between the settlements and the system of movement restrictions, the legality of the latter is called into question.

To reduce the vulnerability of those affected by poor access to services and livelihoods and to comply with its legal obligations under international law, Israel must aim at dismantling the system of movement restrictions. While the removal of some obstacles in previous years was a step in the right direction, much more needs to be done to achieve significant progress. Further steps must include the removal of all obstacles blocking the historical entrances to towns and cities, the revocation of the permit regime associated with the Barrier, the opening up of 'closed military zones' for Palestinian movement and use of the land, and the lifting of restrictions on vehicular access to the Jordan Valley and within the Old City of Hebron. Israel should cease 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 this 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. However, the majority of them have remained in place even though the second Intifada ended many years ago, and despite the fact that virtually all Palestinian organizations operating in the West Bank have renounced violence and the security forces of the Palestinian Authority maintain close security ties with the Israeli security forces.³

This system of movement restrictions came in addition to pre-existing measures implemented by the Israeli authorities in the context of its prolonged occupation. These measures 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.

This report, which covers the period between early July 2010 and the end June 2011, provides data and analysis on the main developments that occurred, as well as on the impact of these restrictions on the access by the Palestinian population to services and livelihoods. It is based upon OCHA’s regular monitoring and analysis, which culminated in a comprehensive survey mapping all closure obstacles, and is supplemented by information provided by partner organizations.

The report comprises seven sections. The first presents the findings of the obstacle survey. The rest focus on recent developments and ongoing humanitarian concerns regarding access of Palestinians to six geographical areas: the main urban centers (Section II); East Jerusalem (Section III); Hebron’s Old City (Section IV); the Jordan Valley (Section V); areas isolated by the Barrier (Section VI); and agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements (Section VII).



I. THE CLOSURE SURVEY

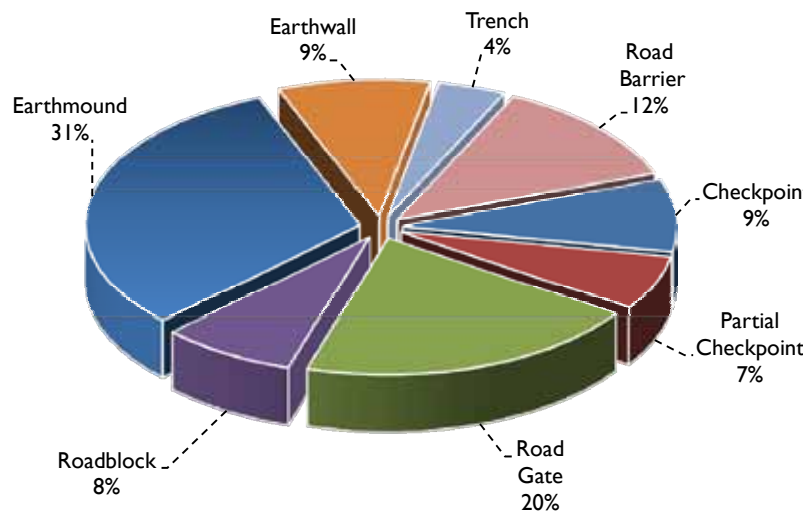
In the comprehensive closure survey completed at the end of June 2011, OCHA field teams documented and mapped 522 obstacles blocking Palestinian movement within the West Bank. These include 62 permanently staffed checkpoints (excluding checkpoints on the Green Line), 25 partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad-hoc basis) and 436 unstaffed physical obstacles, including roadblocks, earthmounds, earth walls, road gates, road barriers, and trenches.⁴

More than half of the permanently staffed checkpoints (34 out of 62) are located on main roads along the Barrier and are used by the Israeli authorities to control access to East Jerusalem, to Palestinian enclaves, and to Israel. Of the remaining 28 checkpoints, 11 are located within the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2 area), and the rest on key routes elsewhere in the West Bank (see table below).

For methodological reasons, the total number of obstacles mentioned above (522) does not include some categories of physical obstacles deployed by the Israeli authorities within the West Bank territory:

- Some 350 kilometers of the Barrier constructed within the West Bank (or 80 percent of the completed sections), which block dozens of roads and paths to Palestinian land and localities.
- The 66 agricultural gates leading into areas isolated by the Barrier.⁵
- Over 100 physical obstacles deployed through the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2), which were not counted in the initial years of this survey (the figure above does include the 11 main staffed checkpoints in this area).⁶
- Approximately 490 ad-hoc ('flying') checkpoints

Distribution of obstacles by type



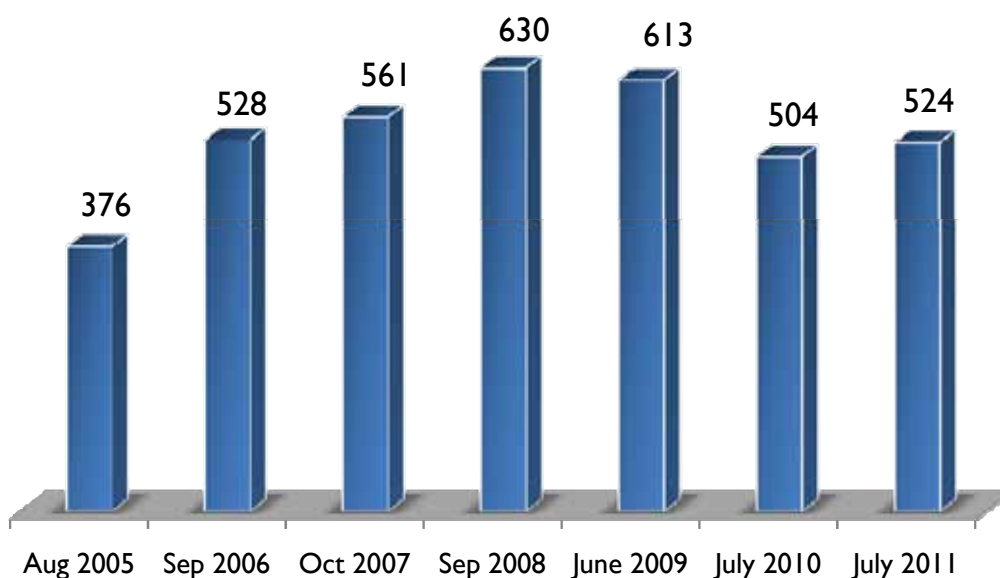
deployed on average every month. This type of checkpoint operates for several hours each time without permanent infrastructure on the ground.

The total of 522 obstacles represents a net increase of 19 obstacles, or nearly four percent, compared to the equivalent figure recorded in July 2010 (503). This increase was the result of the removal of 79 obstacles, alongside the installation of 98 new ones at other locations. The largest increase was recorded in the southern West Bank, where a net increase of 12 obstacles was recorded during this period

This overall increase in the total number of obstacles follows two consecutive years of decline and brings the current total back to the figure recorded in September 2006 (see chart).

While these quantitative changes provide some indication about the level of control exercised by the Israeli military on the ground, in order to understand the evolution of the system of access restrictions, one must account also for significant *qualitative* changes that occurred. Some of the most salient qualitative changes recorded during the past three reporting periods (July 2008 – June 2011) include:

Total number of movement obstacles



- the turning of permanently staffed checkpoints into partial checkpoints;
- the replacement of roadblocks and earthmounds by road gates which are normally open;
- the lifting of some permit requirements;
- the paving and upgrading of alternative routes for Palestinians.

These qualitative changes have contributed to improving the access of Palestinians to and from the

main urban centers (excluding East Jerusalem). This has occurred despite the only limited reduction in the number of obstacles during the previous two reporting periods, and the small increase during the present period. At the same time, these qualitative and quantitative changes have had almost no effect on the access of people to areas separated by the Barrier, including East Jerusalem, to the H2 area of Hebron City, to the Jordan Valley, and to agricultural land in the vicinity of settlements, which has remained severely restricted.

Checkpoint type	Checkpoint description	Number
Israel and East Jerusalem	Located along the Barrier and controlling access into Israel and East Jerusalem for Israelis (mostly commuting settlers); Palestinians holding Jerusalem IDs; and a limited number of other Palestinians holding special permits. Some of these checkpoints are also used to control commercial traffic into Israel.	19
Palestinian enclaves	Located along the Barrier and controlling access of Palestinians holding special permits to and from communities isolated by the Barrier; ⁷ some of these checkpoints 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 + enclaves	Combines the two categories detailed above.	4
Main route	Located on routes on the eastern 'Palestinian' side of the Barrier and controlling vehicular movement of Palestinians from one area to another; some of these checkpoints are also used to prevent entry of Israelis into Area A.	17
Hebron City	Located within or next to the H2 area of Hebron City and controlling movement of Palestinians into or within that area; some of these checkpoints are also used to prevent entry of Israelis into the PA controlled area of Hebron (H1).	11
Total		62

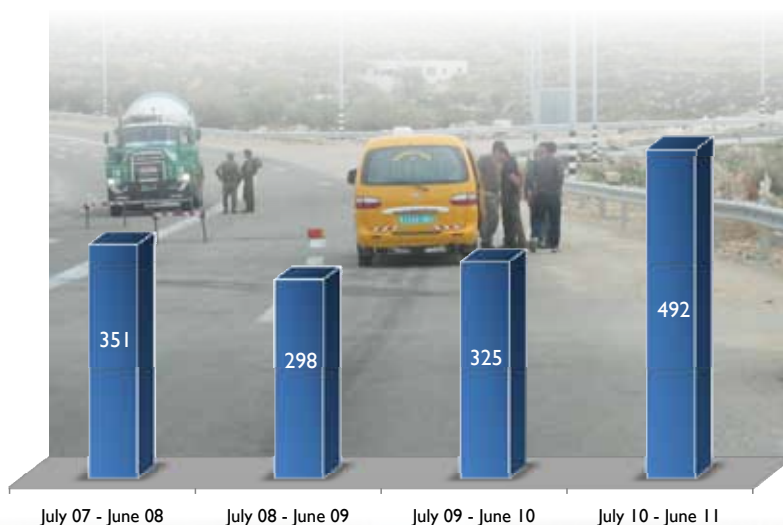
II. THE MAIN URBAN CENTERS

Very few easing measures affecting the access of Palestinians to services and livelihoods in the main urban centers were observed during the reporting period. The lack of improvement that characterized this period stands in sharp contrast with the previous two years (July 2008 – June 2010), during which the Israeli authorities implemented a relatively large number of easing measures which reduced the travel time to and from the main cities (excluding East Jerusalem), and lowered the level of friction between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers at checkpoints.⁸

The key features of the regime regulating Palestinian access into the main urban centers (excluding East Jerusalem), which emerged over the course of this and the previous two reporting periods, can be characterized as follows:

1. Vehicular access into the cities is funneled into a limited number of routes. To date, nine of the ten governorate's main cities have one or more of their main historical entrances blocked. Most of the now-accessible entry points are controlled, but normally not closed, by the Israeli military through a combination of observation towers, partial checkpoints, and 'flying' ad-hoc checkpoints. The use of the latter has been gradually increasing in previous years, alongside
2. Although vehicles entering or leaving the cities are normally not checked, the large volume of traffic as a result of the ongoing closure of other entrances has resulted in heavy congestion and delays, particularly at peak hours. These delays are prolonged whenever the partial checkpoints are staffed or a 'flying checkpoint' is deployed.
3. Vehicular access from Palestinian villages onto some of the main roads used by Israeli citizens (primarily settlers) is also funneled to a limited number of junctions, while the rest of the access points remain blocked. Therefore, the bulk of Palestinian traffic between the villages and the cities occurs along secondary and often lower-quality routes, which usually cross built-up, residential areas. Some of these secondary routes run under the main roads serving the Israeli population or under the Barrier; at present there are a total of 44 tunnels and underpasses fulfilling this function.⁹
4. The opening of some key junctions in the past three years entailed the removal of roadblocks and earthmounds, and their replacement by road gates. Similarly to the partial checkpoints, they

Monthly average of flying checkpoints



allow the closure of entire areas at any given moment with a minimum amount of resources. To date, there are a total of 104 road gates across the West Bank, of which 45 percent are normally open.

5. All Palestinian traffic between the southern and central regions, and between the central and northern regions, has also been funneled into two key junctions, which are controlled by two permanently staffed checkpoints (Wadi Nar and Za'atra/Tappuah). Soldiers at these checkpoints normally stop Palestinian vehicles for some type of inspection, resulting in considerable delays during rush hours. In June 2011, a key route leading from the Wadi Nar checkpoint northwards ('old Qedar settlement' road) was opened for Palestinian traffic in one direction, reducing congestion and travel time along the main route previously used.
6. The protection of Israeli citizens and settlements is the main justification given by the Israeli military for maintaining some of the key restrictions impeding Palestinian access to urban centers.¹⁰ Irrespective of the security considerations cited, these restrictions transformed some of the main West Bank roads into rapid 'corridors' used primarily by Israeli citizens to commute between the settlements and Israel or between two areas within Israel via the West Bank.

Ramallah Governorate

Ramallah is the fastest growing city and the most important service and commercial center in the West Bank. Following the imposition of a closure on East Jerusalem in the early nineties, tens of thousands of Palestinians living in villages in the Jerusalem and Ramallah governorates became increasingly dependant on Ramallah City. The growing importance of the city as a service and employment center stems also from its role as the temporary seat of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions.

Several of the main routes into the city have remained blocked for almost a decade, reducing the number of main routes accessible to only one from each direction (north, east, south and west). No significant change was registered in this regard during the reporting period. This situation is particularly problematic on the eastern side, where the main route continues to be blocked by a checkpoint (DCO/Beit El checkpoint), which only allows passage of ambulances, VIP-card holders, utility services, and internationals. Over 40,000 Palestinians living to the east of the city must therefore use a longer, winding route through densely populated streets.¹³ As a result, the road leading to the checkpoint is used almost exclusively by Israelis from the nearby Beit El settlement and military base. Along with the closure of the main route from the west (Bituniya

UPGRADING THE ALTERNATIVE ROAD NETWORK¹¹

The restrictions on access to certain key roads have gradually funneled Palestinian traffic onto secondary roads, which in many cases are of very poor quality (including unpaved, narrow and/or unsafe roads). During this and the previous reporting periods, dozens of such road sections underwent rehabilitation and upgrading by the Palestinian Authority, in collaboration with international donors. According to the Israeli Civil Administration, in 2010 it approved 21 permit requests for the rehabilitation of road sections partially or entirely in Area C, while another 26 requests were in process by February 2011.¹² Those that were completed have contributed to improving people's access to services and livelihoods. However, by reinforcing an alternative system, these roads also entrench the exclusion of Palestinians from significant sections of the primary road network, now utilized mainly, and sometimes exclusively, by Israelis and Israeli settlers.

checkpoint, which is accessible only for commercial traffic), this situation has increased the volume of traffic through the southern and northern routes (Qalandiya and 'Atara), resulting in frequent traffic jams and prolonged delays.

Access to key roads used by Israeli citizens, from villages throughout the governorate has also remained severely constrained for Palestinians. The main development during the reporting period has been the formal opening for Palestinian use of Road 443, the main east-west traffic artery in the area. Following the ban on Palestinian travel since

Latest developments: in early August 2011, on the occasion of the month of Ramadan, the Israeli army began allowing Palestinian-plated vehicles to enter and leave Ramallah through the DCO/Beit El checkpoint, between 10pm and 6am. Additionally, one roadblock on an entry point to Road 60 from a cluster of villages east of Ramallah was removed. It remains unclear whether the original restrictions will be reinstalled following the end of Ramadan

THE ROAD TO RAMALLAH: SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR

"Why is it a crime for a Palestinian to use the same road used by Israelis?" Diab Mohammed Yassin Badwan (Abu Ibrahim), Head of Beitin Village Council

Beitin is a village of 2,300 located three kilometers east of Ramallah City. For the past decade, most of the routes leading into the village have been blocked, including the main access into Ramallah City. The latter is closed by an earthmound that prevents vehicles from reaching the DCO/Beit El checkpoint, which in any case does not allow normal Palestinian vehicles through. As a result, travel distance and time to and from Ramallah increased from 3 to 15km, and from 10 to 30-40 minutes respectively; the cost of transport rocketed from 2 to 7 NIS for a bus fare and from 10 to 50 NIS for a private taxi fare. Moreover, despite its location immediately along Road 60, due to the closure of the junction to that road, Beitin residents must travel over 20 kilometers to reach the nearest open entry point. These access constraints have had a detrimental impact on the access of residents to services and livelihoods:

Education: disabled children are no longer enrolled in the An Nahda Association for the Disabled in Ramallah and have therefore lost access to special-needs education; students that were enrolled in high-quality secondary schools in Ramallah City had to move to schools in Beitin and nearby villages.

Health: due to the access constraints, all but one of the physicians who were renting apartments in the village, and provided services to the residents, have relocated elsewhere. The single pharmacy in the town and the one specialized medical center (Al Hikma) both shut down in recent years for the same reasons. At present, there is only one clinic that operates until 2pm and no laboratories to conduct tests. These changes all force patients to rely extensively on medical services in Ramallah.

Agricultural livelihoods: almost two-thirds of the agricultural lands cultivated by Beitin farmers (3,000 out of 4,700 dunums) are located to the east of Road 60. As access to this road is closed, farmers must use a long detour via two underpasses. The additional time and transportation cost have severely undermined their agricultural livelihoods.

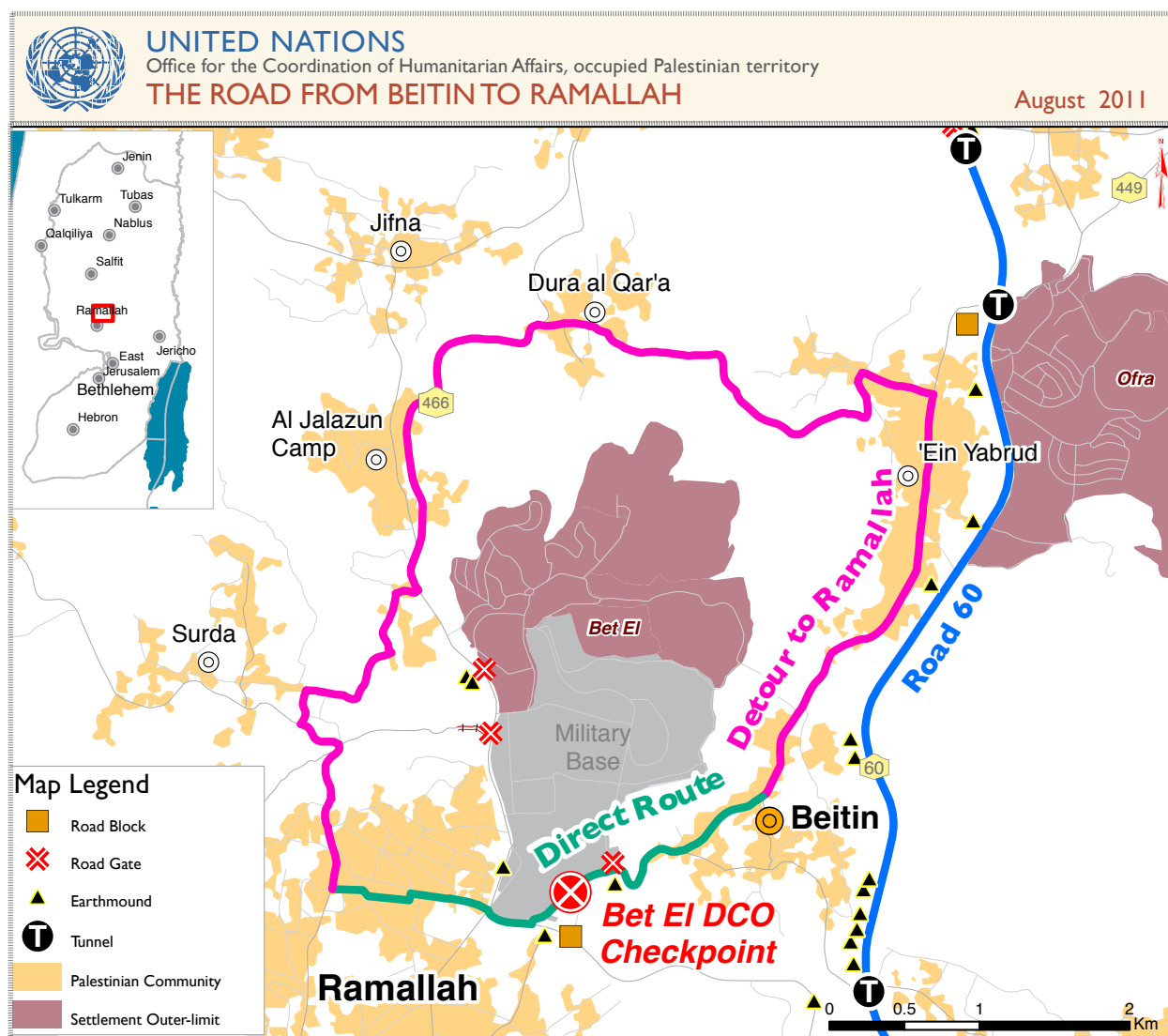
Commercial livelihoods: the increase in transportation costs and the reduction in the volume of customers in the past ten years, has led to the gradual closure of commercial and industrial establishments in the village, including three shops on the main street owned by residents of Ramallah, a few stone businesses, and a wholesale warehouse facility for imported merchandise.

Environment: following the loss of direct access to the main landfill in Al Bireh, in recent years residents have begun operating an alternative site within the bounds of the residential area, where the garbage is burnt, thus generating an environmental and public health hazard.

2002, this road became a key alternative for Israelis commuting between Jerusalem and the coastal area of Israel, as well as for settlers living in settlements along the road. While Palestinians are now formally allowed to travel on this road, access on and off the road is only possible at two junctions. At both junctions new checkpoints checking all passengers have been installed; more significantly, access to Ramallah (and East Jerusalem) through this highway remains blocked. Given the limited and controlled access to it, and the fact that the villages along the road have been in recent years reconnected to each other and to Ramallah through a series of “Fabric of Life” roads and tunnels, the impact of this limited opening has been negligible: monitoring by one international organization revealed that no more than 20 Palestinian vehicles a day make use of Road 443.

No significant change has taken place regarding access from Palestinian villages to the section of Road 60 running through the Ramallah governorate: only two of the 11 villages along this section have direct access to the road, compared to all seven Israeli settlements in the same section. As a result, most of the traffic to and from Ramallah City from the eastern villages travels along three tunnels under Road 60, significantly reducing Palestinian traffic on the main road used by Israeli settlers commuting with Israel.

The single significant easing measure during the reporting period was the removal of a roadblock on the junction into Road 463 on November 2010, significantly improving access to Ramallah City for some 10,000 people living in Kharbatha Kharbatha Bani Hareth, Deir Qaddis and Ni’lin villages.



SUSIYA: THE DANGEROUS JOURNEY TO SCHOOL

Susiya is a small community in south Hebron with a population of some 350 people, including 120 children, dwelling in basic shelters, mainly tents and shacks, and relying on agriculture and herding for their livelihood. Most children must walk 16 kilometers (back and forth) to reach their schools located in the nearby town of Yatta. The route to school entails crossing through a road gate, frequently supplemented by a flying checkpoint, and walking past a military base and a settlement outpost. The journey exposes the children to intimidation and harassment by Israeli settlers and soldiers. In spite of these difficulties, residents are unable to afford alternate transportation for their children. In an effort to improve access to education, in October 2010, an elementary school was established in Susiya, serving 35 children enrolled from first to fourth grades. However, given the inability to obtain a permit for its construction, the community fears it will be threatened with demolition.

Nablus Governorate

With six specialized hospitals, over 5,700 operating businesses,¹⁴ and the largest university in the West Bank, Nablus City serves as a health, economic and academic hub for the entire northern West Bank. Following the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000 and citing security considerations, all routes leading to the city were blocked or controlled by checkpoints and certain categories of people and vehicles were required to obtain permits to enter or leave the city, making Nablus the most access-affected city in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem). This situation improved significantly during the previous reporting period, when five checkpoints into the city were removed or turned into partial checkpoints, and all permit requests were lifted.

The main development during the present reporting period entailed the closure of one of the routes into the city from the south, controlled by the Awarta checkpoint, which was used until then by commercial traffic.¹⁵ An additional route from the south remains blocked by a fully staffed checkpoint (At Tur checkpoint), which allows passage to Nablus City only to the residents of a small community (Samaritans). As a result, all traffic into Nablus to and from the south has been channeled into one route controlled by the Huwwara checkpoint, which during the reporting period was turned into a partial checkpoint.¹⁶ As in the case of Ramallah, the funneling of all traffic onto one route often results in congestion and delays, exacerbated whenever the checkpoint is staffed following a security alert.¹⁷

Additionally, four separate road sections surrounding the city, which are used by Israeli settlers or military, are either prohibited or regularly restricted for Palestinian use, with no change recorded during the reporting period:

- Road 557, between Elon Moreh settlement and Awarta checkpoint (prohibited);
- Aqraba-Awarta-Nablus road through Itamar settlement (prohibited);
- Bypass Road 60, between Yitzhar and Jit partial checkpoints (closed intermittently for Palestinians due to settler violence);
- Road between Asira ash Shamaliya and Shave Shomron partial checkpoints (prohibited).

Significantly, in the second and third cases, the Israeli military justifies the restriction citing the need to protect residents from attacks by Israeli settlers. However, while the protection of the Palestinian civilian population is one of Israel's core duties as the occupying power, the means used penalizes the targeted civilians rather than the violent settlers. For some villages, these restrictions have forced them to resort to long detours to reach services and livelihoods. Due to the ban on the Aqraba-Nablus road, residents of Aqraba and Yanun villages (pop. 10,000) must travel an additional 20 km to reach services in Nablus; those living in Beit Furik and Beit Dajan villages (pop. 15,000) have to travel through densely populated, and often congested streets in Nablus City when trying to reach the central or southern West Bank, due to the travel ban on Road 557.

One of the few positive developments in the Nablus area during the reporting period took place in August 2010, when the Israeli military replaced an earthmound next to Sarra village (west of Nablus City) with a partial checkpoint staffed sporadically. This restored Palestinian movement along the main route between Nablus and Qalqiliya governorates, directly benefiting residents of over 30 towns and villages, including by improving the commercial activity between the two districts.

Salfit Governorate

Even though Salfit is one of the smallest cities in the West Bank (pop. 9,500), it serves as a health, academic and commercial center for a large part of the population in the Salfit governorate (65,000).¹⁸ The main route into the city from the north was blocked in 2001 by Israeli settlers for the nearby

settlement of Ari'el with the army's acquiescence, forcing the residents of 11 villages (pop. 38,600) to make a detour of up to 20 km, to reach Salfit City through its eastern entrance. Following the closure of this route, the residents of Ari'el settlement (pop. 17,000) became the exclusive users of this road.

On November 2010, nearly a decade after its initial closure, the Israeli military installed a new checkpoint on this route and began allowing pre-registered buses and taxis, as well as ambulances, to use this road between 6:00 am and 10:00 pm. At present there are several authorized buses, which transport a daily average of about 1,500 people between Salfit and the northern villages, reducing travel time by 20-30 minutes. Access to this road by private vehicles, as well as by any other vehicle between 10pm and 6 am, remains prohibited.

SHUFA (TULKARM): A VILLAGE SUFFOCATED BY ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

Shufa is a village of approximately 2,300 people, composed of two built-up sections (the western section is also known as 'Izbat Shufa) linked by a dirt road, which also leads to Tulkarm City. This road has been blocked by the Israeli military with earthmounds placed next to the intersection with another road which leads to the Avne Hefez settlement (pop. 1,400) and an adjacent military base. To reach hospitals, higher education and commercial markets in Tulkarm City, residents of the eastern part of Shufa must now travel more than 20 km, compared to 7 km previously, and pass the Enav partial checkpoint. No less significantly, to move by car between one section of the village to the other, people must now travel some 25 km, instead of two. In early 2010, the Israeli military installed a road gate on the single accessible route into the eastern section, which has since remained open.

Access to agricultural land is also restricted. A few hundred dunams of private agricultural land located around the Avne Hefez settlement were designated by the military as a «special security area» and fenced off. Access of farmers to these areas has been limited to certain days every year and requires prior coordination with the Israeli authorities.

In August 2010, the Israeli human rights organization HaMoked filed a petition with the Israeli High Court of Justice on behalf of Shufa's council, requesting that the army removes the obstacles. According to the petitioners, the obstacles result in severe, excessive, and disproportionate infringement on the residents' rights to freedom of movement, family life, education and health, among others. The petition is currently pending.

Latest developments: in early August 2011, on the occasion of the month of Ramadan, the Israeli army removed the roadblock between the two sections of the village, however; the roadblock will be reinstalled by the end of that month.

III. EAST JERUSALEM

There has been no improvement in access to East Jerusalem, for Palestinians who hold West Bank ID cards; their access continues to be severely restricted by the Barrier, the checkpoints and the permit system. This situation has a particularly negative impact on access to specialized hospitals in East Jerusalem by patients and staff, as well as access to Muslim and Christian places of worship.

East Jerusalem has traditionally served as the focus of political, commercial, religious and cultural life for the entire Palestinian population. Since the unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel in 1967, and the designation of a separate residential status for East Jerusalem Palestinians, Palestinians from the remainder of the West Bank have been prevented from residing within the Israeli-defined municipal boundary, other than through the increasingly restrictive process of 'family unification.' Since the early 1990s, when Israel imposed a general closure, non-Jerusalem Palestinians have been required by the Israeli authorities to obtain permits to enter Israel and East Jerusalem.

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 four of the 16 checkpoints functioning along the Barrier, which have become increasingly crowded as a result.¹⁹ Permit holders are allowed to cross these checkpoints only on foot. The remaining 12 checkpoints are used by Israelis, internationals and Palestinians holding Jerusalem ID cards.

As a rule, at these checkpoints, after waiting in line, permit holders must cross a remotely-controlled revolving gate, scan their belongings through an X-ray machine, pass through a metal detector, show their ID card 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. The entire process may last up to two hours during the rush hours in the morning and is widely perceived by the affected people as a grueling experience.²⁰

Access of permit holders into East Jerusalem is additionally restricted during periods of 'general closure.' Over the course of the reporting period, the Israeli authorities imposed a 'general closure' on the West Bank for a total of 39 days, 11 days less than the previous year, due to Israeli holidays. During 'general closures', while exceptions are made for urgent medical cases, the staff of international organizations and other categories, the permits of the majority of business people and workers are invalid until the closure is lifted. 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. Qalandiya and Shu'fat checkpoints in particular, have been closed repeatedly as a result of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces.

Access to health services

Non-Jerusalem Palestinian patients, including emergency cases, require permits for accessing health services in the six specialized hospitals in East Jerusalem. These hospitals provide services unavailable elsewhere in the oPt.²¹ In addition to the stress incurred in applying and waiting for

NEW PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION LANE AT QALANDIYA

In December 2010, the public transportation lane at Qalandiya checkpoint began operating. The lane operates Sunday through Thursday, 0060-2000, and is for the use of Jerusalem ID card holders travelling on public transportation buses. When the bus reaches the checkpoint, all Jerusalem ID card holders disembark, walk through a new pedestrian lane, pass through a metal detector, have their ID cards checked before re-boarding the bus. Although this procedure was planned to reduce pressure on the established pedestrian lanes, during the reporting period long delays and queues have still been reported at the other pedestrian lanes.

requests to be granted (or denied), permits can be issued for a shorter period than the treatment requires, particularly if multiple consultations or operations are necessary.²² It can also be difficult for carers (family members or parents of sick children) to receive permits to accompany patients to East Jerusalem. The requirement for patients to cross the checkpoints on foot often implies that they must wait in crowded lines for long periods, adding significant hardship for the very ill, the elderly, and those with disabilities.

Ambulance transfer to East Jerusalem hospitals in emergency cases can be difficult. Prior coordination by the hospital with the Israeli authorities is required and permission can be obtained on the same day, but direct access of Palestinian ambulances is rarely permitted. In the reporting period, 1,089 ambulances of the major ambulance provider, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), were not given direct access and had to transfer patients using 'back-to-back' procedures (moving the patient from

a Palestinian-plated ambulance to an Israeli-plated ambulance). In very urgent cases, the Israeli Civil Administration does authorize the direct entry of Palestinian ambulances after coordinating with the security personnel at the checkpoints; PRCS reported that 83 (7%) ambulances were allowed direct access during the reporting period.²³

Physical and bureaucratic obstacles also hamper the ability of the estimated 1,000 hospital employees to access their workplaces in East Jerusalem, to the detriment of both patients and hospitals. With the imposition of tightened restrictions in July 2008, West Bank hospital employees have been only allowed access to East Jerusalem through the most crowded checkpoints of Qalandiya, Zaytoun and Gilo; only physicians have been allowed to use other checkpoints when accessing Jerusalem. This has resulted in long delays for staff and results in a disruption in patient care including the scheduling of consultations, operations and other services in East Jerusalem hospitals. The network of the six East



Jerusalem Hospitals has been facilitating access for their essential medical staff and, to a limited extent, for patients with chronic illnesses from the West Bank by operating daily busses to the hospital since 2004, at considerable extra cost.

Additionally, during the reporting period the Israeli authorities continued implementing a decision adopted in February 2009 prohibiting East Jerusalem hospitals from importing medical equipment from the West Bank. This has created logistical problems for the hospitals and has also led to higher costs for equipment purchased through Israeli dealers. A similar decision was implemented a year before regarding medicines and pharmaceuticals.²⁴

Access to Holy Sites

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The Barrier and permit system also impedes the access of Muslims and Christians who hold West Bank ID cards to places of worship in East Jerusalem. Special arrangements are put in place during Ramadan and Easter, but not for Friday prayers or Sunday services the year round. During the month of Ramadan in August 2010, as in past years, the majority of the Muslim population in the oPt was prevented from exercising its right to freedom of worship. Due to the restrictions on access to East Jerusalem, over 40 percent of the West Bank population were denied access to Friday prayers at Al Aqsa Mosque. Except for those holding Jerusalem ID cards, only men above 50 and women above 45

years of age, and boys and girls under 13, were allowed to pass without permits; men between the ages of 45 and 50, and women between 30 and 45 were eligible for special permits that needed to be requested in advance. Overall, however, although there was no increase in the number people eligible to enter East Jerusalem during Ramadan 2010, access was smoother particularly at Qalandiya checkpoint.

Palestinians Christians faced movement restrictions on accessing holy sites in Jerusalem during Holy Week in April 2011, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. Whilst these restrictions are not new—ranging from the permit regime to enter East Jerusalem to those imposed in and around the Old City of Jerusalem—there was a reported deterioration in access in 2011, compared to previous years. Out of an estimated 10-12,000 applications for religious permits to access East Jerusalem from the West Bank, the Jerusalem Inter-Church Center estimated a maximum approval rate of 10 percent (1,000-1,200) compared to an estimated 35 percent approval rate for 2010 Easter applications (3,500 out of 10,000). In addition, only one out of 20 West Bank scout groups succeeded in reaching East Jerusalem to participate in Easter processions, which is the lowest reported participation over the past three years. Access to the holy sites was further obstructed by multiple ad-hoc (“flying”) checkpoints deployed by the Israeli Police in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, particularly on Holy Fire Saturday.

IV. THE OLD CITY OF HEBRON

Almost no change has taken place during the reporting period regarding the significant access restrictions that have prevailed for the last few years into, and within the Israeli controlled area of Hebron City, also known as the H2 area.²⁵ As a result, thousands of Palestinians displaced in previous years from this area are still unable and/or unwilling to return; hundreds of commercial establishments have remained closed; and many of those who remained in the area have continued to suffer from poor access to basic services.

The H2 area comprises about four square kilometers and includes five Israeli settlements with a combined population of a few hundred.²⁶ Together with East Jerusalem, these are the only two cases in the West Bank, where Israeli settlements have been established in the heart of a Palestinian city. The H2 area is also the home of some 35,000 Palestinians and it includes what was once one of the main commercial centres of Hebron, as well as the Ibrahimi Mosque/'Machpela' Cave.²⁷ While the entire population of H2 is affected in one way or another by Israeli measures, the 6,000-7,000 people currently living in the central area of H2, known as the Old City, are those bearing the full impact of the movement restrictions imposed by the army.

A joint survey carried out by OCHA and the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) in October 2010 found a total of 122 closure obstacles, segregating the central area of H2 from the rest of the city. These include 18 checkpoints, 13 partial checkpoints and 55 road blocks, among others. Palestinian traffic is banned along most of the roads leading to the Israeli settlements. In some areas, including parts of what was once the main commercial artery, Ash Shuhada Street, pedestrian movement is also prohibited. On streets where pedestrian movement by Palestinians is permitted, access requires inspection at a military checkpoint. In contrast, Israeli settlers are allowed to move about freely throughout these areas, both on foot and with vehicles.

The extensive access restrictions, compounded by years of systematic harassment by Israeli settlers, have forced a significant part of the Palestinian population to relocate to other areas of the city. A survey conducted by two Israeli human rights organizations in 2007, B'Tselem and ACRI, found that more than 1,000 homes in the Old City of Hebron have been vacated by their former Palestinian residents.²⁸

As in previous years, during the reporting period, the movement restrictions have continued to impair the livelihoods, the safety, and the quality of basic services available to many of the Palestinian residents of the Old City.

Water supply

Due to the ban on the entry of Palestinian vehicles, many households in the Old City are unable to purchase water from water tankers, the main coping mechanism with the water shortage used in other areas of the city.

The entire population of Hebron City, including residents in the areas administered by the Palestinian Authority (H1), is regularly affected by a significant water shortage. To cope with the situation, the Water Department of the Municipality of Hebron implements a rotation scheme; water is supplied through the water network to each quarter of the city for 24 hours every few weeks. During this time, residents store as much water as they can for consumption in the following days and weeks.

Due to the difficult situation facing those living in the Old City, the Water Department has shortened the supply cycle in this area to 24 hours every two weeks, compared to three-four weeks in other areas. Each individual entry of a municipal worker to the area to open and close the valves requires approval 24 hours in advance. Access of machinery needed for maintenance of the network entails a longer waiting period. On occasion this disrupts the actual implementation of the schedule.²⁹

In any case, given the limited storage capacity of most households (usually 2.5 cubic meters) and the large size of the average family in the Old City area (eight members), the water supplied through the network can cover the needs of up to one week, or half of the waiting time until the next supply cycle begins.

Although some approvals have been given by the Israeli authorities on an exceptional basis, currently there is no coordination mechanism enabling the regular access of water tankers (private or municipal) to the restricted area. Therefore, once the water reserves at a household are exhausted, and until the next 24 hour cycle of network supply begins, families must rely on water supply by

"The last time I managed to bring a water tanker to my house was in 1999. It was after my mother died and we needed water desperately to wash her body before burying her. Following pressure through the Palestinian DCL, the Israelis approved the request."

Hassan, a resident of Sahleh Street, near Ibrahimi Mosque checkpoint.

means of bottles, jerry cans and buckets. These are filled at the homes of relatives or neighbors, or at a filling point located in the vicinity of the Ibrahimi Mosque/"Machpela' Cave, and carried to the houses on foot. This task is typically given to the family's



Palestinian children crossing Checkpoint 56 in Hebron City on their way to school. Photo by Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)

children, who perform it at the expense of the playing or learning time.

Access to emergency health care

The detours required to reach certain areas, the need to cross staffed checkpoints, and the obligation to coordinate every individual entry in advance, has resulted in significant delays in the arrival of ambulances called for medical emergencies. Residents have reported cases where, due to such delays, patients were taken on foot to an area where vehicles are permitted and from there are transported to one of the hospitals in the city. Similarly, due to access related concerns, there are pregnant women who choose to relocate elsewhere immediately before and after they deliver.³⁰

A positive step towards addressing ambulance delays was implemented in January 2011. Following approval by the Israeli authorities, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) began operating an ambulance sub-station in the area of the Old City. Since then, after evacuating a patient, PRCS ambulances have been allowed to return to this sub-station through the Giv'at Ha'avot checkpoint without prior coordination. This improvement, however, entailed a significant increase in the operational costs of PRCS, as well as an increase in the staff's exposure to settler violence. As a result

of an attack against a PRCS ambulance by Israeli settlers in March 2011, the army began requiring ambulances already present in the area to perform prior coordination before entering the Tel Rumeida quarter.

Access to education

At present, there are 13 Palestinian schools in the H2 area. One of the most affected is the Cordoba (Qurtuba) School, which is attended by approximately 100 children. Due to the ban on the entry of Palestinian vehicles to Ash Shuhadah Street, the school can only be reached on foot. To access it from H1 and most of H2, children and teachers have to cross two military checkpoints (Checkpoint 55 and 56) twice a day, where they must pass through a metal detector and, on a random basis, have their school bags searched by the soldiers.³¹ After passing the second checkpoint, they have to walk next to the Beit Hadassah settlement, where they face harassment and verbal abuse by settler children on a regular basis.

Commercial livelihoods

Prior to the imposition of the access restrictions, the area in and around the Old City served as a commercial hub for the entire southern West Bank. The above mentioned survey by B'Tselem and ACRI

found that a total of 1,829 Palestinian businesses and warehouses in the Old City, or over three quarters of the establishments surveyed (76.6 percent), were closed. While the majority of the shops were closed due to difficulties impeding the access of customers and providers to the area, at least 440 establishments covered in the survey were shut down by orders issued by the Israeli military, which are renewed every six months until the present. Overall, the access restrictions in the Old City have had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinian families in the area and elsewhere in Hebron City.

While the survey was carried out in 2007 and updated figures are unavailable, field visits and anecdotal evidence collected by OCHA suggest that during the reporting period there has been no significant change in the level of the commercial activity throughout the affected area.

Insecurity

The ongoing movement restrictions constitute a source of insecurity in themselves. This is primarily due to the massive deployment of Israeli forces controlling movement into the area and enforcing the various restrictions. The mere requirement from residents to cross a military checkpoint and undergo an inspection of their belongings every time they enter or leave the area is, in itself, a source of friction and anxiety. This is in addition to the regular threat stemming from settler violence, from the regular search operations carried out by the army, and from the seizure of rooftops by the army as observation points.

For some people, the movement restrictions oblige them to walk through areas affected by criminal activities, including drug dealing, in order to reach or leave their homes. This type of activity has flourished in some parts of the Old City during the last decade, due to the law enforcement vacuum created by Israel's disengagement from this function, along with the inability of the PA Police to operate in the H2 area, as stipulated in the Hebron Protocol of 1997, signed between Israel and the PLO.

"Because the gate closes at night, whenever we have a family event at a relative's place we must stay there overnight. This is to avoid walking the long detour, where we may meet soldiers who can detain our men. This had happened to many families."

Om Ali, mother of 4 children, Bani Dar.

This is the case of about ten families living in the Bani Dar section of the Old City. The main street connecting this area with the rest of the city (Bab el Khan) has been blocked by the army and remains closed at all times. As a result, instead of a few meters, residents must take a detour on foot (approx 15 minutes) that passes through a dark tunnel, the ruins of a house, and then out through a street gate, which is closed by the army every night at 9PM. If obliged to leave or return to their homes after that time, residents must take a much longer detour (walking over one and a half hours), or ask one of the few houses in the quarter that have an extra access point for permission to pass through their homes. People interviewed by OCHA reported that the alternative route they are forced to use to reach their homes is the source of great insecurity.

"A week ago, after crossing the gate, four settler children riding their bikes surrounded my husband, spat on his face and started to curse him. One of the children pulled the leg of my daughter Raw'a, who is 2 years old, and tried to take her from my hands. Only after Raw'a and myself started to scream, a soldier that was standing a few meters away and watching the incident, intervened and ordered the four settler children to leave." Lubna, mother of two children, Bani Dar.

The rationale behind the movement restrictions

In response to this situation, ACRI submitted to the IDF in 2007 an expert opinion issued by a group of retired IDF senior officers, which proposed a model that would enable the army to protect Israeli settlers without isolating the area from the rest of the city. The army responded to the suggestion as follows:

It seems that the basis of the opinion [of the security experts], whereby it is possible for Palestinians to live a normal life in the area alongside that of Israelis, is inconsistent with the principle of separation that underlies the security forces' plan to safeguard the space... How is it possible to prevent friction in the space encompassed by these neighborhoods when on their doorstep (and in most cases, even under or alongside them) regular Palestinian commercial life is taking place?³²

Between 2004 and 2006, a number of petitions challenging the legality of the access restrictions in H2 were filed with the Israeli Supreme Court (sitting as the High Court of Justice) by the Municipality of Hebron, individual residents and several Palestinian and Israeli NGOs. The petitions were subsequently unified by the Court, which, in June 2011, issued a decision rejecting them. In a page and a half ruling,

the President of the Court reviewed some of the easing measures implemented or suggested by the army in recent years, and accepted the state's position that, despite the relative improvement in the security situation in Hebron (according to the army), current access restrictions remain necessary to fulfill security needs. The decision, however, does not elaborate on the legal grounds on which the current extreme access restrictions are justified.

In its Concluding Observations regarding Israel, the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination addressed the situation in Hebron and recommended Israel to review the measures it has adopted in the city to ensure that restrictions on the freedom of movement are "only of temporary and exceptional nature and are not applied in a discriminatory manner, and do not lead to segregation of communities".³³



V. THE JORDAN VALLEY AREA

The Jordan Valley area comprises (for the purpose of this report) most of Tubas and Jericho governorates and the northern section of the Dead Sea coast in the Bethlehem governorate, covering nearly 30 percent of the West Bank. This area has been one of the most severely affected by access restrictions imposed by Israel in recent years. These restrictions have rendered the main roads and the bulk of the natural resources in the Jordan Valley available, almost exclusively, to Israeli settlers and the Israeli military. As in other areas, few changes were registered during the reporting period in regard to these restrictions, which have continued to result in humanitarian hardship for a significant part of the Palestinian population of the Jordan Valley, particularly for Bedouins and herders, as well as in reduced economic opportunities for the wider Palestinian population.

Restrictions on movement through the checkpoints

The Jordan Valley area is separated from the rest of the West Bank by dozens of physical obstacles, including almost 30 kilometers of trenches and earth walls, which have been renovated and reinforced during the reporting period (March 2011). As a result, all traffic to and from the area has been limited to five routes, four of which are controlled by checkpoints (Tayasir, Hamra, Ma'ale Ephraim and Yitav), while the southern most (Road 1 south of Jericho) is not.³⁴

Jordan Valley residents are allowed to cross with their vehicles through three of the four checkpoints (Tayasir, Hamra, and Yitav), provided that the vehicle is registered in the Jordan Valley in the name of the driver. Residents attempting to enter while driving a vehicle registered in the Jordan Valley but not in their names are often denied passage. Non-residents are only allowed to cross these checkpoints as pedestrians or if traveling via registered public transportation. Other vehicles can

be allowed on an exceptional basis after performing a 'prior-coordination' procedure with the Israeli authorities.

In autumn 2010, the Ma'ale Ephraim checkpoint, located in the central area of the Jordan Valley, began being staffed on an irregular basis, becoming a partial checkpoint. However, the Israeli authorities have informed OCHA that the abovementioned rules and restrictions continue to apply. In practice, despite the decline in the level of enforcement, given the uncertainty and risks associated with an unauthorized crossing, the impact of this change has remained limited, with only a minor increase noted in the volume of Palestinian traffic. Field observations from July-August 2011, after the end of the reporting period, indicated that the Yitav checkpoint has occasionally been unstaffed, suggesting that the model used at the Ma'ale Ephraim checkpoint may be implemented here as well.

By contrast, passage through the two checkpoints leading to the northern section of the Jordan Valley, Tayasir and Hamra (also known as 'Beqaot') remained tightly controlled and restricted. Vehicles queuing are allowed to approach these checkpoints only after being called by the soldiers; all passengers must exit the vehicle and pass through a pedestrian lane, at the end of which they pass a metal detector and their documentation and belongings are checked. Cargo loaded on commercial vehicles is subject to visual inspection, with occasional requests to unload it for further inspection.

Delays at these checkpoints vary depending on the volume of traffic, the type of vehicle and the intensity of inspection, normally ranging between 5 and 45 minutes. When an incident or a security alert occurs, delays lasting up to two hours are common. Overall, access through both checkpoints is perceived by Palestinians as particularly difficult and unpredictable.

TWO PALESTINIANS SHOT AND KILLED AT HAMRA CHECKPOINT

Two Palestinian men were shot and killed by Israeli soldiers while approaching the Hamra checkpoint in two separate incidents in January 2011. In the first case (2 January), the soldiers opened fire at a man who was holding what was perceived by them as a “suspicious object”, later identified as a glass bottle, while he walked along an “unauthorized lane” and did not stop after being ordered to do so.³⁵ According to eye witnesses, the man fell to his knees, then stood up again raising his hands and was shot again in the chest. In the second case (8 January), the man, who was employed at an Israeli settlement in the Jordan Valley, was shot after approaching the checkpoint raising his hand with the victory sign and shouting “Allahu Akbar”. While according to fellow workers at the scene the man “was joking”, an Israeli army spokesperson said that he carried an explosive device and a knife.³⁶ Neither of the cases led to the opening of a criminal investigation by the Israeli authorities, as an internal investigation by the army found that the soldiers acted according to the rules of engagement.

Restrictions on access to land

Over three quarters (78.3 percent) of the land resources available in the Jordan Valley area, or some 1.3 million dunums, have been seized by the Israeli authorities since 1967 and allocated to the Israeli army and to the Israeli settlements established in the area.³⁷

To date, there are 37 Israeli settlements spread throughout the Jordan Valley area, with a total population of approximately 9,500 people. While the outer limits of these settlements cover ‘only’ 1.4 percent of the area, together with other areas included within their municipal boundaries or allocated for agriculture, settlements have direct control of some 15 percent of the Jordan Valley area.³⁸ The areas within the municipal boundaries of settlements have been closed for Palestinians by military order.

More significantly, over the years the Israeli army declared approximately 56 percent of the land in the Jordan Valley as ‘close military zones’, the large majority (46 percent) for the purpose of military training (also known as ‘firing zones’) and the remaining 10 percent as a ‘buffer zone’ along the Jordan river. Under the relevant military legislation, people are prohibited from accessing closed military areas for any purpose, except for those who were there before it was closed. The military commander has the authority to arrest individuals entering the area without authorization, and to seize their

livestock.³⁹ Additionally, approximately 21 percent of the Jordan Valley area has been declared in the past decades as ‘nature reserves’, where any development or use is prohibited by military order. Accounting for overlaps between the two categories, the ‘closed military zones’ and ‘nature reserves’ cover over 64 percent of the Jordan Valley area.

Due to the shortage of suitable alternatives, and given the partial and inconsistent enforcement of the restrictions on access to land, including lack of precise demarcation, some of the areas designated as ‘firing zones’ and ‘nature reserves’ have been used by Palestinians, mainly for grazing. However, herders doing so may be subject to fines given by inspectors from the Israeli Environmental Authority, and they risk of being, arrested, assaulted or having their livestock killed or confiscated; during the reporting period OCHA recorded a total of 22 such incidents.

The impact on agricultural livelihoods

The area of the Jordan Valley is highly suitable for agricultural activities. This is mainly due to the fertility of its land and a warm climate that enables early harvests of winter and summer crops and less exposure to crop diseases. However, while Israeli settlements in the area have exploited these favorable conditions to develop highly profitable agribusinesses, covering some 85,000 dunums (or 5 percent of the Jordan Valley), the Palestinian



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agricultural sector is severely hampered by access and movement restrictions, along with a shortage of water for irrigation.

The fact that the large majority of land in the Jordan Valley is off limits for Palestinian use and development is the key factor behind the stagnation of the Palestinian agriculture sector in this area. The World Bank has estimated that if the Israeli authorities would allow Palestinians to access 50,000 dunums of land currently uncultivated, along with the easing of other restrictions (including on movement through the checkpoints and access to water), this could potentially generate a billion dollars of revenue per year.⁴⁰

Those Palestinians currently engaged in agricultural activities face significant constraints. Farmers and key informants interviewed by OCHA stressed the negative impact of the restrictions at the checkpoints, which have resulted in reduced production, declining sales, limited profitability and reduced growth:

- The restrictions on the passage of non-resident drivers through the checkpoints have created an artificial shortage of truck drivers, particularly during harvest seasons. To cope with this, some farmers prefer the longer and more costly southern shipping route (Road 1). It is estimated that the additional transportation costs related to that detour stand at least NIS 7.2 million annually.
- The shipping of produce through the checkpoints is affected by frequent delays caused by inspection procedures. The aggregated cost of such delays are estimated at NIS 3,600 per day or NIS 1.2 million per year.
- Depending on the discretion of the soldiers, some agricultural goods, particularly fertilizers, are delayed or prevented entry.
- As a result of the constraints impeding the access of wholesalers to inspect the produce before purchasing, many have turned to more

accessible markets elsewhere in the West Bank, or to importing from Israel. Wholesalers in the Nablus vegetable market for example, reported a drop of up to 60 percent in purchases from the Jordan Valley since 2005.

The impact on herder communities

Due to their particular way of life, Bedouin and other herder communities are among the most severely affected by the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities. According to an assessment carried out by the UN and humanitarian partners in 2009 and 2010 there are about 27,500 people living in these types of communities throughout Area C of the West Bank, the vast majority of them in the Jordan Valley area. To assess the impact of the access restrictions, OCHA visited a cluster of four such communities, with a combined population of some 500. The communities which are located in Al Bqai'a area in the northern section of the Jordan Valley are Mak-hul, Al Hadidiya, Khirbet Samra and Khirbet Humsa.⁴¹

Access to education

The restrictive planning regime implemented by the Israeli authorities in Area C has resulted in a significant shortage of school infrastructure. In the Al Bqai'a communities no schools can be built due to the inability to obtain building permits. As a result, in the 2010-11 academic year, 166 children from these four communities were forced to travel long distances ranging between 27 and 45 kilometers to reach their primary schools. Roughly half of them attended schools in Tubas and Tammun which involved traveling through a long detour and crossing one of the two checkpoints into the area.⁴² Residents interviewed, including the driver of the school bus, reported frequent incidents of mistreatment and humiliation by Israeli soldiers, while children get down from the bus. A direct road connecting the communities to the schools in that area bypassing the checkpoints is blocked by a road gate. This gate is opened by the Israeli military only three days a week, twice a day for a few minutes, and is only for residents of Al Hadidiya and Mak-

hul; opening hours are unreliable, furthering limiting the potential benefit for a daily commute to school.

Due to the long distances, high transportation costs and harassment at checkpoints, parents are reluctant to have their children travel this route on a daily basis. As a result, the majority of the children attending schools in Tubas and Tammun stay there alone or with relatives during the week and return home at weekends. Residents interviewed were concerned that the lack of regular guidance and follow up by parents has resulted in a decline in school achievements, quality of nutrition, and family cohesion.

Access constraints are also a key factor behind the high drop out level reported. Although precise figures could not be obtained, it was clear from the focus group discussion that the majority of students drop out after the ninth grade. It is also apparent that drop out is significantly higher, and occurs earlier, among girls than among boys, in part due to the desire of parents to reduce the exposure of their

daughters to the risk of harassment at checkpoints. Residents estimated that less than 10 percent of the children take the High School matriculation exam (Tawjihi).

Access to Water

As with education, the restrictive planning regime applied in Area C is the main factor impeding the development of basic water infrastructure.⁴³ In the case of Al Bqai'a area, the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) has rejected repeated requests (including by the Humanitarian Country Team) to allow the installation of a water filling point next to the Hadidiya community, which would reduce costs and increase the reliability of the water supply.⁴⁴ This is despite the fact that this filling point has been approved in July 2009 by the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee. Moreover, the ICA's refusal stands in sharp contrast to the approach it adopted towards the adjacent Israeli settlement of Ro'i, which enjoys uninterrupted water supply for household consumption, as well as large amounts of subsidized water for irrigation.



A father and his daughter waiting for the opening of Al Hadiya gate, on their way to Tammun School by tractor, May 2011. Photo by Isra Muzaffar.

Due to the location of the nearest filling point on the other side of the Hamara checkpoint (at 'Ein Shibli village), there are only two water suppliers meeting the necessary criteria imposed by the Israeli authorities for crossing that checkpoint and to deliver tankered water to the four communities in Al Bqai'a. High transport costs are passed on to residents who pay NIS 25 per cubic liter, up to five times the price paid by households connected to the water network (NIS 4-5). Moreover, due to the uncertainty related to the crossing of the Hamra checkpoint, both suppliers refuse to deliver unless there are at least 6-7 orders on the same day, thus reducing the predictability of water delivery. Community representatives estimated that in the absence of restrictions at the Hamra checkpoint, the price of water from the same filling point could be reduced by a third.

The high prices incurred by communities already affected by poverty have resulted in an extremely low consumption, estimated at less than 30 liters per person per day for all uses, including livestock. To compare, the World Health Organizations recommends 100 liters per person per day as the minimum to meet all domestic needs. The limited access to water has contributed to a further depletion of the financial resources of these communities, to a decline in the health and productivity of their livestock, and to a degradation of hygiene habits.

Food security and nutrition

A UN survey completed in February 2010 among herder communities located in Area C found that food insecurity stood at 79 percent, compared to 25 percent among the wider Palestinian population in the West Bank.⁴⁵ Regarding children under five, the survey also showed alarmingly high levels of acute malnutrition (5.9 percent), underweight (15.3 percent) and stunting (28.5 percent). A year later, following a massive food assistance intervention by UNRWA and WFP, the food insecurity rate has been reduced to 55 percent. Information collected for this report among the four Bedouin communities in Al Bqai'a area suggests a strong causal link between the access restrictions affecting them and the high levels of food insecurity recorded.

THE EMERGENCE OF NON-OFFICIAL SCHOOLS

In an attempt to cope with the impact of the access restrictions, some herder communities, with the support of the Jordan Valley Solidarity Movement, have begun establishing improvised, unofficial schools. In November 2010, one such tented school run by volunteer teachers was established in the community of Ein Al Hilwa serving 29 children of primary school age. Two similar facilities were opened in March 2011 in the communities of Mak-hul (a kindergarten) and Ras 'Ein Al 'Auja (primary). These schools operate under very poor conditions, including inadequate protection from the elements, close proximity to main roads, unhygienic surroundings, and lack of supervision in terms of the curriculum and quality of teachers. "We have no choice. We have children and want them to attend schools without suffering at the checkpoint or having to stay away from their families", said one community leader.

Food consumption in these communities is based on two main sources, both of which have been undermined by the access restrictions: livestock self production - primarily for milk, cheese, eggs and meat; and the purchase of other food items in nearby towns, such as Tammun and Tubas. First, income from herding activities are systematically impaired by the restrictions on access to natural pastures and water sources, forcing residents to rely on expensive fodder and tankered water. Secondly, procedures at the checkpoints have negatively affected the quantity and type of food that can be purchased. Some residents reported that given the typical high temperatures in the area they avoid as much as possible bringing certain products through the checkpoints, as they can be spoiled if a prolonged delay occurs. This raises health concerns related to the limited diet diversity.

VI. AREAS BEHIND THE BARRIER

The Barrier, in conjunction with its gate and permit regime, continues to be the single largest obstacle to Palestinian movement within the West Bank. Approximately 61.8% of the Barrier is complete, a further 8.2% is under construction and 30% is planned but not yet constructed. Similarly to the last few years, very little new construction took place during the reporting period. Most of the recent construction involved re-routings ordered by the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ), as in Bil'in in June 2011, four years after the HCJ ordered a revision of the route.⁴⁶ Other HCJ-ordered re-routings, such as the one currently underway around the Tulkarm community of Khirbet Jubara continue the pattern of removing Palestinian communities from the 'Seam Zone' – the area between the Barrier and the Green Line which has been designated a 'closed military area' – and reconnecting them to the remainder of the West Bank.

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 708 km-long route runs inside the West Bank, leaving some 9.4 percent of West Bank territory (including the so-called No Man's Land) on the 'Israeli' side of the Barrier.⁴⁷ The inclusion of Israeli settlements, together with areas planned for their future expansion, constitutes the major factor for the deviation of the Barrier's route from the Green Line.⁴⁸ The area on the western, or 'Israeli', side of the Barrier includes 71 of the 150 settlements and over 85 percent of the total settler population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰ 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.'⁵¹ UN General Assembly Resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, demanded that Israel comply with its legal obligations as stated in the ICJ opinion.

Access to farmland behind the Barrier continues to be restricted

In most cases, access to land isolated by the Barrier is dependent on obtaining a permit from the Israeli authorities. To apply for, or to renew a permit, applicants must satisfy the security considerations necessary for all Israeli-issued permits and also submit valid ownership or land taxation documents to prove a 'connection to the land' in the closed area.

The impact of this policy was evident during the 2010 olive season when, although additional permits are usually issued to farming families, all 70 applicants in Wadi Shami village in the Bethlehem area had their permit applications rejected due to the lack of land ownership documents. A petition dating back to the introduction of the permit regime in 2003, which challenged the legality of the Barrier permit regime under international and domestic law, was rejected by the Israeli High Court of Justice in April 2011. According to the petitioners, (HaMoked - Centre for the Defence of the Individual and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel) data submitted by the State Attorney to the HCJ indicates that over 90 percent of the applications for permits rejected between 2006 and 2009 were due to a failure to prove 'connection to the land', rather than security concerns.

In a few areas access of farmers is dependent on a 'prior coordination' system. This is the case in the Biddu area in the Jerusalem governorate, where the communities of Beit Ijza, Biddu and Beit Surik (population approx. 11,500) have been cut off from almost fifty percent of their agricultural land. Their

land is now located behind the Barrier in the Giv'at Ze'ev settlement bloc, which is only accessible by means of a cumbersome prior coordination regime.⁵² In 2011, Palestinian access to land in the Biddu area has been extremely restricted due to a dispute between the Israeli DCL and the farmers over the imposition of a 'seasonal calendar', which specifies how many access days are needed per type of crop and amount of land.⁵³

Entry to land between the Barrier and the Green Line is channeled through an official access point, usually a gate, designated on the permit or coordination list. Currently there are 66 Barrier gates, which open on a daily, seasonal or seasonal-weekly basis. The majority of these are gates only open during the olive harvest season and usually only for a limited period during the day. Although the crossings opening times are generally extended during the olive harvest, this is insufficient to allow farmers to carry out essential year-round agricultural activities, such as ploughing, pruning, fertilizing, and pest and weed management. As documented in numerous OCHA Barrier reports, the limited allocation of these permits together with the

restricted number and opening times of the Barrier gates have severely curtailed agricultural practice and undermined rural livelihoods throughout the West Bank.

Continuing decrease in number of Palestinians living in closed areas

The designation of the 'Seam Zone' in the northern West Bank in 2003 also affected Palestinians who reside in the closed area between the Barrier and the Green Line, with those aged 16 and above required to apply for 'permanent resident' permits to continue to live in their own homes. As most services and livelihoods are located on the 'Palestinian' side of the Barrier, residents have to pass through Barrier checkpoints to reach hospitals and health centres, schools and workplaces.⁵⁴ The impact on the residents' access to health is a particular source of concern.⁵⁵ Relatives and service providers living outside the 'closed areas' must obtain 'visitor' permits to access these communities.

Re-routings of the Barrier in recent years have 'reconnected' a number of 'Seam Zone' communities to the remainder of the West Bank. Currently



underway is a revision of the route around Khirbet Jubara (population approx. 300) in the Tulkarm governorate, as a result of an Israeli HCJ decision. The decision followed a petition submitted by the residents, demanding the dismantling of the Barrier separating the village from the rest of the West Bank. While the rerouting 'releases' the community from their current bureaucratic and social limbo, the construction of the new sections of the Barrier has resulted in the requisition and land levelling of 587 dunums of agricultural land belonging to fifty families from the neighboring village of Far'un.⁵⁶

In total, despite the expansion of the 'Seam Zone' further south, the number of people living in the closed areas behind the Barrier decreased from approximately 10,000 in 2003 to 6,500.⁵⁷ However, if the Barrier is completed as planned, approximately 25,000 West Bank Palestinians will reside between the Barrier and the Green Line, in addition to the majority of the 270,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. Most of these communities are in the Bethlehem governorate, where approximately 22,000 residents (in nine rural communities) will be cut off from the urban centre by the route of the Barrier around the Gush Etzion settlement bloc.

ABU QBEITA ENCLAVE: ACCESS TO SCHOOL IMPEDED

Approximately 100 people live in the 'Seam Zone' community of Abu Qbeita in southern Hebron and since early 2009 they have been required to obtain permits to continue living in their homes. To reach the school in the nearby town of Imneizil on the other side of the Barrier, some 15-20 children living in this community have to walk two kilometers (in each direction) every day and cross the Beit Yatir Barrier checkpoint twice a day. To be allowed through the checkpoint, they must show their birth certificates, pass by a metal detector and have their school bags inspected by the checkpoint personnel. The strict checking procedures at this checkpoint are a source of insecurity and result in frequent delays, both of which have reportedly affected the children's psychological wellbeing and their school achievements.

GOODS TO AND FROM THE 'SEAM ZONE' - HEAVILY RESTRICTED

The movement of goods to and from communities located in the closed area behind the Barrier (the 'Seam Zone') is tightly controlled and restricted, both for commercial use and for personal consumption. Shops in the villages of Barta'a ash Sharqiya (pop. 5,000) and Khirbet Jubara (pop. 300), for example, depend on a limited number of pre-registered trucks (42 trucks for Barta'a and 20 for Jubarah), which are able to bring in limited types and quantities of commercial goods from West Bank suppliers. Each truck can carry only two pallets of goods no higher than 1.2 meters high. Construction materials from the West Bank are not allowed into the 'Seam Zone'. While residents can order goods from Israel, which are usually more expensive, they themselves are not allowed to enter Israel as their 'permanent resident' permit is only valid for the 'Seam Zone'. At the Barrier checkpoints, goods must be unloaded from the truck for inspection, a procedure that takes over one hour and often results in damages to the goods. Exit of commercial goods from the 'Seam Zone' to the remainder of the West Bank also requires prior coordination. When this is not granted, trucks must use the regular commercial checkpoint, which increases transaction costs and shipping times. The quantity of goods individuals can bring in for personal consumption is also strictly regulated and restricted.

VII.ACCESS TO LAND NEXT TO SETTLEMENTS

Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967, large swaths of West Bank land have become off limits to Palestinians following their allocation or take over for settlement construction. At present there are nearly 150 settlements, along some 100 unauthorized outposts, with a total population of approximately 500,000. In September 2010, following the expiration of a moratorium on settlement construction declared earlier that year by the Government of Israel, settlement expansion resumed, involving the start of some 2,000 new housing units in 75 different settlements.⁵⁸

The outer limits of the Israeli settlements are physically demarcated by barbed wire, electronic fences and/or patrol roads. Some of these physical barriers were erected in recent years by settlers without any formal authorization, but with the acquiescence of the Israeli authorities. A large number of the settlements include within their outer limits, agricultural land owned and cultivated by Palestinians which has not been formally expropriated or seized for the construction of the settlement or its expansion. For the past decade, access to these lands has been either heavily restricted or totally prevented, with no significant change recorded during this reporting period.

For the last few years, access to private land within the settlements' outer limits has been subjected to the requirement 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. In several cases, this regime is implemented by the Israeli authorities regarding Palestinian land that has been fenced in by Israeli settlers without authorization.

In a larger number of other cases, Palestinian access to agricultural land in the vicinity of settlements has been limited not by physical barriers but by means of systematic intimidation by Israeli settlers. Following a landmark judgment issued by the Israeli HCJ in 2006,⁵⁹ the Israeli authorities began to gradually expand the "prior coordination" regime to agricultural areas where settler intimidation was recurrent. This type of coordination, designed to allow the prior deployment of Israeli forces to secure the area while farmers work, is implemented mostly during the olive harvest season (October-November), rendering access at other times uncertain and dangerous. This regime not only puts the onus to adapt to the access restrictions on the Palestinian farmers, rather than on the violent



Private land belonging to farmers from 'Ein Yabrud village, illegally fenced off by Israeli settlers from 'Ofra settlement, June 2010. Photo by Patrick Zoll.

settlers, but it has also proven largely ineffective in preventing attacks against trees and crops, as most of attacks occur outside the times allocated through the coordination process. During the last olive harvest season, over 3,700 olive trees were burned, uprooted, killed with chemicals or otherwise vandalized.

According to information provided by 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 55 Israeli settlements and settlement outposts, for farmers residing in some 90 Palestinian communities and villages.

These figures, however, are far from reflecting the full scope of the access constraints faced by Palestinian farmers. This is because restrictions on access to land in the vicinity of settlements occur in areas where no coordination mechanism has

been put in place, either because the area has not been fenced off, or because settler violence is not perceived as systematic. In many of these cases the constraints stem from other access restrictions implemented by the army to protect the settlements (see box on Al Khader).

During the previous two reporting periods, the Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din, together with affected Palestinian residents, filed six separate petitions with the Israeli High Court of Justice, challenging the lack of law enforcement by the Israeli authorities against settlers who have illegally fenced Palestinian private land. In a response submitted to the Court in April 2010, the Israeli State Attorney requested to postpone any further discussion on the petitions until a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of illegal fencing is completed by the Civil Administration. This examination is reportedly still ongoing and the Court petition still pending.⁶⁰

AL-KHADER: ACCESS RESTRICTIONS AND SHRINKING SPACE

The historical area of Al-Khader, a town of 11,000 in the Bethlehem district, comprised 21,900 dunums. Since 1967, almost one quarter of this area has been seized by the Israeli authorities and allocated for the construction and expansion of the Gush Etzion settlement bloc. The majority of the land currently cultivated by Al-Khader residents is located to the west of the town in an area which, if the Barrier is completed as planned, will be physically separated from the residential area. Moreover, if the Barrier regime applied elsewhere is replicated here, the area will also be declared a “closed military zone” and access restricted to permit holders. Even though Barrier construction in this area has been discontinued in recent years, access of farmers has gradually deteriorated.

In April 2011, OCHA interviewed members of three families who cultivate land in an area known as Khamlet Alfahem, which comprises some 400 dunums of vineyards and olive groves. The area is surrounded by Road 60 from the east, and by the Gush Etzion settlements from the other sides. Farmers reported that their agricultural livelihoods have been gradually undermined in recent years due to a range of Israeli measures, including:

- the blockage of two dirt roads leading into the area forcing farmers to use a longer alternative route that they had to open at their own expense;
- the prevention of access to the area during the Jewish holidays by the armed guards of the adjacent Elea'zar settlement;
- the recent ICA declaration closing a piece of land in the area for the purpose of “preventing friction” with settlers claiming ownership over the land;
- the demolition of three water cisterns used for irrigation due to the lack of building permits.

CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Most of the movement restrictions addressed in this report were introduced during the four years that followed the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000. The Israeli authorities have justified them as temporary measures to contain Palestinian violence against Israeli soldiers and civilians. However, the majority of them have remained in place, hindering the access of the Palestinian population to livelihoods and basic services, including health, education and water supply. As a result of all types of movement restrictions, there are some 70 villages and communities, with a combined population of nearly 200,000, compelled to use detours that are between two to five times longer than the direct route to the closest city. This is in spite of the fact that the second Intifada ended many years ago, that virtually all Palestinian organizations operating in the West Bank have renounced violence, and that the security forces of the Palestinian Authority maintain close security ties with their Israeli counterparts.

The above does not mean that the situation has remained static. While very few easings were recorded during the reporting period, the ability of Palestinians to travel between the main urban centers (excluding East Jerusalem) is significantly improved compared to three years ago. However, rather than rolling back the system of movement restrictions to the situation that prevailed prior to the second Intifada, that system has become further entrenched. This is due to the gradual emergence of an alternative road network (entailing tunnels, underpasses and upgraded roads), which 'compensates' for the loss or reduced access of Palestinians to the main road network. Despite the immediate respite that this alternative network provides to the affected populations, it also entrenches the exclusion of Palestinians from main roads and contributes to the fragmentation of the West Bank.

At the same time, some of the main roads, along with extensive land resources that became inaccessible to Palestinians, are increasingly used to service the Israeli settlements established throughout the West Bank: their security, their welfare and their connectivity to Israeli. While the settlements are illegal under international humanitarian law, the settler population continues to grow and in 2010

surpassed the half million people. As a result of a ten-month moratorium on settlement construction declared by the Government of Israel in 2009, 2010 saw an overall decline in the number of 'building starts' of new housing units, compared to previous years. However, since the moratorium was lifted in September 2010 settlement expansion resumed at a rapid pace.

As the occupying power, Israel is responsible for ensuring that the humanitarian needs of the local population in the oPt are met, and that Palestinians are able to exercise their human rights.⁶¹ Indeed, the right to freedom of movement can be limited under international law if legitimate security needs so require. However, the limitation must only be "to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation", it should not involve discrimination on prohibited grounds, and must be consistent with other legal obligations applicable to the state.⁶² In the case of Israel's restrictions on the West Bank, given the illegality of settlements under international law, and the close relationship between the settlements and the system of movement restrictions, the legality of the latter is called into question.

To reduce the vulnerability of those affected by poor access to services and livelihoods and to comply with its legal obligations under international law, Israel must aim at dismantling the system of movement restrictions. While the removal of some obstacles in previous years was a step in the right direction, much more needs to be done to achieve significant progress. Further steps must include: the removal of all obstacles blocking the historical entrances to towns and cities, the revocation of the permit regime associated with the Barrier, the opening up of 'closed military zones' for Palestinian movement and use of the land, and the lifting of restrictions on vehicular access to the Jordan Valley and within the Old City of Hebron. Israel should cease all settlement activity.

While Israel bears primary responsibility to rectify the current situation, third states share responsibility for ensuring respect for international law in the oPt. Efforts by third-state countries are crucial to ensure that international humanitarian law (IHL) is respected and humanitarian vulnerability reduced.

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 of 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 (including those which were open when recorded by OCHA) are marked on the maps as closures, 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: VILLAGES AND COMMUNITIES FORCED TO USE LONG DETOURS*

Governorate	Village	Population	Main obstacles	Additional distance to main city/road (in km)
Tubas	Mak-hul	120	Trenches and earthwalls on Road 578	20
	Al Hadidiya	230		20
	Khirbet Samra	50		17
Ramallah	'Ein Sinya	766	Earthmounds into Road 465	6
	Burqa	2,251	Roadblock + checkpoint into Ramallah	13
	Deir Dibwan	5,657	Earthmound into Road 60 + roadblock and checkpoint into Ramallah	11
	Beitin	2,308	Earthmounds into Road 60 and Ramallah + checkpoint	12
	'Ein Yabrud	3,230	Earthmound and roadblock into Road 60 and Ramallah	5
	Kafr Malik	3,002	Earthmound into Road 458	12
	Kharbatha Al Misbah	5,613	Roadblocks, gate and road barrier on Road 443 and Beituniya checkpoint	
	At Tira	1,463		7
Jerusalem	Nabi Samuel	275	Barrier (Jerusalem envelope)	20
	Al Khalayla	750		20
	Bet Hanina Al Balad	1,143		13
	Al Judeira	2,428		8
	A Jib	4,503		8
	Bir Nabala	5,140		8
	Qalandiya village	1,258		8
	Biddu	7,253		20
	Beit Surik	4,147		20
	Beit Ijza	745		20
	Beit Duqqu	1,730		20
	Al Qubeiba	3,384		20
	Kharayib Umm Lahim	387		20
	Qatanna	6,890		20
	Beit Anan	4,247		20
	Al Eizariya	18,785		16
	Sawahra Ash-Sharqiya	6,188		16
	Abu Dis	11,504		16
	Hizma	6,691		9
Bethlehem	Wadi Rahhal	1,563	Checkpoint on entrance of Efrat settlement + Barrier	20
	Wadi Nis	850		20

* Includes villages and communities that in order to reach the nearest city or main service center must use a detour, which is at least twice as long as the historical direct route.

Hebron	Qilqis	1,291	Earthmound into Road 60	7-4
	Beit Einun	2,023	Roadblock into Road 60	
	Al Fawwar Camp	7,353	Roadblock on the main southern route into Hebron	10
	Hadab al Fawwar	2,155		10
	Wadi ash Shajna	803		10
	Deir Razih	301		10
	Khirbet Bisam	100		10
	Karma	1,557		10
	Khallet al Arabi	150		10
	Beit 'Amra	2,433		10
Tulkarm	Ramin	1,932	Earthmounds into Road 557	7
	Shufa	2,347	Roadblocks on the direct route to Izbat Shufa and Tulkarm	14
Qalqiliya	Kafr Kadum	3,188	Closed roadgates on main road to Nablus	14
Nablus	Aqraba	8,873	Main road to Nablus prohibited by military order	20
	Yanun	110	Main road to Nablus prohibited by military order	20
Salfit	Haris	3,376	Checkpoint next to Ari'el settlement (partially open for authorizes buses)	15
	Kifl Haris	3,523		15
	Qira	1,240		15
	Deir Istiya	3,420		15
	Marda	2,161		9
	Qarawat Bani Hassan,	4,123		15
	Sarta	2,743		15
	Biddiya	8,747		15
	Mas-ha	2,173		15
	Az Zawiya	5,157		15
	Rafat	2,019		16
Jericho	Marj Na'ja	768	Roadblock on northern route to Jericho	10
	Az Zubeidat	1,526		10
	Marj Al Ghazal	218		10
	Al Jiftlik	3,987		10
	Fasayil	1,157		10
	Wadi Al Qilt	51	Earthmound on the main road to Jericho	9
	Deir Al Qilt	106		16
Total		195,662		

ENDNOTES

1. The figures for both years exclude about 100 obstacles deployed throughout the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2).
2. For a detailed breakdown of all affected villages see Annex II.
3. A month after assuming OC Central Command of the IDF, Maj Gen. Mizrachi assessed the performance of the Palestinian security forces in the West Bank as "excellent". According to Mizrachi, "we provide a high level of security in Judea and Samaria, and much of it is thanks to the IDF and the GSS, but quite a bit is also thanks to the Palestinians". He estimated that of 45-55 percent of the results are "thanks to them". See, Ben Caspit, "Mizrahi Gets a Shock", *Ma'ariv*, 12 March 2010.
4. For the methodology used in the survey and a definition of the different types of obstacles, see Annex I.
5. For further elaboration on developments related to the Barrier and the agricultural gates see Section VI of this report.
6. For further elaboration on developments related to the access restrictions and their impact in the H2 area of Hebron City, see Section IV of this report.
7. Checkpoints controlling access to East Jerusalem for communities isolated from the rest of the city by the Barrier are considered enclaves.
8. For a summary and analysis of these measures see OCHA, *West Bank Movement and Access Update*, June 2009 and June 2010.
9. Some of these tunnels and underpasses were built in recent years by the Israeli authorities to compensate for the loss of access along certain roads blocked by the Barrier, and were called "Fabric of Life" roads. For a discussion on the impact of these roads see OCHA, *West Bank Movement and Access Update*, June 2010.
10. One of the frequent justifications for maintaining the closure of key roads into Palestinian towns and villages mentioned by the Israeli military in meetings with OCHA 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.
11. For examples and further discussion of this phenomenon see OCHA, *West Bank Movement and Access Update*, June 2010.
12. The Civil Administration, Progress report on transport sector developments, February 2011.
13. This alternative route runs across the built up area of Yabrud, Dura Al Qar'a, Al Jalazzun Camp, Surda, and then into Ramallah.
14. Nablus has the highest concentration of businesses in the West Bank vis-à-vis the rest of the governorate; one-third 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
15. This route however, has been opened during part of the reporting period, following the closure of the Huwwara route for the performance of upgrading works.
16. Shortly after the beginning of the second Intifada in 2000, Huwwara became one of the most problematic checkpoints in the West Bank, involving various restrictions, prolonged delays and high levels of friction. Since June 2009, however, Israeli forces have been conducting only random checks of cars entering and exiting the city, with traffic and movement of people generally flowing without delay.
17. Villages in the most southern part of the Nablus governorate, must also pass a fully-staffed checkpoint (Tappuah) before they can reach that entrance, where checks of south bound traffic are regularly performed.
18. Advanced health services include an emergency center, a laboratory and specialized clinics. Alquds Open University has only one branch in the governorate in Salfit city, as well as The School of Industry and Commerce.
19. Qalandiya (north), Zeitoun (east) and Gilo (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 checkpoint 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 checkpoints designated by the Israeli authorities for entry into occupied East Jerusalem.
20. See OCHA, *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns*, March 2011.
21. In 2010, Palestinians with West Bank ID cards accounted for 64 percent of total patients to East Jerusalem hospitals and patients referred from Gaza were another 2 percent. (WHO oPt, "Referral of Patients from Gaza," 2011. UNRWA also operates a large health centre inside the Old City of Jerusalem and reserves 40 beds in Augusta Victoria Hospital for refugee patients from the remainder of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
22. Chronic patients can receive permits to cover the period of specific treatment, based on hospital request. According to the Israeli Civil Administration, approximately 150,000 permits were issued for patients from the West Bank,

and their escorts and visitors, to hospitals in East Jerusalem in 2010. Another 25,000 permits were issued to patients from the West Bank, and their escorts and visitors, to hospitals in Israel.

23. According to the Israeli Civil Administration there were 550 cases of Palestinian ambulances allowed entry to East Jerusalem without prior coordination in 2010.
24. See interview with Dr. Tawfiq Nasser in OCHA, *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns*, March 2011, p110.
25. In the context of a Protocol signed in 1997 between Israel and the PLO, the Israeli authorities handed over the direct administration and control over some 80 percent of Hebron City, known as H1, to the Palestinian Authority.
26. These include: Tel Rumeida, Beit Hadassa, Beit Romano, Avraham Avinu and Giv'at Ha'avot. The precise number of settlers in the City Center has not been made public. Also, the number fluctuates, since many of the residents in the settlement are yeshiva students or foreign visitors.
27. See, B'Tselem and ACRI, *Ghost Town: Israel's Separation Policy and Forced Eviction of Palestinians from the Center of Hebron*, May 2007.
28. See, *Ghost Town*, Ibid.
29. Information provided to OCHA by the Water Department of the Municipality of Hebron
30. See, *Ghost Town*, p. 27.
31. Subject to prior coordination, teachers are allowed to bypass the metal detectors, however problems in the implementation of this arrangement occur regularly.
32. Letter from Harel Weinberg, IDF legal advisor for the West Bank, to Shai Nitzan, of the State Attorney's Office, 31 January 2007. Cited in *Ghost Town*.
33. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations, Israel, Consideration of reports submitted by states parties (seventieth session, 2007), CERD/C/ISR/CO/13 (2007), para. 32.
34. This route leads both to the central and northern sections of the Jordan Valley, as well as to the southern section along the Dead Sea coast. Access to the latter is occasionally controlled, but generally not prevented, by soldiers staffing the Dead Sea partial checkpoint.
35. IDF Spokesperson, Investigation of Attacks at Bekaot Crossing Concluded, 25 January 2011.
36. Ibid.
37. For further elaboration on the mechanisms used for the seizure of the land see, B'Tselem, *Dispossession and Exploitation – Israel's Policy in the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea*, May 2011.
38. This excludes areas within the settlements' Regional Council (but outside the municipal boundaries).
39. The declarations were made pursuant to the Order Regarding Security Provisions (Closing of Training Areas) (No. 377), 5730 – 1970, and section 90 of the Order Regarding Security Provisions (Judea and Samaria) (No. 378), 5730 – 1970, which was amended numerous times.
40. World Bank, *The Underpinnings of the Future Palestinian State: Sustainable Growth and Institutions*, Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (21 September 2010), 15.
41. The information was collected through a focus group discussion with representatives and community leaders carried out on May 2011. In addition to the permanent residents there are additional 50-70 people who are considered seasonal residents.
42. The other half attend schools located east of the checkpoints, mainly in Ein Al Beida and Frush Beit Dajan villages.
43. Under the Interim Agreements between Israel and the PLO from 1995, any water and sanitation related project to be carried out in the West Bank must be approved by the the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Water Committee. If the approved project is located entirely or partially in Area C, it must also be approved by the Israeli Civil Administration. For further details on the functioning of these mechanisms see The World Bank, *Assessment of Restrictions on Palestinian Water Sector Development*, 2009.
44. The suggested location is only 700 meters away from Al Hadidiya, 3 km from Mak-hul, 5 km from Samra and 8 km from Humsa. This is on average less than a third the average distance to 'Ein Shibli.
45. UNRWA, WFP and UNICEF, *Food Security and Nutrition Assessment*, February 2010.
46. In 2007, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered the state to dismantle and re-route a section of the Barrier in Bil'in to return village land on which Modi'in Illit settlement was projected to expand. In May and again December 2008, the High Court found that alternative routes proposed by the state did not adhere to the 2007 ruling. In April 2009, the state proposed a third alternative route which returned 607 dunums of land isolated by the original route to the village. Bil' in has been the site of weekly protests against the Barrier since 2005, involving local Palestinians together with Israeli and international sympathizers. Two Palestinian protestors have been killed in the protests, with countless others injured.
47. Four routes of the Barrier have been approved by the Israeli cabinet in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. The map of the current route was published on the website of the Ministry of Defense in April 2006. (See www.seamzone.mod.gov.il). For a comparison of the successive Barrier routes and revisions see

OCHA, *Five Years after the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion*, July 2009, pp. 10-11. http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_barrier_report_july_2009_english_low_res.pdf For more on the background and impact of the Barrier see the UN video documentary, 'Walled Horizons', narrated by Pink Floyd founding member, Roger Waters, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLqd0z2lrRY>

48. 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.
49. In East Jerusalem, as in the remainder of the West Bank, the location of Israeli settlements, including land allotted for their future expansion, constitutes one of the principal factors for the deviation of the route of the Barrier from the Green Line. All of the settlements which have been established within the municipal boundary since 1967 have been included on the 'Jerusalem' side of the Barrier. However, if the Barrier is completed as planned, the large 'metropolitan' settlements in the wider Jerusalem area, located outside the municipal boundary, will be also be encircled and brought onto the 'Jerusalem' side.
50. ICJ, *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004, para. 141.
51. *Ibid.*, para. 163.
52. Farmers put their names on a list compiled every two weeks, on average, by the Palestinian District Coordination Office, which in turn submits the list for approval to the Israeli District Coordination Liaison (DCL). The DCL will then provide the list with the approved names to the Border Police who, together, staff the gates and control farmers' access. These various layers of bureaucracy involved in this coordination mechanism often mean that approving a list can take up to ten days, during which time the gates are usually closed. See OCHA, *Seven Years after the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Barrier: The Impact of the Barrier in the Jerusalem Area*, July 2011, p. 7.
53. Between January and 1 May 2011, the gates only opened for a total of six days: more recently (22 June to 5 July), the five Biddu gates opened five days a week, with three openings each day. However, as a result of the protracted closings, farmers were unable to perform necessary ploughing, trimming, spraying, and seedling work, thus affecting the quality and quantity of the olive, nectarine, peach and grape harvests and further undermining the economic situation of the community. As a consequence of gate closures, Biddu farmers have missed olive, peach and nectarine harvests in both 2009 and 2010, resulting in a significant loss of income as well as an increasing threat to food security in the area.
54. For more details on 'Seam Zone' communities, see OCHA, *Five Years after the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion*, pp. 16-19.
55. The requirement for 'visitor permits' to enter the 'Seam Zone' generally prevents doctors from providing house calls, ambulances from collecting patients and mobile teams from providing health services. As a precautionary measure, pregnant women often leave this community one month before delivery to avoid complications. See OCHA-WHO, *Barrier update: Six years after the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Barrier: the Impact of the Barrier on Health*, July 2010.
56. In February 2011, the Israeli Civil Administration started to insist on permits for UN staff members who hold West Bank ID cards to access communities isolated behind the Barrier, thereby denying vulnerable beneficiaries access to UN health and social services. Prior to these demands the UN coordinated travel to some of these areas by informing the relevant DCL the day before via telephone that access was required. In June this restriction was lifted and UN agencies have been able to enter the seam zone with coordination only and in some cases without coordination.
57. The extension of the 'Seam Zone' designation in February 2009 affected only a limited number of people: a few localities between the Barrier and the municipal boundary of Jerusalem with a total population of approximately 500, and three families (approximately 100 people) in Beit Yattir in southern Hebron.
58. Peace Now, *Interim Report: Settlement Activity since the End of the Moratorium*, 20 May 2011. Some 13,000 units can be built without a need for further approval. The previous construction moratorium excluded settlements in East Jerusalem.
59. HCJ 9593/04, Rashad Murad and others v. IDF Commander in Judea and Samaria.
60. Information provided to OCHA by Yesh Din.
61. As the occupying power, Israel is responsible for the implementation of both International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. On the applicability of these legal bodies see ICJ, *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004.
62. See for example articles 4 and 12(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.



Photo by: OCHA

Zufin checkpoint, near Qalqilia



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**