



The Apartheid Wall:

a policy of segregation based on political, social and economic discrimination against a set group

In April 2002, the Israeli government established a steering committee to implement the separation wall plan, which called for its immediate construction in the northern West Bank and the Jerusalem area. The wall is made up of either an 8 meter-high (25 feet) concrete barrier that includes watchtowers, along with a 30 to 100 meter-wide buffer zone intended for electrified fences, trenches, cameras, sensors and security patrols; or it takes the form of a barbed wire wall with the same buffer zone.

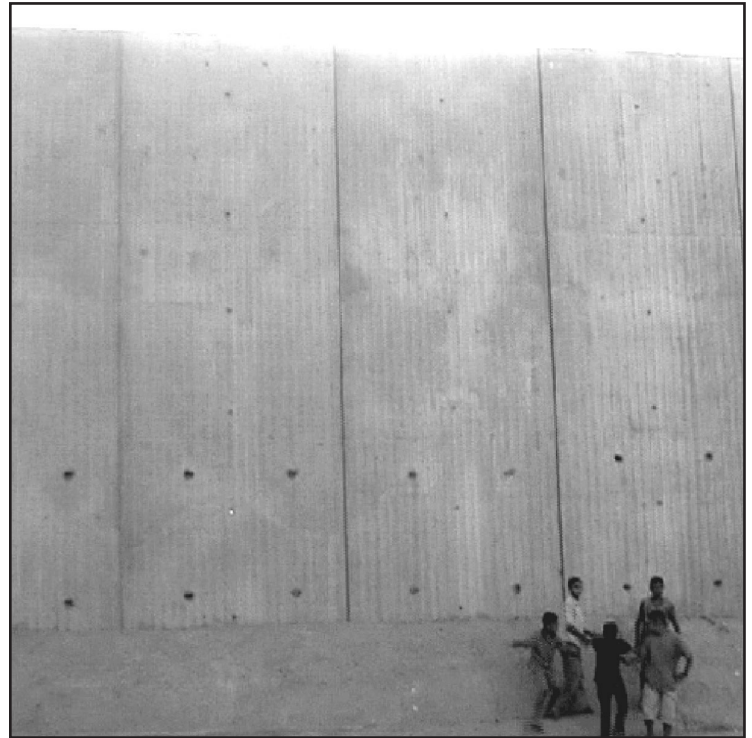
At present, the wall is being built in the Qalqiliya, Tulkarem, Jenin, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem Districts (five of the nine West Bank districts), and up to 6 km east of the Green Line, inside the West Bank. In the northern three districts alone, subjects of the wall's "first phase," the wall is isolating - and de facto annexing - over 120,000 dunums (some 30,000 acres) of land, and at least 35 water wells west of the wall belonging to some 50 communities, including thousands of farmers. In this "first phase," an additional 16 communities already are trapped between the wall and the Green Line (1948 armistice line border of Israel). While Israel extends this so-called "security" measure deep inside the West Bank, the wall will enclave 95,000 Palestinians - 4.5% of West Bank population - in addition to 200,000 Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem, who will be totally cut off from the rest of the West Bank.

Contrary to common belief, the Apartheid Wall is not on, or, in most cases, not even near, the Green Line. Israel's massive land grab along the wall, if completed, will seal the fate of the West Bank into caged cantons. The wall's size, magnitude, and consequences on the ground are considered one of the most destructive measures initiated by Israel since its depopulation of over 500 Palestinian villages 55 years ago. Amid the pretense of negotiations and a "road map" for peace that prevail in the media, the Israeli authorities continue to wreak more destruction every day, making the Apartheid Wall map a clear indicator of the actual path that is being laid out for the further decimation of Palestine.

Consequences to the Victims and the Agenda of the Violators

Not including the various proposed wall expansions, the present construction translates into the confiscation of at least 10% of the West Bank. As of May 2003, some 25 Israeli companies have been contracted to work on the wall, and 250 bulldozers have already razed over 14,500 dunums of land for the footprint of the wall, including the uprooting of some 102,000 trees, and the destruction of 35,000 meters of water pipes. Inhabitants of the affected areas, therefore, are losing most of their agricultural lands, infrastructure and livelihood on which they have depended for many generations, indeed centuries. In notable cases, this destruction also forecloses Palestinian villager's only access to water sources.

Moreover, the wall totally severs the economic, social and family relations among the affected inhabitants. They are trapped between the wall and the Green Line, and will be compelled to leave or face complete isolation from all economic survival and vital services. Some 40,000 residents of Qalqiliya town, which used to be a major economic center in the region, is now completely surrounded by the wall with a military checkpoint as the sole passage. Consequently, Qalqiliya already faces a 70% unemployment rate. At least 10% of the town's population have had to leave their caged community, exemplifying the fate of Qalqiliya and the tens of other villages and towns near the Apartheid Wall.



The wall is made up of either an 8 meter-high (25 feet) concrete barrier that includes concrete watchtowers, along with a 30-100 meter-wide buffer zone intended for electrified fences, trenches, cameras, sensors and security patrols; or it takes the form of a barbed wire wall with the same buffer zone. Both versions fully prevent indigenous inhabitants' access to land, services, and employment. In many instances, the wall stands just meters away from houses.

The wall's building plans and path have changed several times to confiscate further land and water and annex illegal Jewish settler colonies, further revealing Israel's true objectives. The government is now formally adopting the latest expansion plan that the Yesha settlers council formulated in direct consultation with the Israeli Ministry of Defense. This latest plan, which is already being implemented in the northern West Bank, was made public in mid-March 2003, when the Israeli government announced that the wall's path would be altered to include Ariel and Immanuel settler colonies to accommodate the settlers' wishes. The following week, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon declared the building of a second wall, in addition to the minimum 360 kilometers of the wall presently under construction. The second wall would be located in the eastern West Bank, encompassing the settler colonies near the Jordan Valley and its water resources under total Israeli control. If completed, both walls will reach 650 km in length, effectively slicing the West Bank into three separated Palestinian ghettos.

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Human Rights Violations and the State Legal Duty:

By this latest device of the occupation, the Israeli state violates, among others, the human rights to property, work, freedom of movement, water, and all the elements of the right to adequate housing, especially security of tenure, access to public goods and services (including education and health), enjoyment of natural resources (including land and water), freedom from dispossession and deprivation of means of subsistence, the right to participation & self-expression and physical security. All of these are internationally recognized elements of the right to adequate housing. Thereby also, Israel flouts articles 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23 & 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and instrument of customary internal law.

Moreover, on 3 January 1979, the State of Israel ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and, on 3 October 1991, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Consequently, as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing has pointed out in the report he submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in May 2003, Israel now violates its treaty obligations, inter alia, under articles 6, 7, 11 & 12 of the ICESCR, including duties spelled out in General Comments 4 & 7 on the human right to adequate housing, and General Comment 15 on the right to water. Israel hereby also breaches articles 1, 17.1 & 19 of the ICCPR, and articles 1, 5(e) & 6 of CERD. The first article of these international treaties, as with the three other main UN human rights conventions that Israel has ratified, reaffirms the important obligations to implement the principles that override all human rights, namely self-determination, nondiscrimination and, in the case of ICESCR, non-regressivity.

Finally, as an occupying power, the Israeli state has violated the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague Regulations of 1907, as they prohibit any requisition of land in occupied territories, the destruction or seizure of property and any changes to property not required by military necessity; prohibitions against altering the legal system in an occupied territory, practicing collective punishment and transferring population, including the implantation of settlers.

Source: <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article1791.shtml>

Amnesty International on the Apartheid Wall

excerpts from Amnesty International press release, 08/09/2003

The construction in recent months of a wall/fence inside the West Bank has resulted in further restrictions on the movement of Palestinians, cutting tens of thousands of people from the rest of the West Bank and/or from their farming land and irrigation water.

"Israel must refrain from constructing walls/fences or other permanent structures inside the Occupied Territories which constitute or result in permanent restrictions on the free movement of Palestinians within the Occupied Territory or in the arbitrary destruction or seizure of their property," said Amnesty International.

Israel contends that the wall/fence is being built to prevent Palestinians from entering Israel to carry out attacks. Yet, the wall/fence runs mostly deep inside the West Bank, and not on the pre-1967 border between Israel and the West Bank. This, in order to isolate the local Palestinian communities from nearby Israeli settlements, which have been established in violation of international law.

Amnesty International also urged Israel to put an immediate end to the construction or expansion of Israeli settlements and related infrastructure and to take measures to evacuate Israeli settlers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Israel should have never transferred its civilian population into the Occupied Territories. This is a violation of international humanitarian law. Now Israel must remedy this violation by taking concrete measures to evacuate the settlers," said the organization. "Not only are the settlements illegal, they are constructed and maintained in a discriminatory manner and are the proximate cause of so many of the arbitrary restrictions on movement and other human rights abuses."

For a full copy of the report or the summary, please see:
Israel and the Occupied Territories, Surviving under siege: The impact of movement restrictions on the right to work
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE150012003>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE150642003>

Relative size of the Berlin wall and Israel's Apartheid Wall

This graphical representation accurately shows relative height and length of the Berlin Wall next to Israel's Wall, although the vertical/horizontal orientations each graphic are not to scale.

Berlin Wall

96 miles long (155 kilometers). Average height 11.8 feet (3.6 metres)



Human height

Israel's Wall

To be at least 403 miles long (650 kilometers). Maximum* height 25 feet (8 meters).



Human height

*It is not clear whether the shorter fence sections are a first stage of construction.