

More information

- American Friends Service Committee - Middle East Peacebuilding Programs
www.afsc.org/middleeast/peace/israel-palestine.htm
- PENGON (Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network)
www.pengon.org
- Palestinian Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign
www.stopthewall.org
- B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
www.btselem.org
- Gush Shalom: The Israeli Peace Bloc
www.gush-shalom.org
- Congressional Research Service
www.house.gov/MarkGreen/crs.htm
- U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation- Stop the Wall Project
www.endtheoccupation.org
- ISM: International Solidarity Movement
www.palsolidarity.org
- UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency
www.un.org/unrwa



COURTESY PENGON/Anti-apartheid Wall Campaign

Waiting under the sun and heat to pass through the gate at Jayyus, Oct. 2003



Five things you can do to help

- Write a letter to the editor or Op Ed for your local paper.
- Call up your local newspapers and media stations to complain when they run erroneous reports on Israel's occupation — and to thank them when they get it right.
- Working with local peace and justice groups, contact your elected city, state, and national representatives to demand that U.S. policy support a just peace based on human rights and international law, and stop aid to Israel until it ends the occupation.
- Join a local peace and justice group and/or your local Quaker meeting.
- Get your local group to join the U.S. Campaign to End the Israel Occupation (www.endtheoccupation.org) to join your efforts with others around the nation.

OCCUPATION REALITIES

AFSC Middle East Resource Series

Middle East Task Force | Spring 2004

The Wall

Since September 2000, the beginning of the second Intifada (Palestinian uprising), violence between Palestinians and Israelis has increased to an unprecedented level. Since June 2002, Israel has been building a wall inside the West Bank citing security reasons. However, because of its location and the impact this structure has on the Palestinian residents of the West Bank, the Wall is a violation of international law and Palestinian human rights.

It effectively confiscates Palestinian land in the West Bank, destroys property and permanently alters occupied lands, and thus gravely breaches the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) and the 1907 Hague Regulations which govern the obligations of an occupying power. The Wall is against the law. It is a barrier to the prospects for peace.

The Wall Confiscates Palestinian Land

The Green Line, established as the Armistice Line after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, is an internationally recognized border between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) — the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The Wall, in most cases, is being built inside the West Bank, cutting in from the Green Line as far as ten miles at some points. It is estimated that, if the Wall is completed, some 50 percent — 55 percent of the West Bank will be de facto annexed to Israel¹.

Palestinian Homes and Agricultural Lands are Destroyed for the Wall

The occupying Israeli military forces have declared a buffer zone alongside the Wall as a no-man's land, paving the way for large-scale home and land demolitions. As of April 2003, some 3,670 acres of land have been razed for this buffer zone. More than 102,000 trees have been uprooted, many centuries-old olive trees².

The Wall Isolates the Palestinian People

If the Wall is completed, an estimated 320,000 Palestinians — 16 percent of the population of the West

The Components of the Wall

The Wall has multiple structures: concrete and fence.

The concrete Wall is 25 feet high with watchtowers and firing posts every 200 meters.

The fence-like Wall is made of layers of razor wire.

Both wire and concrete structures of the Wall are equipped with 230-330 foot wide buffer zones that include electrical fencing, sand paths to trace footprints, sensors and cameras.

In total, the entire structure will be at least 400 miles long, three times as long as the Berlin Wall.

AFSC principles and positions

The AFSC's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is based on the Quaker belief that there is that of God in each person and a commitment to nonviolent action for social change. Based on these beliefs and within the framework of international law and the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the AFSC strives for a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians that provides justice and security for all peoples living in the region.



American Friends Service Committee

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PEACE BUILDING UNIT



A bulldozer razes land for the path of the Wall.

Bank — will be isolated between Wall and Green Line, and 200,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem will be entirely cut off from the rest of the West Bank³.

According to Human Rights Watch, “The barrier is creating walled-in enclaves confining tens of thousands of people. It will institutionalize a system in which all movement is sharply curtailed...and endanger Palestinians’ access to basic services like education and medical care⁴.”

The Wall is made possible by U.S. Aid to Israel

The Israeli government has allocated more than \$2 billion for the construction of the Wall even though it is confronting serious fiscal budget deficits. On average, the U.S. gives Israel \$3 billion a year in aid, but in April 2003, the U.S. Congress authorized \$9 billion in U.S.-backed loan guarantees to Israel⁵. At that time the State Department announced that, in accordance with the stipulations of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, any Israeli government expenditures beyond the Green Line would result in dollar-for-dollar loan guarantee reductions.

In August 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, “It’s when the fence begins to intrude on land that is not on the Israeli side of the Green Line or starts

to intrude in a way that makes it more difficult for us to make the case for a viable Palestinian state ... it is appropriate for us to say to our Israeli friends we have a problem here,”⁶

Despite the fact that the U.S. government acknowledges that the Israeli government is constructing the Wall beyond the green Line, it has failed to reduce loan guarantees in accordance with the stipulations of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act (though small, symbolic deductions have been made).

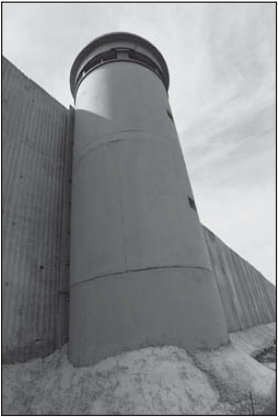
The Wall Does Not Make Anyone Safer

The construction of the Wall between two peoples will not create peace, but instead will exacerbate the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. The means of construction and the path of the Wall are highly destructive and illegal. Security cannot be achieved if the tool for security is the cause of suffering for a people.

[The Wall] has nothing to do with security; it certainly will not bring peace. It will only bring more hatred and bloodshed. The very idea that an obstacle of cement or wire could stop the hatred is ludicrous.

Uri Avnery, The Evil Wall, May 8, 2003

Voices from the Region



Concrete watch tower in Qalqiliya

Whatever we do they’ve got the power – they’re going to build the Wall. We just want to appeal to everyone to stop Israel from stealing the land. It’s not for security reasons. They need to be stopped from killing the old trees, trees which are as old as the Roman Empire.

Najeh Shalabi —
Mas’ha, West Bank⁷

Endnotes

¹ www.stopthewall.org/ and Gush Shalom <http://www.gush-shalom.org/thewall/thewall.pdf>

² Palestinian Environmental NGO’s Network

³ Palestinian Environmental NGO’s Network

⁴ Human Rights Watch
(www.hrw.org)

⁵ Public Law No. 108-11: Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act. 2003

⁶ Palestine Chronicle, U.N. Chides Israel over Separation Wall, August 11, 2003)

⁷ Palestinian Environmental NGO’s Network

⁸ Yedioth Aharonoth, A Wall In Their Heart, May 23, 2003
(www.gush-shalom.org/archives/wall_yediot_eng.html)

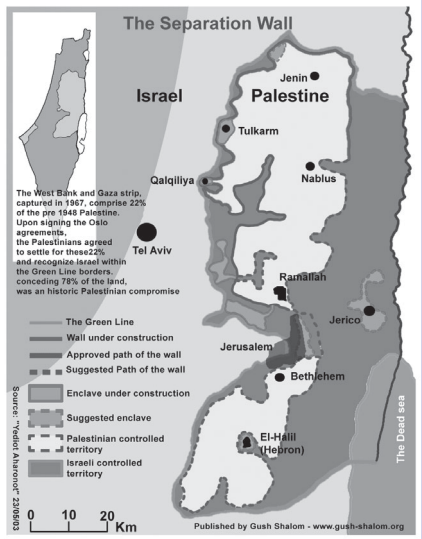
⁹ Roadmap for Peace, Published by the U.S. Department of State, April 30, 2003
(www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm)

Case Study

Reality in Qalqiliya

The West Bank community of Qalqiliya has been hermetically sealed by the Wall. It surrounds the entire city and leaves one single gate for entry which is patrolled by Israeli Defense Forces soldiers who control the Palestinian residents’ ability to enter and exit. Since the beginning of the second Intifada (uprising) against the occupation in September 2000, unemployment and poverty have been on the rise in Qalqiliya. Imposed closures prevent residents employed in Israel from going to work. On average, a family of five to seven members is now living on \$60 USD per month.

Because Qalqiliya sits above the Western Aquifer — which produces more than half of the freshwater resources in the West Bank — the area is agriculturally rich. Due to closures, dependence on agricultural lands for income has increased over the last three years, thus agricultural production constitutes 45percent of Qalqiliya’s economy. However, the Wall will cause Qalqiliya to be isolated from at least thirteen of its groundwater wells. In addition, the Wall construction has led to the confiscation and isolation of more than 900 acres of land and has destroyed another 550 acres. Access to water wells and agricultural lands is crucial for the subsistence of the residents living in Qalqiliya.



(Source: PENGON)

For hundreds of thousands of Palestinian farmers, the Wall will represent a prison with no warden, with no means of sustaining their families — to the point that will force many of them to simply leave their homes, and try living elsewhere as refugees. This is an intention of quiet ethnic cleansing, the sort that cannot be photographed, but is nevertheless as effective and devastating.

Ha’aretz, “The Separation Fence Will
Hurt Palestinians Immensely”, May 18, 2003

The fence is a death sentence for the Palestinians. [It] is a mistake, it will only exacerbate the problem, it will make people more frustrated. People here want to work, and you are creating more hatred instead of the possibility of living together.

Shmil Elad – Einav Israeli Settlement, West Bank⁸

U.S. Policy

In 2003 the U.S. -led Quartet, which includes the United Nations, Russia, and the European Union, launched a *Roadmap to Peace*. Among the objectives in this document, the *Roadmap to Peace* is to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and create a “viable” Palestinian state. The steps to achieving these goals include an end to “confiscation and/or demolition of Palestinian homes

and property” as well as to “destruction of Palestinian institutions and infrastructure.” The *Roadmap* also calls on Israel to take “measures to improve the humanitarian situation [in the occupied territories]⁹.”

However, it is clear that the construction of the Wall — through home demolition, land confiscation, the uprooting of crops, the isolation of communities, and separation from vital resources — undermines the prospect of a viable Palestinian state, and precludes the possibility of a two-state solution. These actions contradict the stipulations of the *Roadmap*, yet the Quartet has not taken further measures to ensure its proper implementation, and the U.S. Congress has failed to hold the Israeli government accountable, despite Congress’ large aid package to Israel.