



THE WALL

Since 2002 Israel has been constructing a Wall (also known as the Apartheid Wall) in the West Bank. The Wall is comprised of 8-metre high concrete walls, ditches, trenches, electric-fences, patrol roads and barbed wire. As currently projected, the Wall will be 725 km long when complete.

The Wall does not follow the 1949 armistice line – the Green Line – but rather significantly veers eastwards into the heart of the West Bank. Eighty six percent of its projected route is inside the West Bank (including East Jerusalem). When completed, the Wall will de facto annex some 46% of the West Bank, isolating communities into Bantustans, ghettos and "military zones". The Wall's circuitous route was chosen so that it encircles 80 Jewish settlements (containing some 385,000 Jewish settlers), physically connecting them to Israel.

Closed Military Areas

Israel has declared the area between the Wall and the Green Line to be 'closed' by military order. Once the Wall is completed, a total of 49,400 West Bank Palestinians living in 38 villages will be included in these areas and physically separated from the rest of the West Bank, where health and education services are generally located. As a result, children, patients and workers have to pass through checkpoints to reach schools, medical facilities and workplaces and to maintain family and social relations. Similarly, Palestinians living to the east of the Wall who want to visit West Bank areas to the west of it need to apply for a permit from the Israeli authorities to pass through a Wall gate.

Communities located close to the Wall - who once had diverse local economies, with vibrant markets and abundant water and land resources - have seen their living conditions plummet. Residents of the closed areas need to ask for permission from the Israeli authorities to continue living on their land. Palestinians who reside to the east of the Wall have been isolated from farms, grazing lands and water resources located on the west side. In the northern West Bank, these Palestinians need 'visitor' permits to cross the Wall to reach their farms and wells located in the closed area. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, less than 20 percent of those who used to farm their lands in these areas before the Wall was constructed are now granted permits.

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The International Court of Justice

On 7 July 2004, the International Court of Justice declared Israel's construction of the Wall in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) to be "contrary to international law". The Court went on to order Israel to "cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall" and "dismantle forthwith the structure" already built. It also called on Israel to "make reparations" for the "requisition and destruction of homes, businesses and agricultural holdings" and "to return the land, orchards, olive groves, and other immovable property seized" to construct the wall. In resolution ES-10/15, passed on 20 July 2004, the UN General Assembly demanded that "Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations" as laid down by the Court. Israel categorically refuses to comply with any of these obligations and continues to build the Wall.



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Photo: S. Sizer

Information in this factsheet was obtained from the following sources:

http://www.sadaka.ie/Files/ICJ_on_the_Wall.pdf

http://www.ochaopt.org/?module=displaystory§ion_id=130&story_id=1456&format=html&edition_id=

<http://www.stophthewall.org/downloads/pdf/Wall-fc-En.pdf>