

13

Am I Not a Human?

The Suffering of **Palestinians From** **Israeli Roadblocks** *in the West Bank*



Edited by

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Translated by

Salma al-Houry

By

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Mohammed Dawood



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

Am I not a Human?
(13)

Book series discussing
the sufferance of the
Palestinian people
under the Israeli
occupation

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Al-Zaytouna Centre
For Studies & Consultations



سلسلة "أولست إنساناً؟" (13)

معاناة الفلسطينيين من الحواجز الإسرائيلية في الضفة الغربية

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Foreword

Al-Zaytouna Centre presents to its readers its thirteenth book of the *Am I not a Human?* Series, which shed light on various aspects of the suffering of the Palestinian people.

This book, *The Suffering of Palestinians from Israeli Roadblocks in the West Bank*, highlights the most serious violations committed by Israel against the Palestinians at these roadblocks, spread out in their various forms throughout the West Bank (WB). The book starts with an informational preface that discusses the Israeli strategy implemented since 1967, of partitioning the WB and Gaza Strip (GS) through a policy of dividing Palestinian lands and humiliating Palestinians. This is followed by a legal preface, which reviews international and humanitarian laws that prove the illegality of these roadblocks. The book then surveys the development in numbers and types of Israeli roadblocks in the period 2001–2014, and gives examples of those found in the WB and of the suffering they cause the Palestinians, while Israeli soldiers escape serious accountability.

The Palestinian person lives without the most basic inherent rights guaranteed by all international laws and treaties; detained in prisons, the bars of which are checkpoints, barbed wire, earth mounds, iron gates, and a reinforced concrete wall. To each roadblock, there is a story; and for each iron gate, earth mound and barbed wire, there is a narrative to be told. These are stories and narratives of blood and death inflicted on workers, students, doctors, mothers and children, at the hands of heavily armed soldiers and under the pretext of self-protection.



This book follows the same approach as the *Am I not a Human?* series, conveying the suffering in a style that addresses the mind and the heart, within a scientific, systematic and documented frame; referring to numerous stories and photos that offer the reader a clearer view of the suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

Al-Zaytouna Centre would like to extend its deepest gratitude to Israa Institution in the UK, for its generous sponsorship of the publication of this book.

Introduction

Israeli checkpoints in WB, a.k.a. “Mahsoom”—a Hebrew term for a military checkpoint that has become part of the Palestinian local spoken Arabic—summarize the suffering of the Palestinian people, captive in cantons that have ripped the WB apart, tightened the noose around their necks, paralyzed their movement, and severed their ties.

Since its occupation of the WB and GS in 1967, Israel has issued a number of laws that have broadened the scope of its control over them. Among these, there is Military Order no. 321[1] of 1969, which gives the Israeli military the right, unilaterally, to confiscate Palestinian lands for public purposes, without providing compensation to the affected party. Israel used this order to build a road network within the Palestinian occupied territories for its army.



The same happened to Israeli settlers for whom the Israeli army has provided alternatives routes, far from Palestinian population centers.

Furthermore, Israel has imposed a comprehensive system of restrictions on the Palestinians' movement within the WB, such as checkpoints, roadblocks and the Separation Wall. This policy was intensified, after the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* on 28/9/2000.

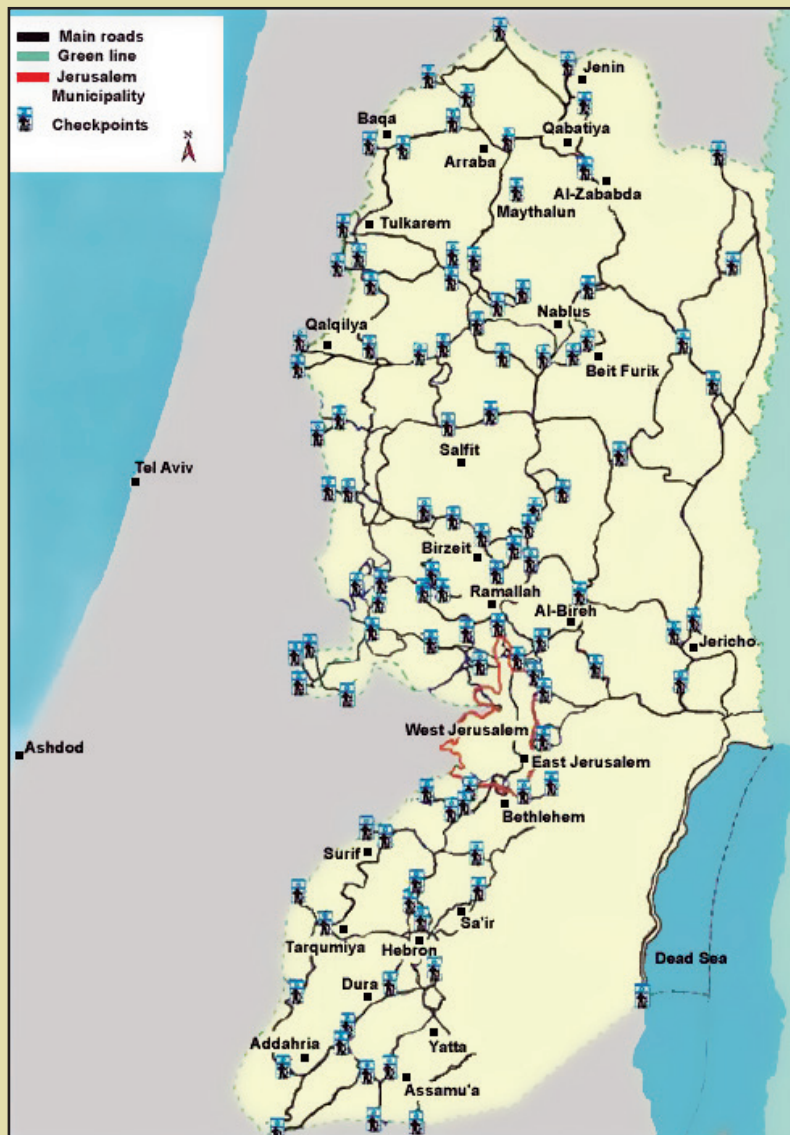
This system came together with other policies that continue to be applied by the Israeli authorities. These include restrictions on Palestinian access to large, important areas, such as East Jerusalem, areas classified as closed military zones, and areas designated for settlers; all under the pretext of bolstering the security of Israel and its settlements, while claiming they are interim measures.

The presence of Israeli roadblocks in WB hinders people's movement and prevents them from going about their daily business in a normal way; it also exhausts them economically, psychologically and socially. And despite the different types of these roadblocks, they all the same purpose: to break the Palestinians' will.

Israeli roadblocks are considered among the worst manifestations of human rights violations; as in many aspects, they are linked to practices that affect the lives and dignity of people, which are protected by international charters and conventions.



Map 1: Israeli Checkpoints in WB



Source: Site of itISapartheid.org,

<http://itisapartheid.org/Images/CheckpointsinWestBank.jpg>





Chapter 1: Informational Preface

Israel imposes restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in WB by a network of fixed checkpoints, surprise flying checkpoints, physical obstructions, roads on which Palestinians are forbidden to travel, and gates along the Separation Wall. In addition to many restrictions that enable Israel to control and restrict Palestinian movement throughout the WB as suits its interests.

Following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the WB, including East Jerusalem and GS, Israel began restricting the movement of Palestinians. Then with the outbreak of the first *Intifadah* in 1987, Israel intensified its military measures against Palestinian civilians, imposed restrictions on their movement, and prevented their entry into Israel to work, except if they had a special permit issued by the Israeli Civil Administration. It closed some roads leading to



Security Council resolution 242, issued on 22/11/1967, stipulates in Article 1/ii:

“Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.”

- United Nations (UN), Security Council, Resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, S/RES/242, 22/11/1967, <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>

certain towns and villages with iron gates, concrete blocks, earth mounds and trenches.¹

On 28/9/1995, Oslo Accord II or the Interim Agreement, signed between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel, provided for Israeli withdrawal from the WB territories and their classification into Area A, Area B and Area C. Area A was to fall under total PA control with full responsibility for its internal security and administration. As for Area B, the responsibility

for public order there was to lie with the PA, while Israel retained full control over its security matters (it is worth mentioning here that the majority of the WB population lives in Areas A and B). Area C, which represents about 60% of the WB, falls under total Israeli control, where Palestinians are prohibited from construction and development of any kind, except if they obtain a building permit issued by the appropriate Israeli authorities. Most of the land in Area C is fertile agricultural land, rich in natural water resources.²



Following the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in June 2002, Israel began constructing the Separation Wall and creating an exclusion zone running along the Green Line from the north of the WB to its south, usurping the most fertile agricultural land and isolating many Palestinian communities.³ The Wall is an integrated system of walls, barbed wire fences, trenches and other obstacles, intrusion-detection fences with sensors to warn of any incursion, checkpoints, and patrol roads for Israeli military vehicles.

Israel has long considered the eastern region of the WB (the eastern buffer zone) its security border. It justified its settlement plans there as serving its security and strategic objectives. For example, in the Jordan Valley area that constitutes 27.5% of the total area of the WB, the Israeli closure policy along with the establishment of Israeli military checkpoints complement the racial segregation policy. Israel has declared large areas of it as “closed military zones” and issued a military order to regulate the Palestinians’ entry to it. It has set up checkpoints at the main entrances that link the WB governorates to the Jordan Valley and at the side entrances that link the Jordan Valley to Palestinian communities. In May 2004, when asked about the Wall in the eastern region, Ariel Sharon replied that Israel would block access to the eastern region with military roadblocks.⁴

Furthermore, Israel’s policy is based on the premise that every Palestinian is a security threat, thus justifying restrictions on the person’s movement.⁵ This premise is racist. It does not justify the infringement on the freedom of movement, nor the repeated inspections carried out by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints, in addition to the degrading treatment and the long wait.





Chapter 2: Legal Preface

As the occupying power, Israel is responsible for ensuring the humanitarian needs of the local population under its occupation, and for ensuring the exercise of their fundamental human rights in accordance with international covenants, charters, agreements and laws. Israeli barriers and checkpoints in the WB, and the degrading treatment practiced there, are clear and explicit violations of all these laws that provide for freedom of movement, the preservation of human dignity and the protection of civilian persons in a time of war.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁶ states in Article 3: “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” In Article 5, it states: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” In Article 9, it stipulates: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.” In Article 13, it states:



“(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.”

“(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁷ provides in its Article 6: “Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.” Under Article 7, it states: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” In Article 9 it states: “Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.” While in Article 12 it states:

1. Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence.
2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own.
3. The above-mentioned rights shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Covenant.
4. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

The Fourth Geneva Convention⁸ stated in its Article 21: “Convoys of vehicles or hospital trains on land or specially provided vessels on



sea, conveying wounded and sick civilians, the infirm and maternity cases, shall be respected and protected” This article is not respected by Israel and it hinders its application by the spread of its checkpoints.

Israel is the occupying power in the WB and, as such, it is obliged, as stipulated in international conventions and treaties, to secure the welfare of the WB population and maintain their dignity. Israel instead oppresses the Palestinians, in violation of these conventions and for its own benefit and that of its settlers. There is no respect for the process of facilitating the movement of patients, no freedom of movement and residence for the Palestinians, no protection of their dignity, and no freedom to work and earn a living.

However, according to Article 146 of the Fourth Geneva Convention,⁹ the High Contracting Parties undertake to provide effective penal sections for persons committing breaches to the convention. Each contracting party is under the obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed these breaches; and each is to take the necessary measures to stop all acts contrary to the provisions of the Convention. However, none of the member states applied the terms of this article on Israel. The following is the text of Article 146:

The High Contracting Parties undertake to enact any legislation necessary to provide effective penal sanctions for persons committing, or ordering to be committed, any of the grave breaches of the present Convention defined in the following Article.

Each High Contracting Party shall be under the obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, such grave breaches, and shall bring such





persons, regardless of their nationality, before its own courts. It may also, if it prefers, and in accordance with the provisions of its own legislation, hand such persons over for trial to another High Contracting Party concerned, provided such High Contracting Party has made out a 'prima facie' case.

Each High Contracting Party shall take measures necessary for the suppression of all acts contrary to the provisions of the present Convention other than the grave breaches defined in the following Article.

Israel built a military watchtower on the lands of Burin High school for Boys near Nablus. The watchtower is only 150m away from the school building.



According to the field follow-up of the tower, it is located by bypass road number 60, overlooking the entrance of Yetzhar settlement from the north.

- Land Research Center (LRC), Building a military watchtower on the lands Burin High school, site of Project of Monitoring the Israeli Colonization Activities (POICA), 1/8/2014, <http://poica.org/2014/08/building-a-military-watchtower-on-the-lands-burin-high-school/>



WB Palestinians are forced to wait a long time in front of Israeli checkpoints.



Palestinian workers run through a hole in the Separation Wall south of WB.

➤ Photo by Ammar Awad, Reuters News Agency, 6/7/2013.





Chapter 3: Development in Numbers and Types of Israeli Roadblocks 2001–2014

The Palestinians suffer at Israeli roadblocks from the long waits that affect their nerves, as well as from the humiliating inspections. The Israelis do not hesitate to force, on flimsy pretenses, any Palestinian to take off his clothes or to walk barefoot in bad weather, even people with health conditions.

Up to 28/9/2001, one year after the breakout of the *Intifadah*, the number of fixed roadblocks was 190.¹⁰ In November 2004, their number rose to 680, and then fell in August 2005 to 376; it rose again in November 2005 to 396.¹¹



Palestinian workers waiting at Israeli roadblocks in the WB.

In May 2007, the number of fixed roadblocks and checkpoints in the WB reached a total of 553; in October 2007, it rose to 561; and in January 2008, it became 563. In the period between April and October 2007, the Israeli authorities removed 80 barriers, but added 115 others. These barriers take different forms, military roadblocks, checkpoints, gates, concrete blocks, earth mounds, trenches, and fences, etc.¹²

As of 11/9/2008, the number of barriers erected in the WB reached 630, including 93 staffed checkpoints and 537 unstaffed obstacles (earth mounds, roadblocks, barriers, etc), not counting the 69 barriers located in the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron City (H-2),¹³ in which Palestinians exist under difficult living conditions. There, all commercial roads leading to Israeli settlements are blocked for Palestinian vehicular access, and the majority of these obstacles have been in place since the year 2000. These obstacles have had many repercussions; more than one thousand Arab homes are estimated to have been vacated by their former Palestinian residents, and more than 1,800 commercial businesses have closed; in 2010, nearly 650 commercial establishments and shops were closed by military orders, in addition to the drop in tourist and visitors traffic.¹⁴



A report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OCHA-oPt) regarding the Israeli closure mentions that, in more than seven years, it “has developed into an entrenched multi-layered system of obstacles and restrictions, fragmenting the West Bank territory and affecting the freedom of movement of the entire Palestinian population and its economy.”¹⁵

On 16/9/2009, the Israeli army announced that it had removed 100 “dirt mound” roadblocks from the entrances to Palestinian villages across the WB, in accordance with the directives of Defense Minister Ehud Barak.¹⁶ A military spokesman claimed, on behalf of the Israeli army, that the decision to remove the roadblocks was “a continuation of the government policy to improve the economic situation in the region while maintaining the operational flexibility of the Israeli army and security forces.”¹⁷

The truth of the matter is that these Israeli statements are mere propaganda, for the barriers that Israel announced it had removed remain in place; however, their administrative classification was changed, as they have become known as “flying checkpoints.”

At the end of 2009, the number of Israeli roadblocks of various kinds totaled 617; including 78 fixed checkpoints, 17 flying checkpoints, 71 watchtowers, 113 agricultural gates, 155 concrete barriers and iron gates, and 183 earth mounds.¹⁸





It should be noted that in 2007, Israel set up 5,858 flying checkpoints, with an average of 488 roadblocks per month. While in 2006, it erected 7,090 mobile roadblocks, with an average of 591 roadblocks a month.¹⁹

A report by the Palestinian Center for Human Rights pointed out that 65% of the main roads are either closed or controlled by the Israeli army, the equivalent of about 500 km of roads.²⁰

In April 2010, barriers found in various areas were as follows: 196 in the governorates of Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Nablus, Salfit, and Qalqilya, 164 in the governorates of Ramallah, Jerusalem and Jericho, and 144 in the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.²¹

In May 2010, the number of Israeli roadblocks of various kinds was 505 roadblocks, distributed as follows:²²

**Table (1): The Distribution of Israeli Barriers in the WB
In 2010 by type (%)**

Type	%
Checkpoints	13
Partial checkpoints	4
Roadblocks	14
Earth mounds and Earth Walls	37
Road gates	21
Road barrier	9
Trenches	2



In addition to the above barriers, there are flying checkpoints. In April 2015, OCHA counted 361 flying checkpoints as compared with 456 in December 2014, 256 in December 2013, and 65 from September 2008 through March 2009.²³

In June 2012, the number of roadblocks reached 542 checkpoints and road barriers, hampering the mobility and access of Palestinians within the WB. These obstacles include 61 permanently staffed checkpoints (excluding those on the Green Line), 25 partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad-hoc basis), and 436 unstaffed physical obstacles, including roadblocks, earth mounds, earth walls, road gates, road barriers and trenches.²⁴

On 31/1/2017, the number of fixed checkpoints in WB reached 98, including 59 internal checkpoints, located well within WB, away from the Green Line. These include 18 in Area H2 in Hebron, where there are small Israeli settlement enclaves. Of the fixed checkpoints, 39 are the last inspection point before entering Israel, although most are located several kilometers east of the Green Line, or just outside the entrance to Jerusalem. 32 of these checkpoints are staffed regularly.²⁵





A Few weeks ago, while they were heading to their land, the children Hamza Mulaitat, Muhammad and Qais Hanani—from the town of Beit Furik, east of Nablus in the WB—found themselves in the grip of a number of Israeli soldiers.

The three children were startled by the presence of the Israeli soldiers hidden behind the trees, after they had set up a surprise checkpoint. They brandished their guns, aimed them at the boys and ordered them to lie on the ground. They tied their hands behind their backs and blindfolded them.

This scene captures the reality of what have become known as flying checkpoints, which are ambushes and checkpoints where the Israeli soldiers apply different torture methods against Palestinians, sometimes to the point of murder.

Beating and Handcuffing

Muhammad aged 14, said that the soldiers handcuffed them, dragged them over thorns, and stepped on their backs.

He added that later the soldiers took him and his two companions to the Itamar Settlement near their town, and from there to the Hawara Camp, south of Nablus, where they beat them up, chided them, and terrorized them.

He said that the Israeli soldiers treated them harshly in the course of the interrogation, forced them to walk over a barbed wire fence, and insulted them, using obscene and offensive language.

Another of the boys, Qais Hanani, said that the soldiers aimed guns at them to scare them and said to them, “You are terrorists; we will gouge your eyes out if you do not confess, and will let dogs tear your flesh.”

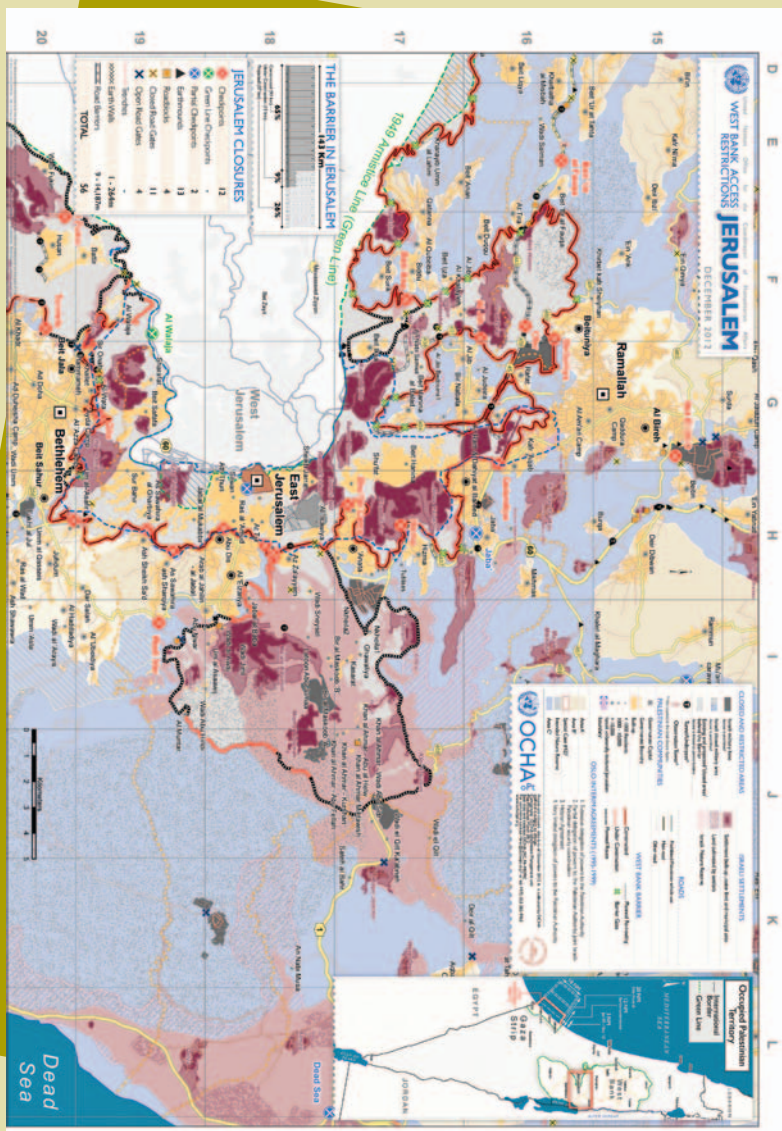
He adds that an obese soldier in full gear sat on his back and caused him serious pain; while the interrogator used crooked ways to press him and extract a confession under duress.

The Israeli authorities detained the boys for more than five hours without notifying their parents. Then late at night, they handed them over to Palestinian Security Forces in shackles.

- “Flying checkpoints”.. Ambushes and Punishment of Palestinians, site of Aljazeera.net, 20/12/2013, <http://www.aljazeera.net/> (in Arabic)



Map 2: The Separation Wall and the Jerusalem Closures



Source: OCHA-oPt, Map of the West Bank Access Restrictions–Jerusalem, December 2012,
http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_the_closure_map_2013_04_21_jerusalem.pdf





Chapter 4: Types and Samples of Barriers in the WB

Israeli barriers vary between checkpoints manned by Israeli soldiers around the clock and others: partial and flying checkpoints; sets of concrete blocks, each one meter long; iron gates and earth mounds and walls. Other Palestinian communities are surrounded by ditches and trenches that deny the Palestinians the use of alternative roads where no Israeli soldiers are stationed. There are also watchtowers erected inside the WB territories which, in special cases decided by the Israelis alone, can be turned into fixed barriers manned by soldiers. There are electronic checkpoints equipped with metal detectors standing in Palestinian communities that make the transition between two cities or between a village and a nearby city a daunting task.



1. Types of Barriers in the WB

The goals and reasons for each type of barriers vary, but they all have one function, to humiliate the Palestinians; among the barrier types are:

- a. Fixed checkpoints:** They are usually found at the entrance of Palestinian cities, towns, and villages. They are used to control movement within the WB and be the last checkpoints before reaching the 1948 occupied territories.
- b. Flying checkpoints:** They do not have a fixed location or a specific time. They are erected according to Israel's needs and requirements, and can be moved from one area to another.
- c. Pockets:** They are generated by the twists between the Separation Wall and the Green line, requiring the Palestinians to obtain special permits to enter their agricultural lands and properties from which the Wall separates them.
- d. Artificial obstacles:** They consist of piles of dirt, rocks, concrete blocks, walls, canals and iron gates. This type of barriers is used to prevent access to certain areas, as that these areas cannot be reached except through fixed barriers, manned by Israeli soldiers.²⁶
- e. The Separation Wall:** This is the most dangerous of all, because the area of land isolated behind the Western Wall will be 733 thousand donums. Its length when its construction is finished will be 770 km,²⁷ and its height will be 8m. It is provided with trenches and barbed wire, and equipped with cameras and machine guns.
- f. Bypass roads:** Bypass roads appeared on the scene in 1993, concurrently with the Oslo Accords, as one of the methods of



isolation, taking over approximately 80 km² (1.4%) of the WB territories to build a network of bypass roads, linking Israeli settlements with each other and with Israel. This has contributed to isolating Palestinian communities from each other and to cutting them apart. The real risk of these bypass roads is found in what is known as the “Buffer Zones” imposed by the Israeli army along the stretch of those roads, which are usually 75m on either side of the road.²⁸ According to the Oslo Accords, the Palestinians were allowed to use those roads. However, after the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* in 29/9/2000, Israel prevented Palestinians from traveling on them, under the pretext of “security reasons.”²⁹ Huge amounts of money were invested in bypass roads, especially in the WB.³⁰

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.



Earthwalls: are road barriers, composed of a series of earth mounds.

- OCHA-oPt, West Bank Movement and Access Update, June 2010, pp. 32–33, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_movement_access_2010_06_16_english.pdf





Earth mounds: are mounds of rubble, dirt and/or rocks put in place by the Israeli army bulldozers to prevent vehicular movement along a road or track. Several mounds less than 50m apart, blocking the same route, are only counted as one closure. If a mound is pushed to the side (by the Israeli army 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.



Checkpoints: are composed of two elements; an infrastructure which inhibits vehicular and pedestrian traffic and permanent presence of Israeli security personnel (e.g., the Israeli army, 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.



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



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



Partial Checkpoints: are made up of similar infrastructure to 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.



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 100m long and obstruct the free passage of people, vehicles or livestock, onto, off or across the road.



➤ OCHA-oPt, West Bank Movement and Access Update, June 2010, pp. 32–33.





At the end of 2012, ‘Abdul al-Hadi Hantash, a Palestinian expert on settlement affairs, said that what is known as “by-pass roads,” built by Israel on the WB territories, had a length of 900 km. He cautioned about Israeli proposals to build new roads with an estimated length of 600 km. He indicated that these roads had enabled the plundering of more than 18 thousand donums of agricultural lands, and the uprooting of tens of thousands of olive and grape trees.³¹

In a report in November 2014, Israeli army radio revealed a large scale scheme to build dozens of roads with a length of 300 km, and designed to serve the WB settlements. To that end, tens of thousands of donums of land would be confiscated, along with Israel consolidating control over large tracts of WB and Jerusalem lands. The report added that the plan was the product of an effort that had been underway for many years, and included 44 blueprints, 24 of them approved, while 20 of them were still under consideration. According to the approved blueprints, the length of approved roads is 157 km, while the length of those that have not yet been approved is 140 km; which means that there is talk of nearly 300 km of roads, the building of which requires the confiscation of nearly 25 thousand donums of the WB land.³²

These roads are divided into three types:

1. Subject to absolute Israeli use, while the Palestinians are utterly forbidden to use them.
2. Palestinians are allowed to use them, but under administrative restrictions, where a permit issued by the Israeli Civil Administration in the WB is required.



3. Roads that Palestinians can use without permits; but at their entrances, they are subject to the restrictions of checkpoints manned by the Israeli occupation forces.³³

The most important bypass roads in the WB are:³⁴

1. Route 60: An old highway that bisects the WB from north to south. It is considered the main artery for the new bypass roads that go around the main Palestinian cities. These roads start from Afula, which is an Israeli town situated to the north of the Green Line, then they pass through the center of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron. These roads are open to all means of transport. Almost all of Route 60 is located in Area C, providing an Israeli-controlled corridor through the entire length of the WB.

It is noteworthy that the Israeli side insisted on keeping this important route in Area C under full Israeli control, because it is the backbone of transport routes in the WB, with which all side roads and transverse roads intersect. Moreover, the bypass roads that link the settlements would become worthless if they had no connection to Route 60.





This is part of Route 60 in the Beit Jala area. This road is considered the backbone of transport routes in the WB, with which all side roads and transverse roads intersect.



2. Highway 80: This road was considered one of the most important and dangerous roads approved by the Israeli government at the end of 1998, following the Wye River Memorandum. It runs through the Hebron Desert southward toward the Negev; the greater part of it is located within the WB territories. The road begins near the settlement of Mishor Adumim to the east of Jerusalem near Khan al-Ahmar, and continues southward, passing near the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. It then runs through the Hebron Desert parallel to the Dead Sea, heading to the Carmel settlement and then to the Susya settlement. The road then crosses the Green Line into Israeli territory in the Negev. The main aim of building this road is to connect the Negev in the south with the Jerusalem area, Nablus and the Jordan Rift Valley in the north, to avoid passing the Greater Jerusalem area and the major Palestinian population centers in the Bethlehem and Hebron areas.



3. Highway 9: In 2013, Israel embarked on executing the plan for Highway 9 that will connect the coastal area near Hadera with the north of the WB, in the direction of Highway 6 (transit) to connect with the junction of the Baqa al-Gharbiya and Jat villages, parallel to the Separation Wall, and all the way to the Jordan Valley and the Jordanian borders. This scheme will cause significant damage to Palestinian villages inside the 1948 occupied Palestinian territories in its second section known as Highway 61. Furthermore, this road will swallow 700 donums of privately owned land belonging to the residents of Baqa al-Gharbiya and Jat, and will disrupt the territorial contiguity between these two villages, and swallow all the lands earmarked for their expansion.³⁵

Prof. Yosef Jabareen, a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning at Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, reviewed the detailed maps of Highway 9 that will extend 183 km inside the WB. He said that this highway would lead to the immediate confiscation of about 20 thousand donums of privately owned Palestinian lands to tighten the grip on the northern WB, intensify the implementation of settlement projects and link them to Israel. Jabareen added that settlement infrastructure projects are designed to cross out the Green Line and slit Palestinian geography. The total span of Road 9 will be 400m, including 50m constituting the width of the road, a 150m clear zone, in addition to 200m on either side of the road, classified as green areas, the use of which is prohibited to the public because they are utility zones strategically readied for the development of the state's infrastructure projects. Jabareen considers the highway 9 plan a continuation of the strategic Israeli project of annexing the WB to Israel through a road network, similar to the scheme to unify East and West Jerusalem, which





is underway; as the Israeli Ministry of Communications has approved a package of infrastructure projects and road networks. And through railroad projects, it aims to link Israel to East Jerusalem and the WB, all the way to Bisan and the Jordan Rift Valley.³⁶



Traffic jam at the Qalandiya Checkpoint at 5:50 AM, residents of the neighborhoods that have remained behind Jerusalem's walls on their way to work in the city.

The path found at the crossing between Jerusalem and Bethlehem known as Checkpoint 300.



Although the Qalandiya Checkpoint is located in the WB territory, away from the Green Line, and surrounded by Palestinian villages, in practice, Israel deals with it as a border station separating WB from Israel.



The following table shows some bypass roads in the WB according to their path, length, width and area:³⁷

Table (2): Some Bypass Roads in the WB According to Their Path, Length, Width and Area

Path		Length	Width	Area
From	To	km	m	m ²
Tulkarem	‘Anabta	15	160	2,400
Deir Sharaf	Kfar Qaddum	5.5	50	275
Baqa al-Sharqiya	‘Illar	8	162.5	1,300
Deir Sharaf	‘Ibal	8	30	240
Deir al-Hatab	Beit Furik	24	30	720
Beit El	Dolev	9	12	108
Ramallah	Beitunia	8.7	25	187.5
Talmon	Yehi’el	5	50	250
Tal al-Asour	Kokhav HaShahar	6	12	72
Tzufin	Kokhav Ya’ir	2.2	12	26.4
Shilo	Alon	5.4	50	270
Ras Karkar	Dayr Qadis	4	50	200
Beitunia	Jerusalem	2.5	30	75
Ayn al Haramiyah	Ofra	5	60	300
Beit Hagai	Qiryat Arba	5.7	25	142.5
Al-Khader	Betar	3.7	8	29.6





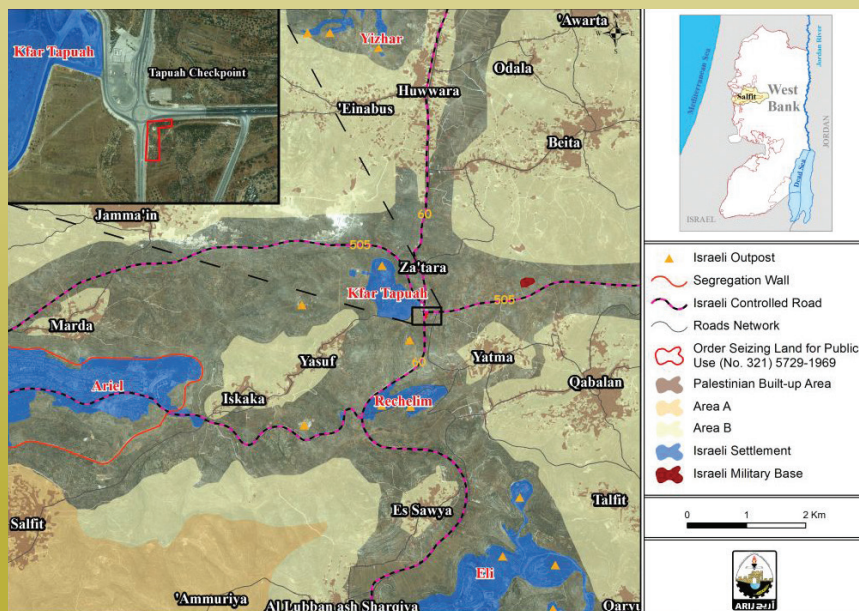
2. Examples of WB Barriers

The WB barriers are divided into six main geographic regions: the north of the WB, its center, the Jordan Rift Valley area, northern Dead Sea, the pocket of the Separation Wall (between the Wall and the Green Line), occupied East Jerusalem area. The most prominent of these barriers are:

- a. The Za'atara Checkpoint (Tapuach) (East of the Salfit Governorate):** Israel has absolute control over movement between the northern and central WB. It imposes strict restrictions on the passage of Palestinian men and young men, aged 16 to 35, traveling from the north to the south of the WB.
- b. The Container Checkpoint (North of Bethlehem):** Israel has absolute control over movement between the southern and central WB. Those passing through this checkpoint, especially during peak hours, are subjected to lengthy delays of up to an hour.
- c. The Checkpoints of Tayasir, Hamra, Gittit, Yitav (Jordan Valley):** Israel uses these checkpoints to control the Jordan Valley's back and forth traffic.
- d. The Almog Checkpoint (Beit Ha'arava Intersection):** Israel controls the northern Dead Sea area, back and forth. Since May 2007, Palestinians with permits to enter Israel have not been allowed to cross. Testimonies indicate that the reason for setting up the checkpoint is, apparently, the desire to restrict use of the beaches in the area to Israelis only.³⁸



Map 3: The Za'atara Checkpoint



- e. **Jalameh / Mqeibleh:**³⁹ This crossing is the Palestinians' only entrance from Jenin to the 1948 occupied territories. A crossing point in the Separation Wall. Staffed around the clock by the military and private security companies. The checkpoint has an extensive infrastructure, similar to an airport terminal. It is closed to Palestinians, except for East Jerusalem residents and Palestinians with entry permits into Israel. They are permitted to cross only on foot. It is also closed to Israelis, with the exception of Palestinians who are Israeli citizens. Also used for transporting goods between WB and Israel.
- f. **The Qalandiya Checkpoint:**⁴⁰ This checkpoint is located south of the city of Ramallah, on the road that connects it to occupied Jerusalem;





it is a source of hardship and deep frustration for the Palestinians. This checkpoint is among the largest military barriers that the Israeli army erected following *al-Aqsa Intifadah*. Every Palestinian wishing to go to Jerusalem or leave it on his way to the center of the WB must pass through this checkpoint where he is subjected to inspection; and sometimes it takes several hours for them to go through. In late 2001, Israel converted it into a huge military barricade that greatly hindered civilian movement, disrupted economic activity, and increased the isolation of Jerusalem. They surrounded it with buffer zones, barbed wire, electronic fences, as well as gates and cameras that prevent the passage of people except through cage-like corridors, and turnstiles, each of which rises to more than two meters.

- g. Checkpoint 300:**⁴¹ It is erected along the Separation Wall between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Staffed around the clock by the military, Border Police and private security companies. Palestinians are not allowed to cross into Jerusalem unless they hold entry permits into Israel or are East Jerusalem residents. Israeli tourist buses can enter Bethlehem only through this crossing.
- h. Ofer Checkpoint:**⁴² Located on Route 443, and staffed around the clock by the military and private security companies. Closed to Palestinians, with the exception of East Jerusalem residents.
- i. 'Atara Checkpoint:**⁴³ It has become permanent. This route is the only one for Palestinians coming from the north and wishing to reach Ramallah; the activation of the checkpoint on a permanent basis effectively creates another bottleneck for Palestinians from the northern WB wishing to travel south.



Traffic between East Jerusalem and the rest of the WB depends on 12 barriers along the Separation Wall. The Palestinian residents of the WB who do not carry Israeli IDs can use only four of them, upon presenting an entry permit to the “State of Israel.” These checkpoints are: Qalandiya, Gilo, Shu‘fat Refugee Camp and Ras Abu Sbitan (Olive Terminal). The remaining eight barriers are intended for the use of settlers and the residents of Israel, including Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. This is in addition to the restrictions on movement from one area to another. For example, the prevention of internal movement in the north of the WB is embodied in separating Nablus from its adjacent villages, and Nablus from the rest of the northern WB governorates: Jenin, Tubas, and Tulkarem.⁴⁴

The severe restrictions on persons wanting to cross the checkpoints and gates varies from one checkpoint and gate to another and from one time to another.⁴⁵

Palestinian women and children at the Shu‘fat Refugee Camp Checkpoint.





Qalandiya Checkpoint: An Obstacle to Normal Life

Human rights violations under the occupation are not limited to cases of violence, death and destruction. They are also part of the routine life of Palestinian residents, as shaped by Israeli authorities.

Qalandiya Checkpoint is a prominent example of this routine. It separates Palestinian communities, neighborhoods artificially severed from each other by the Separation Barrier. Most of the people who cross the checkpoint are residents of East Jerusalem who need to reach other parts of the city for work, school, or basic medical treatment.

In most cases, these residents live only several kilometers away from their destinations, but every day they must wait for hours in the long lines at the checkpoint, which currently has only three active security screening stations for cars and four for pedestrians, and not all of them operate all the time. When finally reached, the security screening is often a humiliating and lengthy procedure.

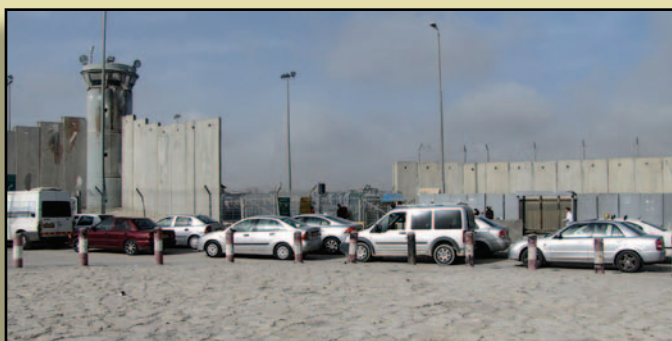
‘Amer ‘Aruri, B’Tselem’s field researcher in East Jerusalem, documented the long lines of people waiting at Qalandiya Checkpoint on 19/3/2014.



Waiting for the Security Check at the Checkpoint



Workers with Israeli Entry Permits on Their Way to the Checkpoint



At the Entrance to the Qalandiya Checkpoint

- B'Tselem—The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Qalandia Checkpoint, March 2014: An Obstacle to Normal Life, http://www.btselem.org/photoblog/201404_qalandiya_checkpoint





Chapter 5: The Suffering of Palestinians Due to Israeli Checkpoints

Israel imposes a strict system of restrictions on the WB Palestinians on their movement, through various barriers, checkpoints and bypass roads, to protect the settlements and secure space for their expansion, as well as improve the settlements' connection with it. The construction of the Separation Wall in the WB added to this suffering; knowing that, in its advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has reached the conclusion that the construction of the wall by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is “contrary to international law.” The Court also ruled that Israel must dismantle the wall and “is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.”⁴⁶



Palestinian movement along some of the main traffic arteries in the West Bank, 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.⁴⁷

A report by B’Tselem — The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, stated that, as of January 2017, Israel had designated 59.22 km of WB roads for the sole, or practically sole, use of Israelis, first and foremost of settlers. Israel also prohibits Palestinians from even crossing some of these roads in a vehicle, thereby restricting their access to nearby roads that they are ostensibly not prohibited from using. In these cases, Palestinian travelers have to get out of the vehicle, cross the road on foot, and find an alternative mode of transportation on the other side.⁴⁸

Health conditions have witnessed grave deterioration due to preventing medical teams from reaching Palestinian cities and towns and moving from one to the other. The Israeli soldier claims for himself the right to evaluate patients’ cases, whether they need medical attention or not. Israeli checkpoints stand in the way of men, women, the elderly and children without mercy; causing the deaths of many patients who are forced to descend from buses or cars, and sometimes walk, while suffering from critical medical conditions. Among the roadblocks other effects include the miscarriage of dozens of pregnant women, in full view of Israeli soldiers. Thus, since the beginning of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* on 28/9/2000 and until May 2007, 69 pregnant women were compelled to give birth at Israeli military checkpoints.⁴⁹ Furthermore, 32 stillborn children were delivered at Israeli checkpoints during the period 28/9/2000–31/1/2011.⁵⁰



Baruch Spiegel

The child ‘Umar Nasrawi, from Hebron, feels afraid when passing through the checkpoint that blocks the road connecting his home and his school, he says:

The soldiers at the checkpoint beat people up and shoot at them. They grab and detain them. Once I left school by myself, they grabbed me and ordered: take off your shorts, raise your hands and lift your leg. The Israeli soldier asked me: where are you going? I said I am going home, so they searched my school bag.

And as usual, security is the shelter in which the Israeli hide when faced with criticism and questions. Baruch Spiegel, former senior advisor to Israeli Ministry of Defense, and head of the Security Fence Team, justifies searching the Palestinian child by saying, “a child can be exploited to dangerous ends,” such as smuggling explosive belts and ammunitions. However, he did not explain the benefit of smuggling these weapons between ‘Umar’s home and his school, which are only hundreds of meters apart.

- Aljazeera.net, “*Filastin Tahta al-Mijhar*” (Palestine Under the Microscope) program, Checkpoint in Palestine, part 2, 14/7/2005, <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/0DBAFA46-E232-4CDC-81FB-8D789A63B634>





On 7/1/2008, a woman from Hebron in the WB delivered her baby at an Israeli military checkpoint in the city's center, after she had been denied access to a hospital. Ashraf Elias Sidr (32 years) said that his wife (23 years) gave birth to her baby at the military checkpoint erected at the entrance leading to "Tal al-Rumaida neighborhood," in the city center where his family lives. He said that divine providence alone saved his new baby Ahmad from certain death, due to the extreme cold that almost led to his suffocation during delivery. Sidr explained that the Israeli soldiers stationed at the military checkpoint intercepted him and his wife while they were on their way to the government hospital in Hebron. They refused to open the Iron Gate that closes the street and detained them for about half an hour under the pretext of making security calls before allowing them to pass. Before long, his wife gave birth in the middle of the road, moments before the arrival of a Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance, which was called for that purpose and which transported the mother and her baby to the hospital.

- A Palestinian Woman Gives Birth at an Israeli Checkpoint in Hebron, site of Insan Online, 8/1/2008, http://www.insanonline.net/news_details.php?id=2429 (in Arabic)

Since the beginning of the *Intifadah* and until 31/1/2011, the number of Palestinians who died due to Israeli checkpoints totaled 401,⁵¹ because the Israeli forces denied them access to hospitals despite their critical medical conditions.

Medical crews face great difficulties in reaching the wounded and the sick in a timely manner as roadblocks adversely affect the ability to develop the Palestinian health system and secure for it medical supplies, while it already suffered from meager resources. During the period 1/1–31/6/2014, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society recorded a total of 204 cases of roadblocks hindering access to the WB from Jerusalem, and 388 cases of hindering access to Jerusalem from the WB, in particular at the Qalandiya



checkpoint. Delay time for some ambulances and their crews at Israeli military checkpoints varied between 35 minutes and four hours 40 minutes; and in many instances, ambulances were prevented from passing through.⁵²

According to a 2012 Amnesty International report, more than 500 Israeli military roadblocks and checkpoints impede the WB Palestinians' access to their workplaces, schools and hospitals. Furthermore, the WB Palestinians who have permits to enter Jerusalem can use only four checkpoints of a total of 16 located along the Separation Wall.⁵³

Five consecutive hours of detention and stalling by Israeli soldiers were enough to turn the life of the Palestinian woman Ruwaida Qabha (24 years), from the town of Barta'a, west of Jenin in the northern WB, into hell before giving birth to her baby Tha'er.

Shortly before midnight, Ruwaida proceeded on her way to al-Amal hospital in Jenin to deliver her first child. However, the Israeli checkpoints were lying in wait for her. For no sooner did she pass the Barta'a checkpoint than she was struck by the presence of the Dothan checkpoint near it, which delayed her arrival at the hospital for several hours.

The Israeli soldier refused to open the checkpoint gate, and insisted that Ruwaida and her companions wait until it opened in the morning. At this moment, Ruwaida said that her condition grew worse; "I felt great pain and started having contractions, after repeated delays, an Israeli military patrol arrived and opened the gate."

Ruwaida remained in labor for more than five hours; and that aggravated the condition of her newborn infant. She said that he suffered an acute brain hemorrhage; in addition, his breathing stopped for more than 15 minutes, which forced them to transfer him to the Israeli Rambam Hospital in Haifa to follow up on his condition.

➤ Aljazeera.net, 22/10/2009.





The Palestinians suffer from the harsh procedures implemented at checkpoints. Depending on the number of people queuing, crossing the checkpoint can take up to two hours, particularly during rush hour. This is especially stressful for people suffering with poor health or with disabilities. Moreover, vehicles with Palestinian license plates are not allowed to pass the Separation Wall checkpoints into East Jerusalem, a significant difficulty for sick or injured people who have problems walking. This rule also applies to WB ambulances that are banned from entering Jerusalem.⁵⁴

Early in the morning, Abu Khaldun (55 years) leaves his home in Bethlehem, heading to a checkpoint north of the city. He finds in front of him tens of workers waiting for the moment they would be allowed to pass in search of work. Abu Khaldun said, “I go out of the house while people are fast asleep; I find tens of workers, I do not know when they leave their homes.” He joins his comrades, and is forced to wait four more hours (until 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning) until the soldiers allow them to enter the checkpoint. The workers say that some employers do not allow them to be late for work. Thus, to arrive at your place of work at 7 o’clock, you must leave your house at 12:00 midnight. Each worker requires two minutes or more to present his personal papers and work permit, after passing through electronic and revolving gates. Some may be subjected to thorough search that requires taking off their outer clothing. With much bitterness, Abu Khaldun describes what takes place as a kind of humiliation; he adds sarcastically “By *Allah*, we stand like sheep, maybe the sheep are better than us.” And so that no one loses his turn, none of them leave the queue for any reason, not even to go to the bathroom. Abu Khaldun said, “Didn’t I tell you that the sheep are better than us.” The workers joked when the soldiers called them to enter the checkpoint, one of them saying loudly “go in like chicken thrown into the plucker.”

- *Asharq Alawsat* newspaper, London, 30/8/2009, <http://classic.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=11233&article=533927&feature=#.VBfnyqOjZeE>



Moreover, the Israeli authorities have imposed new restrictions in the WB that oblige the employees of East Jerusalem hospitals to enter the city through three designated checkpoints only; while in the past, they were allowed to cross from any checkpoint by putting a special stamp on their permits. This concession is currently limited to doctors; while hospital staff coming from the WB must cross the checkpoints on foot and use public transport to reach their respective hospitals. These restrictions entail long delays, and periodic refusals, leading to chronic lateness and disruption of the efficient functioning of the hospitals.⁵⁵

The residents of 60 Palestinian communities in the WB, totaling (in June 2012) about 190 thousand, are still compelled to use detours that are two to five times longer than the direct route to the closest city. Palestinian movement within the Israeli controlled section of Hebron City (H2) remained subject to severe restrictions. This area is segregated from the rest of the city by over 120 closure obstacles, and Palestinian movement by car, and in some cases also on foot, has remained banned along certain streets. As a result, those Palestinians still living in the area continue to suffer from poor access to basic services, including education.⁵⁶

The gate erected by the Israeli army at the entrance of Nabi Salih village in Ramallah Governorate. The villagers can pass through this gate, but only on foot.





University student Wisam Siyam related what happened to him on 9/11/2004, at the Beit Iba checkpoint near Nablus. He said:



Hundreds of Palestinians stand at the Beit Iba checkpoint awaiting permission to pass.

When my turn came and I walked up to the window, he (the Israeli soldier) asked for my identification papers, I gave him my university ID card and my personal ID card. He asked me, how old are you? I told him, I am 30 years old. He pulled himself out of the window and slapped me on my face saying, “You are a liar, you are not 30, get out of here.”

Shortly after, the officer in charge came and inquired about what has happened; suddenly he noticed that I was carrying something, he asked, “What is that in your box?” I said, “A violin.” He said open it, and I did. He said, “Play for us something sad.” The young Palestinian man added, “It would have been calamitous if I did not respond,

for then I will have to return to Nablus and the student housing. While one cannot wait to see his mother and family (..) He put me on the spot, and I played for him.”

Wisam kept on playing music to the soldier manning the Beit Iba checkpoint every time he wished to visit his family in his village or return to Nablus to complete his university studies.

Incidents of beating and verbal abuse are common at checkpoints; as for why the matter of being 30 years old is interesting, it is because the Israelis determine the ages of those allowed or not allowed to pass. Passage at some checkpoints is confined to those over 30. While in other cases, you need to be an old man to be allowed to cross.

- Aljazeera.net, “*Filastin Tahta al-Mijhar*” (Palestine Under the Microscope) program, Roadblocks in Palestine, part 1, 10/7/2005, <http://aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/C1749A20-F610-4967-AEAF-6764D84FBCE4>; and see Yehudit Kirstein Keshet, *Checkpoint Watch: Testimonies From Occupied Palestine* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2006), p. 165, http://www.amazon.com/Checkpoint-Watch-Testimonies-Occupied-Palestine/dp/184277719X#reader_184277719X



In 2003, the Israel army's Judge Advocate General, Maj. Gen. Dr. Menachem Finkelstein, stated that criticism of the behavior of soldiers at checkpoints in the territories was not completely unjustified. Such criticism is continually leveled by the Palestinians, Israeli and foreign journalists and human rights groups, but it is not often does the Israel army admits the veracity of the complaints.⁵⁷

On 7/11/2013, at the Za'atara checkpoint, Israeli soldiers killed a lecturer at the Palestine Technical University – Kadoorie, Bashir Sami Habanin (28 years), from the village of Markah, southwest of Jenin. Another young man, Anas Fu'ad al-Atrash (23 years), from Hebron, was killed when Israeli soldiers shot him at the Container checkpoint northeast of Jerusalem, hours after the murder of Habanin. In February 2014, Israeli forces opened fire at a Palestinian civilian vehicle, on the road connecting the cities of Nablus and Qalqilya, where Nihad Kamal Dawud 'Aql (18 years), from Kfar Qaddoum village, was wounded by bullet in her leg.⁵⁸

A member of the Christian Peacemaker teams stationed in Hebron, describes those roadblocks as “means of collective punishment.” In a televised interview with Al Jazeera Arabic Channel, he pointed out: that every day, when men come to the mosque to pray, it takes them 30 minutes to pass through a checkpoint erected inside the city⁵⁹; while Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention⁶⁰ states, “No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited ... Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited.”





Haim Weiss, a former Israeli army officer, who was in charge of a great many checkpoints before he decided to leave the army, said that the tragedy is greater than can be fully told, for it is enough for a soldier to feel bored for him to decide to close the road. Weiss, who concealed his previous military rank, said during a television interview:

If a person wanted to go from Hebron to Bethlehem, he must go through seven different checkpoints. He might be able to go through the first one, and he might be able to go through the second one; but when he comes to the third one, they will not allow him to pass. Why? Because maybe the soldier is feeling tired, or maybe his ID is invalid (...). And when he decides to go back, the soldier at the second checkpoint does not let him go through. And he gets stuck between the second and the third checkpoints.

A group of Palestinian university students wanted to pass through a checkpoint. Israeli soldiers stopped them and asked one of them to climb on top of a tank. When he ascended, they ordered him to strip naked. When he refused, they threatened to kill him and rape a female colleague; he had no choice but to do what they asked.

Things did not stop there, for the girls were threatened that they must look at him in this state. When one of the girls refused, an Israeli soldier struck her with the butt of his automatic rifle.

➤ Hala Agency Palestine, 22/1/2011, <http://www.hala.ps/ar/index.php?act=Show&id=76093>



From his field experience, Weiss confirms that “often people get stuck between two checkpoints, in the heat or under the rain, and they keep on moving from one checkpoint to another without getting a clear answer from us or be allowed to pass.” Weiss adds, “We deny the Palestinians the right to live a normal life, and I do not want to have a role in that.” That is why he decided to resign.⁶¹ However, thousands of others are spread all over the Palestinian territories, doing exactly what Weiss used to do before he decided to quit.

When its soldiers are caught committing offences against Palestinians at crossings, barriers and roads, Israel insists that these are individual actions. These are certainly not isolated incidents, by the Israeli army’s own admission. Baruch Spiegel, former adviser to Israel’s Defense Minister in matters pertaining to the fabric of life, said that there are some abuses committed by Israeli soldiers at checkpoints. Clashes occur sometimes and clashes are a big problem. He recommended that soldiers be educated, and sometimes punished.⁶²

These actions that he admitted led to the death of many Palestinians, among them Bashar Fakhri al-Qadiri, who was 23 years old when, on 14/8/2005, Israeli soldiers detained him handcuffed in a pit. After spending more than two hours under the scorching sun, he died inside that hole, due to a decision made by the soldiers stationed at the Beit Iba checkpoint.⁶³

Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Human Rights Watch (HRW) Middle East and North Africa Division, said, “Most of Israel’s investigations of civilian casualties have been a sham. The government’s failure to investigate the deaths of innocent civilians has created an atmosphere that encourages soldiers to think they can literally get away with murder.”⁶⁴





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. 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.

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.

- OCHA–oPt, West Bank Movement and Access Update, special Focus, August 2011, p. 22, http://data.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_movement_and_access_report_august_2011_english.pdf

During the first Palestinian *Intifadah* that began in late 1987, Israel adopted a policy of requiring a military police investigation in every case of death or injury among Palestinian civilians at the hands of Israeli soldiers. However, most of the time, this policy was poorly implemented. In the wake of the outbreak of clashes in *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, the Israeli army asserted that it does not intend to carry out investigations on a routine basis in cases of death among Palestinian civilians. It argued



that the current situation was “approaching armed conflict”; therefore, investigations would be limited to “exceptional cases.” But even in situations of armed conflict, military authorities should investigate credible allegations or primary evidence of serious violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In a report issued in June 2005, HRW said that almost all the cases of death and serious injury occurred in circumstances that could accurately be characterized as “situations of armed conflict”; they were rather cases of law enforcement.⁶⁵

Ironically, the military court in Tel Aviv issued a ruling through a disciplinary tribunal against an artillery soldier, sentencing him to 20 days imprisonment after he was convicted of stealing a loaf of bread from a Palestinian car at a checkpoint near Tulkarem.⁶⁶ In contrast, in the same court system an Israeli soldier was convicted for the negligent killing of a sixteen-year-old Palestinian; he was demoted and sentenced to two months imprisonment.⁶⁷ Most of the convictions of Israeli soldiers led to sentences lighter than those issued by the judiciary in cases of petty theft or against conscientious objectors, those who object to military service for reasons of conscience.⁶⁸

“The indictment of soldiers who have killed Palestinians is extremely rare.” Since the outbreak of *al-Aqsa Intifadah* on 29/9/2000 and up to 31/3/2011, Israeli forces have killed at least “3,024 Palestinians, who were not taking part in combat. Of that number, 2,821 were killed by the military”⁶⁹ in WB and GS. In its report “Exceptions” that included files of the offences committed by the Israeli army from the outbreak of the second *Intifadah* on 29/9/2000 to the end of 2007, the Israeli Yesh Din Organization offered the first opportunity to examine the quality of the operations of the military criminal system, including the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division (MPCID) and the Military Prosecution and others. The report, which is grounded in empirical data, and based on





indictments and rulings, showed that out of 1,246 investigation files opened by the MPCID in the seven-year period covered by the report, only 78 (6%) led to indictments against one or more soldiers, and that of the thousands of Palestinian civilians killed, perpetrators were convicted in only five cases.⁷⁰

Up to the time a change was announced in the Israeli military investigations' policy in April 2011, stipulating that an investigation by the Military Police Investigation Unit be opened immediately in any incident in which a Palestinian is killed by soldiers, in circumstances other than combat, no investigation was opened in most of the cases where Israeli soldiers killed Palestinians. According to B'Tselem information, only 14 cases have led to indictments against soldiers up to April 2011. And of the 14 indicted, two of the defendants were found not guilty. The other 12 indictments resulted in convictions, including five through plea bargains. Two defendants were convicted of negligent homicide (One of them was also convicted of giving false information and of unbecoming conduct.) The other soldiers indicted were convicted of lesser offenses: six were convicted of illegal use of weapons, three of negligence, and one of exceeding his authority so as to endanger lives or health.⁷¹

“Stay in line, you cows, don’t you understand?! You are like donkeys..!” With these words, ‘Issa al-‘Issawi, from the Qalandiya refugee camp near Ramallah, started his day as a construction worker in Jerusalem by an Israeli soldier controlling the Palestinians’ movement at the Qalandiya checkpoint.

Al-‘Issawi says, “Hearing improper words, curses and insults are not the only things workers suffer from at checkpoints, there is also the beating.” He adds, “Whoever objects gets arrested or detained, or his work permit gets torn. We put up with this and persevere for the sake of feeding our children.”

Another worker from Ramallah, Khalid Musa, says, “What law in the world allows one to leave his home at three in the morning to reach work at eight? We stand here like animals (excuse the expression) amid insults, beatings and sometimes detention.”

➤ Israeli Checkpoints.. “Pickpocket” of Workers’ Sustenance, site of Felesteen Online, Gaza, 26/9/2010, <http://www.felesteen.ps/> (in Arabic)



In a meeting that took place between former US Vice President, Dick Cheney, and former Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, the American journalist Seymour Hersh reported Barak saying, Israel “had learned that there’s no way to win an occupation,” he told Cheney, and the only issue was “choosing the size of your humiliation.”⁷²

“The soldier climbed into the bus, and collected all our IDs. He then asked us to step down and we stood in one line by the wall; we were about 15 young men. They decided to take us to a building that they had occupied and which they cynically called ‘the hotel,’ because they used to detain young men in it, pending their deportation to permanent concentration camps.” Samih al-Fawayrah remained silent for a little while, and then continued to narrate to the journalist what has happened, “They began to call our names and curse us, until an Israeli soldier, likely of African descent, arrived. He was carrying four cans; and I had no idea what they contained. When my turn came, they started beating me on my stomach, on my face, on my head and on sensitive parts of my body. Some of them were restraining my movement as others continued to beat me; then they threw me to the ground. One of them asked me to close my eyes, and I refused. He hit me with the butt of his gun on my face, forcing me to close my eyes. He told me to open my mouth, and I refused. One of them tucked the barrel of his gun in my mouth to force me to open it, while others poured the contents of the cans in my mouth and hit me on my stomach, I realized then that they are forcing me to drink their urine.”

As he recounted his ordeal, Samih al-Fawayrah, this young Palestinian man in his twenties, was clearly agitated. He was arrested and humiliated by the Israeli soldiers stationed at a military checkpoint between the villages of Wadi Rahhal and al-Khader, near Bethlehem in the south of WB. Al-Fawayrah, who is a well known football player in his neighborhood, added “Since then, I constantly feel I am suffocating and I avoid contact with people. I do not know what has come over me, for I feel that I have changed since that incident.”

The humiliation suffered by al-Fawayrah and the ceremony of beating held for him and his fellow transients on that day was not an isolated incident, it can be said that it was “customary.”

- Aljazeera.net, “*Filastin Tahta al-Mijhar*” program, Roadblocks in Palestine, part 1, 10/7/2005.



A report by the Israeli organization Breaking the Silence revealed testimonies from female soldiers in which they admit to systematic humiliation of Palestinians, using reckless and cruel violence, theft, killing of innocent people and cover-up without regard to age or sex, considering this behavior to be their way to prove that they are “serious fighters.” A former female soldier by the name of Dana Golan, the organization’s director, said that climbing the Israeli military ranks requires inflicting all kinds of harm, humiliation and torture on Palestinians; even on the very old. One of the testimonies was that of a female soldier stating that she was standing at a checkpoint when a colleague told her, “Look how he’s [the Palestinian] laughing at you.” So she went and kicked him between his legs. She added, “Three years later I didn’t get anything and no one knows about it.”⁷³

Amira Hass, a journalist at the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, reported some of what takes place at the Taysir checkpoint. For example, some soldiers urinate in public, and in the presence of women. This is but an extreme manifestation of the scorn the soldiers at the checkpoint demonstrate for the people who are at their mercy and must pass through there. But this is also an expression of the soldiers’ self-confidence, of the knowledge that none of their comrades will prevent them from doing things they would not normally do. In another incident at the same checkpoint, an Israeli soldier collected the identity cards (ID) of a number of drivers waiting in their cars to be tested. He gave them to the policeman in the jeep and returned to the drivers with the ID cards and with traffic violation tickets and a payment of a fine of 100 shekels (about *\$24⁷⁴) each, which they would have to pay for the benefit of the state treasury, for not wearing seat belts. Incidentally, the drivers were wearing seat belts, although their cars had already been waiting for half an hour or more.⁷⁵



In 2003, in an interview with Shalom Goldstein, Advisor to the Mayor of Jerusalem Municipality for East Jerusalem Affairs, the journalist ‘Umar ‘Abdul Raziq from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) asked him what the reasons for tightening the siege on Jerusalem and for the roadblocks spread everywhere in the WB were. He said that “suicide bombers” come from the WB to blow themselves up in Israel and must be stopped. When asked about the collective punishment of Palestinians, he replied that Israelis have the responsibility to protect their children and their citizens. He added that they were sorry for what was happening to the Palestinians, but if there must be crying, let 10 Palestinian mothers cry rather than one Israeli.⁷⁶

A female Israeli soldier searches a Palestinian woman at the Huwwara checkpoint on the southern entrance of Nablus.



The following are examples of actions taken by Israeli forces at military checkpoints:⁷⁷

- 25/10/2000: The Israeli forces prevented an ambulance carrying the patient Ahmad ‘Abdul Qadir Sbeitan (62 years), who suffers from heart disease, from transferring him from the Hebron Governmental Hospital to Ramallah Hospital, which led to his death.





- 5/2/2001: The Israeli forces delayed Palestinian citizens at the Kfar Qaddoum checkpoint in Qalqilya for hours, which resulted in Khadra Mustafa (55 years) suffering a heart attack that caused her death.
- 21/7/2001: At a military checkpoint in Nablus, the Israeli forces delayed the arrival of the infant Khalid ‘Abdul Nasir Musa, aged four days, to the Rafidia Hospital where he was a patient, causing his death.
- 1/3/2002: The two little girls, Jamila and Huda al-Safadi, aged 5 and 7, from the village of Orif, died when the Israeli forces denied them passage through the Hawara checkpoint, despite the fact that the two girls had been injured when a wall in their house fell on them.
- 23/9/2002: The infant girl Rawan Hrayzan, aged three days, died in al-Muhtasib Pediatrics Hospital in Hebron, after a change in her health caused her doctor to refer her to the hospital. However, the Israeli forces stationed in the Abu-Sneina neighborhood, prevented her family from continuing on their way to the hospital, forcing them to take bumpy bypass roads through the surrounding hills; and this led to her death en route. A medical examination stated that the baby’s life could have been saved had she reached the hospital on time.
- 19/8/2003: Khadra ‘Arar, a 74-year-old woman, a resident of the town of Qarawat in Ramallah Governorate, died after she was denied passage to Jerusalem at the Beit Hanina checkpoint. She was detained in the hot sun for more than an hour and a half, an elderly person with heart disease. She had finished medical examinations in the Ramallah Hospital, and she told the soldiers that she was going to an appointment for eye surgery in Jerusalem. She was forced to take bumpy bypass roads and died.
- 24/11/2004: Seventy-year-old Hassan ‘Abdullah Ramadan died at Beit Iba military checkpoint, west of Nablus. He had suffered a



stroke at 10 in the morning and was taken in a taxi. He was forced to travel tens of kilometers through bypass roads, and had to go through the Beit Iba and Surra checkpoints, where the Israeli forces searched him and examined his ID papers. He died before he could pass through the checkpoints, and the process of transferring him to the hospital took about an hour and a quarter, during which he died; the Tell village is only four kilometers away from Nablus. But getting to Nablus requires driving more than 30 km and passing through two permanent Israeli military checkpoints, in addition to other flying checkpoints.

- February 2005: In al-Sahla area of Hebron, the Israeli forces intercepted a Red Crescent ambulance on its way to Abu-Sneina neighborhood in Hebron's Old City to provide emergency treatment to a 15-year-old Palestinian boy shot by the Israeli army. After a wait of two hours, the Israeli forces handed over the boy without providing him with any emergency treatment, and after his heart had stopped beating. Immediately the Palestinian medical team transferred the boy to a Palestinian hospital in Hebron, where he was declared dead on arrival.

The Separation Wall gate south of the village of Kafr Sur north of the WB.





Huwwara Checkpoint... The Checkpoint of Death

At the dawn of Saturday 6/9/2008, the 21-year old Naheel Abu Reida was to become a new victim for the Israeli occupation's sadistic practices at Huwwara checkpoint.

(29 years) recounts: My wife felt the labor pain while she was at the beginning of the seventh month of pregnancy. So, I quickly called my brother as to transport us to Rafeida hospital by his car in the early hours of the morning. My mom went with us, too.

We went through Za'atara checkpoint with no problem until we reached Huwwara checkpoint. I haggled with the soldiers for more than 20 minutes as they have told me that the checkpoint was closed. Despite the fact that they observed that my wife was in pain, they decided to humiliate us; they told my brother to back up the car to 10m away from the checkpoint before collecting our IDs for "security check." We pleaded with them for over an hour to let us pass, yet to no avail.

Labor began, and the baby's head began to come out. So I called out to the soldier, "The baby's coming out, and he and my wife need help." But he utterly refused to help. The head and shoulders of the baby came out; I feared he might fall between the chairs so I put my hand under his head and I felt his pulse, which I still feel to this day.

Life that gave the baby's body some warmth for few moments let the feelings of joy at Zaid's arrival be mixed with the feelings of fear for him. Thereupon the father stood waving the ambulance hoping it will come to help them. When it came, and the medic was apprised of the situation, he went out of his mind, and started to feel the baby. He then said to the father, "May *Allah* be with you, the boy is dead."!!! The father implored the medic: "Hurry and take my wife to the hospital." He told him that the baby's position is critical and she cannot be moved until the baby is fully out of his mother's womb. He then started to deliver her properly within the sight and hearing of the soldiers.



My son Zaid came out dead; we put him in a bag that used to contain his mother's things. We carried my wife in a mat found in the car, in view of her very critical condition; we got to the hospital and she was immediately admitted to the operating room.

The next day, the doctors gave me my son in a "carton." On our way back to our village to bury the baby, we passed by the same checkpoint. One of the soldiers asked me what was inside the carton. I told him this is my son whom you did not allow to live. The soldiers started saying to each other mockingly, "Do you want to see a dead child in a carton?"

The mother, whose tears blended with her anguish at losing Zaid, said: "I did not expect the child to die, especially that his heart was beating at birth. But because of lack of oxygen and because he was born in the seventh month, he suffocated as no care was given to him or to me. And even though I had given birth, the soldiers continued to refuse to let us in."

The Israeli authorities did not impose appropriate punishment for this incident. They opened an investigation and dismissed the officer in charge of the checkpoint; while Israeli sources said that, "the Israeli military court has decided to jail the Israeli officer 28 days, and then move him to another location in the army."

Thus justice remains in the heavens, to where Zaid had ascended.

- LRC, Huwwara Checkpoint – The Checkpoint of Death, POICA, 4/11/2008, <http://poica.org/2008/11/huwwara-checkpoint-the-checkpoint-of-death-another-baby-dies-at-an-israeli-checkpoint/>; and see The Pregnancy Pains of (Naheel) Brought Forth the Pains of Death at the Huwwara Checkpoint, Insan Online, 22/12/2008, http://insanonline.net/news_details.php?id=5822 (in Arabic)





‘Atara Military Checkpoint

Israel uses checkpoints as a trap to arrest resistance fighters, which it calls the wanted. The liberated prisoner ‘Abdul Fattah ‘Asfour was arrested at the ‘Atara military checkpoint in the summer of 2008, while returning from the Al-Quds University on his way to his village Sinjel in the Ramallah Governorate. This showed that the Israeli soldiers were carrying a list of the ID numbers of many young people who go through this checkpoint.

‘Asfour explained that the soldiers got him off the car in which he was riding after confirming his name and ID number. They took him to the Israeli Ofer military prison where he was sentenced to two years in prison, charged with belonging to the “Islamic Bloc” and participating in political activities.

He drew attention to the fact that many students who are now languishing in Israeli jails were arrested at flying military checkpoints. That led him to avoid passing through them and resort to using the difficult and rugged bypass roads, for fear of getting arrested again.

As for ‘Abdul Rahman Ladadwah, he managed to escape the first attempt to arrest him during his absence from the house. However, he did not succeed the second time, as he was arrested at the Ma‘ale Adumim military checkpoint, erected on the road to Al-Quds University; he was sentenced to two years imprisonment. Ladadwah maintained that the Israeli soldiers arrested him while he was on his way to the university. The arrest was made at a flying checkpoint set up few minutes before his arrival to the area. He was handcuffed and blindfolded, then taken to be interrogated in al-Maskubiya interrogation center on many charges, most prominent among them was belonging to the Hamas movement.

The student Fakhr al-Rantisi was arrested at the ‘Atara checkpoint on his return from Birzeit University. He was charged with participating in the cleaning of the cemetery of his hometown Rantis. He says, “Despite the many arrests that prevented me from completing my university studies in safety and security, my latest detention has greatly limited my activities at the university, due to the absurd reason for which I was arrested, which is my participation in cleaning my hometown’s cemetery.”

- Flying Checkpoints... a Nightmare that Haunts University Students, Felesteen Online, 2/1/2011. (in Arabic)



The education sector also fell victim to these roadblocks, the opening and closing of which the Israeli authority controls as it pleases. They also cast their shadows over thousands of students, teachers and university professors. These checkpoints deny students, teachers and professors access to their schools and universities, notably at times of exams. This is due to repeated closures and the long hours of waiting, causing students to lose thousands of learning hours. And even if they get to their schools and universities, they have no guarantee that they will return to their homes. And when they try to circumvent those restrictions, they cannot be sure they can safeguard their lives from the bullets of the Israeli forces and the settlers.

The restrictions imposed by Israel on the movement of workers and goods had a negative impact on the Palestinian economy; this was due to the fact that Israel controls, in a severe and harsh manner, the movement of people and goods to and from the WB. It deliberately applies a policy of closures and complicated measures, with the aim of creating an environment for Palestinians in which they can be expelled, their living costs raised, and their poverty and unemployment ratios worsen. All of these factors prevent them from earning a minimum standard of living, thus creating conditions that force Palestinians to emigrate.

The number of the Palestinian persons from WB employed in Israel and Israeli settlements had reached about 105 thousand workers at the end of 2013, representing 13.5% of the total workforce in the WB. About 34,300 of them work without official Israeli permits, in addition to 18,700 who carry an Israeli identity card or foreign passports. This means that 32.7% of the WB workers in these areas are threatened with prosecution and are subjected to extortion from their employers.⁷⁸ According to data from the Israel Prison Service, the number of





Palestinian detainees in Israel has reached 1,424 in 31/3/2014, on charges of “illegal entry” in Israel, among them 22 minors.⁷⁹

Due to these policies, the unemployment rate in the WB stood at 18.6% in 2013; the differences between age and quality groups have greatly widened, for they are very high among young people, especially graduates.⁸⁰

Table (3): Distribution of Palestinians Aged 15 Years and Above in the WB by Labor Force and Unemployment 2008–2013 (thousands)⁸¹

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Labor force	609	643	665	718	743	759
Unemployment	120	114	114	124	141	141
% of unemployment	19.7	17.7	17.1	17.3	19	18.6

When Palestinians enter Israel without permits, they expose themselves to the risk of disability or death. On 19/10/2013, a Palestinian referred to here as M.M. (23 years) from the village of al-Shuyukh in the Hebron district, attempted to enter Israel, along with dozens of other workers. When they reached al-Ramadin area, soldiers waiting nearby fired teargas at them. M.M. stayed with others, when he thought that the soldiers had left, he crossed the Wall and began walking toward a car that was waiting for him on the other side. After he had advanced about 10m towards the car, a soldier he had not noticed before and who was standing few meters away from him, shot him without verbal warning or firing warning shots into the air; one of the bullets hit his foot. The injured M.M. tried to run back toward the Separation Wall, when he was shot in the other foot by the same soldier. He succeeded in reaching the other side of the Wall and the car that brought him there; its driver transported him to the Alia hospital in Hebron where he received medical treatment.



A Palestinian man waits for Israeli soldiers to open the gate of the Separation Wall at the entrance of the city of Qalqilya.



On 10/11/2013, two Palestinians, B. 'A. (22 years) and H. 'A. (18 years), tried to go across the Separation Wall west of Ras 'Atiya, a village in the Qalqilya district, in order to enter Israel. A military force was waiting on the other side of the wall; and when the two traversed it, the soldiers fired live bullets in their direction. According to testimonies given, before firing, there were neither verbal warnings nor warning shots fired in the air; they thus wounded B. 'A. in the chest, abdomen and thigh. He was transferred to a hospital in Qalqilya thanks to the help of a passer-by.

According to Israeli regulations, soldiers may employ the “suspect apprehension procedure” when a Palestinian attempts to cross the Separation Wall without a permit. As part of this procedure, soldiers may shoot at a suspect’s legs, but only as a last resort, after verbally warning the suspect and firing warning shots in the air. According to the testimonies collected by B’Tselem, the soldiers acted in contravention of regulations in all the incidents described above, shooting at the Palestinians without observing the incremental stages set out in the procedure. In some of the cases, the soldiers did not even restrict themselves to firing only at the legs.⁸²





Economically, the cost of transporting goods from Nablus to the port of Ashdod has risen 55%, due to Israeli roadblocks and checkpoints.⁸³ Israel's use of internal closures, fixed and flying checkpoints, gates, curfews, and the Separation Wall had a very negative impact on the Palestinian economy. The World Bank has estimated that Israeli internal closures accounted for approximately half of the decline in real GDP observed between 2000 and 2002. These barriers are enough to destroy any economy, especially when added to the closures of borders and crossings to the outside world.⁸⁴



Palestinians going through a checkpoint near Nablus.

Israeli authorities imposed periodic restrictions on WB residents aged between 16 and 35 exiting Nablus, Jenin, Tubas and Tulkarm governorates, preventing onward travel southwards. The estimated number of Palestinian males and females affected by age restrictions is approximately 269 thousands, representing 32% of the population of the four governorates.⁸⁵ There are also severe restrictions on the traffic of WB residents to East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians enter as if they were crossing international borders. These authorities usually allow only those above 45 years of age to go to Jerusalem and visit *al-Aqsa* Mosque.



Due to the above restrictions, tens of thousands of Palestinians have lost their jobs; while the movement of workers and the transport of goods have sustained severe damage. Transportation prices rose in a way that limits the profit potential of mainly agricultural crops and simple manufactured goods. Furthermore, it has become incumbent on many Palestinian employees to wake and travel in the early hours of the morning to arrive at work on time; all because of the additional hours it takes to go through Israeli roadblocks and obstacles.

Although some Palestinian workers have obtained permits to work inside Israel, some of them who had entered the checkpoint were turned back by guards, for various reasons. For example, they may ask a worker to go back to the end of the queue because he reached the checkpoint before the hour stated on his entry permit. Another may have his permit confiscated because his fingerprints do not match those in the computer database; another worker may be turned back in compliance with Israel Security Agency (ISA) orders, and so on.⁸⁶

The worker 'Ali Yusuf Jabr (43 years), from the town of al-Khader, south of Bethlehem in the WB, relates that he is compelled to leave his house at four in the morning to be able to pass through the Gilo checkpoint erected at Bethlehem northern entrance. The reason for this is the congestion of workers at the gate and the thorough Israeli inspection procedures that accompany it, the aim of which is humiliating the Palestinian workers and delaying them from work for hours on end. The time normally needed to reach Jerusalem does not exceed 30 minutes, but due to the roadblocks, the time needed is stretched to two hours or more.⁸⁷ On 26/5/2013, due to the heavy congestion at Israeli checkpoints, a worker by the name of 'Abdullah al-Nawajha (50 years) was crushed just before reaching the gate to the Tarqumya Checkpoint and fractured a rib.⁸⁸





In addition, many workers resort to taking bypass roads or to sneaking by to avoid Israeli checkpoints and the abusive treatment of the Israeli forces. This sometimes compels them to creep through the sewer system or through the storm water drainage system. Muhammad, a 23 year old worker, relates that, after his journey from Bethlehem to al-Ram to get to work by going through the storm water drainage system, he found dozens of young men waiting for their turn to go down through that system and then sneak to the other side of the Separation Wall. The outcome of his trip that day was not good, as a military patrol was waiting for him on the other side, fishing out all those coming out of the water drainage system and beating them up, then detaining them for five hours in hot weather.⁸⁹

Furthermore, some workers climb the Separation Wall using ladders and ropes that they bring with them. They place a ladder on the face of the wall; then they tie a rope to an opening at the top of one of the concrete blocks of the wall, which has a height of eight meters. They lower that rope on the other side of the wall; then the workers start climbing the wall. With the help of the rope, they lower themselves quickly down the other side. This speedy descent causes sharp pain in their hands and feet. This trip usually starts very early in the morning between 2 and 3 AM, according to those workers who reach their place of work in this manner. In addition, many workers point out that, on their way to work, they are forced to walk long distances at night in the mountains, a perilous journey that takes around two hours.⁹⁰



The western entrance gate of the Separation Wall that separates the farmers, who are residents of al-Jib village, from their lands; it also separates al-Khalayla neighborhood from the rest of the village.



Things do not always go according to plan, thus on 8/8/2009, the Israeli forces beat the 20 year old Palestinian, Tha'ir Badr 'Issa Jaradat, from Sa'ir village, northeast of Hebron, causing several fractures to his legs. An Israeli military patrol, belonging to the Israeli Border Guard Forces, forced Jaradat to jump from a height of 4.5m, after he tried to climb the Separation Wall in al-Ram area. This led to his fall to the ground and caused him to suffer fractures in both legs. They then beat him up and let loose a police dog on him, attempting to force him to stand up before escorting him to a Border Guard post.⁹¹

A large part of the Palestinian population is dependent on agriculture. However, the existence of vast agricultural lands in Area C, which is under full Israeli control, the spread of roadblocks, the difficulty of moving agricultural produce, and the fact that farmers are compelled to take long bypass roads result in damaged crops, and limit the growth and development of the agricultural sector.



An example of the difficulties faced in the agriculture sector is at the Taysir checkpoint where Israeli soldiers prevent Palestinian farmers from passing their produce through the checkpoint. So these farmers have had to make a detour of around 30 km and pass through a different checkpoint. When it was made clear to the soldiers that there was no such order, they found a method to keep drivers away from the checkpoint: They obligated those who transport vegetables into the WB to unload all crates before the checkpoint, supposedly for inspection, and to reload them.⁹²

During 2010, Israel confiscated or destroyed 13,149 donums of Palestinian lands in the WB; mostly for constructing the Separation Wall in the WB. Israel claims that the confiscation is done for military reasons; which, according to military orders, can be summed up in building bypass roads and military towers, and expanding military bases and Israeli settlements. A study by the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) shows that most confiscated lands are agricultural and are considered the sole source of income for the Palestinian families who had lost their jobs inside Israel.⁹³

A study of the percentage agricultural contribution to the GDP in the WB and GS during the period 1999–2014, shows that it moved downward from 9.3% in 1999 to 3.8% in 2014. (See Table (4)).



Table (4): Percentage Contribution of Agriculture to GDP in PA Territories at Constant Prices* – Selected Years⁹⁴

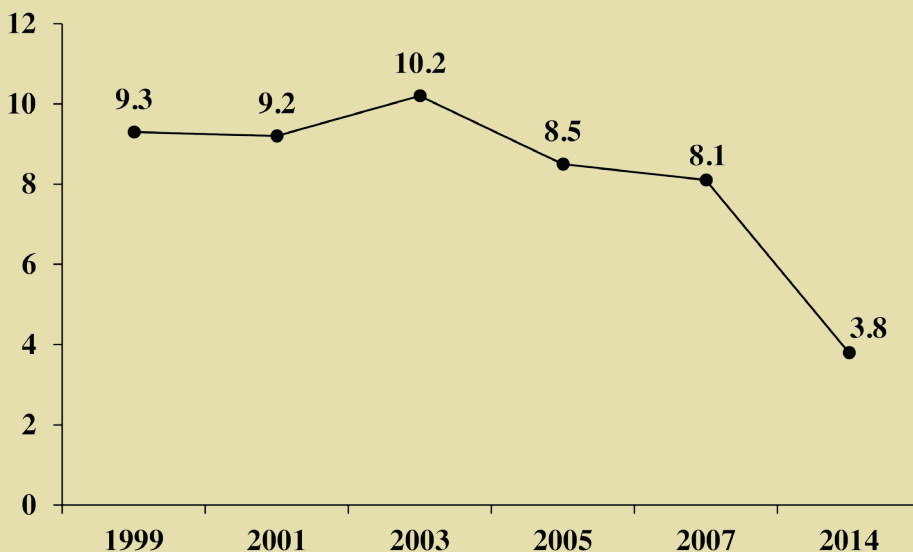
Year	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2014**
Contribution (%)	9.3	9.2	10.2	8.5	8.1	3.8

Note: PCBS data excludes those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israel in 1967.

*Base year is 2004.

**Preliminary estimates.

Percentage Contribution of Agriculture to GDP in PA Territories – Selected Years (%)





It seems that the decline in agricultural activity was related to hardline Israeli practices during *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, and the consequences of erecting the Separation Wall and Israeli roadblocks, in addition to the policies of tying the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy.

Up to July 2012, and according to a report by OCHA-oPt “The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier – Fast Facts,” the UN Register of Damage (UNRoD) has collected over 26,000 claims for material damage caused by the construction of the Separation Wall in the northern WB.⁹⁵ According to this report, the Wall has reduced the access of 11 thousand Palestinians living in 32 communities located behind the Wall to workplaces and essential services. Thus, to live in their own homes and maintain family and social relations in the rest of the WB, they depend on the granting of permits or special arrangements.⁹⁶ Access to agricultural land through the Wall is channeled through 74 gates. The majority of these gates (52 of them) are only open during the six week olive harvest season (October to December), and usually only for a limited period during the day.⁹⁷

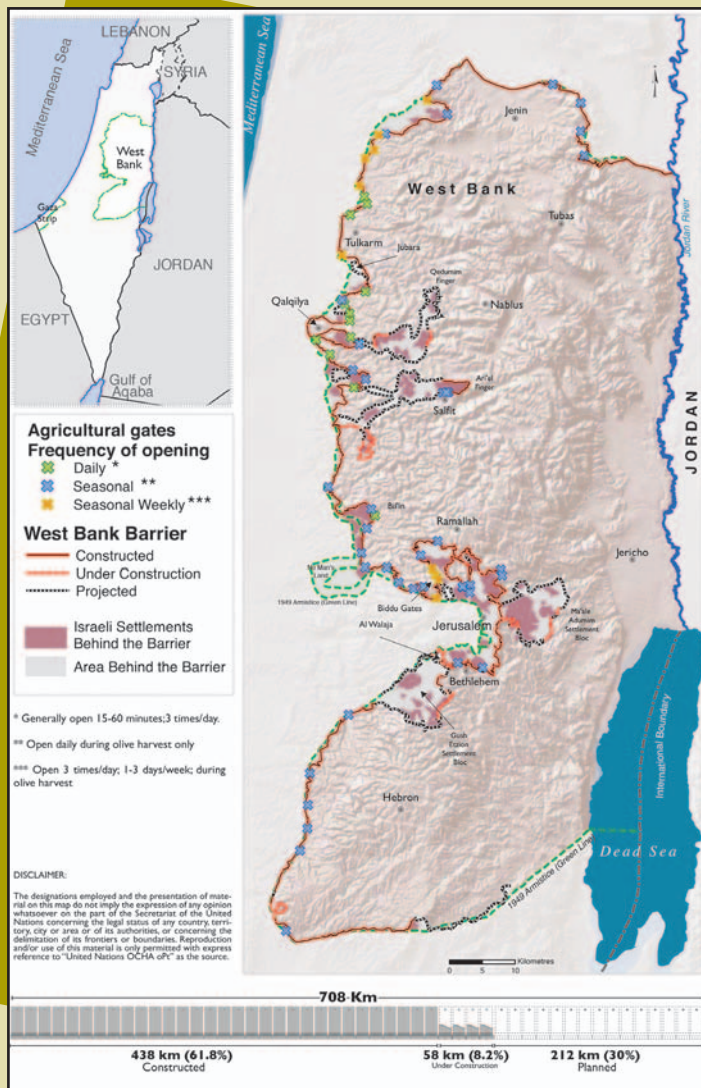


Palestinians use a ladder to cross the Separation Wall in the Palestinian village of al-Ram, north of Jerusalem, near the Qalandiya checkpoint, to enter Jerusalem on 17/8/2012.

➤ Photo by: Oren Ziv/ Activestills.org



Map 4: The Separation Wall in WB and the Agricultural Gates' Frequency of Opening, July 2011



Source: OCHA-oPt, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_west_bank_barrier_route_update_july_2011.pdf





The report “The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier – Fast Facts” indicated that the agricultural livelihoods of approximately 150 Palestinian communities have been severely undermined by the permit and gate regime, which restrict their access to farmland behind the Barrier. Most permit applications are regularly rejected on grounds that the farmer failed to prove his “connection to the land” to the satisfaction of the Israeli authorities. The limited opening of the “agricultural gates” has forced permit-holders to stop cultivation or to shift from labor-intensive to rain-fed and low-value crops.⁹⁸

According to the same report, during the 2011 olive harvest, about 42% of applications submitted for permits to access areas behind the Barrier were rejected citing “security reasons” or lack of “connection to the land.”⁹⁹

In a report that documents violations by settlers and Israeli soldiers during the olive harvest season, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) revealed that the Separation Wall and the complicated procedures that Israeli authorities impose on farmers to keep them from reaching their lands prompted a great number of them to abandon their olive groves isolated inside the Wall. Among these procedures, strictness in granting permits to able-bodied Palestinian farmers and granting them only to old people; in addition to granting permits to primary beneficiaries of the land and denying them to his wife, children and siblings; this of course results in olives being left unpicked. According to a preliminary random survey of three Palestinian communities in the Jenin Governorate, PARC disclosed that the Wall caused Palestinian farmers to abandon 46.5% of the olive



groves isolated by the Wall, which have an area of 750 donums. PARC estimated that losses due to farmers' abandoning about 350 donums of their olive groves isolated inside the Wall, total approximately one million Israeli shekels annually (about \$300 thousand). PARC warned that, if the Israeli authorities continue to follow this policy toward the lands isolated inside the Wall, by 2020, 70% of these lands will be abandoned.¹⁰⁰

Palestinian workers
waiting in line in front of
the Eyal Checkpoint.



➤ Photo by: 'Abd al-Karim
al-Sa'adi, B'Tselem, 2/6/2013.





The Israeli Machsom Watch Organization quoted Palestinian workers as saying that Israeli soldiers at checkpoints do not hesitate to direct their rifles at them, throw stun grenades and tear gas at them, and verbally abuse them. Yet despite of this humiliating journey, these workers seem to be better off than their colleagues to whom the Israeli authorities refuse to grant the necessary permits to enter Israel; especially those young men who have not reached 35 years of age, are not married and have no children.

With the decline of the Palestinian economy, the workers who are denied permits look for different and creative ways to enter Israel, either to look for work or to reach their workplaces. Although Israeli law does not allow hiring foreign workers without permits, Israeli employers sometimes prefer such workers for more than one reason. Muhammad (23 years old) from Nablus said, “We work without any rights, and we are paid less than the others. They can kick us out whenever they want, but there is no alternative.”

Those workers, such as Muhammad, depend on Israeli smugglers to transport them to Israel. Muhammad said, “I pay 200 shekels (\$55) to be transported to Israel.” Usually, and along with Muhammad, scores are transported, depending on the means of transportation used; and they all pay the same rate. “Last week we were smuggled in large refrigerated trucks,” Muhammad explained. “Sometimes I feel I am suffocating, but there is no alternative.” Muhammad has tried several means of transportation; he rode in refrigerated trucks, transport trucks, tank trucks, and trucks transporting goods. And in order not to go through this every day, he stays in Israel for one whole month before returning to WB. He sleeps in unfinished buildings and apartments, and he pays the Israelis for that too. But his life seems to be that of a fugitive. He said, “Border Guards chase us from one building to the other. One time, friends of mine were arrested, while I managed to escape.” Israeli police arrest thousands of “illegal” workers annually.

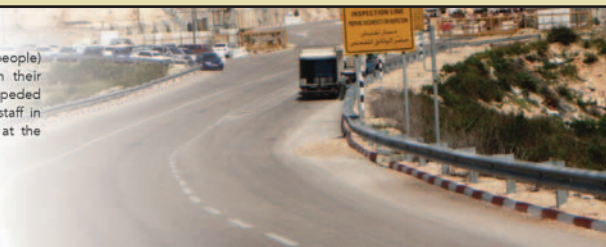
➤ *Asharq Alawsat*, 30/8/2009.



Map 5: The Impact of the Separation Wall on the Humanitarian Situation 2013

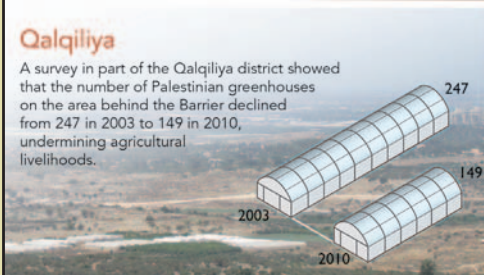
The Barta'a Enclave

Eight communities (approximately 6,000 people) have been separated by the Barrier from their service centre in Jenin. This has also impeded access of humanitarian and Civil Defense staff in emergencies, due to delays and searches at the Barrier checkpoint.



Qalqiliya

A survey in part of the Qalqiliya district showed that the number of Palestinian greenhouses on the area behind the Barrier declined from 247 in 2003 to 149 in 2010, undermining agricultural livelihoods.



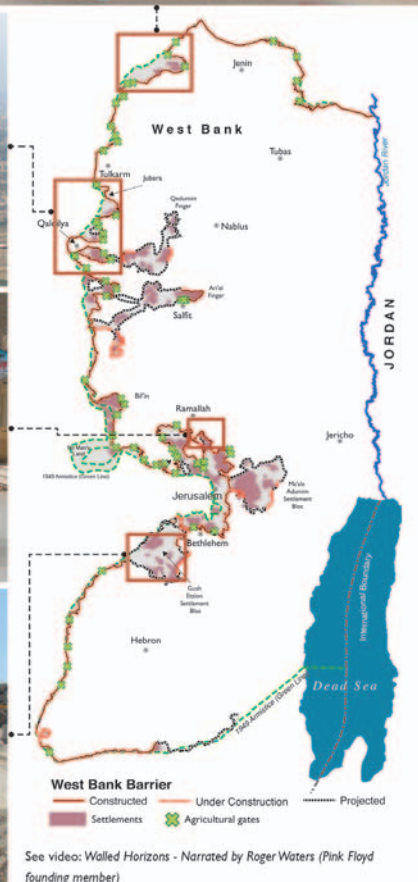
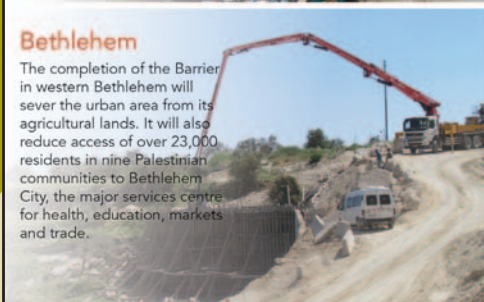
Jerusalem: Kafr 'Aqab

Construction of the Barrier in the Jerusalem area has resulted in the physical separation of a few Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem, such as Kafr 'Aqab, from the urban centre. Residents suffer from impeded access to services on the 'Jerusalem' side of the Barrier, the lack of municipal services in situ, a security vacuum and increasing lawlessness and crime.



Bethlehem

The completion of the Barrier in western Bethlehem will sever the urban area from its agricultural lands. It will also reduce access of over 23,000 residents in nine Palestinian communities to Bethlehem City, the major services centre for health, education, markets and trade.



Source: OCHA-oPt, https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_barrier_factsheet_july_2013_english.pdf





In one of its reports, the World Bank stated that “the collapse of the labor market, caused by restrictions of movement and access, is not only incurring a collapse in the economy, but also generating covert and overt forms of violence.”¹⁰¹ In 2006, the Israeli newspaper Haaretz published a report in which its correspondent Amira Hass indicated that “the regime of restriction on movement imposed by Israel on the Palestinians has crumbled the West Bank into dozens of closed or partially closed enclaves isolated from each other despite their geographical proximity.”¹⁰²

Social and psychological effects are no less important than other effects; for security cordons and closures play a major role in deepening Palestinians’ isolation from each other, hinder family relations and their participation at each other’s weddings and funerals. Added to that, there is the deliberate Israeli humiliation of Palestinians at checkpoints, such as strip searches that increase the psychological pressure on them. For example, workers, traders and prisoners’ families are routinely subjected to humiliation when passing through al-Jalamah Crossing, considered the only entrance for Jenin residents to the 1948 occupied territories. Recently, complaints concerning this have been on the rise, particularly with regard to strip searches, which is a nightmare for Palestinians, particularly women on their way to visit prisoners. There are many women who refuse to enter these search rooms, which results in denying them the visit after they have endured interrogation. There is suspicion regarding the existence of cameras in search rooms, which makes the issue of strip searches totally unacceptable to Palestinian women. None of them would accept putting herself in such a position, especially as female soldiers refuse to enter the search room and conduct a manual inspection; instead they watch everything through cameras.¹⁰³



Concerning extortions at checkpoints, the Palestinian Nafez Abu al-Rub said that Israeli military intelligence officers, located at the front of the checkpoint, wait for the person after he passes all inspection procedures and try to extort him. Sometimes they pick a worker and take him to an adjoining room where they bargain with him over his work permit. Sometimes they extort the family members of prisoners or traders. And things go so far as to tear up someone's permit for no reason and deny him entry after he had passed inspection, even if he has a permit that is granted only to those that have no security precedent; he is subjected to all of that simply because he refused to collaborate with the intelligence officer.¹⁰⁴

On 20/1/2009, Mahmud 'Awwad (29 years), a resident of Salem in the Nablus Governorate, was beaten by an Israeli soldier who broke his skull when he tried to save his brother from the hands of Israeli soldiers at the Hawara checkpoint.



Palestinian workers waiting at an Israeli roadblock.

➤ Reuters.





The Death Checkpoints Put Out the Light of “Nour”

“The trip takes 25 minutes, so why did it take my child an hour and a half to reach the hospital, under which right and under which law?” exclaims the father of the little girl Nour ‘Afana, his eyes filling with tears, accusing Israeli military checkpoints of bearing direct responsibility for the death of his sick 14 year old daughter.

On 28/11/2013, Nour ‘Afana, a child with special needs who lives in the town of Abu Dis, southeast of Jerusalem, was in critical condition and needed to get to the Beit Jala Government Hospital in Bethlehem, south of Abu Dis. However, when the ambulance arrived at the Container military checkpoint, set up by the Israeli authorities on the road leading to the hospital, they found it closed. They could not get to the hospital on time, and that led to her death.

Muhammad ‘Afana (51 years), the grief-stricken father of the girl, said, “My daughter suffers from a rare blood disease that caused her to suffer total physical and sensory paralysis, which we discovered when she was three years old. Since then she needed constant medical care.” “About five o’clock in the afternoon, I noticed that my child was having difficulty breathing,” he added. “So I called for an ambulance; and it was decided that she should be transferred to Beit Jala Government Hospital, provided that, given the seriousness of her condition, she enters directly to the Intensive Care Unit without going through the Emergency Room.”

And as the ambulance driver ‘Ala’ Bassa said, “When we arrived, Noor was having difficulty breathing, in addition there was a drop in her body temperature and cyanosis in her upper limbs, a sign of insufficient oxygen in her blood.”

About 5:30, the ambulance left Abu Dis; and en route, a medic placed the girl on a medical ventilator to help her breathe. The ambulance kept going for two kilometers on the winding road that the Palestinians have resorted to using since the mid-nineties, after Israel closed the Jerusalem-Bethlehem road to Palestinian traffic. But when the ambulance reached the town of Sawahera al-Sharqiya, located on the road to Bethlehem, they ran into a suffocating traffic jam, as the Palestinian cars heading toward the Container checkpoint filled the road in both directions. “So we got stuck one kilometer away from the checkpoint,” said Bassa. He added, “At first, I did not know the cause of the jam, because as far as the eye can see, I could only see stopped cars. I asked the people around me for the reason and they told me that the Israeli soldiers were blocking the passage of cars at the checkpoint.”



As the minutes went by, the ambulance tried to advance in the midst of the congestion, by turning on both the siren and the horn at times, and with the help of people who tried to make way for it at other times. But as Bassa described, “I remained stuck in place. So after more than 10 minutes of waiting, I decided to take another route called ‘old Kedar road,’ but the ambulance got stuck in another traffic jam, 500m away from the checkpoint; I tried to make my way between stopped cars, but to no avail.”

“The only solution left for us to reach the checkpoint was to take a third road; but when I looked at it, I found that it suffered the same congestion problem, so I decided not to take it,” explains Bassa.

In the meantime, the girl’s condition—according to her father—was worsening as she fell into a coma. The monitoring devices were pointing to a progressive decrease of oxygen in her blood. He added, “Her mother and I were under severe psychological pressure, crying and not knowing what we should do and where we should go; watching our daughter strapped to the ventilator device in the ambulance.”

“After more than half an hour of waiting, every second of them crucial to my daughter’s life, we decided to head for Ramallah Government Hospital.” That meant changing the direction of their trip from the south to the north.

The new trip lasted more than 45 minutes, instead of the 10 minutes, the distance between the checkpoint and the Beit Jala Hospital, with the result that the girl died at the gate of the Ramallah Hospital.

Dr. ‘Abdallah Abu-Hilal, the doctor supervising the case of Nour, who followed the process of moving her to the hospital, says, “Medically, the girl was in a critical condition the day she died. However, she could have been saved had she reached the hospital in time.”

The heartbroken father was finding it hard to cope with his grief for his daughter. Nour was his only child, after her twin brother had died from the same disease at age four.



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Villages of Beitin and Shufa, Model of Suffering

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 entry point into Ramallah City. The latter is closed by an earth mound that prevents vehicles from reaching the District Coordination Office (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 15 km, and from 10 to 30–40 minutes respectively; the cost of transport rocketed from 2 to 7 shekels (about \$0.6–\$2) in bus fare and from 10 shekels (\$2.8) to 50 shekels (about \$14) for a private taxi fare.

Moreover, despite its location immediately along Route 60, due to the closure of the junction to that road, Beitin residents must travel over 20 km to reach the nearest open entry point. These access constraints have had a detrimental impact on the access of residents to services and livelihoods, among them:

Education: Disabled children are no longer able to enroll in al-Nahda Women Association in Ramallah that offers educational programs for them; 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. All these changes 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 donums) are located to the east of Route 60. As access to this road is closed, farmers must use a long detour via two underpasses. The additional time and transportation costs have severely undermined their agricultural livelihoods.

Commercial Livelihoods: The increase in transportation costs and the reduction in the volume of customers in the past 10 years, has led to the gradual closure of commercial and industrial establishments in the village.

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.¹⁰⁵

Shufa is a village in the Tulkarm Governorate 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 earth mounds 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 2 km. 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 donums 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—Center for the Defence of the Individual, filed a petition with the Israeli High Court of Justice on behalf of Shufa’s council, requesting that the army remove the obstacles. According to the petitioners, the obstacles result in severe, excessive, and disproportionate infringements on the Palestinian residents’ rights to freedom of movement, family life, education and health, among other rights. The petition is currently pending.¹⁰⁶



Irtah Checkpoint, a cage-like structure, a scene of enslavement and humiliation of Palestinians.



The detention of workers who had entered Jerusalem without permits by Border Guards at the entrance of the village of the Sheikh Sa'd, which is adjacent to Jerusalem.





Conclusion

Israeli roadblocks are the locations where the systematic humiliation of the Palestinian people takes place. These roadblocks have turned all Palestinian population centers into cantons, isolated from each other, besieged, closed and encircled. They are the main reason for the deterioration in the humanitarian, economic, commercial, social, educational, cultural, health and psychological conditions of Palestinians. They are the reflection and symbol of an ugly occupation and its inhumane practices. They control Palestinians' daily routines and have become a burden that can neither be ignored nor overlooked. They have become part of a daily routine consisting of preplanned corporal and psychological punishments, which are in conflict with all divine and man-made laws.

To each checkpoint there is a story, and at every iron gate and earth mound a tale is told. These are stories that have brought





blood and death to workers, students, doctors, mothers and children at the hands of heavily armed soldiers, whose only function is to plant death and spread terror, under the pretext of self-protection.

The spread of Israeli roadblocks in the WB has crippled a substantial part of Palestinian production capacity and has deprived it of its sources of income and development. These roadblocks have restricted its freedom of movement, especially following *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, and thus threaten the Palestinian society's security.

The Palestinian people live without their most basic daily rights as human beings; these are rights that are guaranteed by all international treaties, starting with the freedom of movement and freedom to work. Israel has exceeded its occupation of the territory geographically to become a racist colonizer of the land and its inhabitants. This has become evident in the policies and laws imposed by the Israeli occupation on the Palestinians that are considered grave breaches, such as willful killing, torture and inhumane treatment, willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, based on the provisions of Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

It is unfortunate that the international community, which condemns Israel's settlement policies and considers them in violation of international law does not act to stop them. It is satisfied with condemnations that do not rise to the level of punishing Israeli arrogance and intransigence.

The illegitimacy of the occupation is the premise that must be upheld in demanding an immediate end of the occupation and its roadblocks, behind which they detain the Palestinians' hope of living in a free country, in which they enjoy freedom of movement, work, travel, and education among many other rights.



Images of the suffering of the
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The Suffering of Palestinians From Israeli Roadblocks in The West Bank

معاناة الفلسطينيين من
الحواجز الإسرائيلية
في الضفة الغربية

13

Am I Not a Human ?

This Book

The Palestinian person lives without the most basic inherent rights guaranteed by all international laws and treaties. In the West Bank, Palestinians under Israeli occupation are detained in a prison, the bars of which are checkpoints, barbed wire, earth mounds, iron gates, and a reinforced concrete wall. To each roadblock, there is a story; and for each iron gate, earth mound and barbed wire fence, there is a narrative to be told. These are stories and narratives of injury and death inflicted on workers, students, doctors, mothers and children, at the hands of heavily armed soldiers, under the pretext of self-protection.

This book starts with an informational preface, followed by a legal one, then it surveys the development in numbers and types of Israeli roadblocks in the period 2001–2014, and gives examples of those found in the West Bank and of the suffering they cause the Palestinians.

Al-Zaytouna Centre presents to its readers its thirteenth book in the Am I not a Human? Series, which sheds light on various aspects of the suffering of the Palestinian people. The series conveys the suffering in a style that addresses the mind and the heart, within a scientific, systematic and documented framework.



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