

The Reality Behind The Israeli Security Wall

In June 2002, the Israeli government began to construct a wall projected to encircle the entire West Bank and effectively seal off its inhabitants from Israel. Construction of the first section of the wall was finished in July 2003. The western part of the wall will stretch 360 km from the northern regions of the West Bank to its most southern regions. The estimated length of the entire wall is 700 km

The wall consists of reinforced cement, barbed wire, electrical fences, trenches, electronic motion sensors, guard towers and security roads. It will cost \$1 million per kilometre and will be twice as long and three times as high as the Berlin wall.

Israeli bulldozers have cleared 11500 sq metres of Palestinian land, damaged or destroyed 83,000 fruit and olive trees and demolished green houses and water networks in more than 39 villages. As with the Great Wall of China, Israel's wall can now be seen from space.

Facts about the Security Wall:

- The western wall will effectively incorporate at least 10% of Palestinian territory into Israel. The latest projections estimate it as much as 45-55%
- The first section of the wall incorporated 10 illegal Israeli settlements into Israel. When finished, approximately 91% of all West Bank settlements and 98% of its settlers will be on the Israeli side and effectively annexed.
- 12,000 Palestinians will be forced to reside between the wall and Israel's internationally recognised border, pre-1967, which shall be a closed military zone
- All Palestinian property within 60-100 metres of the wall's path is being destroyed or confiscated. In the village of Barta'a, the Israeli government has ordered the demolition of 8 houses, 3 factories and 128 businesses. In the village of Nazlat 'Isa, Israeli bulldozers have demolished 16 homes and more than 100 shops in order to make way for the wall.
- The land incorporated into Israel by the wall is the richest agricultural land in the West Bank. It includes the aquifer system which provides 51% of the West Bank's water resources (World Bank).

Myths and Realities

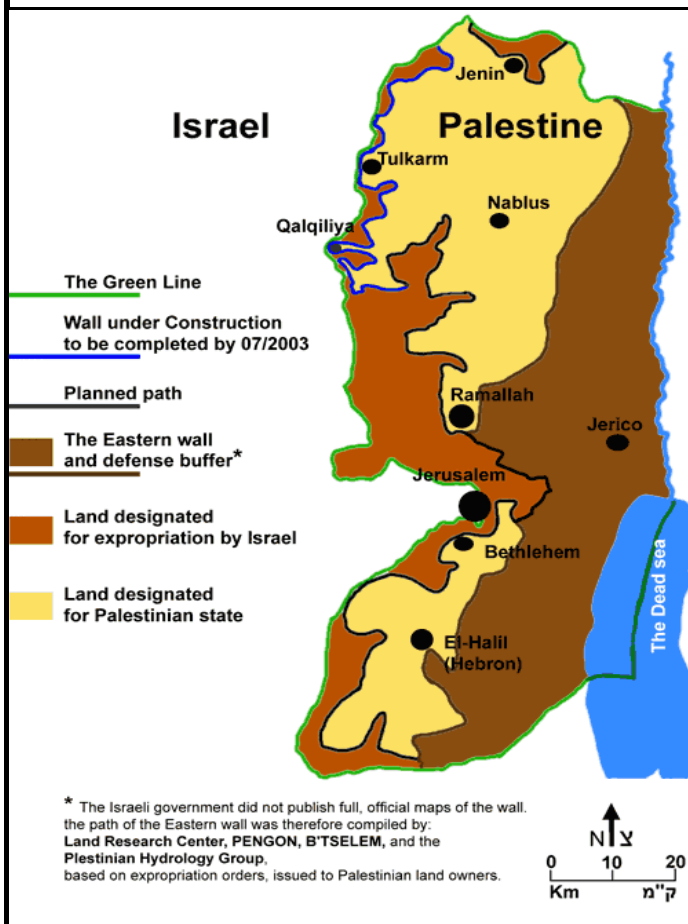
Myth: The Palestinians were informed about the wall and granted the opportunity to contest the Israeli government's decision.

Reality: The Palestinians were informed about the construction of the wall. However, all protests sent by lawyers to the Israeli Supreme Court have been flatly rejected in the name of security.

Myth: The Israeli government is building the wall to protect its citizens by preventing Palestinians crossing into Israeli areas.

Reality: A security wall could have been erected on the international border or inside Israel and still achieved the same objectives. The wall is being constructed on average 6 Km to the east of the international border, deep into Palestinian territory. Its deviation means it will be twice as long as the border.

(Continued on page 2)



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Myth: The wall will stop suicide bombers and prevent terrorist attacks from the West Bank.

Reality: The wall will have no tangible security benefits to Israel. The fence erected around Gaza after the first intifada did not stop attacks on Israeli targets. The wall will increase anger and resentment that fuels the violence.

Myth: The consequences of the wall will overall be beneficial.

Reality: Israel has violated human rights and international law to build the security wall. It will imprison Palestinians into ghettos and bantustans restricting their movement into Israeli areas. It will only further exacerbate the enormous suffering of the Palestinians.



The impact of building the wall:

The wall will have a devastating impact on the lives of around 210,000 Palestinians living in 67 towns or villages (World Bank). It will lead to widespread unemployment, poverty and hunger and deny the Palestinians access to education, health services and places of religious worship.

- ◆ The 12,000 Palestinians imprisoned between the Wall and the Green Line will not be granted residential status or citizenship. They will have no right to travel into or get services from Israel, while Israel simultaneously deprives them of their livelihoods in the West Bank. Palestinians in this predicament may be forced to emigrate.
- ◆ Palestinians will not be compensated for the

land confiscated and property damaged in order to build the wall.

- ◆ In the town of Qalquilya, they have been deprived of their land and cut off from the West Bank and Israel. Unemployment is at 80%; 33% of its businesses have closed and about 8000 people have left
- ◆ The wall now means that the usual 10 km journey between the towns of Bidya and Salfit will become 80 km.
- ◆ Qaffin in the northern West Bank, will be deprived of 60% of their agricultural land.
- ◆ Several villages will lose their only source of water. Jayyous, near Qalquilya, now only receives water for two hours every three days
- ◆ The wall will sever remaining cross-border relations between Israelis and Palestinians and also relations between Palestinian communities.
- ◆ The Palestinians will effectively be living in the largest prison in the world.

International condemnation: Governments across the world have condemned the wall. *Tony Blair* said that the wall “would mean that a peace settlement is less likely and less possible”. *U.S. President George W Bush* also called it ‘a problem’ and his National Security Adviser, *Condoleezza Rice*, also raised objections to the Wall during her recent visit to Israel. UK Foreign Office Minister *Mike O’Brien* stated that, “Our view is that the building of the fence and the adverse impact it will have on Palestinians living in the West Bank is unacceptable.”

The legality of the wall:

The Israeli wall is illegal. It is not being built on the internationally recognised border but exclusively on land confiscated from the Palestinians. It violates article 53 and 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention [Israel is a signatory] which forbid the destruction of property and confinement of persons by an occupier in occupied territories .

Building a wall illegally and by force will not bring security to Israel. It will only exacerbate the conflict and jeopardise the possibility of a future peace process and a viable Palestinian state.