

OCHA occupied Palestinian territory

humanitarian UPDATE

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Overview

On 29 June, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad announced an immediate suspension of anti-Israeli attacks in a joint statement. They were followed hours later by the Fatah party. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have not signed on to the initiative so far.

On 30 June, Palestinian Authority police forces took over security responsibility for the Gaza Strip's main highway artery to Palestinian control ending a 30-month blockade. In Jerusalem, Palestinian security Chief Mohammed Dahlan led a delegation with senior Israeli officials over a planned handover of security authority in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice on 29 June asked Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to reconsider with 'greater sensitivity' the planned route of the separation wall between Israel and the West Bank.

The issue of the Wall was at the centre of a clash between Rice and members of the security cabinet at a meeting in Jerusalem. Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, maintained the large number of terror alerts necessitated the erection of a fence, in addition to Israel's pro-active operations. According to him, "250 Palestinian suicide bombers have entered Israel from the West Bank, but not one from Gaza. The building of the fence, he went on to say "is not a political move, it is a security move."

But according to press reports, the National Security Adviser told Sharon that the U.S. sees construction of the fence as highly problematic, since the Palestinians believe Israel is using

it to determine political borders and annex Palestinian territory. “Even if the fence is a security issue, it is perceived as being political”, Rice noted.

That view is supported from the ground. At the Tulkarem checkpoint (which has now moved closer to Tulkarem town and is now sited on the line of the Wall) soldiers have repeatedly informed the UN that the Wall is an official border line between Israel and Palestine, despite it being located well inside the West Bank.

Update on the Separation Wall

Construction of the Wall has stepped up in the past weeks and is now continuing on a 24 hour basis.

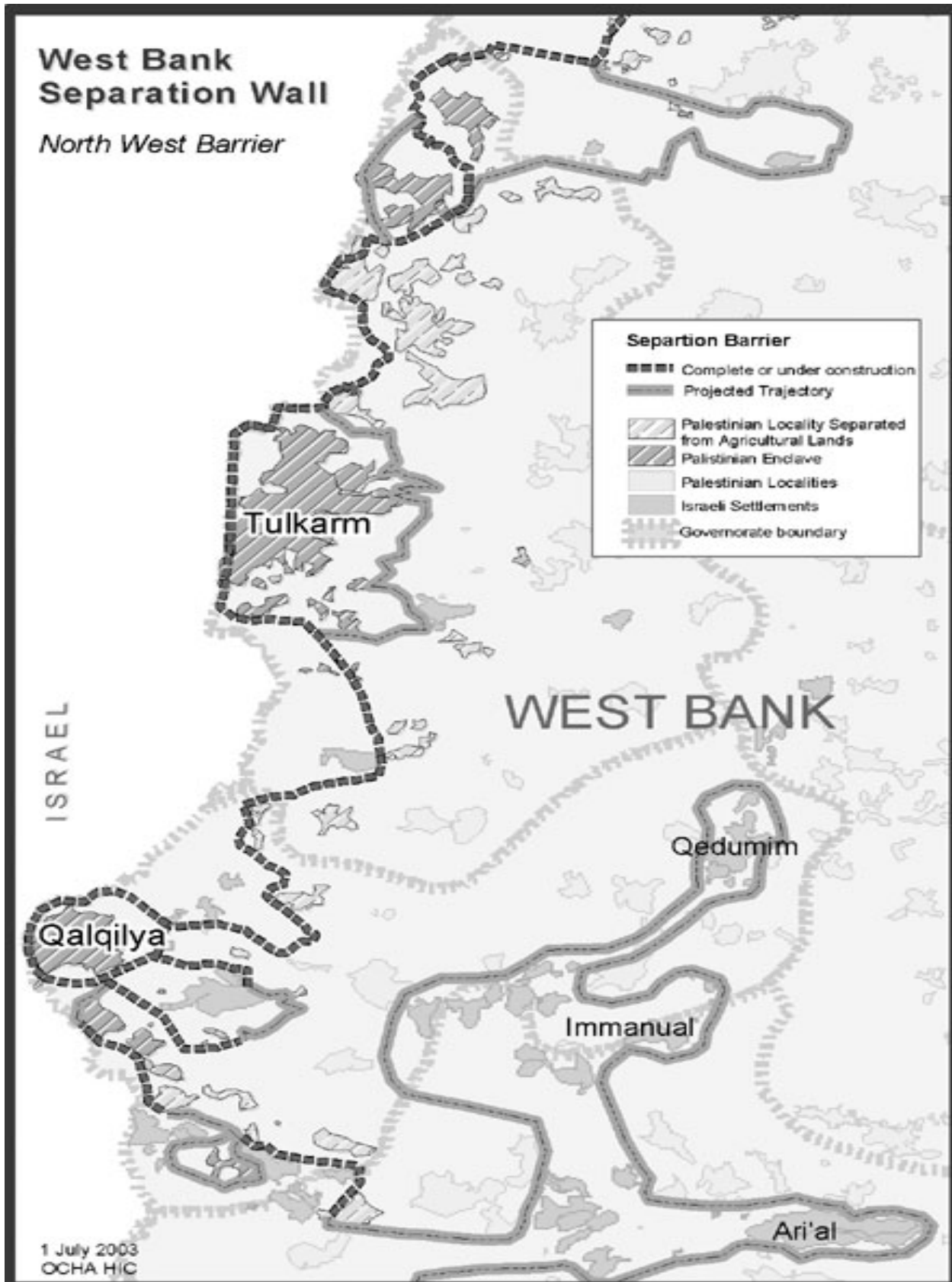
It has been particularly intensive in the Tulkarem-Qalqilya Governorates and around Jerusalem. The construction work on the Wall south of Ramallah (from Beitunia/Ofer military camp – Rafat village – Qalandia) has now reached the Qalandia checkpoint. The IDF contractors are expected to complete the entire northern segment of the Wall within weeks.

The trajectory of the Wall continued to change in response to political pressures (both domestic and international) and to a lesser extent due to the topography of the area under construction. As a result additional Palestinian villages and Israeli settlements are now situated west of the Wall.

As yet in the Tulkarem and Qalqilya Governorates, only one access gate has been constructed (a total of 27 gates were supposed to provide access).

A further Wall is slated to begin on the eastern side of Tulkarem. According to local officials, landowners have been informed that their lands will be taken for its construction. If this occurs, the town of Tulkarem will be parcelled off into an enclave similar to that of Qalqilya.

Total Population Affected by the barrier	224,760
Population in Enclaves (west and east of barrier)	150,300
Populations separated from their farmland	74, 460
Number of enclaves (west and east of barrier)	33
Length of the main barrier (km)	115 out 145



NB The final map of the Wall trajectory will be posted on OCHA website in a few weeks.

West Bank

In the city of Qalqilia, it was reported that 600 out of the 1,100 merchants left as a result of the construction of the Wall. An enclave north of the city was created with 2 gates through the Wall and out of the 9 dirt roads that led to the city, only 2 are open with the others closed off by the IDF. The enclave area has 6 wells and 2,500 dunums of citrus, vegetables and fruit and approximately 200 dunums of greenhouses (one greenhouse can provide livelihood for one family per year).

On 30 June, the IDF began shooting at night at the farmers who were staying in tents beside their fields. Since the Wall construction the farmers prefer to stay at their fields rather than travelling 3-4 hours from their villages. The farmers fled into the countryside and upon return found most of their belongings and tents destroyed.

A Tale of Occupation

Arroub refugee Camp (Hebron) receives almost all its fresh fruits and vegetables from the nearby Hebron wholesale market. But the imposition of the system of closures on the West Bank, has forced vendors to take alternate routes which increases the daily trip of 15 kilometres to up to 50 kilometres.

The restrictions do not stop there. At Arroub Camp delivery trucks are stopped at the IDF and prevented from entering the camp. From there, the goods are loaded onto donkey-carts (one of two in the camp) to be transported inside the camp. The donkey-shuttle-service charges about NIS 15 per trip.

The IDF demands that the donkey-cart operators obtain a permit from the Hebron Civil Administration for this service. One vendor obtained a permit for two donkeys operating from the checkpoint which was valid for one month. But the permit allowed the shuttle to go only twice each day. In November 2002 a third donkey was introduced in an effort to speed up the transport. It was stopped by the IDF at the entrance to the camp and because it lacked a Civil Administration permit, was shot and killed. The goods were then destroyed.

This information was obtained during an interview with a vegetable vendor in Arroub Camp on 20 February 2003 by an International Humanitarian worker.

Gaza

An easing of movement?

Since 30 June, in response to the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, restrictions on entry in northern Gaza has eased, with NGO reporting their vehicles (green-plated) are able to move back and forth to Erez. Palestinian taxis are congregating again at Erez crossing.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with on average 7-8 days of basic food coverage per family. However, a scarcity of cooking gas prevented many families from cooking food.

Abu Houli Checkpoint

Prior to 30 June Abu Houli check point had remained open for traffic on a daily basis. However, curfews had been imposed in areas close to settlements and settler bypass roads particularly in Al Muqhara close to Netzarim where 4 Palestinians were killed during another targeted assassination on 26 June, and in the Abu Al Ajeen and Qarrara areas close to the Abu Houli checkpoint.

Al Mawasi

The ban on private vehicles entering Al Mawasi imposed in November 2000 continues, and applies to both residents and the majority of international organisations. Transport of commodities in and out continues on the basis of a back-to-back system – which also applies to patients who are removed and transferred to another ambulance. PRCS reports that its single ambulance that has remained inside the enclave for the last 2.5 years is in desperate need of maintenance, but as yet has not been permitted to leave.

Movement in and out of Al Mawasi was totally suspended for three days between 19 and 21 June. Even when open, movement is restricted to men over the age of 40 years and women over 35. Others remain effectively imprisoned. One international agency that provides direct services on a regular basis reported last week, that even its staff are now being denied access if they do not satisfy this age criteria. Such conditions are both unprecedented and unjustified in the context of humanitarian service provision.

Humanitarian Access

During the week beginning Sunday 15 June, the “list” (a list of names of humanitarian staff considered clear in terms of security) was once again enforced thus making it impossible to leave Gaza if a name was absent with the exception of diplomatic passport holders. However, by the week beginning Sunday 22 June, a more relaxed regime was in place with the IDF stating that all UN service visa holders could pass regardless of the list, while international NGOs who similarly were not on the list were able to both enter and exit Erez.

However, no consistency currently exists in terms of the commercial crossing points at Karni and Sufa. Karni has been open each day since the middle of June while Sufa has been closed. No explanation has been given for this variance. Rafah crossing has also erratic: some days the passenger and commercial terminals are open, other days closed or else partially open. Inevitably, such uncertainty directly affects the lives of workers, traders and private citizens.

Statistics 14 June-30 June

Total Number of Palestinian Deaths	22	1 under the age of 18
Total Number of Palestinian Injuries	106	

Total Number of Israeli Deaths	5	1 under the age of 12
Total Number of Israeli Injuries	6	
Total Number of Ambulances denied Access	9	A patient suffering a heart attack was arrested
Total Number of Ambulance delayed between 40 minutes - 4 hours	21	
Attack/Abuse/	4	One incident settlers threw stones at the ambulance near Ramallah DCO. Another incident one of the medical crew was ordered to sing, when he refused, IDF verbally assaulted him
Shooting at Ambulance	1	
House Demolition in West Bank	3	2 in Jenin and 1 in Jerusalem