



## Territorial Fragmentation of the West Bank May 2006

The ability of Palestinians to move inside the West Bank has significantly worsened in the past nine months. The Israeli Government states that the reason behind these restrictions is to prevent militant attacks on Israeli citizens.

A combination of checkpoints, physical obstacles and a permit system<sup>1</sup> has effectively cut the West Bank into three distinct areas in addition to East Jerusalem, see map. Within these areas further enclaves have been created – also bordered by checkpoints and roadblocks – that has led to one Palestinian community being isolated from its neighbour.

The Jordan Valley is practically cut off to Palestinians from the rest of the West Bank. And, over the past year, progressively fewer Palestinians have been able to obtain permits to visit 'closed areas' – land to the west of the West Bank Barrier.<sup>2</sup>

Restrictions on movement are at the heart of the Palestinian economic decline.<sup>3</sup> The economy is predicted to worsen sharply if Palestinian Authority employees continue to not receive salaries due to a lack of funding after the Hamas victory in the January elections.

Donor attention has turned to the private sector to maintain incomes and economic opportunities for Palestinians. But as this report illustrates, the private sector relies on the free movement of goods and labour – both have been severely curtailed in the past six months by the new restrictions in the West Bank.

### Humanitarian Consequences of Access Restrictions

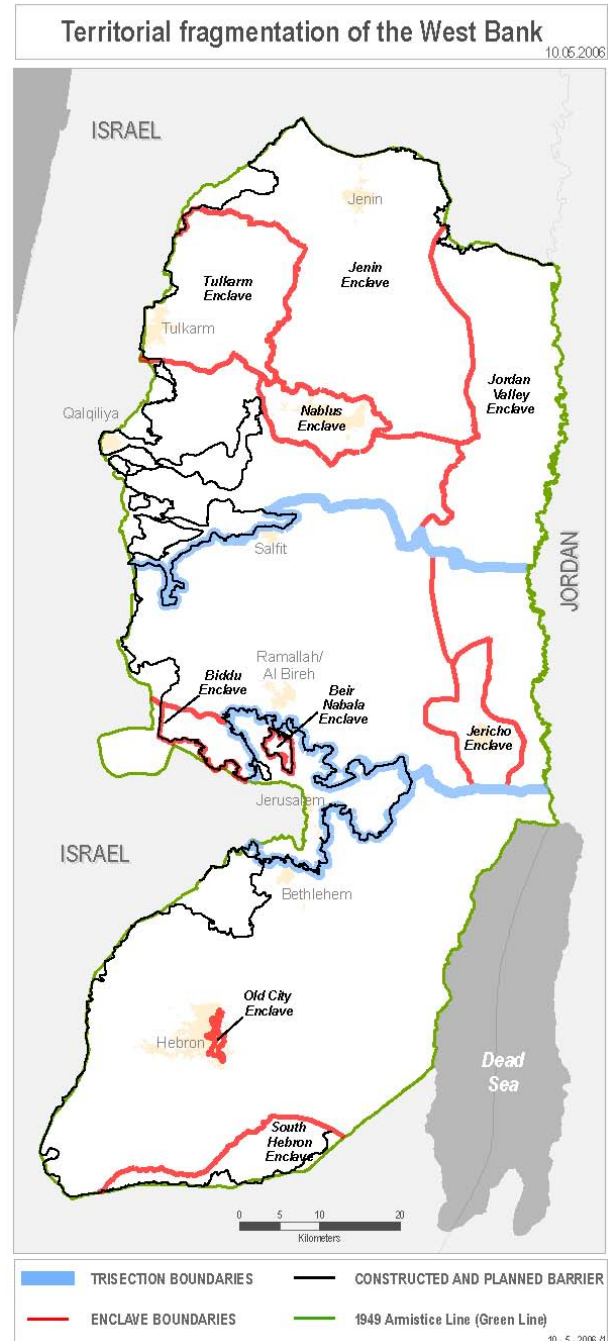
Residents of the West Bank face problems across the whole gamut of ordinary life from getting to hospital, visiting family, or simply marketing goods.

#### Access to Cities

The urban hubs of Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron, East Jerusalem and Jericho are more difficult to access. The governorates of Jenin and Tulkarm are cut off from access south to Nablus. No resident of Jenin has been permitted to travel south of Nablus since December 2005. Nablus city provides essential services and employment, including specialized health care and university education to Palestinians living in the north. Residents of the villages immediately north of Nablus can only get to the city in one of seven licensed taxis that are permitted to enter.

Permit and checkpoint restrictions have isolated residents of the West Bank from East Jerusalem which provides health and education services and is also the centre of religious and cultural life for the West Bank.

Palestinians living south of Road 317 in south Hebron can no longer access Hebron City because of a long, one metre high concrete barrier that physically blocks access across the road.



Herding communities in the area, although very self reliant, face difficulties to hospitals and schools and markets.

Jericho is being increasingly separated from the West Bank and the rest of the Jordan Valley. A ditch encircles the city on three sides and restrictions at checkpoints have undermined trade and visits by tourists.

## Trade Routes

Trade routes from the northern West Bank to Nablus and further to the south or into the Jordan Valley have been severed for northern residents. Vendors of perishable products such as vegetables and fruit have no access to markets. Sales of agricultural products have become particularly important and is one of the few economic alternatives for the increasing number of unemployed who previously worked in Israel.

Goods travelling north from Hebron and Bethlehem use longer and poorer quality roads. They also need to cross the unpredictable checkpoints east of Jerusalem where delays cause substantial costs. Markets in East Jerusalem are being severed from the rest of the West Bank. The regulations imposed by Israel are tight and require goods crossing into East Jerusalem be the same as those crossing into Israel.

## Family Links

The impact of the various movement restrictions and physical obstacles has been particularly severe for families that are separated by a checkpoint, earth wall or the Barrier or that are restricted by the permit regime. Many families can no longer visit their relatives on a regular basis, if at all, especially if they live in the Jordan Valley or in 'closed areas' west of the Barrier.

## Land owners

Land owners who reside in Tubas or Tammoun cannot access their land in the Jordan Valley on a regular basis. Those permits that are issued do not allow for overnight stay in the Valley and prevent farmers from tending their fields regularly. Delays and closure (especially throughout the harvest season from November to March) at Al Hamra checkpoint have resulted in substantial losses of the highly perishable agricultural crops of the Jordan Valley.

## Humanitarian Assistance

At a time when humanitarian needs are greater than ever, access by humanitarian agencies in the past six months has become increasingly difficult. United Nations staff can no longer be guaranteed to get to their places of work. Checkpoints within the West Bank and crossings into East Jerusalem have become increasingly unpredictable.

In part this is because major checkpoints such as Container, Nilin, Ar Ramadin, Atarot, Shu'fat Camp, Giló (Rachel's crossing), are now manned by Israeli Border Police who have replaced the IDF and enforce different and increasingly variable regulations. Private security firms are also being made responsible for certain checkpoints (Erez in the Gaza Strip and At Tayba in Tulkarm). They too employ new restrictions and regulations that delay passage.

UN staff are regularly being asked adhere to different checking procedures despite previous agreements with the Israeli authorities. During periods of closure, the movement of Palestinian staff is further restricted. At these times, the United Nations Refugee and Works Agency (UNRWA), for example, face upwards of 300 staff being denied access to their place of work in Jerusalem.

## What is meant by closure in the West Bank?

The Israeli Government states that it has imposed closure measures on the West Bank to prevent Palestinian militant attacks on Israeli civilians. Since 20 January, 2006 there have been three suicide bombs killing 14 people<sup>4</sup>.

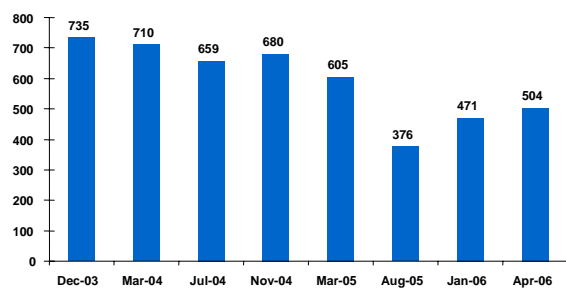
Closure is imposed by one or a combination of methods:

### 1. Permanent Obstacles

Physical obstacles include the West Bank Barrier, checkpoints, partial checkpoints, road blocks, road gates, earth mounds, earth walls, trenches and fences. Movement within the West Bank is obstructed by these physical obstacles placed by the IDF. The number of which has increased from 376 in August 2005 to 504 in April 2006 – a 25% increase.

In addition, the construction of the Barrier<sup>5</sup>, most of which lies inside the West Bank has created a number of 'closed areas' between the Barrier and the Green Line. Increasingly, Israel is narrowing the eligibility criteria for Palestinians wanting to apply for a permit to pass through the Barrier to land or enclaves of villages in the 'closed areas'.

Physical Obstacles in the West Bank



Source: OCHA

### 2. Temporary Obstacles

Temporary obstacles include road gates that are occasionally closed or opened and flying (random) checkpoints. Although not imposed continuously, when in place, these obstacles create unpredictable closure and often extensive delays.

### 3. Permit system and varying regulations at checkpoints

Many routes within the West Bank are regulated by a system of permits. However requirements to get permits to move from one area to another are increasingly difficult to meet and fewer permits are issued. Without warning, additional restrictions or closures can make permits invalid. Additional restrictions can be by age (usually 15 to 32 year old males), by gender or by geographical area. These restrictions can be imposed at any checkpoints at any time.



Hawwara Checkpoint, Nablus | May 2005 | Steve Sabella

# Trisection of the West Bank and East Jerusalem

## I. The North

**August 2005** following Israeli disengagement movement between the north and central West Bank deteriorated. The key checkpoint of Shave Shomeron closed, stopping Palestinian movement on the main route around Nablus.

**February 2006** seven new road gates are placed at the entrances to villages on road 505. The road gates when open are the only possible entrances onto road 505, this means that the road barrier running west of **Za'atara (Tappuach)** checkpoint along roads 505 and 5 to the **Kafr Kasem** checkpoint leading to Israel can now be completely sealed and all north-south movement totally prevented.

**January - April** the number of flying checkpoints and the long delays that they cause increased from 40 flying checkpoints reported in mid-2005 to 160 in April 2006. Flying checkpoints are random checkpoints scattered throughout the northern districts.

### Enclaves within the Northern section

**December 2005** residents of Jenin are prohibited to pass through **Tappuah/ Za'atara** junction south of Nablus effectively sealing all residents within the northern West Bank. Jenin and Nablus are totally severed from the central and southern West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

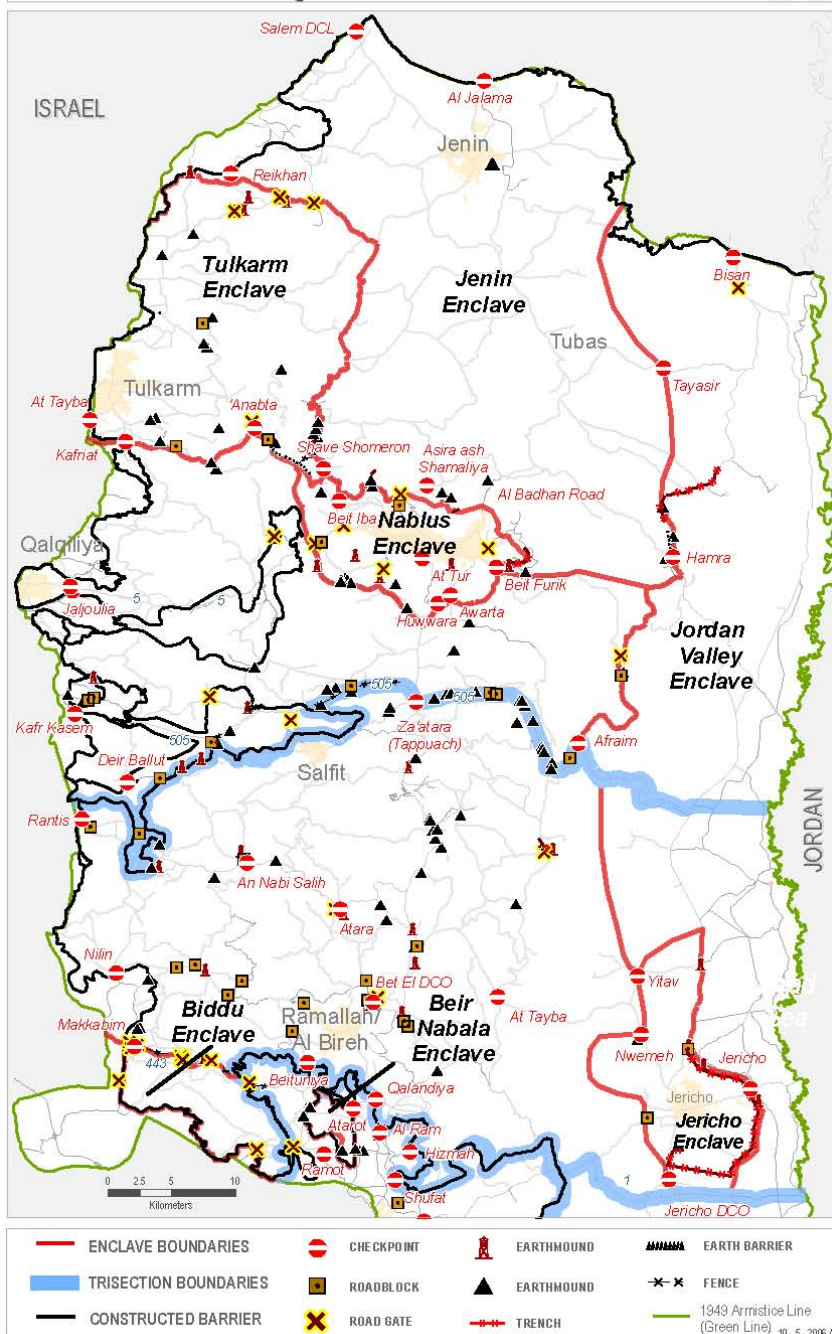
**March 2006** access within the northern West Bank worsens. An east-west closure composed of **Kafriat Tunnel, Anabta, Shave Shomeron, Asira ash Shamaliya** and the **Al Badhan road** divided the northern West Bank into two parts; Jenin, Tubas and Tulkarm to the north and Nablus and Qalqilia to the south.

**End of March 2006** Palestinians between the ages of 15–32 years cannot leave Nablus through **Huwwara and Beit Iba** checkpoints, preventing them from access Jenin and Tulkarm. Public taxis and buses are also denied access through Huwwara checkpoint. Long delays are experienced by people that are permitted to cross the checkpoints.

**1 April** **Al Badhan road** is closed by three earth mounds placed one after the other, preventing Palestinian vehicle movement between Jenin, Tubas and Nablus districts and effectively closing the last open route into Nablus. The earth mounds on Al Badhan road also prevent access of the northern villages of Nablus into the city. The number and impact of new permanent physical obstacles throughout the north also increased - from 114 physical obstacles at the end of January 2006 to 138 obstacles end of April 2006.

Territorial fragmentation of Northern West Bank

10.05.2006



**2 May** although **Asira ash Shamaliya** checkpoint has been re-opened, closure continues throughout the north. Seven taxis are licensed to cross. No foot traffic is permitted. Age restrictions continue to be enforced at **Huwwara and Beit Iba** checkpoints and **Al Badhan road** remains closed by three earth mounds.

**3 May** a Palestinian taxi driver, attempting to solicit customers is killed by the IDF, after crossing an earth mound on **Al Badhan road** on foot.



Al Badhan Road, Nablus | May 2006 | OCHA

## II. The Southern West Bank

*September 2000* Palestinian traffic from the southern West Bank to the north is prohibited from passing through Jerusalem. Instead access is via the long and winding road known as “Wadi Nar” (road 398). The **Container checkpoint** established at the top of the hill of the Wadi Nar road effectively controls movement and separates the south from the central and northern areas of the West Bank.

*Since 2002* passage through the **Container checkpoint** is only allowed for Palestinian public transport and private cars with valid permits. During periods of closure, the checkpoint is closed, Palestinians cross on foot through the hills around the checkpoint to move north or south.

### An Enclave within Hebron city

The area occupied by Jewish settlers in the Old City of Hebron is surrounded by over 100 closures. The combination of roadblocks, barriers and military checkpoints isolates approximately 63 Palestinian families residing in the same area and restricts movement of thousands of people residing and working in the Old City and its immediate neighbourhoods.

*Since mid-2005* two checkpoints around the Old City are upgraded to include metal detectors, through which all people – including children and pregnant women – must pass. This is especially problematic as the checkpoints lead to the main primary schools in the area.

*July 2006* six further gates are installed around the entrances of the Old City, potentially blocking movement and ‘closing’ the residents inside.

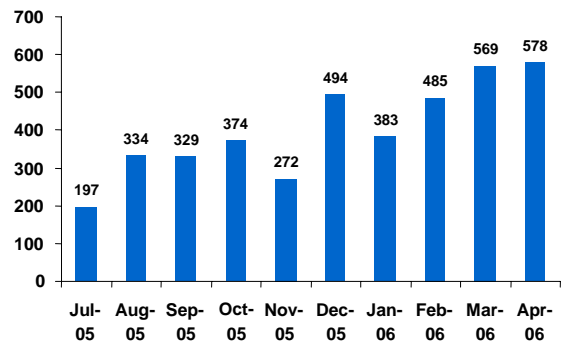
*February 2006* the IDF manned checkpoint of Givat Havot is handed over to settlers living in the area. The checkpoint is now manned by settlers increasing the incidence of harassment on the 12 Palestinian families residing in the area that must cross the checkpoint to access the rest of Hebron and preventing international organisations from using the crossing.

## The Enclave of South Hebron

*October 2000* the IDF progressively seal off south Hebron through a combination of physical obstacles and movement restrictions imposed on Palestinian travel, creating clusters of isolated Palestinian communities south of **Road 317**, and preventing access to health, education and markets available further north.

*December 2005* plans to build a 1-metre high concrete barrier along the northern side of roads 317 and 60<sup>7</sup> between the settlements of Karmel and Tene are announced, which will worsen the isolation of herding communities in Imneizel, At Tuwani and the hamlets of Masafer Yatta. Plans to ensure crossings through “gaps” in the road barrier are unlikely to maintain the current level of access for shepherds and land owners to grazing and cultivated areas on both sides of the road. Roads in the south are used almost exclusively by settlers, they are increasingly difficult for Palestinians to access.

### Flying Checkpoints in the West Bank



Source: OCHA

## III. The Central West Bank

*19 April 2006* the IDF impose closure around Ramallah. The partial checkpoints of **An Nabi Saih and Atara** operate daily, further restricting people travelling north. A series of flying checkpoints are deployed along bypass Road 60 delaying people travelling from the northern areas to Ramallah and further south to Jericho and Jerusalem.

## IV. East Jerusalem

The Barrier surrounding Jerusalem combined with the complex system of checkpoints, gates and permit system for West Bank residents restricts movement from the West Bank to Jerusalem.

*January 2006* military orders further restrict West Bank Palestinian pedestrian and vehicle access into Jerusalem to **four Barrier crossings**<sup>8</sup>. Currently, there are 12 routes and crossings to enter Jerusalem from the West Bank, but the eight other routes and crossing points into Jerusalem are now closed to West Bank Palestinians and will be open only to residents of Israel and international travelers.

## Enclaves within Jerusalem Area

The routing of the Barrier in and around Jerusalem has separated Palestinians residing in Jerusalem from the rest of the city. In two areas entire villages have been completely surrounded by the Barrier preventing access to East Jerusalem.

**January 2006** approximately 32,500 residents of the **Biddu enclave** are surrounded on three sides by the Barrier and on the fourth side by highway 443. The IDF plans two new roads for the enclave, one north under road 443 to Ramallah (already completed), the other leads east to the Bir Nabala enclave. Residents of the Biddu enclave must now travel via Qalandiya checkpoint to access Jerusalem, a detour of more than one hour.

**April 2006** the second enclave of **Bir Nabala** with approximately 20,000 residents are completely surrounded by the Barrier. The IDF have planned two access roads out of the enclave, one, already built, leading to Ramallah and the north and the other linking west to the Biddu enclave. Jerusalem residents of the Bir Nabala enclave who previously accessed Jerusalem in 5 or 10 minutes must now travel through Ramallah and then cross Qalandiya checkpoint to access East Jerusalem.

## The Jordan Valley

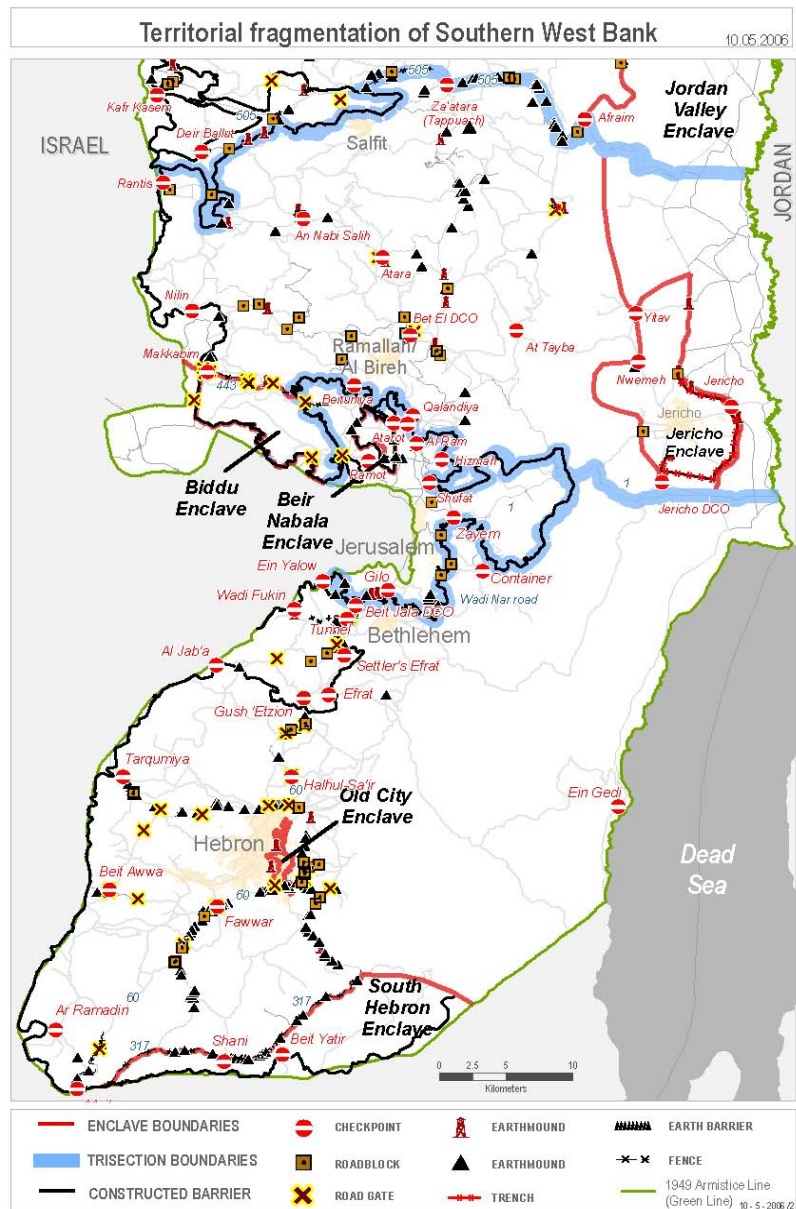
Access to the Jordan Valley started to become increasingly difficult since:

**May 2005** all Palestinians regardless of family ties to the Valley or other links such as employment or land ownership are required to obtain a permit before crossing **Tayasir, Al Hamra or Maale Efraim checkpoints**. Palestinians with the Jordan Valley address on their identification card can move into and out of the northern Jordan Valley region without a permit.

**March - April 2006** entrance through the northern checkpoints into the Jordan Valley becomes increasingly problematic, delays of up to three or four hours are regularly reported by residents, especially at the **Tayasir checkpoint**.

**30 March- 31 March** entrance into and out of the Jordan Valley is completely sealed off for 24- hours. Although complete closure is lifted on the 31 March, an age restriction is enforced: no movement is permitted into or out of the area for people aged between 16 and 30.

**17 - 18 April** Tayasir, Al Hamra and Maale Efraim are completely closed. When reopened on the 20 April, the age restriction is reinforced, except for Palestinians working in settlements in the Jordan Valley.



## The Jericho Enclave

Jericho is surrounded on three sides by a trench that prevents access out of the city. There are two access roads out of the city, one leading west towards Jerusalem and Ramallah, the other road winds through the hills north of Jericho to Ramallah. Both roads are manned by checkpoints: **Jericho DCO, a permanent checkpoint and An Nwemeh a partial checkpoint**.

**15 February** An Nwemeh checkpoint becomes a permanent checkpoint and can only be crossed between 5am and 8pm. Movement from other parts of the West Bank to Jericho becomes more difficult and ambulances traveling either to or from Jericho or Ramallah are obliged to make prior arrangements with the IDF.

**14 - 15 March** Jericho is completely closed during the IDF operation launched on Jericho prison; access was only possible for humanitarian cases and with prior coordination of the IDF.

**19 April – 25 April** access into and out of Jericho for Palestinians is completely denied. On the 26 April, restrictions for those aged 16 to 30 are imposed and on 27 April all restrictions were removed.

**3 May** access into and out of Jericho for Palestinians is completely denied, except for Palestinians working with international organizations.

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1 See OCHA, West Bank Closure Count and Analysis, January 2006 and OCHA, Restrictions on the Movement of people and goods within the West Bank, Technical Note, November 2005 <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/opt/>

2 See UNRWA and OCHA Update 6 - The Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier | Special Focus: Crossing the Barrier - Palestinian Access to Agricultural Land, January 2006 <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/opt/>

3 According to the World Bank, ' (...) the economics of the second intifada—a period in which the various restrictions placed on the movement of people, labour and goods, and on the transfer of revenues collected by GOI on the PA's behalf, led to a contraction in real personal incomes of almost 40 percent between the third quarter of 2000 (Q3/2000) and Q3/2002—despite a doubling of annual donor disbursements in the same period'. Economic Update and Potential Outlook, World Bank, March 15, 2006

4 On the 20 January in Tel Aviv, 1 person was killed by a suicide bomber from the north of the West Bank. On the 13 March, 4 people were killed at the entrance of Qedumim settlement in Nablus, by a suicide bomber from Bethlehem and on the 9 April, 9 people were killed in Tel Aviv by a suicide bomber from the north of the West Bank.

5 Based on OCHA field work and satellite image analysis, the total length of the West Bank Barrier is 703 KM. As of May 2006, 362 km have been completed, 88 km are under construction and 253 km are planned.

6 Data on flying checkpoints is collected by OCHA through observation in the field and reports from reliable sources (UNRWA, village councils, Palestinian District Coordination Liaison), see weekly OCHA 'Protection of Civilians Report.' The data is not comprehensive and not all flying checkpoints are reported.

7 On 13 December 2005, three Military Orders, no. 185, 186 and 187 were issued to expropriate Palestinian land for construction on a 1-metre high concrete barrier.

8 Order Regarding Closed Territories (Judea and Samaria) (Amendment No. 3) (No. 1576) 2005; Order Regarding Closed Territories (Judea and Samaria) (No. 34) 1967, Notice Regarding Establishing Passage Points - 2006, (Amendment No. 1) 2006.