

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA



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PRESS RELEASE

UN OCHA launches Report marking seven years since Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Barrier

Jerusalem, 11 July 2011, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) launched a new report *Seven years after the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Barrier: The Impact of the Barrier in the Jerusalem area*.

This is the fifth year OCHA has issued a report on the anniversary of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Opinion in July 2004. This Advisory Opinion stated that sections of the Barrier route which ran inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, together with the associated gate and permit regime, violated Israel's obligations under international law.

This new OCHA report focuses on the impact of the Barrier in the East Jerusalem area, in particular on West Bank communities and households now isolated on the Jerusalem side of the Barrier. As Palestinians in these areas have West Bank residency status, they have no right to live in the Jerusalem municipal area. They are forced to cross checkpoints to access educational and health services, and even to do their shopping. Their family members from the West Bank cannot visit them unless they obtain Jerusalem entry permits.

The report also highlighted the impact of the Barrier on Palestinian farmers, whose access to their land in so-called 'Seam Zone' behind the Barrier is severely limited. These farmers depend on Israeli-issued permits to access their land through gates which are only open for limited periods. This policy is devastating agricultural livelihoods throughout the West Bank.

The Report calls on the Israeli authorities to abide by the ICJ advisory opinion by ceasing construction of the Barrier, to reroute constructed sections to the Green Line, to dismantle sections of the Barrier already completed, and to repeal the gate and permit regime. Only then will Palestinian communities cut off by the Barrier be able to exercise their rights to freedom of movement, work, education, health and enjoy an adequate standard of living.

To read the full report go to:

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_barrier_update_july_2011_english.pdf

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Notes for the Editor

- The Barrier's total length is 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) between the West Bank and Israel.
- Approximately 61.8% of the Barrier is complete, a further 8.2% is under construction and 30% is planned but not yet constructed.
- When completed, the majority of the route, approximately 85%, will run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rather than along the Green Line. It was the route of the Barrier, rather than the structure itself, which was the subject of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion.
- The total area located between the Barrier and the Green Line amounts to 9.4% of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and No Man's land.
- The inclusion of Israeli settlements, together with areas planned for their future expansion, constitutes the major factor for the deviation of the Barrier's route from the Green Line. The area on the 'Israeli' side of the Barrier includes 71 of the 150 settlements and over 85 percent of the total settler population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.