



Impact of first phase of security barrier (Part 1) – UNRWA report

UNRWA emergency stories

Impact of the First Phase of the Security Barrier on the Qalqiliya, Tulkarm and Jenin districts

In June 2002, the Israeli authorities began construction of the first phase of a 350-kilometre 'security barrier' to physically separate the West Bank from Israel. This phase – from Zbuba in the north west corner of Jenin governorate, through the Tulkarm district, to Elkana settlement in the southern Qalqiliya governorate – will extend some 140 kilometres in length (see Map 1).

[\[map01.jpg\]](#)

The cost is estimated at NIS 10 million per kilometre and is expected to be completed by July 2003.¹ The Government of Israel maintains that barrier is not intended to mark a political border but to prevent Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians. However, at no stage does the barrier follow a course on the Israeli side of the Green Line: on the contrary, it deviates many kilometres into West Bank territory, up to six kilometres in the case of Jayous. When complete, some 160,000 dunums (one dunum is equivalent to one quarter of an acre) of fertile farmland will be isolated on the Israeli side of the barrier, 2.9 percent of the land area of the West Bank.²

The three northern governorates affected have a 2003 estimated combined population of about 500,000 – representing about 25 percent of the West Bank population. Qalqiliya is home to 90,000, Tulkarm 163,000 and Jenin, 247,000. Population figures for the main towns are Qalqiliya, 41,000; Tulkarm, 43,000; Jenin, 34,000.³ In total, nearly 70 towns, villages, hamlets and refugee camps in the three governorates – over 200,000 Palestinians – will be impacted to some degree in the barrier's first phase. ⁴

UNRWA carried out field visits to examine the effects of the barrier on the livelihoods of local residents, with special emphasis on registered refugees. Most of the northern Green Line towns and villages accommodate refugee families. Certain villages, in particular – Atil, Baqa esh-Sharqiya, Barta'a esh-Sharqiya, Taibeh, Rumana and Zububa – contain significant, even majority, refugee populations.⁵ Qalqiliya town, contains 4,000 refugee families, the UNRWA hospital and other facilities, and will be hermetically sealed.

Tulkarm town (3,700 refugee families) will have a wall constructed on its western side and a 'depth barrier' to its east which will seal in most of the town's immediate hinterland, including Tulkarm camp (15,600 registered refugees) and Nur Shams (8,000 refugees).

In the north west Jenin district, Rumana, Khirbet Taibe and Anin villages all have large numbers of refugee families and include an UNRWA school; another 'depth barrier' will isolate this enclave. Although refugees will not necessarily suffer more than the general population from the effects of

the barrier, the resultant decline in living standards will increase humanitarian needs and inevitably add to the Agency's already over-burdened caseload.

Izbat Jal'ud, Qalqiliya

The inhabitants of Jal'ud (also known as Sheikh Ahmed) are refugees from the village of Zakur, whose remains lie just across the Green Line. Some six families, about 36 persons are registered refugees, out of a total population of 100. The barrier will cut off 250-300 dunums in the village as a whole, despite the owners possessing Ottoman and British title deeds. In addition, there is a demolition order for three homes and a mosque erected without a permit: no building permit has been issued in the village since 1978.

Abdallah Said Jal'ud, an UNRWA-registered refugee, will lose approximately 125 dunums in Jal'ud and possibly more land in Hable and Izbat Salman once the course of the barrier there is clear. Various fruits and vegetables, an apple farm and a water reservoir are affected. Access to the land is forbidden while work on the barrier is in progress and there is no indication as to how access will be granted once construction is complete.

The barrier, 'depth barrier' and enclaves

The barrier will be some seventy metres wide on average but will extend up to 100 metres in some areas. It is commonly referred to as a 'wall' but for most of its path the barrier comprises a number of different obstacles and hurdles.

At its most extensive, it will consist of an electronic 'smart fence' in the centre to warn of any attempt to cross; on the eastern side of this fence, a trench, ditch or other obstacle to act as a barrier against vehicles; another fence for delay purposes; a paved service road next to this delay fence. West of the 'smart fence' are a number of paths: a trace path to disclose the footprints of anyone crossing; a two-lane patrol road; a road for armoured vehicles and another fence. ¹²

The barrier will also include watchtowers and entry gates at various intervals and an exclusion zone of undetermined length. On those sections which for topographic reasons the barrier will be less than 70 metres wide, only some of the components that support the electronic fence will be constructed. In various areas, locals have been informed that a 'no go' or buffer zone of undefined extent on the 'Palestinian' side of the barrier will also be imposed, although there is no official confirmation of this.

In areas containing large Palestinian communities close to the Green Line where the path of the barrier will follow the 1948 borders, the Israeli authorities will erect an additional 'Depth Barrier' a few kilometres east of the main Barrier. 'This is a barrier without a fence, whose objective is to channel movement in those areas to a number of security monitoring points.' ¹³

Although no official map showing the course of the barrier has been authorised by the Israeli authorities, the Tulkarm District Coordination Liaison (DCL) office of the IDF confirmed that such a trench will surround Tulkarm town, extending eastwards to include Nur Shams camp. ¹⁴ (See Part 2, Tulkarm section and Map 3). A similar 'deep trench' will be constructed in the north west Jenin district, running from Salem to Araqa villages, to include Rumana, Khirbet Taibe, and Anin. (See Part 2, Jenin section and Map 4). Both areas will become enclaves, isolated between a barrier on the Green Line and a trench to the east.

Only the land directly under the course of the barrier has been formally confiscated; ownership of land behind the barrier remains in the hands of the owners, to which the Government of Israel has promised continued access. ¹⁵ According to the Israeli State Attorney's Office, five main crossing points and 26 'agricultural crossings' will be established along the length of the barrier; ¹⁶ however,

it appears that in the 2003 budget insufficient funds were allocated to erect the main crossing points.¹⁴¹

No official notice has been issued concerning the workings of these crossing points nor the criteria for obtaining permits. Officials in the Tulkarm DCL confirmed that farmers would be given permits for access through the nine gates in the Tulkarm governorate, 'two or three times a day' and that one of these planned crossing points would be at Qafin. However, according to the mayor of Qafin, there are no openings in the completed concrete part of the barrier for a crossing point in the Qafin area.¹⁴² There are unconfirmed reports from Palestinian newspapers that pedestrians and vehicles will be charged for crossing.

In the majority of cases, the first indication to local farmers that their land will be requisitioned is when plans and maps are dropped on their land or posted on trees: the local municipality or village council is rarely officially notified. This is often followed by a notification that the DCL will make a tour of the affected areas to meet with the landowners (see inset box, Part 2, Jenin section).

The legal instrument chosen to achieve confiscation is the issuing of 'requisition for military needs' orders, signed by the Military Commander, Central Command, Moshe Kapilinsky. Most of these orders are in effect until the end of 2005; however, they may legally be extended indefinitely. Furthermore, although some farmers have appealed the requisition orders – either individually or collectively through the municipality or local council- none of these hearings has resulted in a reversal of the requisition order.¹⁴³

Owners of requisitioned land are entitled to claim compensation but few have done so, because they believe it would be seen to legitimise the confiscation. Furthermore, the amounts offered are well below the real value of the land: in Qalqiliya the amount offered was only 10 percent of the actual value.¹⁴⁴

In the most severe cases, entire localities will be consigned to a no man's land between the barrier and the Green Line. It is unclear what arrangements will be made to grant these residents – fifteen communities, with some 13,500 residents in the northern governorates alone¹⁴⁵ – access to the rest of the West Bank. Three of these communities have urban links with sister villages within Israel from which they were separated in 1948. Although these will now be 'reunited' on the Western side of the barrier there is no provision to grant residents special permits to enter Israel. On the contrary, the area between the barrier and the Green line will be declared a Closed Military Zone, although, according to the State Attorney's Office, this designation will not apply to residents of this undefined zone.¹⁴⁶

The Israeli Civil Administration has stated that permanent crossing permits will be issued to residents of these enclaves but those outside will not be able to enter unless they apply for a special permit.¹⁴⁷ The Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem fears that these enclaves will suffer a similar fate to Al-Mwasi area of the Gaza Strip, where special permits are needed for the residents to exit, searches and long delays are common, the sole checkpoint is only open for certain periods and is often closed without warning.¹⁴⁸

Impacts: Land, Jobs, Water, Health and Education

Prior to the current intifada, the northern Green Line towns and villages fared relatively well economically compared to other West Bank localities, due to easy access to the Israeli labour and consumer markets and because large numbers of Israelis, especially Israeli Arabs, visited Qalqiliya and Tulkarm. Access to the Israel labour market has virtually disappeared in the last two years and Israeli citizens are forbidden to enter 'A' areas under Palestinian Authority control.¹⁴⁹

The barrier will seal the end of Palestinian migrant labour in Israel while also isolating affected communities from each other, compounding acute unemployment and poverty levels. In Baqa esh-Sharqiya, which will soon be isolated between the barrier and the Green line, there are some 420 commercial enterprises but the owners of 250 of these live outside the town, east of the barrier.¹⁵⁰ In

Nabi Elias, 15 merchants and their families moved from nearby Qalqiliya town because of movement restrictions through the town's sole access point.¹²³ Both town and village will soon be reunited, surrounded on three sides by the barrier, but there will be only one access point for both through a gate several kilometres east of Nabi Elias.

By severing thousands of dunums of some of the West Bank's best land and water resources the barrier will have grave implications for agricultural productivity. The northern governorates have a disproportionately large share of the West Bank's agricultural and water resources, accounting for 80 percent of wells. Employment in these two activities is also disproportionately high, with the northern governorates accounting for 42 percent of West Bank agricultural and 53 percent of water-sector employment.¹²⁴

The importance of agriculture has grown during the intifada, acting as 'a shock absorber' for many newly unemployed. In Jayous, 400 out of 550 families are now totally dependent on agriculture, up from 250 before the intifada. In Qalqiliya town, 22 percent of the city's pre-intifada economy was based on agricultural produce: this number has risen to 45 percent with 2,000 agricultural workers supporting approximately 15,000 residents. Agriculture is dominated by small, family-based farms that depend on high-intensive family labour at specific times, especially during the olive harvest. It is unclear how these traditional ways can be adapted to the proposal by the Israeli authorities to issue permits which will limit the number and times which farmers can use the agricultural crossing points.

The first phase of the barrier has already resulted in the confiscation and razing of 10,000 dunums of privately-owned land, the uprooting of over 80,000 trees, the destruction of 35 kilometres of water pipes and the demolition of dozens of greenhouses.¹²⁵ Because of its position atop the western groundwater basin the barrier will also have a severe impact on water access, use and allocation, with a number of the villages concerned losing their only source of water.¹²⁶

The Palestine Hydrology Group has listed 30 wells in the Qalqiliya and Tulkarm districts which will be lost in the first phase of construction. Qalqiliya town will lose nineteen wells, representing approximately 30 percent of the city's water supply. In comparison, according to the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, only five of 52 locations targeted in the first phase of construction are connected to the Israeli national water network.¹²⁷ Households in some 300 localities across the West Bank store rain and spring water in cistern in the wet winter months and buy from water tankers in summer. Movement restrictions have already led to an 80 percent rise in the cost of trucked water since the start of the intifada.¹²⁸

In addition to undermining business and family ties, the barrier will also imperil health and educational services. Nine of the 15 communities in the enclaves west of the barrier lack a medical facility entirely.¹²⁹ Many other affected localities provide basic preventive and primary services, but rely on the three main cities for specialised and emergency care, and for regular dialysis and chemotherapy treatments.

Regular preventive services are already undermined by existing mobility restrictions: UNRWA reports a 52 percent decrease in women attending post-natal care. Prior to the intifada, 95 percent of women gave birth in hospitals. This has fallen to 50 percent in some areas, and there are at least 39 documented cases of women giving birth at checkpoints.¹³⁰

Medical personnel also face difficulties in reaching their workplaces. In Qafin, the most northerly locality in the Tulkarm district, health workers from Tulkarm reach the clinic late and leave early because of delays at checkpoints. The barrier will only compound these and other problems, interrupting routine immunisation programmes, delaying mobile clinics, ambulances and the distribution of medical supplies and vaccines. It will also increase the strain on public health providers by further dispersing facilities, staff and resources and adding to the burden and cost to village health centres.

The barrier will also have a harmful effect on education, again by compounding existing difficulties caused by movement restrictions. As with health providers, teachers already face problems in reaching their work places and many have had to be reassigned to schools near their homes.

Across the three governorates, an estimated 7,400 students will be directly affected by the barrier.¹² Dab'a, which will be completely encircled, has a school only to the grade 7; for grades 8-10 pupils must travel to Ras Atiya and for grades 11-12 to Hable; tertiary education in available colleges in Qalqiliya or Nablus, and trips to the latter can take up to six hours. Educational facilities and services will be especially affected in Azun Atme and Ras Atiya.

Ras Atiya, Qalqiliya

In Ras Atiya (pop. 1,400) villagers worked in Israel prior to the intifada, but are now very dependent on local agriculture. Some 1,400 dunums are being lost to the barrier itself and 9,000 dunums will be isolated, 75 percent of the villagers' lands, affecting some 220 families. The barrier will pass within 10 metres to the north and east of the local school, a coeducational institution of 450 students, constructed through Swiss funding. Requests to move the barrier to a more reasonable 100 metre distance were refused on 'security grounds'. Teaching has been disrupted because of explosives used in blasting rocks, and the dynamiting caused cracks to appear in the outer wall. Sixty pupils and 20 out of 25 teachers are from outside Ras Atiya and the barrier, which will cut the road to Dab'a and isolate nearby khirbets Tira, will make access difficult for all concerned.

The greatest change in the landscape since 1967

The hardship brought by the security barrier will affect an already impoverished population. Many affected communities lost land in 1948 – including many not formally registered as refugees – and many localities have been steadily losing additional territory to settlements over the last thirty years. The Oslo Accords provided little protection in this regard: most West Bank residents live in Areas 'A' or 'B' under Palestinian Authority administrative jurisdiction although most available building land lies on the edges of towns and villages in Area 'C' – currently some 60 percent of West Bank land. Permission to build requires Israeli authorisation. Between 1996 and 1999 only seventy nine such permits were granted, leaving residents no choice but to build 'illegally'.¹³

Recent months have seen a surge of demolitions and demolition orders served upon 'illegal' buildings along the path of the barrier. The barrier will isolate predominantly Area 'C' land, and further diminish natural expansion for many communities, leaving young homebuilders no alternative but to leave. There is already evidence of internal migration from some affected areas. Some 6-8,000 residents have left Qalqiliya town since the beginning of the intifada.¹⁴

Zbuba, Jenin

Zbuba in the Jenin district has a population of 2,000 and 240 of its 280 families are registered refugees. Under the terms of the 1949 Rhodes Agreement, the village lost some 18,000 dunums across the Green Line. An additional 2,000 dunums was lost in 1959 and 26 dunums was confiscated in 1999 to construct the Salem DCL and military base. That same year, thirty-three dunums was also confiscated to build a trench, one and a half metres wide and two metres deep along the Green Line.

In December 2002, documents and maps were strewn about on village land disclosing that some 250 dunums of village land would be confiscated, some 50 to 80 metres on the Zbuba side of the Green Line. Nothing official was conveyed to the village council. A letter was also dropped on the ground saying that the landowners could apply for compensation and should send a fax to the Ministry of Defence in Tel Aviv, with relevant details of title deeds for possible compensation. The villagers subsequently rejected this. The DCL called a meeting for affected landowners on 18 February, when it was explained that the confiscation order was from a 'high level' and could not be altered. On 10 March the bulldozers arrived to begin levelling land and orchards.

Despite Israeli assurance of gate passes most of those interviewed appear resigned to losing effective access to their land once the barrier is complete, given their experience of the existing permit system.

In the long run, most worry that the Israeli authorities will justify confiscation on the pretext of under-use, in particular using a provision of Ottoman law, in which if an owner of *miri* land – those situated close to places of settlement and suitable for agricultural use – fails to farm the land for three consecutive years, the land reverts to the State.¹²⁴

In most areas, security personnel and Border Police are already preventing local farmers from crossing or approaching the route of the barrier, although no Closed Military Zone order has been issued. Many farmers interviewed visit their lands only on Saturdays when the bulldozers and security personnel are absent. Others have dismantled green houses or ceased cultivating their land.¹²⁵ Parallel with the fragmentation of land and economy comes feelings of being besieged and disempowered, of no longer having any real control over one's destiny: 'we feel like refugees on our land,' the mayor of Qafin declared.

Atil, Tulkarm

The family of Rathab Ali Awad Said Dameiri, UNRWA refugee, originally came from al Aqdera, just over the Green Line. Mr. Dameiri has been renting some 22 dunums of land for 15 years which he can now only access on foot. He is therefore trying to re-establish what he can of his greenhouses and crops on 25 dunums he has now rented on the 'Palestinian' side of the barrier. Mr. Dameiri claims that although he is allowed to visit his land on foot he is forbidden to cultivate anything. Nevertheless, he goes on Saturday when the contractors and IDF are absent. Mr. Dameiri has not been informed of access arrangements for after the barrier is built.

The Yesha Council of Settlements, the body which represents Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory, has proposed an alternative route for the security barrier which would leave dozens of settlements and more than 100,000 Palestinians on the western side of the barrier. Pressure from settlement heads has already altered the original route of the Barrier in the Tulkarm and Qalqiliya districts with the result that Salit, Avnei Hefez and Alfei Menashe settlements now lie west of the Barrier.¹²⁶

The Defence Ministry has seemingly adopted many of the Yesha's suggestions and recently made recommendations which would extend the barrier far eastwards into the Qalqiliya governorate, bringing the major settlements of Kedumim, Karnei Shomron, Immanuel and Ariel inside the Barrier, encompassing some 40,000 settlers and 3,000 Palestinians.¹²³

It is now reported that an eastern barrier is also planned down the Jordan valley from Mekhola in the north east to Ma'ale Adumim near Jerusalem, and then south to the Judean Desert. Whatever the final boundaries of the barrier it will effectively place much of West Bank land out of bounds for Palestinians and constitute the greatest change in the landscape since 1967.

Part 2: [Impact of Barrier by governate.](#)

Separation Barrier

First Stage Route

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1. B'Tselem: The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, (Draft copy), March 2003, p.7
2. B'Tselem, The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, March 2003, p.8.
3. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Projected population, Selected Years, Medium Series 2003.
4. The World Bank defines 'impacted communities' as 'those that: (a) find themselves on the western (interior) side of the Wall; (b) lose land or infrastructure to its construction; (c) are located less than 1.3 km. From the Wall; or (d) have a main/only access road cut by the Wall. It should be noted that this term is used only as a rough guide and may underestimate the total impact of the Wall on neighbouring communities.' The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, (Draft copy), p. 22. B'Tselem comes up with a similar figure regarding affected communities and population: 'the barrier will likely cause direct harm to at least 210,00 Palestinians residing in sixty-seven villages, towns cities.' The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, (Draft), March 2003, p.3.v
5. According to the World Bank, some 25-30 percent of the population in affected communities are registered refugees, although it is not clear how this figure is determined, which appears to be an overestimate. World Bank, The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, p. 25.
6. B'Tselem, Separation Barrier: Update, October 2002.
7. B'Tselem, Separation Barrier: Update. The quotation is from the response of the Israeli State Attorney's Office to a petition filed in the High Court of Justice by Palestinians against the proposed route of the Barrier. However, according to B'Tselem's latest position paper, p.7, the depth barrier will in fact have a barbed-wire fence alongside it.
8. Meeting with Lieutenant-Colonel Khalil, Tulkarm DCL, 19 March 2003.
9. According to the State Attorney's Office, 'Reasonable crossing arrangements will be made that will take into account the need for the movement of labourers and suitable work implements. On the one hand, and the ability to transport the produce from the farmland to villages lying east of the barrier, on the other hand.' B'Tselem, The Separation Barrier: Update
10. B'Tselem, The Separation Barrier: Update
11. B'Tselem, Separation Barrier: Position Paper, (draft) March 2003, p.13.
12. Interview, with mayor, Mr. Tayseer Harashi, 12 March.
13. 'Past experience Indicate(s) that presenting objections to the IDF is nothing more than a formality which, in most cases, has no effects on decisions that have already been made' B'Tselem: The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, September 2002, p. 13.
14. Interview with mayor of Qalqiliya, Mr. Marouf Zahran, 1 March 2003.
15. World Bank: The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, p.2
16. B'Tselem, The Separation Barrier: Update.
17. B'Tselem: The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, March 2003, p.12.
18. B'Tselem: The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, March 2003, p.7.
19. Some 4,000 residents of Qalqiliya possess Israeli IDs through marriage and other family connections but are now officially prohibited from residing in the town.
20. Interview with mayor, 6 March 2003.
21. World Bank, The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, p.27.
22. World Bank: The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, p.13.
23. PENGON, February Update. PENGON is the Palestinian Environmental NGO network, which includes the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), Land and Water (LAW) and the Union of Palestinian Medical relief Committees, (UPMRC).
24. PENGON: The Apartheid Wall Campaign, Report # 1, November 2002, p.21.
25. PARC: Needs Assessment Study & Proposed Intervention for villages affected by the Wall in the districts of Jenin, Tulkarem and Qalqilia, February 2003, p.3.
26. Oxfam: Forgotten Villages: Struggling to survive under closure in the West Bank, September 2002, p. 26.
27. B'Tselem: The Separation Barrier: Position Paper, (draft), March 2003, p.17.
28. Oxfam, Forgotten Villages, p.24.
29. World Bank , The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, p.26
30. B'Tselem: Land Grab, Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank, May 2002, p. 87.
31. World Bank , The Impact of the West Bank Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities, p.31.
32. B'Tselem: Land Grab p. 52.
33. 'The dominant feeling of fear and uncertainty is negatively affecting the amount of time and resources farmers are investing in their lands near the wall area or west of the wall, especially in types of farming that require expensive inputs such as green houses and irrigated trees and vegetables.' PARC, Needs Assessment Study, p.5.
34. Ibid.

35. 'Defence Ministry wants fence moved deeper into West Bank,' Ha'aretz 23 March 2003. However, Prime Minister Sharon has delayed authorising the Defence Ministry's recommendations, due to pressure from the US administration and because of the increased cost. 'Sharon delays final decision on position of separation fence', Ha'aretz, 6 April, 2003.