

Occupation and Oppression: The Effects of Israeli Settlement Policies and the Apartheid Wall on Palestinians in the West Bank

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ABSTRACT

One of the significant factors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the settlement policy of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories. This paper examines how the settlement policy has impacted Palestinians and violated their fundamental rights, such as the right to a livelihood, the right to education, and the right to movement. Israel has divided the West Bank into three zones—A, B, and C—where it controls outposts with heavy military security. Settler violence has also had a significant impact on Palestinians. Their agriculture and other industries have suffered as a result. Additionally, Israel constructed a separation wall, often referred to as the apartheid wall, which has further divided Palestinians and restricted their movement. The apartheid policies of Israel have deeply affected the Palestinian population.

Keywords: apartheid wall, Israel, Palestine, settlements, Westbank

Introduction

The West Bank's way of life is mostly influenced by the settlements. The settlement has a different impact on Palestinians in different ways. Currently, settlements are home to more than 620,000 Israeli residents. Roughly 209,270 of these people reside in the areas of the West Bank that Israel incorporated into the city of Jerusalem, while 413,400 do so throughout the remainder of the West Bank. The settlements, as we know it, is built on confiscated land from the Palestinians. One of the key driving causes behind the occupation's enormous human rights abuses is Israel's strategy of creating and expanding illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian land. Over the years, Israel has demolished tens of thousands of Palestinian houses and displaced vast swaths of the population to unlawfully establish its people in the occupied territories by building homes and infrastructure. It has also appropriated Palestinian natural resources for settlement purposes, like water and agricultural land. Israeli settlements within the West Bank are indeed an important source of friction in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Settlements are

Israeli civilian enclaves that have been established and constructed on Palestinian land. Israeli-built settlements are off-limits to Palestinians since they are only for Jewish inhabitants. Since the entrance of the Israeli military inside the West Bank in 1967, settlements have indeed been created, and successive Israeli governments have fostered and backed them. Various settlements are frequently linked to one another and to Israel via roads that Palestinians are not permitted to use. Outposts are minor settler colonies, often consisting of only a few trailers or dwellings, formed without the Israeli state's permission. Outposts are usually established on hilltops near older, well-known communities and are connected to them by road. Settlements and outposts form a connected web of regions that are encroaching on increasingly large swaths of Palestinian land and isolating Palestinian people. The West Bank now has two legal systems, one for settlers and one for Palestinians, as a result of Israel's settlement practices. 'The Israeli government has imposed most features of Israeli law to the settlers and settlements, thereby annexing areas to the State of Israel,' according to the Israeli NGO B'Tselem. As a result of the annexation, a legalised separation and discriminatory regime have emerged. Under this regime, individuals' rights are governed by their nationality, based on two independent legal systems in the same territory. (PAHLMBLAD, 2012)

Settlements and its Impacts

Settlements have had substantial economic and spatial repercussions from the beginning. They were established through the annexation of significant swaths of Palestine's most productive land, the appropriation of water resources, and the use of Palestinian quarry, mining, Dead Sea mineral wealth, and other non-renewable environmental assets. As a result, Israeli settlements currently control about 42 per cent of West Bank territory, including built-up regions as well as the settlements' broad municipal limits. Palestinians are not permitted to enter these locations unless they obtain a permit. Not only is the West Bank completely detached from Gaza, but it is also separated from East Jerusalem, which was once the heart of its business and culture. Furthermore, settlements have fractured the West Bank economy into smaller, isolated marketplaces, reducing the competitiveness of Palestinian goods in both domestic and international markets. (Margalit, 2015)

Israel has grabbed over 2 million dunams. (200,000 hectares) of land Palestinians' property since seizing the West Bank in 1967, throughout the West Bank. Israel uses this land for its purposes, including building new settlements, expanding the territory they control – including farmland and industrial zones – and paving roads that mainly serve the settler population. Hundreds of thousands of dunams [1,000 square metres] in the West Bank are dominated by settlements, to which Palestinians have restricted or no access. Some of these locations have been taken over by Israel through formal ways, such as issuing military orders, proclaiming the region "state territory," a "firing zone," or a "natural reserve," and expropriating land. Through everyday acts

of aggression, including assaults on Palestinians & their property, settlers have essentially taken over other places. The two tunes don't seem to have anything in common: The state takes over land publicly, using official techniques sanctioned by legal experts and courts, and white settlers, who likewise want to take over property to advance their goal, start violence against Palestinians for their motives. However, there is only one path to follow: Settler aggression toward Palestinians is one of Israel's apartheid regime's plans to annex additional West Bank land. The state actively encourages and promotes these violent acts, and its agents may even take part in them. As a result, settler violence is a type of government policy backed and enabled by official state authorities, who actively participate in the violence. The state permits settlers to use land violently acquired from Palestinians. Hundreds of outposts and "farms" - settlements for all intents and purposes, erected without official approval and without plans to allow construction – have received support from Israeli authorities and continue to exist. For the most part, Israel has ordered or funded for the IDF to defend the outposts, as well as constructed roads and installed water and electricity infrastructure. Various government agencies, the WZO Settlement Division, and regional councils in the West Bank have all assisted. It has also funded financial ventures in the outposts, such as agricultural facilities, provided help for new farmers and herding, allotted water, & lawfully protected outposts in eviction applications. The state has already stated that it intends to enforce laws on outposts in the future and has even given assurances to the international community to that end. These assurances were not kept. Outposts erected on territory registered as "state land," on-ground Israel declared as such, or on "survey land" (property whose status is still being decided) on the one hand, and outposts built on land recognised as privately owned by Palestinians – which the state wants to remove – on the other. The Israeli Supreme Court acknowledged this distinction, which had no legal basis, and practically all of the outposts remained in place in the end. Settlement violence towards Palestinians was already reported since the beginning of the occupation. It's documented in hundreds of official documents and dossiers, thousands of Palestinian and Israeli testimonials, books, reports by Palestinian, Israeli, and global humanitarian groups - including B'Tselem since its founding – and thousands of media stories.

Nonetheless, this constant, extensive recording has had little impact on settler aggression towards Palestinians, which has always been a part of life in the West Bank under colonization. Battering, throwing stones, threatening, torching fields, ruining trees and crops, stealing crops, damaging homes and cars, stopping traffic, using live fire, and, on rare occasions, murdering are among the violent activities. Settlers from so-called farms evict Palestinian farmers and shepherds from their fields, as well as pastureland and water sources, which they have relied on for decades. They employ drones to scare Palestinian flocks into scattering, and they start violent clashes daily. The military has a policy of not addressing aggressive settlers, even though soldiers have the right and responsibility to hold and arrest them. (B'Tselem, 2021)

Settler aggression towards Palestinians and their properties is routinely enabled by Israeli security personnel. Rather than confronting settlers, the military usually prefers to remove Palestinians out of their cropland or pastureland, employing tactics such as issuing closed military zone orders that only apply to Palestinians. Soldiers may take part in settlement attacks or simply observe them from the sidelines. Despite settler attacks on Palestinians, Israel's passivity persists, with law enforcement officials doing everything they can to avoid responding to the incidents. Complaints are complex to lodge, and in the rare situations that investigations are launched, the system rapidly clears them. Indictments of settlers who harm Palestinians are rare, and when they are, they usually allege minor violations with minor fines. According to numbers released by Yesh Din in Jan 2020, 91 percent of settler violence investigations were concluded without an indictment after 15 years of monitoring. Only 100 of the more than 1,200 inquiry files had indictments served on them. Settler violence does have consequences for living circumstances inside the Occupied Territories because it has a long-term chilling impact, eroding the foundations of Palestinian communities' livelihoods and reducing their revenue. Residents describe how, without protection, under the threat of violence and fear, and with no other option, Palestinian communities forego or scale back traditional professions such as sheep and goat farming or various seasonal plants, which had previously enabled them to earn a decent living and live comfortably for generations. Palestinians avoid grazing land & water sources that historically serviced their communities, and farmland cultivation is restricted. In some regions, Palestinians are afraid to enter their farmlands without the presence of Israeli residents or military personnel. Many farmlands have been damaged or ignored to the point where they scarcely produce crops, making the effort to reach them prohibitive for the owners. As a result, there are barricades strewn across the West Bank that Palestinians are aware not to cross; otherwise, they fear getting subjected to violence that may be fatal. (Jazeera, 2021)

Israel's apartheid system, which strives to create a Jewish-only zone between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean, includes official and unofficial state violence. The land is treated by the government as a resource dedicated to serving the Jewish community, and it is used almost entirely to develop and extend existing Jewish residential communities, as well as to construct new ones. Simultaneously, the dictatorship splits Palestinian space, deprives Palestinians of their land, and confines them to small, overcrowded enclaves. Apartheid is based on systematic, organised aggression against Palestinians perpetrated by a variety of actors, including the Israeli government, military, Civil Administration, Supreme Court, Israel Police, Israel Security Agency, Israel Prison Service, Israel Nature and Parks Authority, and others. Another group on this list is settlers, whose aggression is incorporated into the state's formal acts of violence. Official Israeli government violence is sometimes preceded by settler violence, and occasionally it is merged into it. Settler violence, like state violence, is planned, institutionalised, well-equipped, and carried out to achieve a specific strategic purpose. While advancing Palestinian

dispossession, Israel can maintain plausible deniability by blaming the violence on settlers rather than the military, courts, or Civil Administration. The facts, on the other hand, debunk plausible deniability: when violence occurs with the permission and help of Israeli officials and under their auspices, it is considered state violence. (B'Tselem, 2021)

The settlers aren't challenging the state; they simply carry out its orders. Israeli settlers' violence jeopardises Palestinians' physical security and livelihoods while they live under Israel's long-term military occupation. Physical assaults, intimidation, seizure and destruction of private property, impeded access to pasture and farmland, and assaults on livestock and agricultural land are only a few examples of the brutality. Israel's decades-long practice of unlawfully supporting the settling of its residents in occupied Palestinian territory is the fundamental cause of settler violence. This action has resulted in the gradual appropriation of Palestinian land, resources, and transit lines, as well as the creation of two distinct systems of rights and privileges, favouring Israeli citizens at the expense of the West Bank's 2.5 million Palestinian people. Recent state initiatives to justify the Israeli seizure of privately held Palestinian land retrospectively intentionally encourage a culture of impunity which leads to the continuation of the conflict. In reaction to Israeli settlers' violent acts towards Palestinians, Israeli authorities regularly fail to implement the rule of law. Israeli forces frequently fail to stop attacks, and follow-up is either insufficient or ineffective. Current system measures, such as asking Palestinians to file a complaint at police stations inside Israeli settlements, intentionally undermine the rule of law by preventing Palestinians from filing complaints. The prospect of vulnerable families being displaced as a result of settler aggression is a growing concern. Some Palestinian communities are subjected to ongoing pressure and hardship as a result of settler aggression, which is exacerbated by other challenges such as access and mobility limitations, as well as house demolitions. Displacement has significant physical, socio-economic, and emotional consequences for Palestinians in the short and long term. (B'Tselem, 2021)

Physical injuries and insecurity; emotional suffering; hindered access to education and services; loss of property, assets, resources, and livelihood; and the risk of displacement are all effects of settler violence on groups, families, and people. Settler violence, as well as the fear and intimidation that comes with it, has a significant psychological impact on victims and witnesses of violent acts, as well as on the psychosocial well-being of women, men, girls, and boys in impacted communities. Deep emotions of anger (particularly for men), constant thoughts of fear and insecurity, binge eating, sleep disruption (particularly for children), anxiousness (particularly for women), depression, and behavioural problems are among the impacts recorded by a Protection Cluster member providing mental health responses to victims of settler violence. Aggression, hostility, social disengagement, scholastic degradation and poor school performance are all indicators that youngsters experience. Settlement violence and harassment of schools and

children obstruct access to education. Fear of settler-related violence has also been mentioned as one of the reasons why females, particularly in Area C, are unable to attend school. Settlers regularly attack the secondary boys' school, primary boys' school, and primary girls' school in Urif village (Nablus governorate), which is close to Yitzhar settlement: these attacks are frequently followed by Israeli security force interventions using tear gas, rubber-coated metal bullets, and live ammunition to disperse Palestinians. Five such attacks on Urif schools were registered in the first 6 months of 2013. Settlement-related events are also common in the communities of At-Tuwani and Hebron Old City. Settlers' devastation and harm to productive trees, particularly olive trees, has a cumulative and negative impact on Palestinian families' and communities' livelihoods. More than 100,000 households are believed to rely on agriculture for income, including those who own olive groves, those who labour under share-cropping contracts, and wage employees who work primarily during the olive harvesting season. Olive-owning households report that revenue from olive farming is their primary source of savings for significant expenses like education fees and wedding costs. Damage to fruitful olive trees caused by settlers is connected with a large economic loss for olive-owning households. Moreover, the expansion of settlements, including settler agriculture, continues to expand, consuming Palestinian water sources. Between 1997 and 2013, the land used for Israeli settler cultivation in the West Bank increased by 35% (with 40% of that growth occurring in regions bordering ideological settlements, primarily on private Palestinian land), reaching 93,000 dunums. The overall acreage farmed by Israeli settlers within West Bank is 1.5 times bigger than the entire built-up area of settlements and outposts (approximately 60,000 dunums), and the majority of settlers' land is outside of recognised settlement limits. Farmers' access to land is restricted, such as confined spaces and protected areas around settlements, as well as settlement roads that obstruct access. Then under the Ottoman Land Code, which is frequently enforced by Israeli authorities, custody of unregistered land reverts to the state of cultivation is interrupted for ten years. These cumulative effects all contribute to an increased chance of displacement. Several victims of settler violence have told Protection Cluster personnel that they believe settlers are attempting to force them to leave their land so it can be taken over for settlement development by using violence and harassment. The Jalud village council, for example, reports that about a 40percent of the inhabitants have fled the hamlet since the Shilo settlement and nearby outposts gradually took over many of their properties. Settler violence has a direct and indirect impact on the lives of women and girls in a variety of ways: prolonged exposure to settler violence does have a psychological impact on women, who report anxiousness and continuous fear for themselves and their children; the increased pressure adds additional stress and tensions to family life, potentially increasing the risk of violence inside families; and women and girls may be restricted from working or studying outside the home due to the increased pressure. Men's problems are aggravated by the perception that they are failing to create a secure refuge for their

family in line with traditional gender norms. (Jazeera, 2021)

Palestinians have been disadvantaged, impoverished, and subjected to pervasive and systematic socio-economic disadvantage across all domains of governance as a result of Israel's fragmentation, segregation, and land confiscation policies and practices. Decades of discriminatory treatment and resource allocation by Israeli authorities on behalf of Jewish Israeli citizens in Israel and Israeli settlements inside the OPT have exacerbated existing inequities. Palestinians are denied the same opportunity to earn a living, engage in business, and support themselves and their families as Jewish Israelis throughout all areas of governance. Instead, they face discriminatory limits on access to and use of agriculture, water, gas, and oil, among other natural resources, as well as constraints on health, education, and other vital services. Israeli-imposed movement restrictions cost Palestinians in the West Bank 60 million missed labour hours every year (equal to USD 274 million) and 80 million litres of gasoline, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. According to the World Bank, simply removing roadblocks, one of the constraints, only enough to expand market access by 10%, would increase local output in the West Bank by 0.6 percent, resulting in a 4.1 percent to 6.1 percent increase in GDP per capita in the West Bank. This amounted to a total loss of between USD 589 million and USD 876 million in 2019. Closures diminish the likelihood of being employed, hourly pay, and the number of days worked, according to a 2019 study by the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, while increasing the number of working hours per day.(Amnesty,2022)

The Palestinian agriculture sector's productivity has decreased, according to the World Bank, as a result of Israeli limitations on accessing water and agricultural land in Area C, as well as the "dual-use" policy that includes important agricultural output products. Import limitations on fertilisers, for example, have caused a slew of issues for the Palestinian agricultural industry, including low production and soil degradation. UNCTAD predicted in 2015 that agricultural productivity in the OPT has decreased by 20-30% since fertiliser import restrictions were implemented. While the ICT sector is one of the fastest-growing in the OPT, the Palestinian ICT sector continues to be forcibly integrated into the Israeli system and faces severe limitations as a result of this dependency and other Israeli restrictions on the sector, including the "dual-use" restrictions on the transfer of ICT equipment, according to the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency. The sector has only increased from 0.1 percent of GDP in 1994 to 4 percent in 2019, according to the World Bank. According to the World Bank, the manufacturing sector's capacity in the OPT has stalled as a result of Israel's multi-layered system of limitations, including the "dual use" policy, resulting in a drop in the sector's percentage of GDP. The manufacturing sector contributed 19 percent of Palestinian GDP in 1994 but had decreased to under 10% by 2019. The OPT's status as a source of cheap labour for Israelis and Israeli settlements limits the Palestinian economy's future development. For example, the furniture industry has been severely hampered

by a steady movement of talented workers to Israeli competitors who can afford to pay higher rates. According to UNCTAD, roughly ten percent of the West Bank's employment, or 133,000 Palestinians, worked in Israel and settlements in 2019. While a UNCTAD study found that Palestinians working in Israel and settlements increased factor income it also found that this "decreases labour supply to the domestic market, dampens incentives to invest in human capital, and hurts GDP growth." As per the World Bank, the manufacturing sector generated 19 percent of Palestinian GDP in 1994 but has decreased to under 10% by 2019. The OPT's status as a source of cheap labour for Israel and Israeli settlements limits the Palestinian economy's future development. For example, the furniture industry has been severely hampered by a steady movement of talented employees to Israeli competitors who can afford to offer higher rates. (Amnesty,2022)

Israel has sought to control all water supplies and water-related infrastructure in the OPT since 1967, having a significant impact on Palestinian populations and agricultural activity. Israel restricts the amount of water available to Palestinians to a level that does not fulfil their demands and does not represent a fair and equitable sharing of shared water resources. Only 10% of Gaza's population currently has direct access to clean drinking water, while 660,000 Palestinians in the West Bank are reported to have restricted water access. Israel took military control of all water supplies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip two months after the occupation began. Israel took military control of all water supplies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip two months after the occupation began. In Nov 1967, the Israeli government published Military Order Amending the Water Supervision Law, which declared that Palestinians in the West Bank may not build any new water facilities without first gaining permission from the Israeli army. Since then, extracting water from any new source or developing new water infrastructure has necessitated obtaining permissions from Israel, which are practically impossible to obtain. Israel even restricts the gathering of rainwater in many of the West Bank, and the Israeli army often destroys Palestinian rainwater-harvesting cisterns. As a result, approximately 93 percent of cultivated Palestinian land was not irrigated in 2017, according to a UNCTAD analysis. While denying Palestinians access to water, Israel has successfully established its water infrastructure and network in the West Bank for use by Israelis and residents of settlements. Israel has taken 82 percent of Palestinian groundwater for its use and that of Jewish colonies, while Palestinians must buy more than half of their water from Israel. Mekorot, an Israeli state- owned water utility, has deliberately sunk wells and tapped springs in the occupied West Bank to supply its population with water for domestic, agricultural, and industrial needs, including those residing in illegal settlements. Mekorot does sell some water to Palestinian water utilities, but the amount is set by Israeli officials, who frequently reduce or eliminate the amount sold, leaving many Palestinian communities without water or underserved by a critical water source. Many Palestinian villages in the West Bank, particularly in Area C, are forced to buy water carried in by trucks at

substantially higher prices, ranging from USD 4 to USD 10 per cubic metre, due to ongoing limitations on tapping water resources. As a result, Palestinians pay at least eight times the price of Israeli settlers for water. As a result, water costs can consume up to half of a family's monthly income in some of the poorest places, such as the Jordan Valley. Israeli settlements on the West Bank are not subject to such restrictions or shortages of water, and they benefit from well-irrigated fields and swimming pools. (Amnesty,2022)

Israel has also denied Palestinians in the OPT access to oil and gas reserves beneath their land and their coastal seas, denying them economic development and the opportunity to exercise other socioeconomic rights, such as the right to work. According to UNCTAD, the OPT is located atop have a big deposit of oil and gas resources in Area C of the West Bank and along the Mediterranean coast of the Gaza Strip. The Levant Basin Province in the Eastern Mediterranean is one of the world's most important natural gas reserves. Palestinians, on the other hand, have been barred from accessing these reserves, which are estimated to be 1.525 billion barrels of oil worth USD 99.1 billion, to meet their energy demands and create fiscal and export profits. UNCTAD believes that the Palestinian economy has been deprived (at a conservative estimate) of USD 2.57 billion since the drilling of two natural gas fields off Gaza's coast began in 2000. (Amnesty,2022)

Israel has also utilised archaeological excavations to keep and control more territory for the establishment of Jewish-only settlements and the exploitation of Palestinian natural resources while denying Palestinians access to or use of the land. Israel has effectively controlled tourist and archaeological sites in the West Bank since the occupation began. Between 1967 and 2007, Israeli officials discovered and excavated 980 archaeological sites in the area, including 349 in East Jerusalem. In violation of international law and cultural property treaties, Jewish settlers, other Israeli residents, and Israel's military have unlawfully relocated archaeological antiquities uncovered in the OPT and displayed them as Jewish and Israeli in exhibitions in Israel and abroad. The systematic demolition and takeover of ancient sites by Israel deny Palestinians their right to cultural heritage and property. Furthermore, the construction of archaeological sites in the occupied West Bank supports local settlements, primarily through tourism, and exacerbates violations of human rights against Palestinians in nearby villages. Indeed, in recent years, the Israeli government has boosted its financial backing for the settlement tourism business. (Amnesty,2022)

Since 1967, Israel has detained hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, on military orders, many of which criminalise a variety of peaceful actions. Men and boys in entire villages have been picked up in mass arbitrary arrests during times of heightened tension and violence. Between 1987 and 1993, Israeli soldiers detained over 100,000 Palestinians during the Palestinian uprising. Israeli authorities have also arbitrarily imprisoned tens of

thousands of Palestinians, including political detainees, and held them in administrative detention for lengthy periods without accusation or trial. Israel has also established military tribunals to charge Palestinians, which do not provide fundamental fair trial safeguards. Almost every case filed before military court results in a conviction. The majority of convictions are the result of plea bargains since Palestinian defendants know that if they go to trial, they would be convicted and sentenced to a higher sentence. Israeli settlers in the OPT, on the other hand, are convicted in Israeli civilian courts and have more legal safeguards under Israeli civilian law. Torture is still not illegal in Israel, making it possible for Palestinian captives to be tortured and mistreated while in Israeli custody. Israeli troops have a long history of employing disproportionate and frequently fatal force against Palestinian men, women, and children, particularly in retaliation for protests and to suppress dissent. Thousands have died, and many more have been injured. Because authorities failed to conduct rigorous, fair, and independent investigations to disrupt the cycle of impunity, these abuses have been allowed to persist for more than half a century. More than 10,200 Palestinians have been killed since 1987, many in situations that imply the executions were illegal and may have amounted to war crimes. Over 1,400 Israelis had been slain by Palestinians in the same period. Hundreds of civilians have been killed by Palestinian armed groups in actions that are illegal under international law. (Amnesty,2022)

A large percentage of Palestinian households in Area C (38%) rely on unstable employment and daily earnings as a source of income, with many of these (38%) working in Israel or Israeli settlements. More than three-quarters of Area C families (78 per cent) rely on agriculture and livestock for a portion of their income. Discriminatory planning and zoning laws, as well as regular demolitions of livelihood buildings like livestock shelters and limits on land access, all harm Palestinian livelihoods in Area C of the West Bank, especially farming. . Similarly, the construction of the separation wall, which was intended to encircle settlements while excluding Palestinian communities, has displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians from their homes. Poverty has become entrenched as a result of livelihood constraints, and moderate and severe food insecurity is higher in Area C communities (26 percent) than in Areas A and B. (17 percent). Food insecurity has been estimated to be as high as 79 percent in Bedouin settlements in Area C. As a result, food insecurity has immediate and perhaps life-long health consequences. In a 2016 assessment of malnutrition among children and their mothers in the Jordan Valley, which is predominantly located within Area C, it was discovered that 16% of children under the age of five were stunted (small for their age). Stunting was more common among Bedouin children (23%) than among children in villages (10%) and camps (10%). (9 percent). Similarly, children from households that had been forcefully displaced in any way had a greater rate of stunting (19%) than children who had never been forcibly moved (10 percent). Stunting has been associated with long-term repercussions on both physical and emotional wellness, in

addition to academic and economic implications. The survey also discovered that nearly half of all Jordan Valley children (49.3%) and 19.1% of moms were anaemic. (Impacts of Israeli settlements in the West Bank on Palestinians' rights to health and dignity, 2021)

SEPARATION BARRIER/ WALL OF APARTHEID

The Israeli cabinet resolved to build the Separation Barrier in June 2002. Following a long spate of Palestinian assaults on Israelis, the decision was taken. The stated goal was to prevent Palestinians from entering Israel without permission from the West Bank. The construction of the barrier, on the other hand, was meant to serve other, unstated goals. The placement of communities was a crucial element in defining the barrier's course, providing the framework for the de facto annexation of most settlements and many territories for future development. As a result, the barrier became an important political instrument for achieving Israel's annexationist goals. It facilitates Israel's occupation of nearly 10% of the West Bank, reduces the number of Palestinians living within the barrier and the Green Line [Israel's sovereign territory and the West Bank], and results in collateral damage to Palestinian communities east of the wall, effectively dividing them off from their own land. The West Bank makes up around 85 percent of the barrier's meandering path. To put it another way, it goes through the occupied territory and not along the Green Line or in Israel proper (i.e., west of the Green line). This is consistent with Israel's long-standing strategy of utilising the West Bank to fulfil its interests and purposes while ignoring the needs and rights of Palestinians living there. When Israel constructed the barrier, it dismantled continuous Palestinian urban and rural blocks, severed intercommunity ties that had been developed and solidified over many generations, and imposed an arbitrary reorganisation of space based on settlement boundaries and for the convenience of Israeli security forces. The Separation Barrier was designed to seem like a border fence. The majority of it is made up of an electronic fence with concrete walkways, barbed-wire fences, and ditches on both sides. On average, the barrier is 60 metres broad. Instead of this sort of barrier, Israel built an eight to a nine-metre high concrete wall in metropolitan areas such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Qalqiliyah, and Tulkarm. The concrete wall is approximately 70 km long in all. The barrier's route is 712 km long, including those that have already been built, those that are being built, and those that are still under development. That is more than double the length of the Green Line, which is just 320 km. If the entire proposed route is constructed, 52,667.7 hectares of land will be shut off from the territory of the West Bank, making up 9.4 percent of the West Bank and including area annexed by Israel to the municipal limits of Jerusalem. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), around 460 km (or 65 percent of the intended barrier) has been built as of September 2017. Another 53 kilometres (or 7.5%) were under construction, with work on another 200 miles yet to commence. When Israel erected the barrier, it separated residents of 150 Palestinian villages from their property, including farms and

pastureland, leaving the communities east of the border wall and their land on the opposite side, between the barrier and the Green Line. Israel's actions resulted in thousands of Palestinians being refused access to the cultivation of their land. Israel did install 84 gates in the barrier's completed sections to provide landowners access to their lands. In reality, however, the gates obstruct entrance to the land and are primarily there for show, apparently enabling life to continue as usual. Only 9 of these gates were opened daily in 2016, according to OCHA numbers; ten were only opened a few days and during the olive harvest season; and 65 gates were only opened for the olive harvest. (Krauss, 2021)

The Separation Barrier cut off more than just territory from the rest of the West Bank and its people. There are around 11,000 Palestinians imprisoned between the Separation Barrier and the Green Line in 32 towns. This figure excludes Palestinians residing in regions annexed to Jerusalem's municipal borders. Residents in these communities, which include those in the enclave of Barta'ah a-Sharqiyah in the northwest of the West Bank, areas to the north and south of Tulkarm, areas to the north and south of Qalqiliyah, and small areas west of Hebron, must obtain permits from the CA for virtually every aspect of their lives. To continue residing in the homes where their families have resided for generations, nearly all Palestinians over the age of 16 must get "permanent residence cards." Permits are valid for a specific amount of time, ranging from one day to two years. Permits must be renewed regularly before they expire for permit holders to remain in their residences. Israeli citizens and non-Israeli Jews, on the other hand, are permitted to come and stay in certain locations, even if they have never been there before. The principal centre of everyday life for most of these towns — imprisoned between the Green Line and the Separation Barrier — remains east of the barrier, where work, health services, trade, culture, and recreation can be found. As a result, inhabitants must pass through checkpoints daily to maintain their normal routines, such as travelling to work, visiting friends and family, or even going shopping. Such restrictions on freedom of movement limit rural populations' access to hospitals in neighbouring cities; education suffers as many teachers who work in the enclaves' schools live on the other side of the barrier, and important personal relationships are strained as friends and relatives are unable — with very few exceptions — to visit. As a result, Palestinians living in the regions imprisoned between the barrier and the Green Line seldom have the opportunity to attend family and social events in their towns. Instead, they are forced to celebrate events such as weddings and birthday parties on the other side of the barrier, away from their villages. (The Separation Barrier, 2017)

The Separation Barrier in Jerusalem has fully cut off the city from the rest of the West Bank, further isolating East Jerusalem from the West Bank territories that Israel has not seized. This was accomplished by arranging the route to match the municipal borders that Israel created around Jerusalem in 1967 — which had no practical significance until the barrier was built — to

strengthen Israeli control over the annexed regions. The route deviates from Jerusalem's municipal limits in five regions, in keeping with the same purpose that guided the design of the city's boundaries in 1967 - to capture as much land and as few Palestinians as possible. The barrier separates two localities within Jerusalem's municipal limits, the Shu'fat Refugee Camp and Kafr 'Aqab, which are home to some 140,000 Palestinians. The barrier extends beyond municipal lines in three regions, effectively annexing undeveloped territory, settlements, and their surroundings to Jerusalem. As a result, the barrier's path takes a meandering course through the city, covering 202 kilometres in the Jerusalem region. The Separation Barrier's path stretches into the West Bank, fragmenting the West Bank by isolating nearby villages and cutting them off from their property. The burden this places on their existence, along with the stifled potential for long-term growth, contributes to solidifying Israel's annexation of the land west of the barrier. As a result, the number of Palestinians in some of these places – and the enclaves that arise – has decreased. Long-standing commercial relationships between Palestinian villages along the Green Line and Israeli citizens have also been harmed by the barrier. In verdicts on more than 150 petitions challenging the constitutionality of the whole barrier as well as the legality of specific portions, Israel's Supreme Court handed its mark of approval to the barrier's construction throughout the West Bank. The justices approved the state's contention that the barrier is only temporary and that the route was designed only for security reasons. They opted to overlook assertions from numerous authorities about Israel's geopolitical aims served by the barrier in doing so. Their decisions made it easier for tens of thousands of Palestinians to have their rights violated in contravention of international law. The Court clarified its view in two important judgements – one in the Beit Surik case in June 2004 and the other in the Alfei Menashe case in September 2005 – that establishing the barrier within the occupied territory is legal and does not pose any concerns of authority. Multiple human rights of Palestinians living on both sides of the barrier have been infringed as a result of its construction in the West Bank. It restricts their freedom of movement, affecting their rights to a job, education, medical treatment, family life, earning a living, and a decent quality of living, among other things. The collective right to self-determination of Palestinians is also infringed, as the barrier's twisting course cuts into Palestinian areas and fragments the people living there. There is no serious construction of permanent health infrastructure in Area C to address the demands of its population since building permits are often rejected. In Area C, there are no permanent Palestinian healthcare facilities, although Israeli settlers have access to sophisticated hospitals and clinics. (The Separation Barrier, 2017)

Conclusion

The Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank has impacted the Palestinians in different ways, such as in the form of settler violence, which had a severe impact on the Palestinian people

physically and mentally. Settlement policy has a very negative impact on the socio-economic, health, political and other aspects of the Palestinian people. Israel has not legally annexed the West Bank. However, in reality, it sees the settlements built across Area C as expansions of its sovereign land and has all but removed the difference for Israeli citizens while confining the Palestinian people on 165 disjointed "islands" (Areas A and B). Israeli policy in the West Bank has consistently focused on this dual trend of Israeli settlers annexing more and more territory in the West Bank while Palestinians are being forced out. All Israeli legislative, legitimate, planning, financing, and defence organisations have worked toward that aim. Israel has built a discriminatory regime in the Occupied Territories by imposing two distinct legal systems on the same area and basing individual rights on nationality. This tyranny, which is unique in the world, is reminiscent of horrible past governments such as South Africa's apartheid system. The separation wall could be viewed as an example of Israeli apartheid & a component of racial discrimination. The graffiti artists utilised the walled areas of the barrier as a canvas to express human rights problems, protests against the barrier, and Palestinian resistance.

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