



West Bank 'Security'-wall:
Under Construction and Projected Alignment



An Interrupted Landscape

Tracing Jerusalem's New Walls

An Essay in Photos

What Israel has dubbed the "separation wall" will lace the contours of Palestinian West Bank communities with tens of kilometres of cement and barbed wire. In the northern West Bank, the wall is already isolating 50 villages from their livelihood, de facto annexing their land to Israel. In the Jerusalem area, however, what Palestinians have taken to calling the "apartheid wall," is more insidious, creeping between Palestinian communities with barriers of concrete and fencing. Both north and south of Jerusalem, near Ramallah and Bethlehem, the wall - actually a series of fences and patrol roads - is nearing completion. Its confines trace the expansionist borders of "Greater Jerusalem" and close off the city's Arab neighbourhoods to Palestinians cantonized in the outer West Bank.



Ramallah's wall, commenced in August of 2002, falls on one side on the lands of al-Ram, Qalandiya, Kufr Aqab, al-Bireh and Rafat. On the other, reports are of a wall under construction between Dahiat al-Barid and the settlement of Neve Yacov. The barrier's two loose ends connect at the knot of Qalandiya checkpoint, reportedly one of several "crossing points" through which Palestinians will traverse Israeli security. The barrier's path cuts close to residential areas, assuring spying eyes from imposing eight-meter-high Israeli watchtowers. Its span will be 40 to 100 meters wide, encompassing a swath of military roads, sensors and dangerous "buffer zones." On the Ramallah side, it will further isolate 15,000 Jerusalem identity card holders living in Kufr Aqab and Qalandiya Refugee Camp from the city, their families and municipality services.

In Jerusalem's south, at least 15 kilometres of electric fence and an 8-10 meter high concrete barrier will separate Bethlehem from Jerusalem. An integral part of this wall is a fence/road connecting Gilo with surrounding settlements and Israeli population centers.

Once Bethlehem's new landscape is completed, the current Bethlehem checkpoint will be moved 200 meters south, physically completing Israel's annexation of the Rachel Tomb/Bilal Ibn Rabah area and drawing a straight line of Israeli access almost to the center of the town. The wall in this area will mean the confiscation of some 18,000 dunums of land, matching in one fell swoop the 14,000 dunums confiscated from the Bethlehem area since 1967.

Symbolic of the wall project's designs - to hide the Palestinian population from view and curtail its growth - cement walls have been erected in various Jerusalem neighbourhoods: at Kubsa checkpoint in Abu Dis, on the Atarot settlement bypass road, and in Gilo settlement itself. These physical

barriers have poured into concrete the travel restrictions imposed on Palestinians since the first Gulf War, but they also form a metaphor for a new era of Palestinian erasure.

This essay and photos are deeply indebted to the work of PENGON, the Palestinian Environmental NGO Network (www.pengon.org), which is mobilizing a campaign against the wall.



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The Bethlehem area road leading to the settlement of Gilo does double duty as Jewish-only traffic route and dividing wall. Source: PENGON/Isabel de la Cruz



At the entrance of Bethlehem, an elderly woman and boy use the only "access route" into town to reach thousands of dunams that Israel has confiscated for a wall and Jewish-only road.. Source: PENGON/Isabel de la Cruz



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Bulldozers have worked over this Rafat village land, just north of Jerusalem, preparing the ground for the wall. Source: PENGON Archives



Jerusalem Quarterly File



At Qalandiya checkpoint separating Jerusalem from most points north, this chain-link fence and patrol road was quietly erected in late winter 2003, moving the "border" just a few meters closer to Ramallah and the waiting line of cars. Source: PENGON/Isabel de la Cruz



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In the northern West Bank near Qalqilya, the walls are thicker and block the sun. Source: PENGON/Isabel de la Cruz



Under an angry sky, the village lands of Kufr Aqab are scarred by the digging arms of Israeli bulldozers. Source: PENGON/Isabel de la Cruz



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In Abu Dis, there is no land to till: a crowded line of concrete blocks prevent passage into and out of the city of Jerusalem. Source: PENGON/Simone Bitton



The business of division is not always neat. At Turkumiyeh crossing near Hebron, avocados are loaded from the back of a West Bank truck to the bed of a Jerusalem lorry. Only the produce is allowed to cross. Source: PENGON/Isabel de la Cruz



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Along a Gilo street, the erasure is complete. The cement of a concrete barrier has been painted with an idyllic scene of expanding settlement, eliminating the Palestinians below. Source: PENGON