The Separation Wall- Facts and figures

Over ten years ago, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion holding that the Separation Barrier, that runs inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, violates Israel’s obligations under international law. While the ICJ has ordered that Israel cease construction of the Wall and dismantles the sections already built, the Israeli government has continued construction with impunity.

Below are some facts and figures on the Wall (Barrier) from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

- The Barrier consists of concrete walls, fences, ditches, razor wire, groomed sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a buffer zone.
- The Barrier’s total length (constructed and projected) is approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice (‘Green’) Line, which separates Israel from the occupied West Bank.
- Approximately 62.1% of the Barrier is complete, a further 8% is under construction and 29.9% is planned but not yet constructed. (As of 2013)
- When completed, some 85%, of the route will run inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line, isolating some 9.4% of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- 71 of the 150 Israeli settlements in the West Bank and over 85% of the total settler population are located on the ‘Israeli’ side of the Barrier’s route.
- Palestinians with West Bank ID cards who are granted special permits can only enter East Jerusalem through four of the 14 Barrier checkpoints around the city.
- Around 7,500 Palestinians who reside in areas between the Green Line and the Barrier (Seam Zone), excluding East Jerusalem, require special permits to continue living in their own homes; another 23,000 will be isolated if the Barrier is completed as planned.
- There are about 150 Palestinian communities which have part of their land isolated by the Barrier and must obtain ‘visitors’ permits or perform ‘prior coordination’ to access this area.
- Access to agricultural land through the Barrier is channelled through 80 gates. The majority of these gates only open during the six weeks olive harvest season and usually only for a limited period during the day.
- During the 2011 olive harvest, about 42% of applications submitted for permits to access areas behind the Barrier were rejected citing ‘security reasons’ or lack of ‘connection to the land.’
- Despite the presence of the Barrier, Israeli sources estimate that some 15,000 Palestinians without the required permits smuggle themselves from the West Bank to look for employment in Israel every day in 2011 (Israeli Government Special Committee).
• The UN Register of Damage (UNRoD) has to date collected over 26,000 claims for material damage caused by the construction of the Barrier in the northern West Bank.

According to “Stop the Wall”, a grassroots movement uniting the struggle of the popular committees in the villages, the cost of the Wall is now estimated at $2.1 billion. Each km costs approximately $2 million. In addition, the Occupation has spent NIS 2 billion to construct alternative roads and tunnels.

The Wall has destroyed a large amount of Palestinian farmland and usurped water supplies, including the biggest aquifer in the West Bank. 780 Palestinian villages and communities with a total population of 266,442 will be isolated as follows:

• Villages surrounded by Wall, settlements and settler roads - 257,265 Palestinians.
• Villages isolated between Wall and Green Line - 8,557 Palestinians
• Villages isolated and residents threatened with expulsion - 6,314 Palestinians.

Checkpoints and the Wall

• There are hundreds of checkpoints and other military obstructions such as roadblocks, trenches, and gates that restrict Palestinian movement. Additionally, there are 1,661 km (1,032 miles) of settler-only roads that connect settlements and settlement blocs. B’tselem points out that Israel has used many systems to restrict movement since the 1990s, such as “checkpoints and obstructions, the Separation Barrier, forbidden roads or roads with restrictions in Palestinian use, and the movement-permit regime.”

• The system of checkpoints, permits and barriers restricts the Palestinians’ freedom of movement within the occupied area, greatly impacting their access to employment, school, medical care, and other vital social services.

• The checkpoints and movement barriers violate Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.”

• B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, refers also to checkpoints as a form of collective punishment, violating the rights of an entire population under the assumption that all Palestinians are a security threat.

This form of collective punishment is detrimental to the economy as a whole, severely limiting the flow of goods, including humanitarian aid. Movement and access restrictions such as the Separation Wall and checkpoints impact the Palestinian economy by creating greater unemployment, crippling private sector activity, causing a rapid decline in GDP, decreasing wages, and increasing poverty.
WHERE LAW STANDS ON THE WALL
INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE ONGOING CONSTRUCTION OF ISRAEL’S WALL IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN WEST BANK

JUNE 2002
ISRAELI CARETAKER GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES PLAN TO CONSTRUCT A CONTINUOUS FENCE IN THE WEST BANK

What is the International Court of Justice (ICJ)?
The ICJ is the supreme judicial body of the United Nations, established in 1945. Its role is to settle legal disputes between states and give advisory opinions on legal issues.

Composition
The Court consists of 15 judges, each appointed by the General Assembly and the Security Council for a 9-year term, and elected without taking into account the nationalities of judges elected from any state.

JULY 2004
ICL JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED: COURT ORDERS ISRAEL TO REMOVE THE WALL FOLLOWING REQUEST BY UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JULY 2014
10 YEARS AFTER THE JUDGMENT THE WALL IS LEGAL

THE WALL IS ILLEGAL
1. Constitutes collective punishment
2. Has not been justified by any legally valid grounds
3. Violates all human rights

14. Summary of Chamber’s reasonings:
1. ISRAEL MUST Dismantle the Wall
2. ISRAEL MUST PAY reparations to Palestinians
3. STATES OBLIGED to act against the Wall
4. UN SHOULD take action

JUNE 2014
10 YEARS AFTER THE JUDGMENT CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL CONTINUES

Sources:
1. ICL, “The International Court of Justice and the Israeli Separation Wall”, Peace Research Institute, 2004
2. UN, “The Legal Status of the East Jerusalem Security Fence”, 2005
3. ICC, “The Legal Status of Israel’s Separation Barrier”, 2005

Source: http://visualizingpalestine.org/visuals/icj-separation-wall- legality
Good news story: Cremisan Monastery wins in Israeli High Court: Court orders change of route

A Bethlehem-area monastery that was slated to be split in half by the barrier has won its appeal in the Israeli High Court, after a nine year struggle that involved multiple court cases and nonviolent direct action to save the monastery.

For more sources see:

Bethlehem: Israeli High Court halts building of Cremisan separation wall
Society of St. Yves (Catholic Centre for Human Rights)
Israeli Court rejects Cremisan Valley West Bank barrier
Israel’s top court blocks extension of Separation Wall through Cremisan Valley (The Guardian)
Supreme Court nixes West Bank barrier route outside Jerusalem
http://www.saintyves.org/?MenuId=3&Lang=1&TemplateId=news&catId=1&full=1&id=66

An Israeli rationale for the barrier:

Impact on Palestinians and Israelis:
http://blog.eappi.org/tag/separation-barrier/

Story of Bethlehem unwrapped - St James, Piccadilly event on the barrier:
https://vimeo.com/100120040

Pax Christi wall education resource:
http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/resources/workshop-resources/the-wall/

Al-Walaja: the story of a shrinking village (animation made by EAs Julia Land and Ali Morgan, 2014)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpb9xFjUNiM

"The Wall has been broken down" - brochure and discussion guide about the conflict by Kairos Netherlands and Friends of Sabeel Netherlands
http://www.henriveldhuis.nl/LocalFiles/Israel_Palestijnen/Muur_afgebroken/Muur_afgebroken.htm

Terrestrial Jerusalem – Jerusalem Atlas: this is an interactive map: on the right side of the map you can click on “Route of the Barrier” and then on the Legend you click on a layer to show its
content on the map. This organization is only focused on Jerusalem.

Btselem—has a lot of resources including videos. http://www.btselem.org/topic/separation_barrier

UNOCHA Fact Sheet – “The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier July 2013”

UMOCHA Barrier Maps

West Bank Access Restrictions Map – Sept 2014

Description of the Wall Museum and photos of the posters

The Wall Museum – a book

Christmas DVD with songs, prayers, and story posters from the wall

Film about the wall from the "Christ at the Checkpoint" Conference in 2012
http://vimeo.com/36912118

A picture and text features about the separation wall 10 years after its beginning
http://972mag.com/the-wall-project/

Picture series: 10 years since the wall declared illegal (by a former MCC staff)

Picture series: Christmas Prayer service against the wall (by a former MCC staff)

Infographic about the wall from "Visualizing Palestine"
http://visualizingpalestine.org/visuals/icj-separation-wall-legality

Also Al Haq _ interesting interactive maps
(http://alhaq.mits.ps/index.php/interactive-map/interactive-map-annexation-wall)

AL Haq articles
(http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/wall-and-jerusalem)