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BARRIER TO PEACE ASSESSMENT OF ISRAEL'S REVISED WALL ROUTE

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Despite widespread international opposition, Israel continues to use the Wall and other elements of its ever-expanding settlement enterprise in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) to unilaterally impose its own final status vision on the ground. The Wall, deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice, snakes through Palestinian, and not Israeli, territory in order to sustain and reinforce the vast majority of Israel's settlements throughout the West Bank, all of which are illegal under international law. To further facilitate the expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, on both sides of the Wall, Israel continues to construct a vast network of settler highways connecting its illegal settlements to each other and to Israel, while simultaneously imposing severe movement and access restrictions on the 2.4 million indigenous Palestinians who live in the West Bank.

The Israeli Ministry of Defense recently published a revised route of the Wall¹⁴. The new Wall route is considerably worse than the previous route, both in terms of its impact on the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of ordinary Palestinians and its long-term implications for permanent status negotiations.

*Whereas the previous route (April 2006) seized some 9.0% of West Bank territory, the revised Wall route will now effectively annex **12% of the West Bank**. The new Wall route will incorporate two additional settlements, Nili and Na'aleh, with a combined population of approximately 1,500, into the western side of the Wall. As a result, some 20,000 Palestinians in five villages (Rantis, Shaqba, Qibya, Budrus, and Ni'lin) will be almost completely surrounded by the Wall and other settlement infrastructure and virtually cut off from the rest of the West Bank.*

Among the most significant changes to the route of the Wall is its incorporation of a large swath of Palestinian territory in the southeastern West Bank near the Dead Sea, representing about 2.6% of the West Bank. In the process, the revised route will incorporate one new settlement, Mitzpe Shalem (pop. ~200), as well as portions of the Oslo-defined Nature Reserve (Area B). Despite these and other changes in the route of the Wall, its purpose remains the same—to consolidate Israeli control over the most critical parts of the occupied West Bank, including all of Palestinian East Jerusalem and vital land and water resources, all which severely undercuts prospects for establishing a viable, independent Palestinian state.

This fact sheet analyses the impact of the revised Wall route and Israel's settlement expansion.

A. The revised Wall route, together with other components of Israel's settlement enterprise, will reinforce Israeli control over 46% of the occupied West Bank.
(See attached map: "Israel's Wall and Settlements (Colonies), October 2007.")^{ii[2]}

- The revised Wall route alone **de facto annexes 12%** of the West Bank.

- This figure **includes the Latrun Valley and East Jerusalem**, which together constitute 2.0% of the West Bank.
- This figure also **includes the Ariel and Kedumim “fingers,”** which together constitute 2.2% of the West Bank.
- Settlements “east” of the Wall *de facto* annex an **additional 8.0%** of the West Bank.
 - Most of these settlements are surrounded by their own **fences or walls** and control large areas of Palestinian land throughout the West Bank.
- Israel’s *de facto* annexation of the Jordan Valley accounts for an **additional 26.0%** of the West Bank.
 - Israeli settlements control nearly the entire Jordan Valley, thus prohibiting its use or development by Palestinians and severely debilitating Palestinian economic potential.^{iii[3]}
 - Former Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz recently approved the expansion of the Jordan Valley settlement of Maskiyot, slated to house settlers evacuated from the Gaza Strip in 2005. This decision is consistent with statements by Israeli leaders that Israel intends to maintain control of the Jordan Valley indefinitely.^{iv[4]}
- The total length of Israel’s Wall is **755 km** which is around twice the length of the 1967 border.
- The revised Wall route effectively incorporates over 398,000 illegal settlers, or **approximately 87.0% of the total Israeli settler population.**
- The Wall facilitates the expansion of the most damaging Israeli settlements, such as **Ma’ale Adumim**, which cuts the West Bank in two and severs Palestinian East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, and **Ariel**, which cuts more than 20 km deep into the West Bank.

B. Percentages are deceiving: What matters are the value and location of land.

- While East Jerusalem accounts for just 1.3% of the West Bank, it represents the **economic, cultural and religious capital** of the Palestinian people, without which no Palestinian state could be viable.

- Israel's Wall and settlements seize vital land and water resources, and effectively **divest Palestinians of their water rights.**
 - The **Ariel and Kedumim “fingers,”** which stretch up to 22 km into the northern West Bank, account for 2.2% of the occupied West Bank, but sit atop some of the most valuable **water resources** in the West Bank.
 - By incorporating many of the West Bank's most valuable water productive zones, Israel's Wall and settlements effectively pre-empt a future fair and equitable allocation of the West Bank's water resources, as required by international law.^{v[5]}

C. The revised Wall route still effectively severs East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

- The revised Wall in the Jerusalem area **de facto annexes ~230 km², or 4.0% of the occupied West Bank, thereby** isolating some 255,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites from the rest of the West Bank, and severing another 2.2 million Palestinians living on the “eastern” side of the Wall from East Jerusalem.
- The Wall will effectively annex to Israel three major settlement “blocs” surrounding metropolitan East Jerusalem—Giv'on, Adumim, and Etzion—on land critical to Palestinian population growth and economic development needs.
- The Wall facilitates the expansion of the **Adumim settlement “bloc”**, which includes Ma'ale Adumim, Almon, Kefar Adumim, Alon, Qedar, and the industrial settlement of Mishor Adumim. The largest settlement in this bloc, Ma'ale Adumim, will be incorporated to the western side of the Wall.
 - The Adumim Wall lies approximately 14 km east of the 1967 pre-occupation border and houses over 35,000 settlers. To create **contiguity between the Adumim bloc and West Jerusalem**, Israel is implementing the **E-1 Plan**. The Plan calls for the construction of 3,500 housing units (approximately 14,500 settlers), ten hotels, an industrial estate and entertainment facilities atop 12,442 dunums of Palestinian village lands belonging to El-Eizariya Az-Zaim, At-Tor and Issawiya. **The E-1 Plan and the Adumim bloc assure Israeli control over all key road-links connecting the northern and southern West Bank, and effectively cuts the West Bank in half.** Furthermore, the E-1 Plan will deny Palestinians access to one of the last remaining areas for Palestinian natural growth and economic

development, thereby further **threatening the viability of the Palestinian state and its capital.**

- **Israel's Wall and settlements deny Palestinians of their religious freedom and right to worship:**
 - The Wall prevents hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Christians and Muslims from reaching their holy places, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in East Jerusalem.
 - As a result of the fragmentation of the **Christian and Muslim Palestinian** communities in and around East Jerusalem, **Jerusalem imminently risks losing its historic character** of housing vibrant communities of Christians, Jews and Muslims.
 - Israel's actions paved the way for Israeli settler groups, supported by the Israeli government, to intensify their efforts to change the physical and demographic character of the Old City of Jerusalem through increasing the Israeli settlement activities in and around East Jerusalem.
 - In recent months, various settler groups, backed by the Israeli government, began several illegal projects to expand the Jewish presence in the Old City, including excavations at the Al-Magharbeh Gate road, at the entrance to the Haram al-Sharif, currently being carried out by the Western Wall Heritage Fund.
- The revised Wall continues to **sever East Jerusalem from the neighboring communities** of Bethlehem and Ramallah, which historically have been socially, culturally and economically interdependent, and together account for **some 35% of the Palestinian economy**, including the Gaza Strip.
 - As part of the revised Wall route, road number 70 (Eastern Ring Road) has been finalized. This road encircles the Palestinian village of Anata, and puts 2,230 dunums of its land on the western side of the Wall.
 - **Bethlehem** remains completely cut off from Jerusalem, while the surrounding settlements of the **Etzion bloc will be allowed to expand onto more Palestinian land.** The surrounding **Etzion settlements will control an area of 70.9 km².** These settlements will permanently **restrict the Bethlehem's urban development** while severing it from its agricultural hinterland, on which Bethlehem and Jerusalem rely. The Etzion settlements prevent free movement

of people and goods between the villages and the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, while encroaching on cultivated areas, preventing access to fields, polluting water wells and decimating any prospects for development.

D. The revised Wall's route will create more Palestinian enclaves and semi-enclaves:

- In the western Ramallah district, the new route extends the Wall around Mod'in to incorporate the settlements of Nili and Na'aleh (pop. ~1,500) to the western side of the Wall. As a result, some 20,000 Palestinians living in five villages (Rantis, Shaqba, Qibya, Budrus, and Ni'lin) will be almost completely encircled by the Wall and other settlement infrastructure. The new route will move the Wall at least five kilometers east of the 1967 boundary in this region.
- The new route of the Wall will take a major portion of southeastern Hebron and Bethlehem districts, near the Dead Sea, and will incorporate the settlement of Mitzpe Shalem, home to 200 settlers.
- In the Salfit area, the "road protection" segment connecting Elqana and Ariel settlements along Road Number 5 has been widened, further isolating the Zawiya-Rafat-Deir Balut enclave.

E. Most of the changes to the Wall's route are aimed to grab more Palestinian land and displace Palestinians.

- **Roughly 80.0% of the revised route still lies on occupied Palestinian territory.**
 - On July 9, 2004, the International Court of Justice unequivocally reaffirmed that all portions of Israel's Wall built on occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as all of Israel's settlements, are illegal.^{vi[6]}
- Approximately **260,000** West Bank Palestinians living in the Governorates of Jerusalem, Jenin, Qalqilya, and Bethlehem will remain trapped between the Wall and the 1967 pre-occupation border. This accounts for **10.6%** of the total Palestinian population in the occupied West Bank.
- The Bethlehem-area villages of Wadi Fukin, Nahhalin, Battir, Khirbet Zakariya, Husan and Jaba—home to approximately 19,000 Palestinians—will

remain **trapped between the 1967 border and the Wall and cut off from vital economic, health, and other essential services in Bethlehem.** This facilitates the expansion of the **Etzion settlements** while creating strong incentives for Palestinian villagers to abandon their homes and some of the West Bank's most valuable lands to find livelihoods in neighboring Palestinian urban centers.

- The revised Wall route keeps intact the regime of **“closed zones,” gates, and permits.**
 - Since the area between the Wall and the 1967 border in the northern West Bank was declared a “closed military zone” by the Israeli army in 2002, Palestinians wishing to access area for any reason must first obtain an Israeli permit. Only “Israelis”—including anyone eligible of immigrating to Israel under Israel's *Law of Return*—may enter, live or work in those areas, also known as “closed zones,”^{vii[7]} without permits.
 - This includes thousands of Palestinians trapped between the Wall and Israel who must still obtain and renew permits from the Israeli military to remain in their homes, as well as those living “east” of the Wall, who must obtain and renew permits to access their fields or places of employment.
 - Meanwhile, according to the terms of the military order, any person of the Jewish faith from anywhere in the world will be able to immigrate to illegal Israeli settlements as well as freely access these closed zones, without permits.

^{i[1]} The new route of the Wall can be found on the Israeli Ministry of Defense website:

<http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/route.htm>

^{ii[2]} “The Wall and Israeli Settlements (Colonies), September 2007,” available at <http://www.nad-plo.org/news-updates/wallmapoct07.pdf>, last checked October 09, 2007.

^{iii[3]} See B’TSELEM, *Land Grab: Israel’s Settlement Policy in the West Bank*, (May 2002), available at http://www.btselem.org/Download/200205_Land_Grab_Eng.doc, last checked October 9, 2007.

^{iv[4]} See Nadav Shragai and Amos Harel, “IDF Authorizes Expansion of West Bank Town of Betar Illit,” HA’ARETZ, May 22, 2006, available at <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/718227.html>, last checked May 22, 2006.

^{v[5]} For background on the issue of water in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as a basic analysis of Palestinian water rights under international law, please see NEGOTIATIONS SUPPORT UNIT, *The Palestinian Position on Water*, available at [http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=negoPermanentWater&title=The Palestinian Position on Water](http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=negoPermanentWater&title=The%20Palestinian%20Position%20on%20Water), last checked October 9, 2007.

^{vi[6]} See *Advisory Opinion*, ¶ 78, 2004, *supra* at note 2.

^{vii[7]} See B’TSELEM, *Not All it Seems: Preventing Palestinians [sic] Access to their Lands West of the Separation Barrier in the Tulkarm-Qalqilya Area*, p.7 (2004), available at http://www.btselem.org/Download/200406_Qalqilya_Tulkarm_Barrier_Eng.Doc, last checked October 9, 2007. For an English-language translation of the closed zone order pertaining to the Wall, see <http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=palisraeliWallPrimaryHborders3p>, last checked October 9, 2007. Similar orders address areas falling under Israeli settlement (colony) jurisdictional control. See B’TSELEM, *Land Grab: Israel’s Settlement Policy in the West Bank*, (May 2002), available at http://www.btselem.org/Download/200205_Land_Grab_Eng.doc, last checked October 9, 2007.