The Segregation and Annexation Wall: A Crime against Humanity

"In its Opinion, the Court finds unanimously that it has jurisdiction to give the advisory opinion requested by the United Nations General Assembly and decides by fourteen votes to one to comply with that request. The Court responds to the question as follows:

By fourteen votes to one,

The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law."

--International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion July 9, 2004.

Introduction:

On September 28, 2000, then Likud opposition leader Ariel Sharon chose to make a most provocative visit to the Al-Aqsa compound in Jerusalem's Old City, accompanied by as many as 1000 Israeli Special Forces units. As a consequence of this provocation the Palestinian Uprising or Second Intifada erupted, a show of collective Palestinian dismay at Israel's illegal and prolonged occupation of Palestinian land and people.

Instead of recognizing the adversarial reality of this occupation, the government of Israel, at the time headed by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, initiated the construction of what came to be known by Palestinians, as the **'Segregation and Annexation Wall.'** The first sections of the Wall were built in the northern West bank city of Jenin in beginning of 2002.

Israel's 'Wall' is being built in such a way as to divide Palestinian population centers from their adjacent agricultural land and water resources, isolating Palestinian population centers from one another and restricting not only freedom of movement of individuals but also worsening an already crippled Palestinian economy. The 'Wall' separates Palestinians from Palestinians and serves to secure illegal settlements built on occupied land. The most evident exploitation of Israel's breach of convention is the implementation of new borders within the West Bank (including east Jerusalem), an occupied territory.

This actual annexation of land alongside the violations of basic human rights highlights Israel's self-absorbed, unilateral and unconstructive-to-peace policies, with complete disregard to common human values that would take into consideration the effect the 'Wall' has on Palestinians. So that as Hebrew University's Shlomo Avineri explains while, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has at last internalized the limits of Israeli power to impose the ousting of Palestinians entirely, the remaining option was simply to separate the Palestinians from Israelis. This move makes evident that withdrawal and construction of this Segregation and Annexation Wall in the West Bank, is meant to give the Israelis security and while its effect on Palestinians was unclear, it was left unexplored, one imagines, due to its irrelevance on Israeli policy.

The Segregation and Annexation Wall Deconstructed

Structure

The Segregation and Annexation Wall's construction varies; around Qalqiliya it is pure concrete **8 meters (25 feet)** high and equipped with watchtowers while in other places it is part concrete and part fence or a series of razor wire and/or electric fencing all of which includes a **70-100** meter (approximately **230-330** feet) "buffer zone" with trenches, roads, razor wire, cameras, and trace paths for footprints. In Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the Wall is made up of a combination of these materials.

Essentially the 'Wall' is a physical barrier consisting of a network of fences, walls, and trenches, unilaterally constructed by Israel on Palestinian lands. The main barrier takes on many forms,

including 8-meter high cement walls, **3-meter** high electric and barbed-wire fences, and a combination of the two. According to Israeli plans, the barrier will be over **450 miles** (**720 kilometers**) in length, at a cost not less than **$1.6 million per mile ($1 million per km**), and will exceed **$1 billion** for the entire project. The infrastructure of the barrier that also includes a buffer zone on both sides, surveillance cameras, trenches, and observation posts compounds what Israeli human rights activist Jeff Halper calls the "matrix of control" of settlements, by-pass roads and checkpoints.

What's in a Name?

The name of the Israeli Wall (commonly referred to as a "fence" by its supporters and a "wall" by its opponents) is itself a political issue. The most common names used by Israel are "separation fence" (*gader ha'hafrada* in Hebrew) and "security fence" or "anti-terrorist fence" in English, with "seam zone" referring to the land between the fence and the 1949 armistice lines. Palestinians (including the media) most commonly refer to the barrier in Arabic as "*Jidar Al-Dam wal Fasl Al-Unsuri*", (racial segregation and annexation wall), and many opponents of the barrier sometimes refer to it in English as an "apartheid wall". The United Nations and the international community use inconsistent wording, including separation/security and fence/wall/barrier. While the ICJ consistently used the word 'Wall.'

The West Bank 'Wall'

The constructed and approved (solely by the Israeli Knesset) extents of the 'Wall' roughly follow the 1949 Jordanian-Israeli armistice line, also known as the "Green Line". In some areas the route diverges from this line, particularly in areas with a high concentration of Jewish settlements: east Jerusalem, Ariel, Beitar Illit, Efrat, Gush Etzion, Emmanuel Karmel Shomron, Givat Ze'ev, Oranit, and Maale Adumim. These divergences may be as much as 20 kilometers from the 'Green Line'.

The 'Wall' violates multiple international conventions, agreements, and resolutions, including article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter (prohibiting the use of force to violate territorial integrity), the Fourth Geneva Convention (prohibiting the destruction of land or property and the practice of collective punishment), and both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economical, Social, and Cultural Rights (defining rights of movement, property, health, education, work, and food). The 'Wall' also is contrary to UN Security Council resolution 242 which calls for the "Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent [1967] conflict."

The Wall encroaches into the occupied Palestinian territories from along the entire perimeter of the West Bank, frequently abutting or intersecting Palestinian villages, while leaving agricultural fields, shops, and family members on the opposite, Israeli-claimed side of the border. In places like Qalqilya, the barrier loops prominently into the West Bank, enveloping entire Palestinian villages and creating ghettos with a single, narrow checkpoint guarding the entrances to these villages. Effectively Qalqilya has turned into a very large open air prison. The Annexation and Segregation Wall, upon its completion, will result in Israel's annexation of **roughly half of the West Bank**, displacing and disconnecting Palestinians from their homes, families, neighbors, and fields. It is this encroachment and the resultant humanitarian crises that the Israeli Supreme Court, itself, ruled illegal in its June 30, 2004 ruling, notwithstanding its approval of the justification for the barrier based on security concerns.

In a more broad-reaching ruling on the 'Wall,' the International Court of Justice ruled on its legality in a July 9, 2004 verdict. In sum, the decision rendered the construction of the 'Wall' contrary to international law, recommended that the State of Israel end its construction and dismantles existing segments and that Israel pay reparations to those who have suffered loss as a result of the construction, and instructed the United Nations to pursue necessary means to address the illegality of the 'Wall.' Both Israel and the U.S. disregarded this ruling and thereby dismissed the relevance and authority of international law over Israel. The U.S. continues to provide more aid to Israel than to any other country in the world.

The impact of the visually and spiritually offensive 'Wall' on the Palestinian people has been more devastating than abstract facts can convey. Homes have been demolished, water supplies have been cut off, fields have been razed, villages divided, and access to the other side has been cut off. Farmers have lost their fields or lost access to them. Faithful communities—Palestinian Muslims and

Palestinian Christians—have been denied access to houses of worship. Families have been split. According to UN estimates, **680,000 Palestinians (30% of the West Bank population)** are directly affected. The Sabeel Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem reports that "Palestinians have been separated from their places of employment, their farmlands, hospitals, schools, places of worship and their families. In the first phase of the wall alone, **100,000 trees** have been uprooted; **35,000 meters** of irrigation networks have been destroyed; and **75% of teachers and students** living in the construction areas have had difficulty arriving at school." These effects further deteriorate the quality of life of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories.

On February 18, 2005 the Israeli cabinet approved a new route for the 'Wall' which would leave approximately **7 percent** of the West Bank and **10,000 Palestinians** on the Israeli side. Map: [1] Before that time the exact route of the barrier had not been finalized, and it had been alleged by some that it would encircle the West Bank, separating it from the Jordan valley. [2]

The Jerusalem Wall

On July 10th 2005 Israel's cabinet, ignoring Palestinian objections and US misgivings, endorsed the construction of a 'Security wall', saying that security needs have forced it to build **80 kilometers of eight-meter-high concrete walls and electric fences** around Jerusalem. The 'Wall' leaves four Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem (Kufr Aqab, Anata, Qalandia, and the Shufat refugee camp), with some **55,000 residents**, on the West Bank side, while including the largest Jewish West Bank settlement, Ma'aleh Adumim, with close to **30,000 people**, on the Jerusalem side. The Jerusalem enclosure is part of the **720 km** 'Wall' Israel has been building for more than two years to separate itself from much of the West Bank. Looping the Annexation Wall around Ma'aleh Adumim, located east of Jerusalem near Jericho, would cut off east Jerusalem, the Palestinians' most potent symbol, from the rest of the West Bank.

The establishment of new Jewish neighborhoods coupled with the route of the 'Wall' is creating Palestinian enclaves in east Jerusalem, reducing economic opportunities, and producing overcrowded living conditions. If the process is completed, some **200,000 Palestinian east Jerusalemites** will end up inside the Jerusalem envelope, live under greater Israeli control, and increasingly be separated from the West Bank; the remaining **55,000** will be outside the 'Wall,' disconnected from the city that has been their centre of gravity, fearful of reduced social services and, in many instances, determined to find their way back into the fenced-in areas. That will be an explosive mix.

The 'Wall,' once completed, would create a broad Jerusalem area encompassing virtually all of municipal Jerusalem as expanded and annexed in 1967, as well as major settlements to its north, east, and south. This new "Jerusalem envelope", as the area inside the 'Wall' euphemistically has been called, incorporates large settlement blocks and buffer zones, encompasses over **4 per cent of the West Bank**, absorbs many Palestinians outside of municipal Jerusalem and excludes over **50,000** within, often cutting Palestinians off from their agricultural land. Expansion of the large Ma'ale Adumim settlement to the east of Jerusalem and linking it to the city through the **E1**, a planned built-up urban land bridge, would go close to cutting the West Bank in two. New Jewish neighborhoods/settlements at the perimeter of the municipal boundaries would create a Jewish belt around Arab east Jerusalem, cutting it off from the West Bank and constricting Palestinian growth within the city.

The Gaza 'Wall'

A similar 'Wall,' the Israeli Gaza 'Wall,' runs parallel to Gazan portion of the 1949 armistice line. The 30 mile (52 kilometer) long 'Wall' was constructed in 1994 by Israel under the leadership of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. It consists mainly of a wire fence with posts, sensors, and buffer zones. There are several crossing points in the 'Wall': Erez Crossing, the Rafah Crossing, Sufa crossing, Kissufim crossing, and the Karni crossing used mainly for cargo. The 'Wall' is augmented by an open observation area **300 meters** wide on the Gaza side of the 'Wall.' Israel claims that the 'Wall' has been effective in preventing terrorists and suicide bombers from leaving Gaza.
Along the Egyptian border with Rafah, a steel 'Wall' was erected along the "Philadelphie Route", with several large armored posts along it. Rafah is an area of frequent clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian's. This heavy fortification system is meant to protect the soldiers' lives and stop smuggling tunnels which are used by Palestinian's to obtain weapons and explosives.

The Gaza 'Wall' is less controversial than the Israeli West Bank 'Wall', as it traces the actual border with Gaza, whereas the West Bank Wall delves significantly outside of the 1949 armistice lines, Israel's internationally recognized frontier. This is the main reason why the latter was ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice.

Recent Developments: Another Wall in Gaza

"The Israeli navy plans to build a sea barrier off the coast on Northern Gaza, saying it will keep out potential attackers once Israel pulls back from occupied land this summer." The story goes on to say, "The navy said the barrier, stretching **950m** into the sea, is necessary because of the expected loss of surveillance systems in the planned pullout... the barrier's first 100m will consist of cement pilings buried into the sandy bottom... the structure will extend another **800m in the form of a 1.8 meter** deep fence floating beneath the surface. Israel to build sea barrier off Al Jazeera June 17, 2005.

The Humanitarian Impact

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OCHA-OPT) said that the land between the 'Wall' and the 1949 borders constitute some of the most fertile in the West Bank (WB).

In a report issued Tuesday on the "Preliminary Analysis of the Humanitarian Implications of February 2005 wall Projections", OCHA-opt revealed that the total length of the new Apartheid Wall route will be **720 km long compared to 622 km of the previous route**, adding that an approximately **142,640 acres or about 10.1% of WB** land will lie between the 'Wall' and the 1949 borders, including east Jerusalem.

As for humanitarian impact, the report revealed that if the two of the sections "pending completion of detailed staff work", Ma'ale Adumim and Ari'el/Emmanuel fingers colonies are included, then approximately **142,640 acres or about 10.1% of WB** land will lie between the wall and the 1949 borders, including east Jerusalem.

The previous route incorporated **174,360 acres or 12.7% of the WB including east Jerusalem**. The **2.5%** decrease in the new route in WB area located between the 1949 borders and the wall, is largely due to the shift of the wall back to lie on the 1949 borders in the South Hebron area, the report said.

It added that a larger decrease in affected WB land would occur, if the sections pending completion of detailed staff work, Ma'ale Adumim and Ari'el/Emmanuel fingers were excluded. Then only **6.8%** of WB land would be incorporated by the wall.

The report said that the land between the wall and the 1949 borders constitute some of the most fertile in the WB. It is currently the home for **49,400 Palestinians living in 38 villages and towns**, excluding the communities in east Jerusalem. Meanwhile the previous route had approximately **93,200 Palestinians living between the 1949 borders and the wall**. The reduction in population is due to an easing of the closures in Qalqiliya (**population 45,800**). While the city remains encircled by the wall, the checkpoint at the entrance of Qalqiliya is not manned.

The 'Wall' will also affect those people living east of it who may need to cross it to get to their farms, jobs and services. More than **500,000** Palestinians, for example, live within **a one kilometre strip** of the wall including east Jerusalem.

As for the affect of the planned Ma'ale Adumim section, the report said that cutting **14 km** east across the most narrow section of the WB, the planned Ma'ale Adumim, Israeli colony, section will impede movement between the northern and southern areas of the WB, blocking the current roads used by Palestinians to travel between these areas.

For Palestinians citizens residing in and around east Jerusalem, the addition of the Ma'ale Adumim section will increase existing movement restrictions created by the constructed parts of the wall. Approximately **230,000** Palestinians hold east Jerusalem residency permits. About **one-quarter** of these people are located on the WB side of the 'Wall' and will need to cross it to access services which they are entitled to inside Jerusalem, the report said.

Wall length stretches a total of **670 kilometers** (including east Jerusalem), the new 'Wall' route will run from the northern Jordan River in eastern Tubas to the southern-most tip of the West Bank in the Hebron Governorate. Because of its meandering path into the WB, the 'Wall's' length is approximately twice the length of the 1949 West Bank (Armistice Line) adjacent to Israel, **315 km**. The length of the 'Wall' will be **129 km** less if the sections labeled "pending completion of detailed staff work" are removed, the report revealed.

20% of the 'Wall's' length runs along the 1949 borders. More of it is now planned to be on the 1949 borders primarily as a result of the shift of the southern route in Hebron towards the borders, the report added.

The 'Wall's' planned path cuts into WB land in many places. In the planned Ari'el/Emmanuel finger, it cuts **22 km or 42%** across the width of the WB. In the planned Ma'ale Adumim section, the wall route cuts into the WB **14 km or 45%** of its width, the report said.

In areas where the wall has been constructed, the Israeli Forces issued military orders in September 2004, creating "no-construction" zones, averaging up to **200 meters** on the WB sides of the 'Wall.'

Moreover, the Israeli cabinet approved moving a **6 km** section of the 'Wall' in this area closer to the 1949 borders. As a result, the Palestinian population in this area will no longer be located in a "closed area", but rather on the WB side of the 'Wall.' This will reduce the overall Palestinian population in "closed areas" by about **340 persons** and the number of acres in "closed areas" by **785**.

The new route adds **20 km** along the 1949 borders in South Hebron and is marked on the map as "pending completion of detailed staff work." The new route contains two sections marked as "road protection structures". They constitute an additional **10 km** of 'Wall' and close off the Gush Etzion (West Bethlehem) and Bir Nabala (North Jerusalem) areas, the report added.

There are special security areas marked in the Ari'el/Emmanuel colonies fingers where some requisition orders have been issued and/or construction has begun along the planned route.

The report shows that Palestinians who live in "closed areas" are required to pass through gates in the 'Wall" to reach markets, schools, hospitals and maintain family connections in the remaining areas of the WB. Although Israel introduced some changes to the operation of the gates, access for Palestinians in these areas is restricted.

In February 2005, UN staff has observed **63 gates** in the constructed wall. Of these **25** are accessible to Palestinians with the correct permit. The Israeli Government has not released information on which access gates will be opened through the planned routes of the 'Wall.' This is particularly significant in the Jerusalem area, where tens of thousands of Palestinians will be affected, the report said.

The area between the 'Wall" and the 1949 borders, will be **56** Israeli colonies contains approximately **170,123 Israeli colonizers** - an estimated **76%** percent of the WB colonies population. This figure does not include the Israeli colonizers population in east Jerusalem.

While Palestinians citizens residing in "closed areas" between the 'Wall' and the 1949 borders face an uncertain future in terms of their personal and lands' status. On 7 October 2003, the Israeli Forces issued a number of military orders restricting access to land areas located between the 'Wall' and the borders in the Jenin, Qalqiliya and Tulkarm districts. Those orders require approximately **5,000 citizens** living in these "closed areas" to apply for permits to remain living in their homes. The permits are valid for up to a year for citizens and are valid for only one gate. Use of other gates is also militarily regulated and allowed only in emergency cases, the report added.

The 'Wall' will further restrict farmers living outside this 'closed area' from reaching their land. Medical staff, business people and international humanitarian organizations also have to apply for special permits. According to the military orders, Israeli citizens, Israeli permanent residents and those eligible to immigrate to Israel in accordance with the Law of Return, are exempted from these requirements, the report revealed.

If the military orders that restrict entry into the "closed areas" between the borders and the wall are applied to the new parts of it, then many more thousands of Palestinians are likely to face difficulty continuing to live in their homes or access land.

As yet no publicly available studies have been conducted by the Israeli Government to measure the 'Wall's' impact on Palestinian lives. However, the Israeli High Court ruled on 30 June 2004 in the "Beit Surik" case, that the "rights, needs, and interests of the local population" must be considered in designing the route, the report said.

Where the 'Wall' has been constructed, Palestinians face economic hardship from being restricted from or not being able to reach their land to harvest crops, graze animals or earn a living. Citizens have also been cut off from schools, universities and specialized medical care by the constructed 'Wall' the report added.

The damage caused by the destruction of land and property for the 'Wall's' construction will take many years to recover and hinder Palestinian development should a political situation allow this. The 'Wall' also fragments communities and isolates citizens from social support networks. Even where the 'Wall' route does not encircle an area as an enclave, its presence may still impact a community. For example, the 'Wall' route surrounds on three sides approximately **43,900 Palestinians** residing in communities between At-Tira and Beit Sira northwest of Jerusalem, the report concluded.

The Legal Case (in brief):

Apart from the fact, that Israel's Wall is in complete contravention to any form of logic or any moral/ethical standards, it is also in contravention to the entire international legal system. Altogether the 'Segregation and Annexation Wall' is in breach of:

- ✓ **The Hague Regulations of 1907**
- ✓ **The IV Geneva Conventions of 1948**
- ✓ **The United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human rights (1948), various General Assembly and Security Council resolutions**
- ✓ **The Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague**
- ✓ **The International Convent on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Convent on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
- ✓ **The United Nations Convention on the Crime of Apartheid – (The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid)**
- ✓ **The legally binding bilateral agreements signed, prior to the interim period, between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel.**

Violations of Hague Regulations:

Section II Article 23(g), and section III Articles, 46, 50, 52 and 55 which prohibit the destruction of 'enemy property,' private property cannot be confiscated "no general penalty shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly or severally responsible."

Violations of IV Geneva Conventions:

Geneva Convention Articles 33, 46, 49, 52, 53, 56 and 58 prohibits the creation of unemployment or restricting the opportunities offered to workers... it also prohibits any destruction of personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons.

Violations of the United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, General Assembly and Security Council resolutions:

A major violation of the Apartheid Wall is the unilateral demarcation of a new border in the West Bank that amounts to effective annexation of occupied land. United Nations Charter Article 2.4 states that "[a]ll members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force

against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."
The 'Separation and Annexation Wall' is also in contravention to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Wall severely hampers

Violations of the International Convent on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Convent on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):

The Wall also breaches the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) and the International Covenant on Economical, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), both of which Israel is a high signatory party. The rights violated include: freedom of movement (ICCPR, art. 12), property (ICCPR, art. 1,), health (ICESCR, art.12 and IV GC, art. 32), education (ICESCR, art. 13, and IV GC, art. 50), work (ICESCR, art. 6), and food (ICESCR, art. 11).
UN Security Council Resolution 681 (1990), UN General Assembly Resolution 56/60 (2001) confirm that the IV Geneva Convention is applicable to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, and thus, makes Israel's compliance mandatory.

The United Nations Convention on the Crime of Apartheid:

Under Article 1 of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1979) the Wall constitutes a "Crime against Humanity". It divides populations on the basis of race and ethnicity and discrimination against residents in the West Bank to benefit illegal Israeli settlers and thus complies with the definition of "apartheid".

On July 9, 2004 the United Nations highest and principal legal body, the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands (ICJ), delivered its advisory opinion requested to it on behalf of the General Assembly, from a proposal put forth by the Delegation on behalf of the State of Palestine which is only granted observer status and therefore, cannot do so alone. (Full ICJ Advisory opinion text) The International Court of Justice (ICJ), principal judicial organ of the United Nations, has today rendered its Advisory Opinion in the case concerning the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In its Opinion, the Court finds unanimously that it has jurisdiction to give the advisory opinion requested by the United Nations General Assembly and decides by fourteen votes to one to comply with that request. The Court responds to the question as follows:

A. By fourteen votes to one,

The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law";

B. By fourteen votes to one,

Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law; it is under an obligation to cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle forthwith the structure therein situated, and to repeal or render ineffective forthwith all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto, in accordance with paragraph 151 of this Opinion";

C. By fourteen votes to one,

Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem";

D. By thirteen votes to two,

All States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation

created by such construction; all States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 have in addition the obligation, while respecting the United Nations Charter and international law, to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law as embodied in that Convention";

E. By fourteen votes to one,

The United Nations, and especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and the associated regime, taking due account of the present Advisory Opinion."

History's 'Walls'

- ✓ Berlin **Wall**
  - 1961 – 1990
  - 103 miles (around West Berlin)
  - To keep out: East Germans
- ✓ Korean DMZ
  - 1953 – present
  - 151 miles (between North and South Korea)
  - To keep out: soldiers from either side
- ✓ US/Mexico border
  - 20th century – present
  - 2000 miles: Rio Grande River, reinforced by **Wall** in places
  - To keep out: illegal immigrants from Latin America
- ✓ Great **Wall** of China
  - 220 BCE – present
  - 4500 miles, approximately
  - To keep out: invaders from the North (13th – 14th century Mongols mounted successful conquests)

Chronology of the 'Segregation and Annexation Wall'

1994-1996: A Wall is constructed around Gaza, under the Labor government of Yitzhak Rabin.

1996: Ariel Sharon proposes building a Wall through the centre of Hebron to annex the Jewish settlements in the Old City and the Tomb of Abraham, and to ethnically cleanse the Old City of its Palestinian population.

May 1997: The Israeli government formally endorses the plan for a "Greater Jerusalem," annexing settlements and "Judeaizing" the demographic makeup of the city.

1993-2000: Under the guise of the Oslo agreements and "peace negotiations" the Occupation steps up its colonization policies, especially in the so-called Area C (sections of the West Bank under full Israeli control) doubling the number of settlers and settlements (both new and expanded) and dissecting the West Bank with settler-only bypass roads. Jerusalem has been sealed off and the Palestinian residents subjected to many different methods of expulsion from their city. This has paved the way for the definitive annexation and ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem and almost half of the West Bank through the Apartheid wall.

September 28th 2000: As Israel hides behind a façade of negotiations that are intended solely to grant the Occupation time and political cover for its continuing colonization policies, and after the massacre committed by Israel to defend Sharon's march to the al-Aqsa Mosque, the second Intifada starts.

November 2000: In the first two months of the Intifada, Israel kills well over 200 Palestinians and injures hundreds more. The Occupation's Labor government, led by Ehud Barak, announces the approval of plans to build a "barrier".

September 2001: At the World Summit against Racism in Durban, South Africa, 3,000 NGOs adopt a declaration condemning Israel's "systematic perpetration of racist crimes including war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing," and describing Israel as "a racist apartheid state in which Israel's brand of apartheid as a crime against humanity has been characterized by separation and segregation ... and inhumane acts." The call for comprehensive isolation of Israel is launched.

April 2002: Occupation Forces and gun ships step up their offensive in the West Bank, putting all Palestinian cities and villages under siege and heavy attack. Israel carries out a massacre of the population in the refugee camp of Jenin and completely razes the centre of the camp to the ground, also destroying vast parts of the Old City in Nablus. The economic and administrative infrastructure of the West Bank, and any resemblance of normal life for Palestinians, is completely destroyed.

June 16, 2002: construction starts on Phase I of the fence / **wall**, the northern section (145 Kilometers; 90 miles) from Salem to Masha village, south of Qalqiliya. Construction follows a rash of suicide bombings (42 from March 2001 – March 2002). Construction of the Apartheid Wall begins with the confiscation of land and the uprooting of trees in northern Jenin district, as the population of Jenin, and throughout the West Bank - which is still under curfew - tries to recover from the massacres and attacks of the previous months.

July 31, 2003: Phase I of the fence / wall is completed

- ✓ annexed **90,000 dunums (= ¼ acre, or 22,500 acres), about 2% of the West Bank**
- ✓ annexed area includes the Western Aquifer, the second largest source of fresh water, after the Jordan River, for residents of the region
- ✓ separated many Palestinian villagers from their farm plots
- ✓ isolated many Palestinian villages west of the wall, in an area now called "The Seam"
- ✓ sealed off Qalqiliya, once the central market for **85,000** of region's Palestinians; city loses
- ✓ **15%** of municipal land and **50%** of agricultural land. Approximately **10-20% of 41,000 residents** relocate to villages.
- ✓ Uprooted: **102,320 olive and citrus trees (60,000 replanted); 85 commercial buildings, such as greenhouses; destroyed 18-19 miles of irrigation pipes**

September 21, 2003: Israeli envoys tell the Bush administration that the barrier's route is determined by security considerations and is not intended to create political borders.

October 2003: Israeli cabinet approves mid-section of the fence / **wall**, from Biddya to Beituniya, which will isolate 58 additional Palestinian communities west of the **wall** and bisect neighborhoods in east Jerusalem.

December 8, 2003: UN General Assembly condemns construction of the fence / **wall**.

December 26, 2003: While demonstrating against the fence / **wall**, Israeli Gil Na'amai is shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers at Masha village; this action galvanizes the "intifada of the fence."

Feb 24, 2004: International Court of Justice begins hearings on the legality of the Israeli security barrier, Israel and Palestinians use the hearings as a platform for demonstrations about terror and the occupation.

Spring 2004: Residents of **Mevasseret** (Israeli) and Beit Suriq (Palestinian) villages organize a kite-sitting "as an act of solidarity and a sign of the neighborly relations between the two communities."

July 9, 2004: July 9, 2004: International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, gives its advisory opinion that construction of the wall is contrary to international law that Israel must dismantle the wall and pay reparations for damages.

February 1, 2005: Israeli High Court of Justice orders one week halt in construction of the 'Wall' near **Mevasseret** to consider the route." "This is the first time Israeli citizens living near the seam line have joined a petition to the court over the fence's route."

February 18, 2005 the Israeli cabinet approved a new route for the 'Wall' which would leave approximately **seven percent** of the West Bank and **10,000 Palestinians** on the Israeli side. Map: [1] Before that time the exact route of the 'Wall' had not been finalized, and it had been alleged by some that it would encircle the West Bank, separating it from the Jordan valley.

July 10 2005 Israel's Cabinet, ignoring Palestinian objections and US misgivings, endorsed the construction of a 'Wall' in Jerusalem, saying that security needs have forced it to build 80 kilometers of eight-meter-high concrete walls and electric fences around Jerusalem.

MIFTAH's Position

On Sunday the Israeli Cabinet approved Sept. 1 to be the completion date of the 8 m high, 730 km long Apartheid Wall in the West Bank, cutting off 55,000 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem from their work, schools, hospitals and families.

The decision was made after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called for workers to speed up building the Apartheid Wall, including closing off Jerusalem, which will separate Palestinians from the holy city they want as the capital of a future Palestinian state. If completed, the Wall will de facto annex 47 percent of the West Bank, isolating Palestinian communities into Bantustans, enclaves and military zones. And only 12 percent of historic Palestine will be left for all Palestinians.

While Israel claims the Wall is for "security" purposes, the strategic path of it actually reveals it as a land grab for incorporating much more of the West Bank into the boundaries of Israel, and, thus, creating new facts on the ground. Not only is this Wall a violation of the road map, which Israel agreed to move forward on in the peace process in 2003, but it is also illegal according to the International Court of Justice's ruling last year, which called on Israel to stop construction and dismantle what was already built.

The fact that Israel made this decision the day after the one year anniversary of the ICJ ruling is a slap in the face to the international community, exposing Israel's arrogance that it is above international law. But even more importantly, the Apartheid Wall takes away more of Palestinians' already diminished human rights and freedoms. Israel's not-so-subtle goal is to drive the Palestinians out of Jerusalem, so that Israel can annex it fully, eliminating the possibility of Jerusalem being a final-status issue in future peace negotiations.

MIFTAH condemns Sunday's decision and calls on Israel to comply with international law and put an immediate stop to the Wall's construction. Israel's decision is an unacceptable exercise of political power to advance Israel's agenda, which are adversary to Palestinian rights to freedom and self-determination, as well as international law.

Pictures and Videos

To view selected videos:
1) http://stopthewall.org/news/video.shtml
2) http://www.thewallofhate.org/film/thewall.wmv

To view selected pictures
1) http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=7797&CategoryId=23

Sources:

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Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign – www.stopthewall.org
B'Tselem - www.btselem.org

International Court of Justice – www.icj-cij.org
United Nations – www.un.org
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics - www.pcbs.org