



THE HUMAN IMPACT OF THE ANNEXATION WALL ON PALESTINIANS PERSONAL NARRATIVES

INTRODUCTION:

Annexation Wall:

A concrete and razor wire wall built by the Israeli occupation between 2002 and 2006 close to the armistice line of 1948 with varied depth in the West Bank and Jerusalem (occupied in 1967). The wall is 770 km long, eight meters in height, and it contains electronic gates controlled by the Israeli army or private security companies contracted by the Israeli government for such purpose.

False security claims justified the wall, while the real reason for building it is to annex and control the widest possible areas of the West Bank and apply the ethnic cleansing policy against Palestinians, the owners of the land. The Israeli government planned to utilize the Wall as a tool to displace Palestinians and intensify building settlements as well as control the natural resources, including minerals, natural gas, and, mainly, water resources, as the confiscated areas contain the biggest underground water basin in Palestine.

A LIVE TESTIMONY ABOUT THE SUFFERING OF PALESTINIANS, RESIDENTS OF **UM AL REIHAN VILLAGE- JENIN GOVERNORATE**, AS A RESULT OF THE WALL:

The impacts of the Annexation Wall extend to affect all aspects of life for Palestinians, including the human, economic, social, health, and educational levels. These impacts affect all Palestinians living in the buffer zones (the areas between the Wall and the Green Line).



HUMAN ASPECT:

People are subject to humiliating practices while being searched once crossing the electronic investigation machines at the gates that they are allowed to pass through.

In many cases, people (men and women) are obligated to take off their coats and jackets (with the presence of cameras) while crossing. Children below the age of 16 are not allowed to pass unless accompanied by a guard (father or mother) or to present the ID card of the father or the mother or the birth certificate.

The Israeli soldiers and the militants of the security companies that control the gates obligate Palestinians to get out of the cars and walk through a path for walking with no respect to age, sick persons, or disabled persons. Only the first-degree relatives of the driver (father, mother, wife, brothers, children) are allowed to cross by the car.

While entering the village, through the gate, all are obligated to get out of the cars, and they are searched through the electronic gates, and also their belongings are searched.

All food supplies, medicines, and all other goods that Palestinians carry with them are investigated by the police dogs. Such practice violates Muslims' belief that dogs should not touch or smell food and drinks for religious reasons. People are not allowed to move, and they are obligated to stand in specific places, and they are denied the right to protest against any practices by the Israeli soldiers or the members of the security companies.

No Palestinian citizen is allowed to pass through the gate without holding the needed permission or the magnetic card, although all the personal information of the Palestinian citizens is there on the Israeli computers.

Palestinians are not allowed to carry with them more than five kilograms of meat or five chickens. Birds and animals, or even plants, are not allowed. Furniture is not allowed, and neither are electric appliances such as televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines. Entering these appliances and so the building materials is conditioned by pre-coordination with the Israeli authorities, and other gates should be used for this purpose, which increases the cost of travelling.

At the time the gate is closed, the Israeli occupation does not allow reopening it, though there could be emergency cases such as delivery cases and other emergencies, which puts people's lives at risk, taking into consideration that there is no medical center in the village. Additionally, the Israeli occupation does not allow the entry of ambulances to the village. The bodies of those from the village who die in the hospitals in the nearby cities are not allowed to be entered into the village through the gates. The only allowed entrance is the gate in Bartaa Village, and there, the bodies of the dead are searched with no respect for their humanity.

In case there were citizens outside the village and returned after the time for closing the gate, they are denied entry. Those citizens are not allowed to enter regardless of their circumstances, and in many cases, though they arrive before the closure of the gate, they are banned from entering without any justification. Those citizens have to spend the nights outside the village, in hotels or at relatives' places, leading to an increase in the financial and emotional burdens.

The Israeli occupation denies the entry of any medical, social, or humanitarian organization or even international supporters through the gate, leading to an increase in the suffering of Palestinian citizens, who are isolated and absent from the media coverage.

The Israeli occupation suddenly closes the gate with no prior notice, and so, the citizens, mainly students and employees, are not allowed to return to their homes. Furthermore, during the Jewish feasts, the gate is closed, making the village into an open-air prison, which affects the citizens, including students, employees, and merchants, whose daily life activities are disrupted.

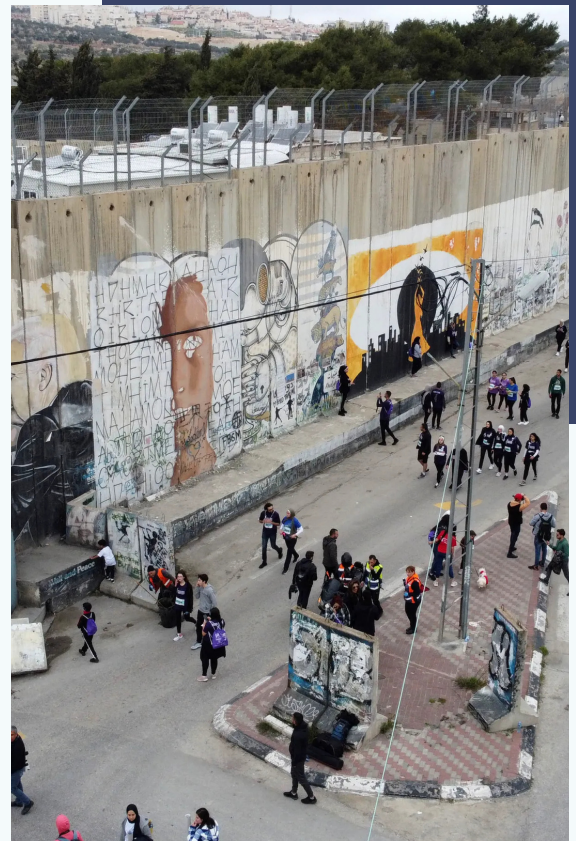
Palestinians are humiliated daily due to being searched and having their belongings searched in a way that lacks respect. People are deprived of carrying some of their belongings with them once they enter or leave the gate. People are forced to cross a path surrounded by wires, which, in normal cases, is used for animals but not for human beings. The path also features metal turnstiles for entry and exit.



SOCIAL ASPECT:

The relatives of the residents of the village are not allowed to enter unless they obtain special permission, and they are not allowed to stay in the village overnight. In many cases, permissions are not given but only to the first-degree relatives, and on special occasions like a funeral or a wedding.

The presence of the Annexation Wall and the Iron Gate at the entrance of the village, and denying people entry to the villages inside the Wall, caused the disfiguring of the social fabric and affected the social cohesion of Palestinian families who are connected in blood and affinity relations. The result was an increase in the percentage of spinsterhood in all the villages in the seam zone area.



The Wall caused geographical and demographical change in the area inside it due to intensifying settlements in the village and the villages around. The village is surrounded by six settlements, and they are being expanded continuously on the lands of Palestinians. Thus, the number of Palestinians in the area is minimized while the number of settlers is increasing regularly.

POLITICAL ASPECT:

Through closing the Palestinian localities in the West Bank by iron gates, the occupation seeks to press on Palestinians and push them to evacuate their lands to be annexed to the settlements. Palestinian lands are confiscated and declared as military closed areas. In 1996, as an example, 264 Dunums (one Dunum approx. 1,000 m²) from Um Al Reihan land were confiscated and the current gate exists on this land. The Gate is termed as (Military Gate number 300) in the Israeli reports. The owners of the land are not allowed to enter it or cultivate it, and thousands of trees in this land were uprooted (mainly olive trees), and they were taken to be planted in the settlements.

Obligating Palestinians to live in an area surrounded by the Wall and military iron gates stands as a violation of Palestinians' national right to live in their land as indigenous people. The Israeli occupation seeks to promote the idea that the land behind the Wall is owned by the Occupation and Palestinians have no right to live in it. For that, the Israeli authorities changed the term (permanent resident) on the given permissions to the term "resident". When Palestinians protested against that, the data was computerized and kept by the Israeli soldiers and security companies that guard the gate. Such a behavior indicates that there is a tendency among the Israeli authorities to annex the area to Israel.

The Occupation conducted a census of Um Al Reihan Citizens suddenly, and their names and ID numbers were documented to consider them as residents, but not citizens, and based on that, the term citizen was removed from the permissions and replaced with "resident".

There was an expansion of the settlements close to the village (Um Al Reihan and Thaher Al Maleh) to increase pressure on Palestinians and prevent them from building for urban expansion. The Israeli authorities demolished a house (under construction), stopped building another house, and demolished two agricultural establishments (Poultry Farms)

The Israeli occupation documents daily those who enter the village or get out of it to identify the citizens who are living permanently in the village. The purpose is to push those who have houses or work outside the village to leave it.

ECONOMIC ASPECT:

The Israeli occupation prevents Palestinian farmers from accessing their lands and harvesting their crops, especially olive, in the areas close to the Wall. Palestinians are granted a one-day or a two-day permission to pick the olive crop, which is not adequate, and so, the crops are corrupt and are wasted.

The Israeli authorities do not allow trucks to enter the village, and so, people are forced to use their private vehicles or even to walk carrying luggage to reach the gate (the gate is 3 km far from the village). there is no safety on the roads, which are close to the settlements, in addition to the increase in costs when people use their private cars.

People are not allowed to carry olive oil once crossing the gate, and so, farmers cannot market their products, and consumers cannot purchase them due to the high prices.

As the occupation prevents the entry of some materials through the gate, such as canned food and cleaning material, people are forced to purchase these materials at extremely high prices despite the fact that they live under hard economic circumstances.

EDUCATIONAL ASPECT:

Teachers are not allowed to pass through the military gates once their permissions have expired, and in some cases, they are denied entry for security reasons. Sometimes, the soldiers ban teachers from passing without giving any justification.

Students from the scientific stream who study outside the village suffer from being delayed in attending the schools, as there is always a delay in opening the gate, and sometimes they are absent from school once the gate is closed (usually the gate is closed without giving justification). Students, mainly girls, abstain from affiliating with universities to avoid being humiliated daily at the gate.

DAILY SUFFERING:

Palestinians are subject to revenge practices at the gate daily. People are humiliated and forced to take off their coats during winter with no respect for old or sick persons. For example, cancer-diseased persons or dialysis patients, as well as elderly persons, are forced to get out of the cars and enter the electronic investigation room.

The Israeli occupation schedules the opening of the gate to be between 7:00 am and 4:00 pm. This duration is not enough to enable people to finish their work or purchase their needs from the cities outside the Wall.

Children in the villages inside the Wall suffer from psychological pressure, and they feel isolated because they lack a sense of safety and security, and they are deprived of participating in activities outside the village.

The Israeli soldiers decide suddenly what is allowed to enter and what is not, and this is done randomly. What people are allowed to carry with them through the gate today could be banned at any moment without declaring the reasons.



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