



OCHA Closure Update

occupied Palestinian territory

30 April - 11 Sept 2008

Executive Summary

1. During the reporting period, the Government of Israel took more steps aimed at easing internal movement for Palestinians in the West Bank than it had during the prior reporting period. These steps included the removal of one staffed checkpoint, the removal of another 100 unstaffed obstacles, of which only 25 were significant and counted by OCHA, and the easing of movement through three main routes. These actions are positive and welcomed yet their impact is limited geographically.
2. In its latest survey completed on 11 September, OCHA observed 630 closure obstacles blocking internal Palestinian movement, including 93 staffed checkpoints. This figure represents a net increase of 3 percent, or 19 obstacles, compared to the figure reported at the end of the previous reporting period (29 April 2008). This total does not include 69 obstacles located in the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron City (H-2).
3. This survey also found that almost three quarters of the main routes leading into the 18 most populated Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank are either blocked or controlled by an IDF checkpoint. Moreover, almost half of these secondary routes into these areas, established over time as alternatives to the main routes, are also blocked or controlled by a checkpoint.
4. The closure obstacles constitute only one of several layers of a complex system of movement restrictions. Therefore, their total number and geographical distribution at a given time, although indicative, does not capture the entire scope of the system. Other layers of this system include, but are not restricted to, The barrier route, prohibitions on access to vast areas of the West Bank combined with a permit regime, restrictions on the use of main roads, random checkpoints, curfews, and age and gender restrictions.
5. The Israeli authorities continued investing large sums of money in transportation-related infrastructure in the West Bank. This included the construction of the so-called "fabric of life" roads and the expansion of IDF staffed checkpoints located on key internal routes. Some of this infrastructure has eased the movement of Palestinians and ensured transportation contiguity between communities that were physically disconnected. However, this came at the price of further entrenching a system of restrictions, which excludes Palestinians from significant parts of the main road network and restricts their movement on other parts.
6. Incidents of blocked humanitarian access continued, in particular at the 'Tunnels' checkpoint, located on the main route between the southern West Bank and East Jerusalem. Most incidents involved demands by Israeli security personnel to search UN vehicles (buses in particular) forcing UN staff to reroute and causing hundreds of lost staff hours and additional costs.
7. In reflecting on the policy implemented for the last eight years, one can note that what was once justified by the Israeli authorities as a short-term military response to violent confrontations and attacks on Israeli civilians, appears to be developing into a permanent system; a system, which is fragmenting the West Bank territory and affecting the freedom of movement of the entire Palestinian population.

I. Israeli steps aimed at easing movement

During the reporting period (30 April - 11 Sept 2008), the Government of Israel took more steps aimed at easing internal movement for Palestinians than it did during the prior reporting period. These steps included the removal of one staffed checkpoint, the announcement of the removal of another 100 unstaffed obstacles, and the easing of movement through three main routes, as follows:

1. Removal of one staffed checkpoint ('Rafat-Masyoun'):

this checkpoint was established a year and a half ago and its removal allowed over 50,000 Palestinians living in two Barrier enclaves (Bir Nabala and villages south of Road 443) to travel to and from Ramallah without delay. At the same time, access to East Jerusalem, to which most residents of this enclave were linked, continued to be blocked by the Barrier.¹

2. Removal of 100 obstacles: In March 2008, during the previous reporting period, the IDF announced the removal of 61 closure obstacles, and between May and September 2008, it announced the removal of another 39 obstacles, altogether totaling 100. Of these obstacles, 25 were previously mapped and counted by OCHA and their removal confirmed. Five obstacles that had been mapped and counted by OCHA, were not removed in practice, despite the IDF announcement. The remaining 70 obstacles, were either considered insignificant and therefore not mapped or counted by OCHA,² or had already been removed in the past.

3. Easings: three main routes, which had been permanently closed, were opened for Palestinian traffic without dismantling the physical infrastructure:³

a. *'Shave Shomeron'* checkpoint, Nablus-North: this checkpoint, which was installed in 2001 and totally closed for Palestinians since August 2005, has been opened for Palestinian traffic every day from 06:00 to 18:00, since 9

August. While IDF soldiers continue staffing the checkpoint permanently, vehicles are generally not stopped or checked. This change has eased the movement of around 300,000 Palestinians using their vehicles to travel from the northern West Bank into the central and southern parts and vice versa. Previously, in order to travel southwards, Palestinians coming from Jenin area needed to make a long detour and cross a difficult checkpoint in Tulkarm governorate ('Enav' checkpoint). Despite this opening, they still have to cross 'Tappuah' (also known as 'Za'atara') checkpoint, where checks and queues are usual, to access the central areas. This opening had no impact on the access of Palestinians in and out of Nablus City, which remains constrained by the checkpoints installed around the City.

b. *'Al Fahs'* (also known as 'Kvasim' or 'Sheep') junction, Hebron City: the roadblocks blocking traffic through this junction were removed in May and subsequently replaced by two gates and an observation tower. The IDF reported that the gates are planned to remain open permanently. This opening provided direct access to Road 60, the main north-south traffic artery in the area. Before that, Palestinians were forced to make a long detour through Halhul town in the north, in order to reach that road. This opening has significantly improved commercial traffic to and from the industrial area in the south of Hebron City, as well as the movement between the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron City (H2) and Yatta town. The gates placed at the junction, however, were closed by the IDF for several hours at a time on four days during July.

c. *'Ras al Joura'* (also referred as 'Halhoul Bridge') junction, Hebron City: the earthmounds and roadblocks blocking the route leading to this junction, which connects Hebron City with the main east-west traffic

artery in the area (Road 35), were removed in September and replaced with two gates and checkpoint infrastructure. Although according to the announcement made by the Israeli authorities, only commercial trucks will be allowed to cross, private vehicles have recently started to use this junction as well. This opening significantly shortened the travel time between Hebron City and the 'Tarqumiya' checkpoint, where the main commercial terminal between Israel and the southern West Bank is located. In addition, this opening provided with a shortcut to reach Road 60, thus reducing the pressure at Halhul checkpoint.

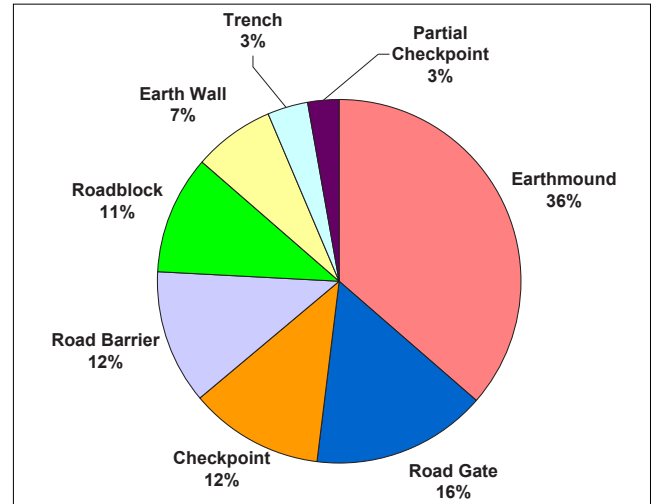
These actions are positive and welcomed, yet their impact remains limited geographically. In addition, past experience demonstrates that in places where an easing instead of a removal has been implemented (meaning that the infrastructure was kept intact), restrictions are likely to be re-imposed for temporary periods of time (see the case of 'Al Fahs' junction above). As we shall see in the following sections, the Israeli steps did not reduce the larger territorial fragmentation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Overall, the freedom of movement of Palestinians within the West Bank remained highly constrained and neither territorial contiguity nor the pre-2000 status quo has been restored.

II. OCHA's closure survey

During August 2008 OCHA field teams carried out a comprehensive closure survey, which was complete on 25 August, and updated by selective field observations aimed at recording changes instituted until 11 September.⁴ Overall, the survey's findings show a lack of significant improvement in the access and movement situation within the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with the exception of the areas mentioned in the previous section.

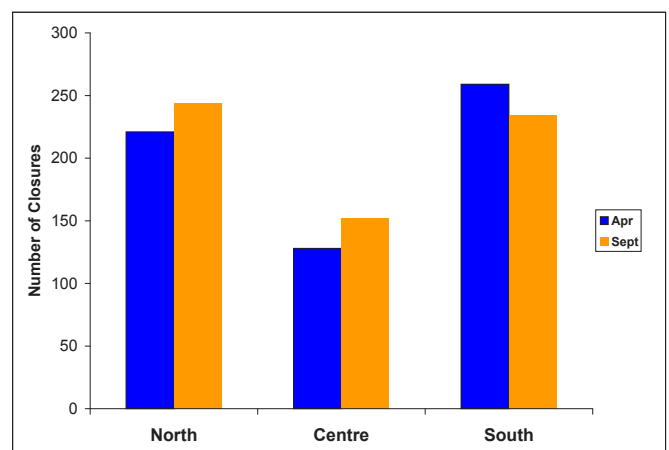
In this survey, OCHA recorded 630 closure obstacles

blocking internal Palestinian movement, including 93 staffed checkpoints and 537 unstaffed obstacles (earthmounds, roadblocks, road barriers, etc).



Closure Count by Type of Obstacle, Sept 2008

This figure represents a net increase of 3 percent, or 19 obstacles, compared to the 611 closure obstacles recorded at the end of the previous reporting period (29 April 2008).⁵ This change resulted from the removal of 82 obstacles,⁶ including one staffed checkpoint, alongside the installation of 101 new obstacles, including two staffed checkpoints. While the northern and central areas saw a net increase of 20 and 24 obstacles respectively, the southern area experienced a net decrease of 25 obstacles.⁷



Closure Count per Area

The total number of closures reported above includes eight staffed checkpoints installed along the Barrier on routes leading to Palestinian communities



isolated between the Barrier and the Green Line, as well as 18 checkpoints controlling access to East Jerusalem. By contrast, 56 crossing points, also known as “Barrier gates”, leading to agricultural areas isolated by the Barrier in the northern and central West Bank are not included in the count.⁸



Deir Al Ghussun, Gate 623, Photo by Marc Juillard/EAPPI

The total also does not include 69 obstacles located in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron (H2), which were not reported and counted in prior surveys due to methodological constraints.⁹ While these obstacles are disregarded in the comparison with the previous reporting period, they bring the real total to 699 obstacles.

The survey included for the first time an examination of the current status of the main and secondary routes into 18 of the most populated cities and towns in the West Bank.¹⁰ The findings show that of the 72 main routes leading to these cities and towns, 53 or almost three quarters of them (73.6 percent) are either blocked (by an obstacle or by the Barrier) or controlled by an IDF checkpoint.

In addition, of the 51 secondary routes into these cities and towns that were newly constructed or developed over time as alternatives to main routes, almost half of them (24) were subsequently blocked or controlled by a checkpoint. Five of the 27 alternative routes currently open were constructed by the Israeli authorities as “fabric of life” roads.¹¹

Tulkarm, for example, with a population of more than 45,000, had before the start of the second Intifada in 2000, six main routes into the city, of which only two remained unblocked (north and north-east routes). The main two routes connecting the city to the east (Nablus area) and to the south (Qalqiliya area) are controlled by staffed checkpoints. Palestinians are allowed to cross the first (‘Enav’ checkpoint) after undergoing checking procedures. Movement through the second (‘Kafriat’ checkpoint), now leading to an area isolated by the Barrier, is prohibited, except for permit holders. An alternative to the latter route was provided by the Israeli authorities, who paved a dirt track leading southwards, part of which is a tunnel under the Barrier (a so-called “fabric of life” route). The other two routes, which connected the city to Israel, were blocked by the Barrier, and on one of them a commercial terminal and a checkpoint were constructed.

III. A multi-layered system of restrictions

The closure obstacles constitute only one of several layers of a complex system of movement restrictions implemented by the Israeli authorities for the last eight years.¹² Therefore, the total number of obstacles and their geographical distribution at a given time, although indicative, does not capture the entire scope of the system. Other layers of this system include, but are not restricted to, prohibitions on access to vast areas of the West Bank combined with a permit regime, restrictions on the use of main roads, random checkpoints, curfews, and age and gender restrictions.

I. The barrier route, Closed areas and permit regime:

- a. The West Bank Barrier: as of the end of the reporting period, approximately 57 percent (415 km) of its overall route has been completed, with 79 percent (329 km) of it running inside the West Bank, separating

Palestinians from their land and leaving communities within isolated enclaves. Nine percent of the route is under construction - almost entirely inside the West Bank.¹³ Access to the area left between the Barrier and the Green Line is severely restricted and regulated by a permit regime.¹⁴

- b. Closed military zones: approximately 21 percent of the West Bank was declared over the years as "closed military zones". These areas are used mostly for IDF training.¹⁵ Access to these areas, which are located mostly in the Jordan Valley, is prohibited by military order.¹⁶
- c. Israeli settlements: over 3 percent of the West Bank lies within the outer limits of 149 Israeli settlements and industrial zones.¹⁷ These settlements are considered illegal under international law.¹⁸ Access of Palestinians to these areas is prohibited by military order, except for workers holding special permits.¹⁹ During the first half of 2008 there was a 42 percent increase in the number of 'building starts' of new housing units in these settlements (excluding East Jerusalem), compared to the same period in 2007 (1010 vs. 709).²⁰ In several settlements located to the east of the Barrier, the IDF declared areas of land around the settlement, usually private Palestinian land, as a "Special Security Area", where access of Palestinian is subject to "prior coordination".²¹
- d. East Jerusalem: access of Palestinians to 64 square kilometers of the West Bank, which were annexed to Israel and to the Jerusalem Municipality, is prohibited by Israeli law, except for those Palestinians who hold an Israeli ID or a very-difficult-to-obtain special permit. Most of this area has been also separated from the rest of the West Bank by the Barrier. Permit holders are allowed to cross the Barrier into East Jerusalem through only four of the 18 existing checkpoints and only by foot.

2. **Restricted roads:** during the reporting period, the IDF continued to prohibit or severely restrict the use by Palestinians of about 200 kilometers of roads, rendering them largely for exclusive Israeli use. This is in addition to hundreds of kilometres of roads located in areas entirely inaccessible to Palestinians, as described above. Some of these roads serve as corridors connecting Israeli settlements to Israel, and others, such as Highway 443, are mainly used by other Israeli citizens commuting between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv areas. In addition, there are about 180 kilometres of fences, trenches and earth walls, de-facto blocking pedestrian and vehicular access to additional roads, regarding which no formal prohibition applies.²²
3. **Random ("flying") checkpoints:** during the reporting period, the weekly average of "flying" checkpoints increased by 35 percent, compared to the average for the previous four months (89 vs. 66). These checkpoints often cause more difficulties for Palestinians than the permanently staffed checkpoints, since they are unpredictable and usually entail more intensive search procedures and delays.
4. **Curfews:** this measure entails a sweeping prohibition on the entire population of a specific area on leaving their homes. During the reporting period, there was a 37 percent decrease in the number of times the IDF imposed curfew on Palestinian villages, compared to the previous four months (32 vs. 51).²³ The combined duration of these curfews decreased even more significantly, from 842 to 227 hours.
5. **Age and gender restrictions:** this measure was implemented in the past to prevent certain age and gender groups, generally males 16-35 year old, in the northern areas from crossing some checkpoints in the southwards direction. This restriction was not implemented during the reporting period.

IV. Humanitarian Access

The ability of UN humanitarian staff to reach some areas, particularly East Jerusalem and some areas isolated by the Barrier, continued to deteriorate during the reporting period. This was mainly due to the demands by Israeli security staff at some specific checkpoints to search UN vehicles (busses in particular), in contradiction to the UN privileges and immunities, which prohibits such searches. These demands often resulted in delays and protracted negotiations. For example, during July, about 80 percent of UNRWA's refusals to have their vehicles searched at the 'Tunnels' checkpoint (between Jerusalem and the southern West Bank) failed and the busses had to be rerouted.

The Israeli authorities have also notified the UN that a new procedure regarding UN supplies will soon be strictly enforced, reducing the number of Barrier crossings through which UN-contracted trucks can enter the West Bank from 12 to six (the UN was first notified of this procedure last year, but its implementation has been delayed). These procedures will increase time and fuel costs that will have to be borne by UN agencies. It should be noted that 'back-to-back' procedures are in place for all local commercial traffic at these crossings. There is additional concern that these crossings do not have the capacity to handle the total expected traffic load.

These new practices are hindering the ability of humanitarian agencies to efficiently deliver aid and services to those in need and undermine UN privileges and immunities.

V. Towards a further entrenchment of the fragmentation

During the reporting period the Israeli authorities continued investing large sums of money in transportation-related infrastructure in the West

Bank.

This type of investment includes the so-called "fabric of life" roads. These are alternative routes, newly constructed or upgraded, designed to re-connect Palestinian communities that were severed by the Barrier, by a closure obstacle or by a restriction on the use of a main road. Most of them include tunnels and underpasses going beneath the Barrier or the restricted road.

To date, about 40 kilometres of "fabric of life" roads, including 44 tunnels and underpasses, were completed. In addition, some five kilometres are under construction and another 40 kilometres and 18 tunnels are planned. The costs of these roads vary depending on the specific characteristics of each one, including the length and the topography. The cost of the road and tunnel connecting Qalqiliya City with the southern community of Habla, for example, which is about 500 metres long, was estimated at nine million NIS. By contrast, the cost of the road connecting two Barrier enclaves to the north-west of Jerusalem (Bir Nabala and Biddu enclaves), which is a 3 kilometres long sunken road and includes three bridges above it, was estimated at 40 million NIS.²⁴ According to an Israeli military expert, the total cost of the completed and planned "fabric of life roads" is approximately two billion NIS.²⁵

Another type of investment is related to the expansion of IDF staffed checkpoints located on key internal routes. According to the Israeli authorities, the "renovation" and "upgrading" of these checkpoints is intended to facilitate the flow of Palestinian traffic through them. During the reporting period the IDF started to expand two checkpoints – Jab'a, which controls access to Ramallah from the south, and 'Wadi Nar'. The latter (also known as 'Container') checkpoint, located south of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement, is the only route connecting the south and center of the West Bank that is available for Palestinians who do not hold Israeli IDs. According to the Israeli authorities, when completed, it will have permanent infrastructure, with one pedestrian lane and five lanes for vehicles. Similar works were

performed in the past on main checkpoints into East Jerusalem and Nablus. The cost of these investments is unknown.

Some of this infrastructure has indeed eased the movement of Palestinians and ensured transportational contiguity between communities that were physically disconnected. However, this improvement came at the price of further entrenching a system of restrictions, which excludes Palestinians from significant parts of the main road network and restricts their movement on other parts. Moreover, the construction of the “fabric of life” roads may result in additional social,

economic and environmental costs for the Palestinian population, which have not been so far systematically assessed.

In reflecting on the policy implemented for the last eight years, one can note that what was once justified by the Israeli authorities as a short-term military response to violent confrontations and attacks on Israeli civilians, appears to be developing into a permanent system; a system, which is fragmenting the West Bank territory and affecting the freedom of movement of the entire Palestinian population.



Biddu sunken road

Annex I: Regional Overview

Northern West Bank (Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Nablus, Salfit and Qalqiliya governorates)

In the northern West Bank OCHA recorded 244 closure obstacles, including 32 checkpoints. This constitutes a 9 percent increase compared to the number recorded at the end of the prior reporting period. This change resulted from the removal of 20 obstacles and the installation of 40 new ones, all unstaffed.

Highlights on specific checkpoints:

- *'Beit Iba'* checkpoint: a humanitarian lane was established on 8 August for vehicles going out of Nablus. For vehicles entering Nablus only one lane is open that near the checkpoint splits into two, one of which is considered a humanitarian lane. However, whenever there is a queue there is almost no way for vehicles to reach the latter.
- *'Jalameh'* checkpoint: a limited number of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship (100-150) are allowed to cross every day through this checkpoint, located on the Green Line, but only by foot. While the purpose of this step was to improve commerce in Jenin City, its impact was limited due to the lack of vehicles to facilitate their purchases.
- *Awarta* checkpoint: The IDF have announced plans to expand this checkpoint, which functions as a 'back-to-back' terminal for goods in and out of Nablus city. While according to the authorities these expansions will ease movement through this checkpoint, there is concern that the works will result in a further entrenchment of this checkpoint.
- *Huwwara* checkpoint: On 5 September, the IDF allowed Palestinians with Israeli citizenship to enter Nablus city with their vehicles for the first time in eight years. The number of yellow plated vehicles which actually entered the city was limited.
- The IDF extended the opening hours at all checkpoints around Nablus for one hour; however, long queues were still observed.

Central West Bank and Jordan Valley (Ramallah, Jerusalem, Jericho governorates)

In the central West Bank OCHA recorded 152 closure obstacles, including 32 staffed checkpoints. This constitutes a 19 percent increase compared to the number of obstacles recorded at the end of the prior reporting period. This change resulted from the removal of 15 obstacles, including one staffed checkpoint and the installation of 39 new ones, including two staffed checkpoints.

The removed checkpoint ('Rafat-Masyun') controlled movement between a Barrier enclave and Ramallah (see section I above). The two added checkpoints are the following:

- *Ni'lin*: on 4 August, the IDF established a new checkpoint at the entrance of Ni'lin village (Ramallah) in response to the almost daily demonstrations against Barrier construction. On days when demonstrations are planned, the IDF permits only residents of Ni'lin to enter the village from Road 446.



- *Beit Iksa*: on 10 September, the Israeli Border Police upgraded a flying checkpoint on the road linking two villages, Biddu and Beit Iksa, in the Western part of the Jerusalem governorate. Only residents of the seven villages of the Biddu enclave are allowed to pass into Beit Iksa village. The Israeli DCL informed OCHA that the checkpoint has been established to prevent Palestinians from sneaking into Israel. Despite guarantees from the Israeli DCL that teachers at the primary and secondary schools in Beit Iksa would have free access into the village, several teachers have reported being denied access on some days since the beginning of the school year.

Highlights on specific checkpoints:

- *Rimonim/Taybe* partial checkpoint: this checkpoint has not been staffed since the adjacent Al-Mu'arrajat road leading to Jericho was closed for renovation on 21 July, thus allowing free movement through it. This checkpoint was included in the list of 61 obstacles announced by the IDF as dismantled in March 2008 (see section I above), however most of the infrastructure remained intact and the checkpoint continued to be staffed randomly.
- *Dead Sea* (also known as *Ha'arava*) partial checkpoint: this checkpoint continues to prevent Palestinian from accessing the Dead Sea on weekends (from Thursday afternoon until Saturday night) and on Jewish holidays.
- *Jericho DCO* checkpoint: following the closure of the Al-Mu'arrajat road to Ramallah, due to renovation works, all traffic in and out of Jericho is channeled to this checkpoint which is unable to handle the increase volume of traffic. During rush hour, delays can last more than an hour.
- *Hamra and Tayasir* checkpoints: no improvement and often long delays. Permits are required for West Bank vehicles to cross into the Jordan Valley through both checkpoints, unless the owner is from the Jordan Valley. Only ten such permits have been issued.
- *Barrier gates*: in the western area of Jerusalem governorate, there are five 'prior coordination' gates along the Barrier that are not opened regularly and are blocking at least 300 farming families from reaching their land. During the reporting period, the situation has deteriorated due to the reduction in opening times from 5 days a week to 3 days a week, as well as erratic operating procedures.

Southern West Bank (Bethlehem and Hebron governorates):

In the southern West Bank OCHA recorded 234 closure obstacles, including 29 staffed checkpoints. This constitutes an almost 10 percent decrease compared to the number recorded at the end of the prior reporting period. This change resulted from the removal of 47 obstacles and the installation of 22 new ones. It should be noted, however, that at least three of the removed obstacles in Bethlehem governorate were replaced by the Barrier, thus keeping the respective routes blocked.

During the first week of September the IDF removed nine obstacles on different sections of three main roads (356, 35 and 60) including two gates, three earthwalls, and four earthmounds. The impact of these removals was minimal, as these gates were often open and the earthmounds were flattened, except for one, which blocked a route leading to a neighborhood where 60 families live.



In the same period, the IDF eased access between Hebron City and Road 35 through the 'Ras Al Joura' junction, significantly improving the movement of commercial trucks between Hebron and Israel (see section I above). This easing replaced a previous relaxation, which entailed the opening of a gate leading to the same road (the 'Farsh Al Hawa' or 'Yehuda' gate). That gate was subsequently closed in the aftermath of opening the 'Ras Al Joura' junction.

From mid- July through August, the IDF installed ten new earthmounds in the area of Yatta town that blocked three key routes to villages unconnected to the water network and badly affected by the drought. These earthmounds prevented the implementation of a plan to supply these villages with tankered water. The Israeli DCL informed OCHA that these obstacles were installed to prevent Palestinian workers from illegally entering into Israel. In addition, the IDF installed new obstacles on four agricultural roads leading to a Barrier gate in western Hebron governorate, thus hampering farmers' efforts to reach their lands beyond the Barrier in the upcoming olive harvest season.

Highlights on specific checkpoints:

- *'Al-Fawwar'* partial checkpoint: during the reporting period this checkpoint was more frequently staffed than in the past. It is located on a main junction and controls the movement of 170,000 Palestinian residents of Hebron City, Yatta, As Samu', Dahriya and another 15 villages along Road 60. On several occasions, Palestinians have reported aggressive behavior and confiscation of IDs by the soldiers.
- *Halhoul Bridge* partial checkpoint: in July and August, a further deterioration in access at this checkpoint was reported. It was staffed daily, causing lines up to one km long. The long queues have forced merchants to move commodities using the back-to-back system. UN and humanitarian vehicles were allowed to move to the front of the queues only following prior coordination with the Israeli DCL. Until the recent opening of the 'Ras Al Joura' junction, this bridge was the only route connecting Hebron to the north.

a. Annex II : Barrier Gates

The Barrier has severed hundreds of agricultural roads which Palestinians formerly used to access land and water resources. The IDF has installed 56 Barrier gates which allow Palestinians, primarily farmers, access to land isolated between the Barrier and the Green Line. These gates are divided into different categories depending on the frequency of opening – daily, weekly or seasonal – and the procedures required for Palestinians to cross.

In the northern West Bank, where the land between the Barrier and the Green Line was declared closed by military order in October 2003, those above the age of 12 require a 'visitor' permit to access land in the closed area. In locations where the closed area has not been declared, for example Ramallah, access to land isolated by the Barrier is dependent on ID cards and list of names maintained at the gates, which are open by prior coordination with the Israeli District Coordination Liaison (DCL) Office.

These special requirements for Palestinians to cross, limited gate placement and opening hours, and restrictions on vehicles, equipment and materials have severely curtailed the time available for farming with negative impact for rural livelihoods. Consequently, OCHA will include the Barrier crossing points in its closure monitoring from now on.

A complete list of the crossing points which allow Palestinians access to communities and land isolated by the Barrier is included in the table below. The list does not include military gates which Palestinians are prohibited from using, nor the crossing points installed or incorporated into the Barrier which channel Palestinian access into Israel or to East Jerusalem.

Type	Description	No.
Agricultural gates	Open daily, generally for one hour early morning; noon; late afternoon to allow farmers holding valid permits access to their land in the closed areas. Only a minority of permit-holders, generally herders, are allowed to stay on their land overnight.	11
Seasonal/ weekly gates	Open seasonally, usually only in olive harvest, to allow farmers access to olive groves; and one to three days weekly throughout the year, to allow for ploughing, weeding, pruning etc.	7
Seasonal gates	Only open during the olive season, (October – December) - from one week to one month.	12
Prior Coordination gates	Access is not dependent on permits but by ID cards and/or list of names on gate. Gates are open through prior coordination with the DCL usually seasonally, and sometimes several days weekly.	25
Other gates	Bil'in is open 24 hours following a order by the Israeli High Court of Justice.	1
Total		56

Annex III: Number of main and alternative routes into most populated cities by status

City	Population (2006)	Main routes pre- 2000	Main routes blocked (2008)	Secondary/ alternative routes established	Secondary/ alternative routes blocked (2008)
Qabatiya	19,694	2	1	1	1
Ar Ram & Dahiyat al Bareed	25,595	3	2	1	1
Tulkarm	45,463	6	4	1	0
Yatta	42,853	5	4	7	0
Halhul	21,803	2	2	5	2
Al 'Eizariya	17,398	3	2	3	3
Jericho	21,897	4	4	3	3
Qalqiliya	44,709	4	3	0	0
Salfit	9,756	3	1	0	0
Adh Dhahiriya	28,568	3	2	5	1
Idhna	18,826	2	1	2	0
Jenin	35,760	4	2	0	0
Bani Na'im	18,883	3	3	6	4
As Samu'	17,951	2	1	5	3
Dura	21,554	3	2	4	2
Hebron	178,046	10	8	5	4
Bethlehem	29,927	5	3	3	1
Nablus	134,116	8	8	0	0
Total	732,799	72	53	51	24

Annex IV : Methodology and definitions

Methodology

OCHA monitors and maps closure obstacles in the West Bank on a regular basis. Teams of experienced field staff, with extensive and detailed knowledge of the West Bank travel along every paved road, all significant unpaved roads and the majority of minor tracks in their area of operations. The monitoring survey takes approximately ten full working days for four teams. Each team, traveling in a 4x4 vehicle, is equipped with a sophisticated GPS (geographical positioning system) unit and a camera.

Each time a significant obstruction is located the team records its position with the GPS unit for future mapping and takes a photograph of it. The obstacle is then categorized according to pre-determined definitions as described below and given a unique identifying name based on a combination of the nearest main road, nearest village or town, and the governorate and the field office identifying it. Next, the type of access blocked is described, e.g. access of a village to main road, connection between two towns or access from an agricultural road to an olive grove. Records, including the code of the photograph, are entered on a file in the GPS, relying on pull-down menus to reduce the risk of error.

Only obstacles that effectively block vehicular access along a clear paved or unpaved road are counted. Obstacles within 50 metres of another obstacle on the same route are recorded as one.

The GPS files are down-loaded on a daily basis into a computer using geographic information system (GIS) software to render the information into maps. Maps are printed and crosschecked against other field data jointly by the GIS specialist and a member of the field team. If there is any query, further field checks are carried out to ensure a complete and accurate data set.

It should be noted that the OCHA survey is extensive but not necessarily exhaustive, as some of the smaller routes may be missed. Thus OCHA maps and counts the majority of obstacles but the numbers given remain an underestimate of the total number of obstacles.

A complete catalogue of closures with location data, GPS coordinates, and photos are provided to the IDF liaison office at Bet El. An agreed period of two weeks is given for the IDF to check the data and offer comments, which are subsequently considered before the final maps are published.

Definitions

- *Checkpoints* are composed of two elements. First, an infrastructure obstructing vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The second element is the permanent presence of Israeli security personnel (e.g. the IDF, the Border Police, the civil Police, a private security company). Security personnel check the documentation of persons crossing the checkpoint and conduct searches on their vehicles and their belongings.
- *Partial Checkpoints* are made up of similar infrastructure as checkpoints but are not permanently staffed. Frequently the partial checkpoint infrastructure is installed on roadsides and therefore does not directly obstruct the traffic. When staffed, partial checkpoints function as the full checkpoints described above. When unstaffed, the traffic may flow relatively freely along the route.
- *Earthmounds* are mounds of rubble, dirt and/or rocks put in place by IDF bulldozers to prevent vehicle movement along a road or track. Several mounds less than 50 meters apart, blocking the same route,

are only counted as one closure. If a mound is pushed to the side (by IDF or Palestinians) or if a route around it is created and vehicle access is possible, the mound is not recorded as an obstacle. Earth mounds are often removed or circumvented and then re-built and/or enlarged. Therefore, some of them appear on one map, disappear from the next and then subsequently reappear.

- *Roadblocks* are constructed from one or more concrete blocks about one meter cubed and like earthmounds are used to prevent vehicle access to land or roads. In all other respects they are the same as earthmounds.
- *Trenches* (or ditches) are dug across flat land or along the side of a road to prevent vehicles going around a closure obstacle on the road.
- *Road Gates* are metal gates used to block access to a route. Many of them are permanently closed whilst others are mostly open and only closed from time to time by the IDF. All road gates are marked on the maps as closures, including those which were open when recorded by OCHA, until the infrastructure is removed.
- *Road Barriers* may be composed by a continuous earth wall, a fence or a concrete barrier running along the side of a road. To be classified as a road barrier, this type of infrastructure should not be safety related, should be greater than 100 metres in length and obstruct free passage of people, vehicles or livestock, onto, off or across the road.



Endnotes

1. Another checkpoint in the Hebron governorate ('Old Tarqumiya' checkpoint) was dismantled and relocated 1.3 km away to a new site. Therefore this was not included as a removal.
2. This category includes obstacles which blocked access to a closed military zone or to a settlement, or which were in the middle of a field.
3. In addition, on 28 April, at the end of the previous reporting period, 'Asira a Shamaliya' checkpoint, which blocked movement between Nablus City and nine villages to the north of the city with a population of 30,000, was opened for Palestinian traffic between 5:00 -23:00.
4. For a description of the methodology and a definition of the different types of obstacles see Annex IV.
5. While the total number of closures reported in the previous Closure Update was 607, a later review revealed that one obstacle recorded in the survey was mistakenly omitted in the final report and three checkpoints were mistakenly classified as Barrier gates and not included in the count. Therefore, the updated figure as of the end of the previous reporting period is 611 and not 607.
6. This figure includes not only all the obstacles removed by the IDF (even if not formally announced) but also obstacles removed by Palestinians and not re-closed a later stage by the IDF. The figure also includes obstacles that were excluded from OCHA's map following their reclassification as insignificant. The latter may occur whenever a blocked route, used in the past as an alternative to a main route, becomes redundant due to the opening of the main route.
7. For a detailed overview of the situation and changes occurred during the reporting period by region, see Annex I.
8. These gates will continue to be systematically surveyed; however, they will not be added to the total but reported separately. For a description of the different types of crossing points see Annex II.
9. In addition, there are nine main checkpoints located throughout the H2 area, which were counted and included in OCHA's previous and current closure count, bringing the total number of obstacles in H2 area to 78.
10. A table with the list of cities included in this examination, the number of routes into each of them and their status appears in Annex III. Ramallah and Al Bireh, were excluded from this examination due to methodological problems.
11. On the problems related to this kind of roads see Section IV below.
12. The Israeli authorities have stated that these restrictions are necessary to protect Israeli citizens living in West Bank and East Jerusalem settlements and in Israel from attacks by Palestinian militants.
13. Once finished, about 9.5 percent of the West Bank will be located between the Barrier and the Green Line. The Government of Israel stated in numerous occasions that the purpose of the Barrier is to prevent attacks on Israeli civilians and that its route is dictated exclusively by security considerations. However, according to recent Israeli media reports, the IDF Chief of Staff, Gabi Ashkenazi, said that "the route is a political issue and therefore it must be determined by the government". See, *Ha'aretz*, 27 July 2008.
14. According to a UN survey conducted in 2007 in the northern West Bank, less than 20 percent of those who used to farm their lands in these areas before completion of the Barrier, are now granted permits to reach their farms and wells. See, OCHA, *The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier*, July 2008, Update No. 8.
15. OCHA, *The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and Other Infrastructure in the West Bank*, July 2007, pp. 42-3. Available at: <http://www.ochaopt.org>.
16. Although not strictly enforced, this prohibition affects the livelihoods of small Palestinian communities, herders and Bedouins in particular.
17. OCHA, *The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements*, Ibid.
18. Settling an occupied territory is illegal under international law. By its very nature, military occupation is seen as temporary. The Fourth Geneva Convention (article 49) relative to the Protection of Civilian Person in Time of War explicitly prohibits the transfer of the Occupying Power's civilian population into the territory it occupies since it makes terminating occupation more difficult. The illegal status of Israeli settlements has been confirmed by the United Nations Security Council (Resolution 466 of 22 March 1979) and the International Court of Justice (Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, of 9 July 2004).
19. The scope of the military orders prohibiting entry of Palestinians into the Israeli settlements is much broader and applies to all areas within the municipal boundaries of settlements, which are much beyond the outer limits. However, in practice this prohibition is enforced mainly within the outer limits. For further elaboration See, *B'Tselem*, Land Grab – Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank, May 2002.
20. Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS), *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, available at: http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/yarhon/o4_e.htm. In addition, the population of these settlements grew during this period by 4.6 percent, compared to a 1.6 percent growth in Israel. The ICBS's estimate for the end of 2007 was 276,100, while at the end of June 2008 is 282,500. Information available at: http://www.cbs.gov.il/population/new_2009/table1.pdf.
21. B'Tselem, *Access Denied: Israeli measures to deny Palestinians access to land around settlements*, September 2008, available at: http://www.btselem.org/english/publications/summaries/200809_access_denied.asp
22. Regarding this type of obstacle (also known as "linear closures"), only the sections blocking another road are counted in OCHA's closure count, while the sections blocking access from an agricultural or built up area are not.
23. A single curfew affecting multiple neighboring locations is counted as one incident.
24. *Haaretz*, *The Marker Economic Supplement*, 22 May 2008
25. Ibid. This estimate includes the cost of agricultural gates in the Barrier as well.