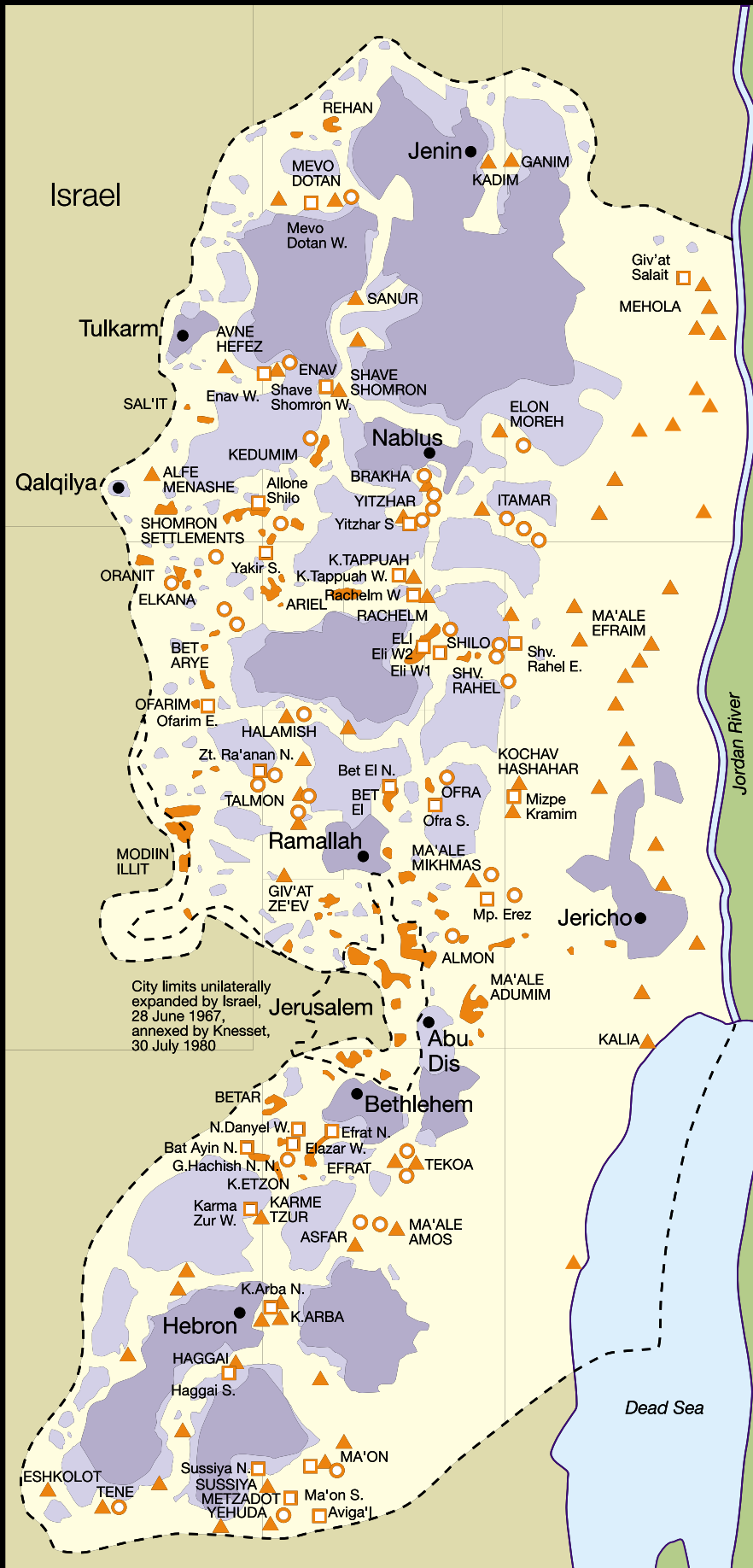


Losing ground

Israel, poverty and the Palestinians

The West Bank



- Palestinian Autonomous Area (Area A: full civil and security control)
- Palestinian Autonomous Area (Area B: full civil control, joint Israeli-Palestinian security control)
- Israeli civil and security control (Area C)
- Israeli settlement/built-up area
- Settlement outposts established 1996 - February 2001
- Settlement outposts established since February 2001

City limits unilaterally expanded by Israel, 28 June 1967, annexed by Knesset, 30 July 1980

Dead Sea

Jordan River

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Foreword

In recent years I have made many visits to the Middle East. In 1996, I noted the hope and optimism engendered by the Oslo peace process. But on each of my visits since then, the sense of frustration with Oslo has become increasingly apparent.

As I returned home each time, two requests rang loudly in my ears. Firstly, that the stories of ordinary people living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel today should be told. Behind the politics and the events that grab the attention of the media, there is to be found not only real human suffering but also an increasing loss of hope.

Secondly, people told me, the UK and the EU must take their responsibilities seriously. Why should the UK and EU assume a special role? We have a moral responsibility. The UK, in particular, has played a singular role in shaping the political landscape of the Middle East.

We also have a global responsibility. Whatever the particular linkage between the crisis in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the one hand, and the current world situation on the other, the state of the world clearly cannot be understood without reference to Middle Eastern tensions.

Finally, we have a religious responsibility. Middle Eastern churches feel unrecognised and misunderstood outside the region. There is a further aspect to this religious responsibility. While the only solution to this conflict is a political one, a crucial religious perspective to that solution has been ignored. From this point of view, the Alexandria interfaith process initiated by Archbishop George Carey is to be welcomed. At the landmark gathering, a dozen senior Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders issued a seven-point declaration pledging to use their religious and moral authority to work for an end to violence and the resumption of the peace process.

Members of religious communities in the UK and Ireland could, and should, do more. They can, for example, support religious dialogue. Such a dialogue needs to cover key issues, including:

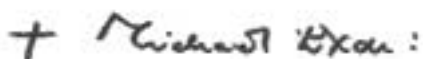
- forgiveness and its relationship to justice, notably the recurrent biblical imperative linking promises of restoration for God's people to faithful obedience and conformity to God's will
- an understanding of the significance of 'the land' and identity in all three traditions. The land is associated not only with promise but with warning
- the nature of hope. We need to understand just what it is that motivates people to be willing to die, when there is no hope for which to live.

For each of the three great faiths represented in the Middle East, there is an urgent need to reflect theologically. For each community, there is a vital question we need to ask ourselves: in what kind of God do we believe? A life-giving God who cares for all humanity? A liberating God? A God who loves the world rather than a religious elite? It is a matter of theology, and ultimately it is in our theology, that our hope will be found.

The Palestinian-Israeli situation today shows the futility of violence, where endless repression and resistance feed off each other. From this cycle of repression and violence, conflict and provocation, comes the bitter fruits of poverty. Action is urgently needed to break this cycle of diminishing hope. We need an honest analysis of the causes of the current humanitarian crisis and we need a response

which balances the need to address both immediate relief needs and the structural problems behind them. In particular, what is required is support for the active engagement of all key partners in a renewed peace process, working towards the end of the occupation and the causes of poverty and conflict.

For these reasons I very much welcome this report by Christian Aid and its work to eradicate poverty and to create the conditions in which peace and justice may become a possibility for all.



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The Rt Revd Michael Langrish
Bishop of Exeter

Executive summary

'We do not want the flag. We want to live in freedom. Now we do not live – we simply exist. We exist by accident.'

Palestinian woman in the Gaza Strip

Every day brings news of further tragedy from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: the eight-year-old boy shot by the Israeli Defence Forces as he leaves school; the suicide bomber who kills himself and a group of Israeli teenagers out for a carefree evening; a crowded bus blown up during morning rush hour in West Jerusalem; F-16s and helicopter gunships mounting bombardments in civilian neighbourhoods. This is the daily fare for international television news – the regular viewing of two societies locked together in fear.

Behind the headlines and the television images is another sort of violence: the violence of the dramatic plunge by ordinary Palestinians into extreme poverty. This is the story that we do not hear, the relentless, incremental slide into a life dominated by lack of money to buy food, ill-health and rising levels of malnutrition. Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem are today experiencing a humanitarian crisis that is just as fundamental to the conflict as the suicide bombers and Israeli F-16s that make the news.

The impact of the conflict is felt by Israelis and Palestinians in innumerable ways: the worker who fears travelling to work because of suicide bombings on buses, or the children afraid to travel to school. But while the daily climate of fear is shared, the economic impact is primarily felt by Palestinians: the father who works only one day in ten; the farmer whose crops rot in the field because he may be shot by Israeli settlers if he tries to harvest them; the school building constructed with funds from international donors which is now shattered by army incursions. Large swathes of farmland have been cleared, citrus and olive groves torn out to make way for settlements and settler roads.

Almost three-quarters of Palestinians now live on less than US\$2 a day – below the official UN poverty line. Half the population needs extra food to ensure minimum daily requirements. A quarter of all children are anaemic. From Christian Aid partners, working in the poorest communities in the occupied territories, we hear even starker figures: in some Gaza Strip villages, 63 per cent of children are anaemic, while unemployment stands at 70 per cent. Palestinian society is rapidly falling into poverty and despair.

The creation of poverty

Responsibility for the current humanitarian crisis rests principally with Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian territories. But the foundations for impoverishment were laid long ago. Starting with an already poor agrarian economy, Palestinians have seen the promise of a secure future stripped away – by the progressive loss of land from 1948 onwards and by successive military incursions marked by violence, land occupation and the subordination of the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy. The Oslo Accords of September 1993, despite the great hopes surrounding them, failed to deliver significant change, as has the Palestinian Authority. Attention given by the Palestinian Authority to poverty eradication – even allowing for the destruction of its infrastructure – has been notable by its absence. Frustration, despair and disillusionment – especially following the failure of the Camp David talks – were partly the result of the slide into deeper poverty after 1993.

The rest of the story will be told more fully in this report by Christian Aid's partners and the ordinary Palestinians with whom they work: how actions taken by the Israeli government, for security or other reasons, have created a situation of de-development – of systematically stripping away the ingredients of a viable economy and society.

Individually, these acts would not be enough to cause extreme poverty; together, they add up to a devastating armoury of policies that have dismantled an already weak economy.

The key structures creating poverty are:

- Loss of land** Since the 1967 Six Day War established a new border, Israel has gradually encroached on Palestinian land through expropriation, occupation and acquisition of so-called 'state land'. After the Oslo Accords, agreement on Israeli military control meant that Israel controlled 82.8 per cent of Palestinian territory. The area of self-rule in the Gaza Strip now amounts to less than a quarter of the size of London
 - Settlements** Almost 42 per cent of the West Bank, according to Christian Aid partner B'Tselem, is controlled by Israeli settlements and regional municipal councils. The number of settlers has doubled since the Oslo peace process, to 200,000 in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem
 - Water** Israeli control over access to water limits Palestinian irrigation for agriculture, the drilling of boreholes and personal consumption. Israelis' allocation of water is five times that of Palestinians. Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip use almost seven times more water than Palestinians there
 - Closure and curfew** Since the second intifada, a tightening of the network of military checkpoints and roadblocks has placed three million Palestinians under virtual siege. Villages are cut off from one another; it is often impossible to travel from one part of the West Bank to another, as well as between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The uncertainty as to whether journeys can be made is damaging, both psychologically and economically
- Lack of strong self-government** The failure of the Palestinian Authority to tackle poverty and develop accountable institutions has hindered Palestinian economic development. In addition, 60 per cent of the Palestinian Authority's budget comes from tax revenue held by the Israeli government. Israel's ability to withhold payment of this revenue, coupled with the destruction of much of PA infrastructure, has contributed to a breakdown in government functions. The annexation of East Jerusalem has deprived the Occupied Palestinian Territories of its traditional economic centre.

Any real semblance of normal life is grinding to a halt – but it is ordinary life for which most Palestinians long. 'When I look at television, I see children in gardens and in schools, having a secure life,' one 35-year-old Palestinian mother of four told Christian Aid. 'I close my eyes and wish that I were living in these circumstances – especially for my children.'

The humanitarian mandate
All of Christian Aid's Palestinian partners have been affected by the second intifada and, even more fundamentally, by the Israeli invasion of March/April 2002 and subsequent tightening of the military occupation. Long-term development work – the challenge of helping people to raise their own standards of living – has become all but impossible. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), which normally trains farmers in agricultural techniques, has also been distributing emergency food packages and has begun work programmes to alleviate unemployment. Twisted metal is all that remains of the greenhouses built by PARC in Beit Layla village; the greenhouses were bulldozed to create a 'security zone' for a nearby Israeli settlement.

Placing three million people under what is effectively a siege inevitably has consequences for their health. Treatment is inaccessible; emergency care is often blocked as even Red Crescent ambulances are fired

upon; malnutrition is on the rise. Christian Aid's partner, the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC), has trained and resourced mobile medical and first-aid teams. Women have been trained to provide first aid, as ambulances are often blocked or delayed by closure and checkpoints. In a survey of 760 families in the Gaza Strip, nine out of ten reported that one or more family members had psychological difficulties. Children's lives, especially, are marked by fear, nightmares and anxiety.

Aid agencies such as Christian Aid have a duty to fulfil their humanitarian mandate and to meet immediate needs, especially in times of emergency. But Christian Aid's mandate, in the OPT and Israel as elsewhere, is also to look at the causes of poverty and to speak out about those causes. This report, *Losing Ground*, is an attempt to challenge the structures that are making Palestinians poor and to alert the international community to the urgency of finding a solution.

International responsibilities

Israeli government actions that impoverish Palestinians violate international humanitarian law, specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague Regulations (reproduced in part in the appendix). Both regulate behaviour in war and in occupied territories. Collective punishment, for instance, as imposed by curfew and by closure, violates the Fourth Geneva Convention. Seizure or destruction of municipal property – the destruction of Palestinian Authority buildings, for instance – is illegal under the Hague Regulations. Many Israeli actions violate UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 that call for Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in 1967 and later resolutions calling for an end to violence.

Like any other state, Israel is obliged to adhere to the international conventions to which it has committed itself. Israel accepts the applicability of the Hague Regulations but not of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the OPT, although it undertakes to respect its humanitarian provisions. It argues that

the territory it occupies was not part of the sovereign territory of either Egypt or Jordan, the two states from which it wrested control of the Palestinian territories, and that therefore the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply because the territories were never a state. No other High Contracting Party of the Geneva Convention has accepted this argument.

The Palestinian Authority, marked by corruption, collapsing infrastructure and inefficiency, has failed to tackle poverty and has also consistently violated human rights standards. Palestinian calls for reform have grown. The terms of reference for reform, Palestinians say, must be set by themselves.

But the responsibility for increasing poverty lies far wider than this. Had the other 160 signatories to the Geneva Conventions and the Hague Regulations taken their obligations seriously, the key issues in the conflict – annexation of land, settlements, closure and control of water – would have been confronted. The major powers – the US, UK, and the rest of the EU – have the authority to make international law meaningful. That they have not done so means that the downward spiral of Palestinian daily life is in equal measure their responsibility, too.

Christian Aid believes steps must be taken by the international community, Israel and the Palestinian Authority to:

Alleviate the current humanitarian crisis

- Withdraw Israeli forces to positions held prior to September 2000 to allow humanitarian work to be carried out unimpeded
- Establish an international presence to monitor all human rights violations
- Lift the closure and dismantle checkpoints within the OPT
- Allow unimpeded progress of Palestinian people and goods and humanitarian access through Israeli ports and across international borders
- Release PA tax revenue currently held by Israel to a transparent fiscal agency within the PA

- Repair water, sewage and other essential infrastructure
- End all land confiscation and impose an immediate freeze on settlements.

Create the economic foundations for development

- Allow the PA to exercise sovereignty over its international borders, trade and economic activities
- Guarantee freedom of movement for Palestinians and goods within and between both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
- Establish a forum for deciding equitable water allocation and control across the region.

Dismantle the occupation

- Allocate to permanent Palestinian control land seized by Israel since 1967
- Reach a negotiated end to land confiscations and a final agreement on settlements
- Support Palestinian-initiated reform of the Palestinian Authority to ensure good governance and accountability
- Hold both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to account for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Losing ground

As this report goes to press, an eight-metre high concrete wall is being constructed around the West Bank by the Israeli authorities. It is thought it will run much of the length of the 'Green Line' – the 1967 border – but at key points carves out yet more Palestinian land. Built at the cost of £1 million a mile, the wall is creating what some Palestinians describe as the world's largest open-air prison. When it is completed, it will have razor wire, trenches, floodlights and electronic detectors. It will allow access to Israel only at Israeli-controlled checkpoints. When Christian Aid visited the town of Qalqilya, large areas of olive groves, farmland and homes were being cut off from the town – depriving farmers of their land and livelihoods.

For Israelis, living in fear for themselves and their children, the wall is an attempt to create security in a land where attacks can come at any time. No amount of 'absolute closure' – the complete block on all traffic between the occupied territories and Israel – has stopped the suicide bombs, or calmed the sense of fear and extreme tension that permeates Israeli society. Many Israelis hope the wall will provide the answer – that they can go back to living a more normal life. But it is not a solution to the conflict.

Based on its experience in Israel and the Palestinian territories since the 1950s, Christian Aid believes that any resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must respect the integrity of both the Palestinian and Israeli people. Both the Palestinian Authority and the state of Israel must be held to account for their violations of human rights and international law. Christian Aid unreservedly condemns the suicide bombing and attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinians, as do its human rights partners in both the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel. Israel's right to recognition and to safety for all its citizens, as well as its right to independent economic development, is not in question. Christian Aid believes that the Palestinian people should be afforded that right as well.

Recommendations

The international community has failed to find a resolution to the conflict. Ending Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, through a peace process based on international humanitarian law, is the only way to achieve such a resolution.

Christian Aid urges European states, particularly the UK and Ireland, to take all necessary steps to bring about a just and lasting peace. It calls on the international community to address the causes of Palestinian poverty.

As a matter of urgency, the international community must:

- continue targeted aid for the most vulnerable people throughout the current emergency
- implement an international protection mechanism in order to avert further loss of life among Israeli and Palestinian civilians, allow negotiations between the two sides to resume and ensure that humanitarian work can proceed unhindered
- bring pressure to bear on the government of Israel to withdraw its military forces to positions held before September 2000 and halt all attacks on, and damage to, Palestinian civilian infrastructure
- ensure that Israel ends the policy of closure and curfew of Palestinian cities, towns and villages throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Freedom of movement within these areas must be guaranteed
- ensure that Israel stops all land confiscation and freezes all new settlement construction. Israel must also stop expanding existing settlements,

a process which it commonly describes as 'natural growth'

- encourage talks to resume immediately to reach a final settlement. Any framework must be based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. These call for full Israeli withdrawal from lands occupied since 1967 and the end to illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, and reaffirm the right of Israel and a future Palestinian state to exist within secure borders
- support reforms of Palestinian self-government that are meaningful, lasting and owned by the Palestinian people themselves. It should work with the Palestinian Authority to establish accountable and transparent institutions in order to prevent any human rights abuses within Palestinian areas and acts of terror within Israel. The PA must be held to account for its actions
- assist in the reconstruction and development of the Palestinian economy and infrastructure through aid, trade and investment.

In addition, the international community must meet its own obligations under individual government and international law to:

- ensure Israeli compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, which relates to the protection of civilians during war or under occupation. Christian Aid calls on the US, UK,

Irish and other EU governments to specify publicly the actions they are taking to ensure that Israel complies with the Geneva Conventions

- the European Union should enforce all provisions within bilateral treaties with Israel, including human rights articles, such as the Association Agreement. It should consider suspension of such agreements in light of Israel's non-compliance.

The United Kingdom and Ireland must take specific actions:

- the UK government must explain how Israel's status as one of 14 'target markets', identified by the Department for Trade and Industry for preferential trade promotion, is compatible with Israel's non-compliance with international law
- the UK government should use the range of bilateral mechanisms available to it to help ensure Israel's adherence to the Geneva Conventions and international law. Christian Aid calls on the UK government to explain how it is using its influence with the United States to press the US to ensure Israeli compliance with international law and to guarantee an equitable peace between Israel and the Palestinians
- the Irish government should take every opportunity to use its influence, both bilaterally and through multilateral fora, to ensure Israeli compliance with international law and to promote an equitable peace between Israel and the Palestinians based on UN resolutions 242 and 338.

Introduction

Today's acute impoverishment is in danger of destroying Palestinian society. Failure to address the root causes will be felt far beyond Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

This report looks at how and why ordinary Palestinians find themselves in conditions of acute poverty. Based on Christian Aid's work with local organisations in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories over the last five decades, the report examines the structures behind Palestinian poverty – how poverty has been heightened since the signing of the Oslo Accords and made even more acute with the Israeli response to the onset of the second intifada in September 2000 – and looks at how the international community has failed to address the causes of poverty.

Israeli government actions impoverishing Palestinians are almost all in violation of international humanitarian law. But, as the report argues, the international community – by walking away from its responsibilities as signatories to international conventions – has contributed not only to acute poverty and suffering, but to a major source of instability in the world today. The second intifada and its repercussions have brought the images of violence and distress into our living rooms, but the tragedy, and the responsibility for it, has been decades in the making.

Issues of religion, political instability and constant crisis make this one of the most testing regions for Christian Aid. Working with both Israelis and Palestinians, Christian Aid has seen first hand the cost of this crisis and the toll it takes on ordinary Israelis and Palestinians alike. Christian Aid's findings in this report are based on interviews with both partner organisations and the people with whom they work, and are rooted in on-the-ground experiences of those partners and the range of

voices and expertise they offer, from faith-based to secular, from human rights to agricultural development. The findings also reflect a wider discussion with sister agencies in Europe and the Middle East.

This report does not seek to draw a complete picture of Palestinian-Israeli relations. It does not look at human rights except as they affect poverty levels and it does not seek to analyse the political outcomes of conflict. Nor does it examine the situation of the 5.5 million Palestinian refugees in the diaspora. It looks at poverty within the Occupied Palestinian Territories: at the humanitarian crisis besetting it today, at the solutions, and at the dangerous consequences if solutions are not found.

If allowed to go unchecked, what is now one of the most serious humanitarian crises Christian Aid has witnessed in 50 years of work in the region will fundamentally undermine the future of Palestinian society. A humanitarian crisis will cease to be a crisis, and instead become the norm. Israelis and Palestinians alike are living in a state of fear and tension, unable to move freely or send their children out to play without worry that they might be at risk. Today's acute impoverishment is in danger of destroying Palestinian society. The potential repercussions of a continued failure to address the root causes of this crisis would be felt far beyond Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. There is therefore an international obligation to act now to achieve a just and lasting peace.

1 Roots of poverty: Palestinian history 1917-1994

'Our problem is that our village, Rantis, lost 36,000 dunums [9,000 acres] in 1948. Our village land stretched all the way to Ras al' Ayn [now the Israeli town of Rosh Ha'ayin]. What we have left is five per cent of our land. Everything else, either side of the Green Line, was lost.'

Shawki, a farmer in Ramallah district

Modern Palestinian history is one of losing ground. From the 1947 United Nations' call for partition to today's land seizures and growing Israeli settlements, Palestinians have seen their territory shrink to a fraction of its original size. A look at the situation since 1917 shows how steadily Palestinian control of their land has been eroded – and how the question of sovereignty and territory lies at the heart of the current conflict.

No one would deny – least of all Christian Aid's partner organisations struggling to meet the mounting humanitarian need – that poverty has deepened and become acute because of the intifada and the severe restrictions imposed by Israeli forces. But today's poverty is linked directly to decades of Israeli-Palestinian history and to the establishment over time of an infrastructure of Palestinian poverty.

Sowing the seeds of poverty: 1917-1967
Almost immediately after capturing Palestine in 1917, Britain stated, through the Balfour Declaration, that it favoured the establishment of a Jewish national home. Britain drafted the terms of the mandate that was then awarded to it by the League of Nations for the governance of Palestine. The mandate provided for an 'appropriate Jewish agency' to assist in the development of the country.¹ No parallel offer was made to the Arab community. From the outset, then, the determinants of the economic shape and power in Palestine were in place.

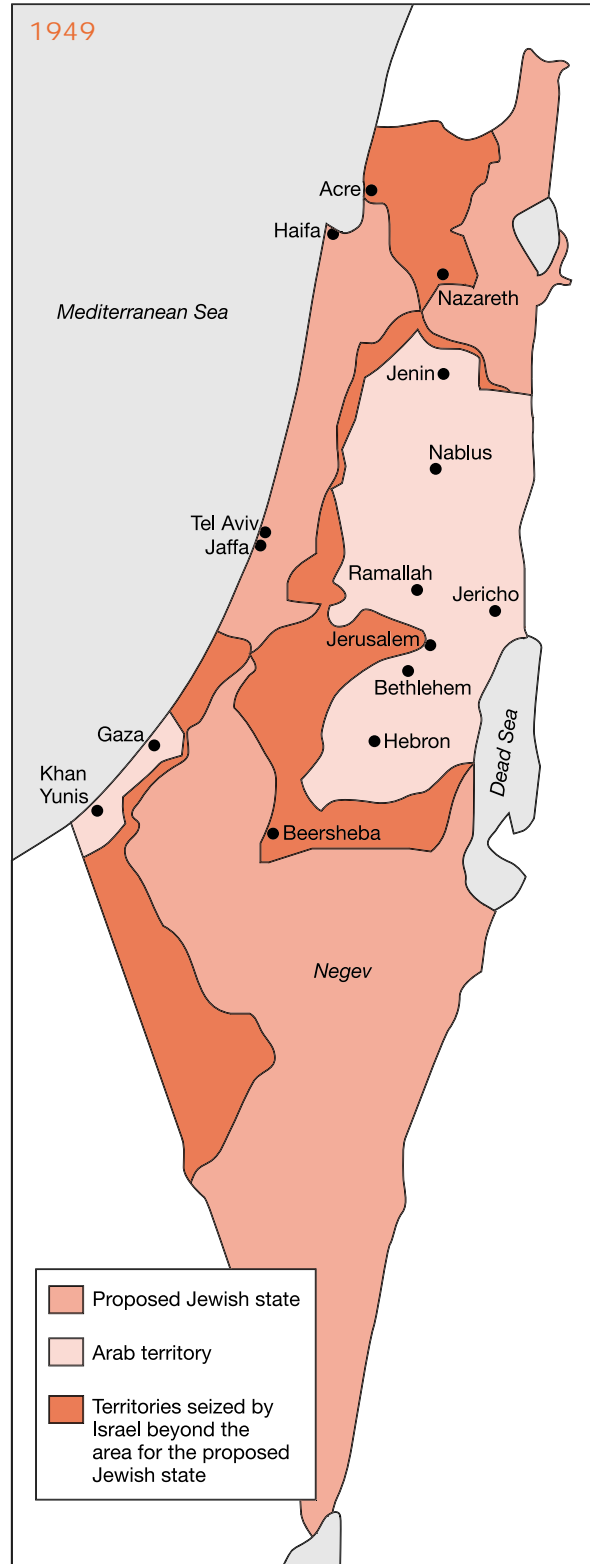
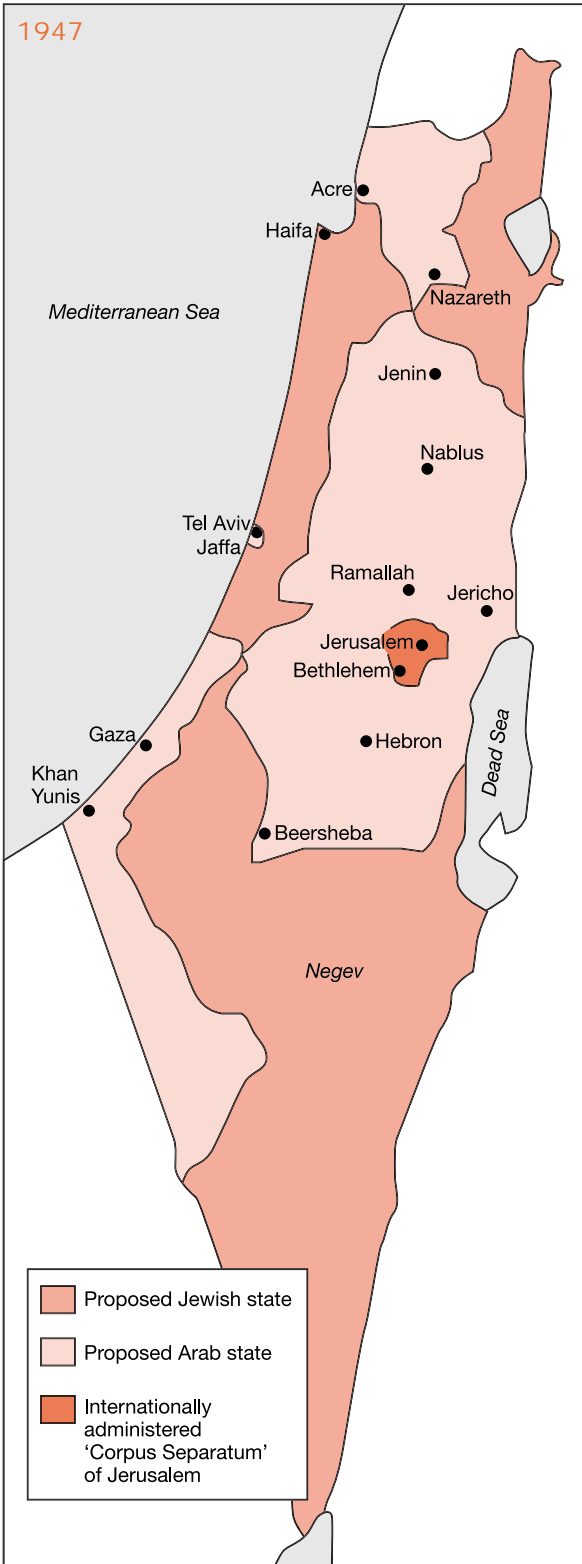
In 1947 the United Nations called for the partition of Palestine, awarding 54 per cent of the land area to the Jewish population and 46 per cent to Palestinian Arabs, who comprised two-thirds of the total population of Palestine. In the war that followed, the Jewish armed forces made substantial territorial gains, establishing the state of Israel on 78 per cent of the land area of Palestine. This left Palestinians with two separate portions of land: the Gaza Strip, which came under Egyptian administration, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which was integrated into Jordan. By the time the war was over, as the maps opposite show, the Armistice Line had created a temporary ceasefire boundary delineating 22 per cent of Palestinians' original land. The Armistice Line has remained in place ever since.

Two developments fundamentally undermined the viability of the economies of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. First, both areas were inundated with refugees – an estimated three-quarters of a million people in all – from the part of Palestine that became Israel.² Secondly, the West Bank lost access to the central coastlands and ports of Palestine to which the economy had been intimately linked. The Gaza Strip was isolated, no longer able to trade with the rest of Palestine and instead had to turn for its economic survival to Egyptian traders hundreds of miles away.

At the same time, the West Bank now had to face eastwards, to Jordan, for its economic survival, rather than to the coastal regions in the west. It lost

United Nations partition plan,
UN Resolution 181

Rhodes Armistice Line after 1948 war



its economic coherence and became instead a group of smaller, more localised economies, based on the towns of Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Jericho and Hebron. The towns of Tulkarm and Qalqilya on the western edge of the West Bank were stripped of most of their surrounding farmland and many of their markets. The West Bank soon found itself neglected as a matter of policy by the Jordanian government, which wanted to ensure that the East Bank, hitherto a rural backwater of the Palestinian economy, should dominate the newly enlarged state both politically and economically. By 1967, the West Bank's industrial sector had shrunk from contributing 12 per cent to 9 per cent of the area's GDP.³

Occupation and uprising: 1967-1987

The 1967 Six Day War was borne out of cold war rivalry, mutual hostility between Israel and the Arab states and regional insecurity. It had consequences reaching far beyond its original objectives. At the end of the war, Israeli government ministers announced that for strategic economic and political reasons, Israel would not return the territories it had occupied during the hostilities, including parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁴ East Jerusalem was effectively annexed and in 1980 was declared to be part of Israel's united capital. And, as shown on the adjacent map, Israel took control of not just the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, but also Sinai (returned in stages by 1982) and the Golan Heights.

In the wake of the 1967 war, Israel embarked upon a programme which set the stage for the events of the following decades: land confiscation; settlement building; the establishment of highways to integrate the territories into Israel while by-passing Palestinian towns and villages; and the seizure of the water resources of the West Bank primarily for the benefit of Israelis on both sides of the 1949 Armistice Line.

The Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) became Israel's subordinate market. Israel could freely

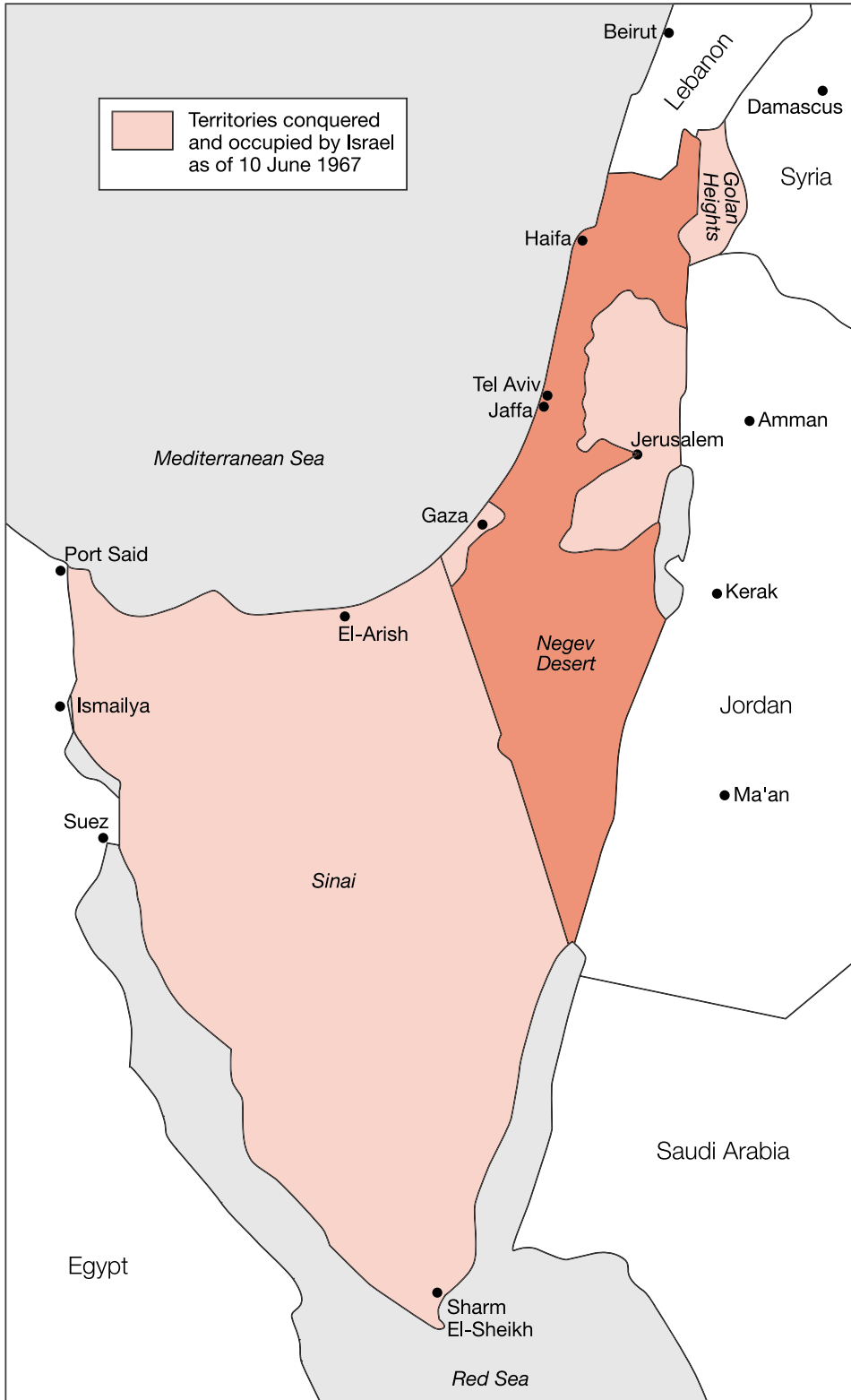
export subsidised goods into the OPT. Palestinians, on the other hand, were restricted in what they were allowed to export to Israel, with the exception of certain agricultural commodities, for example olives and bananas. Because the West Bank and Gaza economies were not able to expand and to generate new remunerative jobs, Israel increasingly attracted Palestinians for cheap casual labour. Families became dependent on migrant employment in Israel – in particular in agriculture and the construction industry, both inside Israel and in Israeli settlements. The average number of Palestinian workers with permits who made their living by working in Israel, or Israeli settlements, exceeded 100,000 during the 1980s.

Limited economic opportunities at home also encouraged tens of thousands of young Palestinians to leave for the Gulf region, where they could earn relatively high wages and were able to remit money to their families in the refugee camps, towns and villages of the OPT. At its peak in the late 1980s, about 100,000 workers lived abroad and sent money home. Many of these Palestinians emigrated permanently; their ideas, their skills and entrepreneurial drive were lost to the Palestinian economy, reducing still further the viability of and prospects for the domestic economy.

While Palestinians – relying increasingly on Israel for employment and exports – became ever-more dependent on the Israeli economy to earn a living for themselves and their families, the rewards were decidedly uneven. Between 1967 and 1987 Israel levied taxes on the OPT which created income two-and-a-half times greater than the value of government investment in the area. In 1987 alone, while Israel spent US\$240 million on services and projects in the OPT, it collected US\$393 million in taxes.⁵

On the surface the relationship might have seemed stable and of mutual, albeit unequal, benefit. But the low wages, shrinking economic opportunities and ever-widening differences in wealth and income

The Middle East after the 1967 War



between Israelis and Palestinians fuelled Palestinian discontent – a trend which the rise of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the emergence of a new nationalist leadership helped accentuate. Israel often responded to resistance with curfews on refugee camps and selected neighbourhoods and by demolishing homes, only some of which lacked building permits.

In December 1987, the first intifada began. It was a widespread expression of civil resistance to the military occupation, marked by the outbreak of mass demonstrations, civil disobedience and stone throwing. In 1988 Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin claimed the uprising would be broken 'with might, power and beatings'. More than 1,000 Palestinians and 170 Israelis died.

Economic isolation: 1991-1993

With the onset of the Gulf War in January 1991, Israel imposed greater restrictions on movement between the OPT and Israel, and within the OPT. Critical roads and border crossings between Israel and the OPT were closed. These closures precipitated a dramatic fall in employment in Israel and devastation for an economy that relied on foreign earnings for half its GNP. The Gaza Strip was completely fenced in for Israeli security reasons (and remains so today), and the number of workers going into Israel halved. By May 1991, at least one in three Gazans was unemployed.⁶ Incomes throughout the territories plummeted.

Following the Gulf War, with the Palestinians in a particularly weak position, bilateral negotiations were established at the Madrid conference. Talks took place between Israel and the Arab states and between Israel and Palestinians in the OPT. The conference centred on UN resolutions 242 and 338. It did not yield the desired results of 'land for peace'. Although Madrid demonstrated some US commitment to resolving the conflict, it was apparent that US interest continued to be the maintenance of Israel's position of strength.

On 30 March 1993, due to high levels of violence within the OPT, Israel imposed closure on the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. In fact, it separated the OPT into four distinct areas: East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the north and south sections of the West Bank with those north and south sections only accessible to each other via Jerusalem. These closures fragmented the community. With more than a hundred military checkpoints, both along the 1949 Armistice Line and within these areas, this latest act also caused a massive disruption to the free movement of goods, services and people.

On the eve of the Oslo Accords, therefore, the territories were characterised by what has been termed 'economic de-development'. On top of an already weak agricultural sector and tiny industrial sector, a succession of Israeli policies contributed to the growing dependence of the Palestinian economy, halting and in some cases reversing the small advances that had been made. As both UNCTAD and the US academic Sara Roy make clear, despite the indisputable short-term economic gains to Palestinians from Israel, economic growth has been blocked by an Israeli policy based on political concerns.⁷ Among the symptoms are a chronic trade deficit, myriad trade restrictions, a return to increasingly small-scale production and chronic unemployment. Functionally, the Occupied Palestinian Territories had become little more than a dormitory area for cheap labour for Israel and a captive market for its products.

Hoping for peace: the Oslo Accords, 1993
The Oslo process for the first time placed formal negotiations between the PLO and the Israeli government as the central method of achieving peace. When the Accords were signed amidst great fanfare in September 1993, it was hoped that they would enable the first concrete steps towards peace. They would, so it was anticipated, bring about an end to Israeli military occupation, establish peace between Israel and the Palestinian

people, and help to create an autonomous Palestinian entity.

Together with the three Cairo agreements of 9 February, 4 April and 4 May 1994, Oslo established an interim period to pave the way for a final status agreement on 4 May 1999. By that time, it was expected that the prime stumbling blocks to a durable political settlement would be removed: the issue of refugees; the status of Jerusalem; illegal Israeli settlements; access to water; and defined borders. During the interim period, it was also expected that Palestinians would gradually take control of agreed areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, the closure imposed in 1993 was not removed as military checkpoints remained in place between each Palestinian location, forming an institutionalised part of the process.

Apart from East Jerusalem, the territories were to be divided into three categories: Areas A (total Palestinian control), B (Palestinian administered but under Israeli military control) and C (sole Israeli control). The aim, so Palestinians understood, was to set in train a process involving a progressive transfer of control from Israeli to Palestinian hands – moving more land from category C to category A areas – so that by the end of the process Palestinians would have recovered the lands occupied in 1967 while Israel would have received formal recognition of its borders and credible and lasting peace. However, in effect, by 1999 Israel retained control of 82.8 per cent of the OPT.

Transfer of control of Areas A and B to the Palestinian Authority, Israeli retention of Area C

Area	1995	1999
A	2%	17.2%
B	26%	23.8%
C	72%	59%

Paris Protocol: economic agreement

In addition to agreement under the Oslo Accords on a process towards final status, the two parties came to an agreement on the economy in May 1994, with the Paris Protocol. The Protocol states that:

The two parties view the economic domain as one of the cornerstones in their mutual relations with a view to enhance their interest in the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace... This protocol lays the groundwork for strengthening the economic base of the Palestinian side and for exercising its right of economic decision-making in accordance with its own development plan and priorities. The two parties recognise each other's economic ties with other markets and the need to create a better economic environment for their peoples and individuals.⁸

Under this agreement, Palestinians were free to oversee a local banking system and manage foreign currency reserves, but were not allowed to mint their own currency. Taxes paid by Palestinians would be remitted to the Palestinian treasury. VAT on imports from Israel would be remitted to the PA by Israel. There would be a quasi-customs union between Israel and the OPT. Free movement of labour (effectively, Palestinians into Israel) was also agreed. As the protocol stated: 'Both sides will attempt to maintain the normality of movement of labour between them, subject to each side's right to determine from time to time the extent and conditions of labour movement into its area.' This measure, as we will see, has been compromised by military closure.

The protocol also gave Palestinians freedom to import basic foodstuffs, certain processed foods, essential consumer products and some capital equipment for the textile, construction and agricultural sectors. Items falling outside the agreed list (of 526 items) remained subject to Israeli veto.⁹ Israel maintained control of all borders and ports. In agriculture, an area in which Palestinians might have

expected a level playing field, Israel stipulated restrictions on the import of poultry, eggs, potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes and melons from Palestinian producers for a period ending in 1998.

The demise of the Oslo peace process
The Oslo Accords set the stage for peace. Donors, particularly European governments, contributed funds to help establish the new Palestinian Authority, the beginning of Palestinian self-rule. Important infrastructure was created with donor funds and the beginnings of national health, education and fiscal policies were put in place. The expectation was that peace, however difficult, would come.

The failure of the Oslo Accords to deliver on their promise of peace has left a bitter aftermath. Structurally, the process was flawed from the start: key areas of inequality between the two principal signatories, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, were entrenched – which meant that one side would always reap disproportionate benefits. The international community was not sufficiently concerned to help tip the balance towards greater equality. And the key elements of Israeli policy towards the OPT continued, including closures, trade restrictions, and the expansion of settlements encroaching on Palestinian land.

There was also a significant omission from the Declaration of Principles (DoP), the first of the agreements in the Oslo Accords. For the first time in any agreement or statement on Israel and the OPT, there was no mention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and its specific protection of civilians living in territories under occupation. In allowing mention of these rights to be excluded from the DoP, the process lacked the fundamental requirements of international law and therefore lacked the canon that would, in areas of disagreement, define what was permissible and what was not. In the key document governing their future, Palestinians were left without a statement of protection under the umbrella of international law.

Lacking these key protections, and with many of the key elements of contemporary Israeli strategy in the OPT allowed to continue, the underlying structures and processes which fuelled Palestinian poverty continued to take their toll, exacerbating and extending impoverishment, reducing opportunities and increasing frustrations. In turn, this fuelled progressive decline into violence and human rights violations. The sense of betrayal and disappointment was, and remains, great. One Palestinian told Christian Aid: 'We were having a bad time before Oslo. We thought Oslo would bring peace. But nothing really has changed. In the past two years, instead of democracy or human rights, we just got tanks and rockets.'

Basic statistics

Geographic sizes

Mandate Palestine (1918-1948) 26,323 sq km
(slightly smaller than Belgium, or twice the size of Wales)

Israel (as defined by the 1949 Armistice Line) 20,200 sq km
(half the size of Switzerland)

The West Bank and Gaza Strip 6,165 sq km

The West Bank (incl East Jerusalem) 5,800 sq km
(twice the size of Oxfordshire or slightly smaller than Galway)

The Gaza Strip 365 sq km

So-called because it is geographically narrow, running 45 km long and only 5-12 km wide. Gaza is slightly smaller than the area of the Isle of Wight, although the Palestinian self-rule area is only 210 sq km, less than a quarter of the size of London, and less than half the size of Dublin.

Population (estimate for 2001 based on 1997 census)

Israel 6.3 million
This figure includes 1.1 million Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip (including East Jerusalem) 3,298,951

The West Bank (including East Jerusalem) 2,102,360
Almost 60 per cent of this population lives in villages and small towns of 10,000 or less. There are five cities of more than 30,000 persons and 22 towns of 10-30,000 persons. Almost half the population is refugee.

The Gaza Strip 1,196,591

The Gaza Strip is largely urban with 350,000 people in Gaza City, 105,000 in Khan Yunis and 59,000 in Rafah. Three-quarters of the population are refugees, many of whom live in Gaza's 26 camps in four refugee blocks.

Coming to a halt: the impact of closure

'Israeli occupation forces have erected hundreds of checkpoints at the entrances of every Palestinian community, dividing the West Bank into 64 enclaves and the Gaza Strip into three sections. At these checkpoints Israeli soldiers regularly humiliate, even terrorise, Palestinians. In one instance Israeli soldiers forced Palestinians in a car to eat even though it was the holy month of Ramadan in which observant Muslims fast from daybreak to sunset. In another case, soldiers demanded that a man who was transporting 30 large barrels of olive oil to market curse the Prophet Mohammed. When he refused, they poured all 30 drums of oil on the ground.'¹⁰

From a report by a Christian Aid partner, the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees

Closure – the system of Israeli checkpoints and blockades that prevent or severely restrict freedom of movement – is the most pernicious, least reported, and therefore least understood aspect of life for Palestinians. Closures are perhaps the single most important impediment to the development of a sustainable economy. By curbing freedom of movement, they affect employment, trade and the ability of business to operate effectively. They are also a source of humiliation and control – one of the constant elements of occupation that interfere with the most basic tasks of daily life. Travelling to work or taking a child to the doctor becomes an almost overwhelming obstacle – leaving Palestinians feeling trapped in their enclaves.

The policy of closure was inaugurated with the occupation in June 1967.¹¹ In 1968, in order to regulate the use and absorption of Palestinian labour into the Israeli economy, an order forbade

any Palestinian worker from the OPT to be inside Israel between 1am and 5am.¹² Workers travelling into Israel had to have a pass in order to do so. In 1991 the whole of the Gaza Strip was enclosed with an electrified fence. Israeli settlers choosing to live in the OPT in defiance of international law were not required to carry a similar pass. They were free to come and go as they pleased, and lived under a wholly separate system of law – that is, under Israeli domestic jurisdiction – while Palestinians lived under Israeli military jurisdiction.

Since March 1993, three forms of closure have been applied:

- Internal closure within the West Bank and Gaza Strip, preventing movement from one Palestinian locality or area to another within the West Bank and between the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip

- Closure of the borders between Israel and the OPT. This includes a prohibition on travel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip
- Closure of the international crossings between the OPT and Egypt and Jordan, the two countries in addition to Israel which adjoin the OPT.

Israel also uses 'absolute closure', a practice which prohibits all Palestinian travel across the 1949 Armistice Line, into East Jerusalem, between one Palestinian-controlled area (area A under the Oslo Accords) and another within the West Bank, and between the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip. Further, it forbids any movement through Israel to and from either the West Bank or Gaza Strip. Between 1993 and 1996 there were 342 days of absolute closure in the Gaza Strip, and 291 days of absolute closure in the West Bank.¹³ The signing of the Oslo Accords did not curb in any way the implementation of closure.

Checkpoints and closure

An extensive network of fixed and mobile military checkpoints now exists on roads inside both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At times of severe internal closure only Israeli troops, settlers and non-Palestinians may move on the roads. According to the World Bank, between September 2000 and the end of 2001, total closure was in place for 73 per cent of the time in the West Bank and four per cent of the time in the Gaza Strip. For the remaining 27 per cent of the time in the West Bank and 95 per cent in the Gaza Strip, 'partial' closure was in operation, forcing Palestinians to take highly circuitous routes to their destinations.¹⁴

The West Bank has suffered closures across its entire territory. Internal closure has segmented the Gaza Strip, one of the world's most densely populated areas, into three sections: Jabaliya, Gaza City and Khan Yunis/Rafah. Anyone travelling in either the West Bank or Gaza is immediately conscious of the difficulty of travelling, the massive

devastation of orchards alongside roads (cleared for security reasons) and the unpredictability of what may happen at checkpoints.

Access roads to most villages have been cut off, either by deep trenches gouged by bulldozers, or by two-metre high banks of earth, or concrete blocks. This means villagers must often walk or (where possible) drive cross-country to get to a road, but at the risk of being turned back. Trips which once took 25 minutes now take 12-14 hours. 'When my mother died,' a doctor working in a Gaza City clinic told Christian Aid, 'it took me two days to get home [to Khan Yunis]. You and I are the same. Why do you live the way you do and I cannot even get home?'¹⁵

Although restrictions apply mostly to Palestinians, they can apply to foreign non-governmental organisation workers, too. On Sunday 7 July 2002, for example, a Christian Aid worker tried to enter Nablus. The journey from Jerusalem took three-and-a-half hours, ending on a rough track on top of Mount Gerizim, outside the city, where donkey carts were available to transport would-be travellers into the city. But the track was blocked by an Israeli armoured personnel carrier and access was denied. After a two-hour wait, armed troops confirmed that the city would remain closed that day. It took four hours to return to Jerusalem. The travel time before closure from Jerusalem to Nablus was about one hour.

The international community has reacted to closure through poverty alleviation efforts, mostly to address basic needs rendered more acute by the Israeli closure policy. However, it has not challenged Israel's argument that security justifies the closures. It might be thought that closure is an understandable response to suicide bombers and other illegitimate acts of political violence. Yet absolute closures have failed to prevent the illegal entry into Israel of either Palestinian labourers in desperate need of work or suicide bombers.

testimony

'The soldiers pointed their guns'

Asmahan, 25, belongs to a refugee family originally from Ramla. She now lives in Gaza City. Because of the closures, it takes her up to seven-and-a-half hours to reach her relatives in Rafah, just 20 miles away – a journey that would take 45 minutes were it not for the checkpoints.

'Two weeks ago my husband left Rafah at noon to come to Gaza City. He reached Gaza at 4am. He reached the checkpoint and it closed. Then the checkpoint behind him closed and all the cars between the two checkpoints were locked in. Imagine it with a family, not being allowed to open the window, not being allowed to get out of the car. Imagine the anxiety of the family when they knew he had left at midday and had not arrived by dusk.

'My daughter is three years old. At the first checkpoint going to Rafah last week she got out of the car, exclaiming: "I will go to uncle [the Israeli soldier] to ask him to open the road." My husband jumped out to catch her. The soldiers pointed their guns at them both. My seven-year-old son was very frightened: "They will shoot you!" he screamed.'

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'The value of closure is psychological. It makes Israelis think they are safe,' said retired Israeli General Security Service (Shin Bet) commander Gideon Ezra MK. 'But in fact closure has the opposite effect. It doesn't stop the bombers. But it makes people angry, and that anger isn't good for anybody.'¹⁶

The cost of closure

Closures create three profoundly damaging phenomena: a loss of access to the labour market inside Israel, internal disruption and the profound uncertainty that makes daily life a constant struggle. The cost is primarily a human one: measured, as we will see in the following chapters, in employment dwindling to one day a week, malnourished children, and farmers forced to leave their crops to rot in the fields.

- **Impact on business and trade** Closure disrupts business. It results in lost orders and in increased transport costs in the order of anything between 100 and 200 per cent because of delays at military checkpoints. Uncertainty is the single greatest disincentive to

investment. Even the rumour of closure can affect prices of goods – as explained by a farmer who works with Christian Aid's partner PARC. 'We were selling crates of vegetables for about NIS 14,' he told Christian Aid. 'But as soon as there was word of closure the price collapsed to NIS 2.'¹⁷ In the first year of the intifada, 2000-01, industrial production in the OPT dropped by at least 65 per cent, with an estimated loss of US\$556 million.¹⁸

- **Trade** Closures have led to a steep decline in imports, severely reducing the PA's tax revenue and the economy's capacity. Exports of agricultural goods were estimated to have fallen by 30 per cent of their potential value and manufactured exports by some 24 per cent of their value by the end of 2001.¹⁹
- **Employment** is the area hardest hit. By 1996, around 28,000 Palestinians were travelling to Israel to work – a quarter of the number working there in 1992. Between 1993 and 2000, unemployment averaged 20 per cent. But at

testimony

Life under closure: Shawki, Ramallah district

'I worked a little in an Israeli settlement near Nablus before the big closure, but they decided not to pay us. We had worked for one month, very long hours, so in real terms it was more than a month's work. The settlement refused to pay us. We could do nothing.

'We have 14 children in this house. School starts again in one month's time. We have no money to get the children ready for school. We cannot afford to buy clothes or shoes. Anyway, out of 30 teachers at the school, ten will be unable to reach it because of the closure. Older children in the village cannot get to university for their final exams. It is happening all over the West Bank. There is great anxiety among these students.

'Three children, aged 21, 13 and 10, have thyroid trouble and need expensive medicine. A whole year has gone by since they had a blood test. If we could get to Aboud [a village about seven miles away] they could visit a clinic. A taxi would cost NIS 50 [US\$10], but even if we could afford it, there is an Israeli tank blocking the road. We have another child in the house who broke his arm. We could not afford proper treatment so we took him to a traditional healer. As you see, the arm is completely mis-set. It needs re-setting. But we have no money, and no insurance for hospital treatment.'

times of closure, the figures soar to as high as 75 per cent in the Gaza Strip and 50 per cent in the West Bank. 'There are 25 of us in the house where I live – six families in all. But only three of us are working,' a 19-year-old woman in Gaza City told Christian Aid in late 2002.

- high levels of stress are affecting all sections of Palestinian society. Attendance at Gazan mental health clinics has doubled since 2000. In a survey of 760 families in the Gaza Strip, almost nine out of ten reported a family member with psychological difficulties.

The impact on health

Placing three million people effectively under siege inevitably has consequences for their mental and physical health.

- treatment, even for routine health care, is increasingly inaccessible; people cannot travel to hospitals or clinics in the West Bank or receive treatment in East Jerusalem as they once did
- emergency care becomes more difficult as even Red Crescent ambulances have come under fire from Israeli defence forces
- rates of malnutrition are rising, particularly for children. Chronic malnutrition now stands at 13.2 per cent, with acute malnutrition at 9.3 per cent²⁰

A recent Johns Hopkins University survey found that the incidence of anaemia among Palestinian children under five had climbed to 19.7 per cent by 2002, with an even higher rate in the Gaza Strip. This condition, caused by a deficiency of iron, folic acid and protein, can lead to impaired learning and growth development and a decreased immunity to infectious diseases.²¹

The impact on education

- **Higher education** In 1995, Gazan students studying outside the Gaza Strip were denied permits for the first half of the second semester. According to one report: 'Midway through the second semester, Israel agreed to grant permission to about two-thirds of the students on the condition that they sign a

declaration of support for the political negotiations. The remaining one-third of Gazan students were never granted permits. No reasons were provided.²²

- **Primary and secondary education** Since September 2000, between ten and 90 per cent of teachers (depending on the area) have been unable to reach the primary and secondary schools where they teach because of closures. More than 60 government schools have been suspended in Areas A and B for a variety of intifada-related reasons. Seven schools have been seized and used by Israeli forces for military purposes. Secondary students in the West Bank were unable to sit their final exams in the summer of 2001 and again in summer 2002, jeopardising their chances of further education.

Some children have had to drop out of school. Parents are unwilling to let their children take public transport; they now have to pay twice because mini-vans are barred from passing through checkpoints. Children taking a mini-van get out at a checkpoint, walk across a no-man's-land, and take a second van; the fares are more than families can afford.

Said one mother of school-age children: 'When Bethlehem comes under curfew or attack, the teachers can't come to school in our village. During the siege of the Church of the Nativity, the parents went to teach in the school because the teachers couldn't get through. The children want to ask questions, but we can't answer them.'

Lost ground: Israeli settlements and Palestinian land

'At the checkpoint you can wait for up to six hours. The Israeli army does not allow you to get out of the car; they shoot those who do. You must keep the windows closed, even in summer. All of this is to protect the settlers from the Palestinians. Why not move them from our land so that we can move freely in our land and they can move freely in their land?'

Umm Mahir, Gaza Strip

Israel embarked upon a programme of land expropriation immediately after its capture of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.²³ Its immediate concern, as it spelled out in the 1967 Allon Plan, was to ensure strategic control of the West Bank by controlling a broad belt of land lying along the Jordan river, and a string of equally strategic points along the eastern escarpment of the West Bank highlands. In the name of security, it established military-agricultural settlements on these sparsely populated lands.

From the time that the Likud party came to power in 1977, the nature of settlement changed radically. The new objective was not merely to attain strategic security, but to integrate the territories acquired into Israel. Dormitory areas were created, effectively suburban neighbourhoods, within easy reach of the major metropolitan areas of Israel, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the other coastal towns. Heavy subsidies induced a large number of Israelis to settle in these areas, despite the settlements being internationally recognised as illegal.²⁴

Along with creating a permanent Israeli presence in the OPT, Israel began to expropriate large tracts of land close to Palestinian towns and villages. These tracts were often defined as 'state land'. By the time of the Oslo peace process, sequestered lands comprised 65 per cent of the West Bank and 42 per cent of the Gaza Strip.²⁵ By this time, too, there were

264,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, 160,000 of whom were within the revised boundaries of East Jerusalem, and a further 5,000 in the Gaza Strip. However, expropriation violated both the letter and the intent of the Geneva Convention.

Expropriation and settlement

In 1991, Israel began to intensify its land seizures and settlement programme. This coincided with the Madrid round of talks aimed at resolving the conflict. That year alone Israel expropriated just under 47,000 dunums (11,750 acres) of land and established eight new settlements with 13,650 housing units. It marked a threefold increase on 1990 levels. The number of settlement constructions commenced was 60 per cent greater than the average for any single year since 1967.²⁶

Israel also took planning powers out of the hands of Palestinian planning institutions and vested it in the hands of Israeli settler planning authorities, facilitating Israeli settlement and frustrating Palestinian efforts to obtain building permits. It began to build settler highways that circumvented Palestinian towns and villages while seizing Palestinian land on which to lay them. Palestinians were not allowed to travel on these roads.

In 1991, the US withheld US\$10 billion in loan guarantees to secure a halt to settlements. The

testimony

'They burned the crops': Khadr's story

'Yesha settlement stole 300 dunums (75 acres) of our land. Last January [2002] they burnt our crops and our farmhouse and shot at us. The first time they came, they just burned the crops. The second time they also destroyed our greenhouses. We suffered a loss of NIS 190,000, affecting four families...We should not stay long in this field. They will be watching us from that watchtower now and may start shooting at us.'

money had been intended to assist in housing Soviet immigrants inside Israel, not inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories. But on his election to office in June 1992, Prime Minister Rabin negotiated the release of these US funds in return for an undertaking to refrain from establishing new settlements. Excluded from the deal were 24,000 new units already under construction in East Jerusalem and the occupied territories and a proviso was agreed which allowed an annual increase of up to 2,000 units in the West Bank to allow for 'natural growth'.²⁷ By March 1993, while the Madrid process was continuing, Rabin had inaugurated the largest building boom in the OPT since 1967.

Losing ground during the Oslo peace process It was understood, among Palestinians and the international community, that in assigning decisions about the future of existing settlements to the final settlement negotiations of the Oslo peace process there would be a complete cessation of settlement enlargement in the interim. Instead, Israel has proceeded apace with 'thickening', or enlarging, these settlements to make it yet harder to remove them, while expropriating yet more land for settlement.

From the signing of the Oslo Accords until August 2001 more than 280,000 dunums (70,000 acres) of land were confiscated in the West Bank. According to an in-depth report on settlements produced by Christian Aid partner B'Tselem, built-up settlements comprise only 1.7 per cent of Palestinian territory. However, Israeli settlement regional councils control a further 41.9 per cent of Palestinian land, excluding

security zones or areas controlled by the Israeli Defence Forces.²⁸ As of mid-2002, over 150 new housing units were being constructed in the Gaza Strip, some on newly seized land.²⁹

Despite clear Israeli violation of international law, the international community has been reluctant to uphold and enforce it. A good example of this unwillingness is illustrated by one settlement, Har Homa, which lies between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Construction of this settlement, approved by Shimon Peres in 1996, completed the chain of settlements that deliberately ringed Jerusalem and cut it off from its Palestinian Arab hinterland – an act which made Har Homa not just one small settlement, but turned it into a source of debate at the UN. The UK's then-Foreign Secretary, Malcom Rifkind, stated: 'Like all the settlements this one will be illegal, and it goes against the spirit of the Oslo Agreement.'³⁰

But the United States used its veto twice to block a UN Security Council resolution critical of Har Homa. An emergency session of the UN General Assembly called for a halt to Har Homa and an end to all settlement activity in the OPT. However, the General Assembly, then as now, lacked mandatory powers to enforce its will, and Har Homa was built, regardless of international opinion.³¹ It thereby undermined prospects for Palestinian political and economic coherence by effectively separating East Jerusalem from the West Bank.

Walling off the West Bank

Around the West Bank town of Qalqilya, looming eight metres high, is a vast grey concrete wall.

testimony

'I have no right to build a house on my land': Daoud, West Bank farmer helped by Christian Aid partner YMCA

'I have 42 acres, half of which is under threat of confiscation. It was bought by my grandfather in 1924. During the 1970s and 1980s, the building continued...our land is now surrounded by three settlements. I have no right to build on my land.

'In 1991 we heard that Israel was trying to confiscate part of our land as it "had no owner". We went to the military court near Ramallah and showed them our documents – they were shocked. "Where did you get them," they asked. They postponed the case and said that I had to prove ownership. They said we needed a new map with measurements on it and signed and agreed by all the neighbours. We were given only 35 days to do this.

'This wasn't easy, but we did it, and presented the map. They then called for witnesses who had worked there. Then, in February 1992, our lawyer got a letter saying that the documents didn't prove that it was ours, it was state land and was to be confiscated.

'We have now gone to the Supreme Court, which will cost us US\$10,000. But even if we get to keep the land, we can't develop it or build on it. It is difficult to get permission.'

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When Christian Aid visited this Palestinian town in October 2002, the wall was part-way through construction – unfinished metal loops running along the top of the wall, ready for coils of razor wire, and studded by as-yet unmanned watchtowers. At night it was patrolled by Israeli armoured vehicles.

Standing on the crest of a hill, looking towards Israel, all the land that could be seen by Christian Aid observers had been confiscated by Israel to make way for the wall. Large, well-established groves of olive trees, fields of vegetables, dozens of greenhouses and even homes were lost to the other side. Some farmland had been bulldozed to create security areas. All told, Qalqilya was losing 5,000 acres. The wall was cutting off its farms and its livelihoods.

This security wall is being built, at the cost of £1 million a mile, to create a barrier between Israel and the West Bank. It will run 250 miles through the West Bank, and be accompanied by floodlights and electronic detectors. This is the new Israeli answer

to suicide bombers, which a two-year policy of tightened 'closure' – the network of roadblocks and military checkpoints that bound most villages and every city of the West Bank and Gaza Strip – has failed to stop.

But for Qalqilya, the wall is a disaster. It has been commonly thought that the wall would follow the Green Line of the 1967 boundary between Israel and the West Bank. But in practice, it is swallowing great swathes of Palestinian land. Secondary walls are being planned to completely encircle major Palestinian towns and villages close to the Green Line; access will be through Israeli-controlled gates. It will establish a new, *de facto* border for Israel – and less land for Palestinians. Palestinians say the wall will effectively create the world's largest open-air prison.

No end in sight: housing units and roads
When the Oslo Accords were signed in September 1993, there were 32,750 housing units in the settlements, housing approximately 100,000 settlers

in the West Bank outside East Jerusalem. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords, another 20,371 units had been constructed by 2001, an increase of 62 per cent. In 1997, Israel handed over 80 per cent of Hebron to the PA, but retained 20 per cent of the city centre, to accommodate the 400 Israeli settlers living in this city of 120,000 Palestinians. In April 2002, tenders were invited to replace the mobile homes located there with permanent houses.³² On coming to office in February 2001, Ariel Sharon authorised the construction of 34 new settlements over the following 12 months.³³

A network of highways has also been constructed to enable Israeli settlers to by-pass Palestinian towns and villages. For each 100km of such by-pass 'security' highways, some 2,500 acres of often-fertile agricultural land are confiscated. A band of land some 50-75 metres wide either side of the road comes under Israeli control, on which no construction is allowed. Approximately 350km of by-pass roads have so far been constructed, with a land loss to Palestinians of more than 8,000 acres.

In September 1993 the total illegal Israeli settler population for all the Occupied Palestinian Territories stood at 269,000. By the beginning of 2002 this figure

had risen to 380,000,³⁴ the increase being mainly in the West Bank where the population virtually doubled to reach 200,000. East Jerusalem's illegal settler population has also grown to reach 175,000.³⁵

Vesting planning authority in settler authorities allows them to refuse Palestinian applications for building permits. In this way Israel can ensure that Palestinians remain highly confined within their towns and villages. After the signing of the 1995 Interim Agreement on extending the jurisdiction of Palestinian self-rule, planning powers for Areas A and B (approximately 40 per cent of the West Bank) were transferred to the Palestinian Authority. However, in the case of dozens of villages and towns, the vacant land for housing lies on their periphery, just across the boundary in Israeli-controlled Area C, and thus applications for building permits remain thwarted by Israeli control.³⁶

Palestinians fear they will not get their land back. One well-informed Palestinian told Christian Aid: 'Palestinians now view Israeli land seizure as a policy of confining us to concentrated areas. Sharon is now speaking of returning about 42 per cent of the occupied territories – in other words, 42 of the 22 per cent of Palestine the Israelis did not conquer in 1948.'³⁷

Building restrictions in Beit 'Inan: Naji Jamhour, head of the village council

'Our current total land is 12,000 dunums (3,000 acres). It belongs to the *waqf* [an inalienable Islamic endowment]. We have a population of 5,000. Before the 1948 war our village lands, together with Imwas and Yalu [villages razed after the 1967 war], stretched all the way down to the coastal plain. Our village is famous for its olive and almond trees.

'Technically we are in Area B [under joint Israeli and Palestinian control]. We suffer from planning restrictions. We cannot build, except on a very limited area – 750 out of the 12,000 dunums. If people build homes where they want them, the Israelis come and demolish them. The 750 dunums of agricultural land on which building is permitted is down the side of this steep valley. We may not build on top of the hill. Only Israeli settlers are allowed to build on hilltops.'

Every last drop: Israel's control of water

'Before we lost our land, some people planted their farms with olives. The trees have been uprooted by the Israelis. We may not use water for agriculture. Our domestic water is often not running. So we sometimes have little water to drink. Over the road we see the sprinklers on the lawns of the Israeli settlements.'

Shawki, a farmer in Ramallah district

Israel took immediate steps in 1967 to control and, in some places, restrict Palestinian access to water. It forbade any new water installation without a licence issued by the military commander.³⁸ It declared all water sources to be 'state property'.³⁹ It introduced water meters to limit Palestinian consumption to 1967 levels, thereby controlling the amount of expansion possible in arguably the most important sector of the Palestinian economy, agriculture, but also limiting its use for industrial purposes.

In a traditional agricultural society as existed in 1967 in Palestine, virtually every village depended on shallow-draught wells. If they ran dry, new wells sometimes needed to be dug. Between 1967 and 1994 the number of new wells allowed for supply of drinking water did not exceed 15 for the West Bank. In the meantime, Israel embarked on sinking deep wells that lowered the water table and thus dried out many shallow-draught village wells.

In 1982, control of all water resources and their supply was handed to the Israeli water authority, Mekorot. No new sources are now allowed for agricultural purposes. Theoretically, a new well can be bored within ten metres of the old well, but its depth is limited. They may not dig deeper and the Palestine Hydrology Group normally advises villages not to waste their money as the groundwater has been lowered by Israeli exploitation and the villagers will not strike water. Of 750 wells that existed in the West Bank prior to the

1967 war, less than half are still functioning. Furthermore, Palestinians were denied all access to the River Jordan – a critically important resource – although as a territory on the bank of the river it has a right of access in international law.

The restriction on water for agricultural purposes is apparent in the decline of irrigation for agriculture. In the 1970s about 17 per cent of agricultural land was irrigated. Today that proportion is a mere five per cent.⁴⁰ In the Gaza Strip, a comparatively arid area, the limited water resources were pumped to supply Israeli agricultural activity, not only in the Gaza Strip but also in the Negev.⁴¹

Since the Oslo Accords, Israel has retained strict control of water, setting aside the issue of water for final status talks. It continues to use 79 per cent of the renewable water resources of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for Israelis, either in Israel proper or in settlements in the OPT.⁴²

The loss of water to the OPT has been immensely damaging. In 1999, water experts estimated that the cost to Palestinian agriculture and industry caused by Israeli water restrictions, including water illegally taken by Israel since 1967, was a minimum of US\$45 billion.⁴³

Water as a weapon: since the intifada Since the second intifada the water situation for Palestinians has deteriorated further. Closures

testimony

Solving the water crisis: Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees

'We have real water problems. There are more than a thousand wells in the Gaza Strip. Over 140 of them have been damaged or polluted by the Israelis. Many locations have no water to drink and rely on trucked water. We do this mainly in the southern part of the Strip. Palestinians here get only 50 litres of water a day. The settlers consume between 400-500 litres a day.

'PARC has a programme of cistern construction. In the Gaza Strip, these are made of corrugated iron with a plastic lining. Because cisterns and water tanks attract Israeli rifle and machine-gun fire, they are sunk into the ground with only the top exposed. Each cistern holds 220 cubic metres of water, collected off greenhouse roofs in winter and pumped into the cisterns from wells, once depleted in summer.'

The price of water

In a groundbreaking report published in July 2000, Christian Aid partner B'Tselem explored the mechanisms of the control and use of water by Israel in the OPT:

'The discrimination of the resources shared by Israel and the PA is clearly seen in the figures on water consumption by the two populations: in the West Bank, consumption for domestic, urban and industrial use is only approximately 26 cubic metres a year, which is approximately 70 litres a day.

'There is a huge gap between Israeli and Palestinian consumption. The average Israeli consumes for domestic and urban use approximately 103 cubic metres a year, or 282 litres a day. In other words, per capita use in Israel is four times higher than in the OPT. To make a more precise comparison by also taking into account industrial water consumption in Israel, per capita use per year reaches 128 cubic metres – 350 litres per person a day – or five times Palestinian per capita consumption.

'Urban water consumption of Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip is 584 litres per person a day, almost seven times greater than domestic water consumption among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

'The World Health Organisation and the United States Agency for International Development recommend 100 litres of water per person per day as a minimum quantity for basic consumption. This amount includes, in addition to domestic use, consumption in hospitals, schools, businesses, and other public institutions.'⁴⁴

testimony

'Two-thirds of the wells are dry': Mamduh, a farmer helped by Christian Aid partner PARC

'Israel controls the water. Al Awja village, for instance, has 5,000 inhabitants and covers 40,000 dunums [10,000 acres] of land. Most of this land cannot be reached as it is inside a designated 'military zone', so in practice villagers can only use 12,000 dunums of land – less than one third of the total. At the beginning of the 1980s, the Israelis sunk nine deep wells on the edge of the Jordan Valley to a depth of 250 metres and have been drawing water from them since then. As a result, the water table has sunk and the Al Awja village wells have dried up. Consequently the villagers have no water except rainfall. Last year Al Awja village could cultivate only 2,000 dunums of its land – one sixth of the 12,000 dunums to which it currently has access.

'Since then, Israelis have dug another 11 wells. It is estimated that two-thirds of the village wells in the Jordan Valley are now dry.'

have rendered it extremely difficult to truck water to villages that depend on the provision of water by tankers. With the cutting of the access roads to such villages, water tankers have to drive down rough agricultural tracks or even cross-country to reach their destinations. Some houses find themselves waiting two or three weeks to get water into their cistern. Random shooting at Palestinian villages has resulted in many villagers' water tanks (which sit on the roofs of homes) being punctured. Palestinians believe the shooting of water tanks happens so frequently that it is deliberate. Already in deep penury, villagers have little choice but to scrape together whatever money they can to replace these tanks. By November 2000 the price for trucked water had risen from US\$2.5 per cubic metre to US\$7.5 per cubic metre.⁴⁵

Drinking water allocation for the OPT in 2000 worked out at 26 cubic metres per Palestinian yearly, the equivalent of 70 litres a day. The allocation for Israelis was 128 cubic metres per head per year, or 350 litres daily. In other words, per capita water consumption in Israel is five times higher than in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel also uses almost eight times more water for

agriculture than the OPT, in part because the latter is denied access.⁴⁶

After 35 years of military occupation, there are still 215,000 Palestinians living in villages who have never been connected to the drinking water supply lines.⁴⁷ They do what people did two thousand years ago: catch rainwater in winter and store it in cisterns. In summer, if lucky, they have a spring that still functions nearby. Otherwise they must pay exorbitant sums for water to be trucked in.⁴⁸ Such water storage is yet another burden on impoverished villagers and another installation vulnerable to wanton destruction during armed Israeli raids.

A bleak harvest: the undermining of agriculture

'Jericho's harvest is its lifeblood. But we cannot get our produce out of Jericho because of the closure. So there are huge levels of unemployment for farmers. Even when things were open we needed approval to export vegetables to Europe but the Israelis delayed the shipments...the cargo rotted.'

A farmer working with Christian Aid partner PARC

When Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 65 per cent of the Palestinian population was rural and largely engaged in farming. Israel took three steps that had a devastating effect on Palestinian agriculture.

- **Firstly**, Israel allowed Palestinians to obtain work across the Green Line, inside Israel, where they could earn more than at home, reflecting the higher cost of living in Israel. From a short-term perspective this move would appear to have been beneficial to Palestinian livelihoods, providing opportunities to earn higher incomes. However, the long-term effect has been to erode the pivotal agricultural base of the economy of the OPT. Attractive short-term wages have stimulated the exodus of roughly two-thirds of farmers from the land, some remaining merely as part-time farmers. In turn, this has led to rapid falls in investment in the land, reducing the productivity of farms and widening still further the gap between incomes from farming and from migratory labour. In cases where the exodus of labour has resulted in the total cessation of cultivation, more deep-seated problems have arisen. Failure to till the land for three consecutive years has been used by Israel as a reason to seize 'uncultivated land' (under Ottoman law), to declare it 'state land', and to make it available to Israeli settlers – but not to Palestinians.

- **Secondly**, Israel began to dump its surplus and subsidised agricultural produce, including milk, cheese, meat, then fruit and vegetables, on the territories' markets. More cheaply priced goods are clearly attractive to Palestinian consumers but for farmers this meant the erosion and, in some cases, the total loss of their major market, providing another contributory cause of the undermining of Palestinian agriculture.
- **Thirdly**, Israeli policies directly and indirectly encouraged Palestinians to embark on growing and exporting a narrow range of labour-intensive products, such as onions for seeds in the West Bank and strawberries and flowers in the Gaza Strip, for Israel's export market, making use of their comparatively lower wage levels. But many of these products also tended to be relatively low value-added products, or more risky. Differential price incentives and quantitative restrictions placed on some more high-value products ensured that alternative production of products such as tomatoes, would be less profitable. Production for domestic consumption of such crops fell correspondingly.

In 1984 Israel imposed production quotas on key market-garden produce, such as tomatoes and cucumbers, and imposed a blanket prohibition on the cultivation of melons and on the planting of new, or replacement of old, fruit trees without a permit.⁴⁹ It was soon apparent that such permits were

testimony

'The crop was left to rot': Mamduh Abu Jarrar, a farmer working with PARC
'Farmers have no safety net. They have no insurance for what they cultivate. If it rots they lose everything. Why do we have no factories for, say, tomato paste here? The answer is very simple: why would any private investor in his right mind invest in such a factory when there is such political instability? So there is no facility for processing tomatoes we cannot get to market. Last year we had to sell 15kg crates of tomatoes for NIS 1 or NIS 2 (up to US\$.50). Agricultural inputs come from Israel and they are too expensive. Each crate costs NIS 7-8 to produce. The wholesaler takes ten per cent, the Jericho municipality takes three per cent. So last season, 70 per cent of the crop was left to rot.'

'We have some 600 farmers here in Jericho. Collectively, they have about NIS 8 million in debts. If the closure continues into next year, the farmers will not plant and the number of farmers will fall by about one-third to, say, 400 farmers. There are 400,000 dunums here in the valley, but Palestinians are only allowed to use 37,000.'

'There has been massive destruction of farms around settler roads. We wish to depend on ourselves and our freedom. We live in fear for our trees.'

extremely difficult to obtain, taking five years or more. Israel also imposed restrictions and high tariffs on Gaza's citrus exports, while introducing a tax regime that favoured Israeli producers.⁵⁰ Unable to replace low-yield or dead trees and unable to export freely, Gaza's citriculture went into long-term decline. Israel also applied restrictions on the export of major Palestinian products such as grapes and dates into Israel.⁵¹ In the meantime, Israeli goods were sold without restriction in the OPT. Palestinian farmers now had to compete against heavily subsidised produce.

Farmer Mamduh explained how banana farmers were put out of business:

The Jordan Valley used to have huge banana plantations. We had 4,000 dunums of bananas around Jericho. Israel used to import bananas from Palestinians. The Palestinian plantations have now almost entirely disappeared, wiped out by subsidised Israeli produce. Over the past ten years, the market has been flooded with Israeli bananas, which enjoy a 42 per cent subsidy. They decided to squeeze us out of the market. It is the same story with citrus.⁵²

Israeli security closures and agriculture
Before the Oslo Accords, agriculture was the principal productive sector of the Palestinian economy, accounting for 27 per cent of Palestinian GDP. By 2002, agriculture's contribution to GDP had fallen to just seven per cent. Already far less technologically advanced than its Israeli neighbour, Palestinian agriculture suffers the additional disadvantage of trying to compete on an unequal playing field. Israeli trade restrictions, closures and limits on water use for irrigation fundamentally hamper farmers' efforts to expand production, expand exports and diversify their production base to reduce risk.

These longer-term factors have worked together to erode the strength and importance of the agricultural sector and provide a backdrop to the more recent setbacks caused by closure.

In mid-summer 2001 and 2002, fruit and crops rotted on the trees and in the fields throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as, for the second year running, it was impossible to get produce to market. After one year of internal closure, by

testimony

'We wait for hours at the checkpoint': Muhammad, grape farmer

'We have a very early season for seedless grapes, which gives them great value for export. They can only be grown in the Jordan Valley, nowhere else. Normally they sell at NIS 15 per kilo, but with the closure they fetch only NIS 2-3. Before cropping, the cost to produce is NIS 6 per kilo. We have to compete against Israeli produce enjoying a 40 per cent subsidy. We are suspicious about the treatment we get at checkpoints. We are made to wait for four or five hours to cross a checkpoint, by which time the grapes are beginning to rot and we cannot sell them at market.'

September 2001, agricultural earnings had suffered a devastating 70 per cent decline.

Judeh Abdullah, deputy director of PARC, explained the impact of closure on farming. 'Israel controls the inputs and imports for agriculture. It also controls marketing, how far we can export out of the territories, to Jordan, to Europe or even to Israel. But now with the closure, we cannot even market from one village to another.' He continued:

All Palestinian agricultural produce is restricted by closure. Closure is applied to protect Israel's markets. Israel only accepts Palestinian produce if it is itself short of a commodity or wants it for export. A plum farmer from Beit Suriq, for example, is fined for taking his produce into East Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is under occupation like Beit Suriq, but it has been illegally annexed to Israel. I see no one in the international community ensuring the right for Palestinian farmers to take their produce into East Jerusalem. Why not?

By September 2001, the losses to agriculture were estimated at US\$246 million. But this was not just loss of trade or unharvested crops. The figure included the cost of Israeli measures, including the destruction of crops, trees and the agricultural infrastructure, preventing work on cultivated land; settler attacks on farmers working in their fields; damage to greenhouses and irrigation; and export bans on produce.⁵³ The Ministry of Agriculture estimated that, in the first year of the second intifada, at least 124,000 trees had been uprooted

from 11,000 dunums (2,750 acres) of land. Using World Bank figures that estimate the value of each fruit tree to be \$250 (reflecting the time taken to mature as well as their expected yield) the loss, in financial terms solely from uprooting trees, is probably in excess of US\$31 million.

Farmers' greenhouses, supported by Christian Aid's partner PARC, have been bulldozed and destroyed to create a security zone around the Israeli settlement of Dogit. Said one Christian Aid observer, visiting two days after the destruction of the greenhouses in December 2001: 'The farmers in this part of Gaza have lost their livelihoods. If they stray into this now-barren area, they risk being shot.'

Fishing the sea at Gaza

Fishing has always been an important part of the Gazan economy. Approximately 2,200 fishermen provide a living for their families, many of whom were refugees and therefore arrived in the Gaza Strip in 1948 without any assets. Another 1,200 people work in the fishing industry, in the cleaning and preparation of fish. Altogether, just under 4,000 families are dependent on fishing for their livelihood, probably around 28,000 people in all.⁵⁴

Under the Oslo Accords, Gazan fishermen were permitted to work within a 20-nautical-mile limit, consistent with the Convention of the High Seas and confirmed by Palestinian-Israeli agreement.⁵⁵ In fact, throughout the period of the Oslo peace process there were marine closures, which intensified at the outset of the second intifada when

testimony

'Each fisherman has his own story': Nabil, a fisherman from Shati refugee camp
'On 15 December 2001, I was arrested with four others in our boat. We were told to strip and the Israelis hosed us with water. We were in a permitted area; we had a permit. But after half an hour another Israeli vessel came and took our equipment and told us to go north with them to Ashdod port [in Israel]. We were handcuffed and hooded and put in prison.

'After 15 minutes they asked my name and removed the hood and took us to Ashkelon interrogation centre, where we were held for four months. We did not see daylight for four months. I was tortured. They made me sit on a tiny seat with my hands tied tightly behind my back to my ankles.

'I have 12 in my family. I do not have money for a lawyer. I now have to find US\$2,800 for legal aid. I was sentenced to 14 months in prison. After three days, the others were released. It was a security offence. I was accused of smuggling people, but I was innocent. I am now denied a fishing permit so I have no living from my boat.

'We have no one to turn to. There are 2,200 fishermen. You have heard from some of them. Each fisherman has his own story.'

Israel arbitrarily restricted fishing to six nautical miles. This restriction has, at times, been further reduced to three nautical miles.

In addition to these restrictions, fishing communities have faced consistent violations of human rights. 'Even in this reduced area,' reported the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, 'Israeli forces continue to harass fishermen by chasing them and firing random shots and noise bombs in their direction. Israeli naval boats also often attack Palestinian fishing boats, arrest fishermen... and take them to detention centres.'⁵⁶

Between 29 September 2000 and 31 May 2002, ten fishermen were shot while working, and another five suffered injuries as a result of beatings or being sprayed with water hoses. A further 65 were arrested at sea and then detained. Nets have been confiscated, boats impounded or sunk and the harbour has been bombed. Sometimes Israeli forces simply shoot in the direction of fishing boats, forcing the crew to return to shore. Ancillary workers, primarily women engaged in cleaning and gutting,

are also adversely affected by attacks on fishing vessels; if the boats do not come in to port, they have no work and do not get paid.

Over the course of the Oslo peace process, the fishing catch almost halved, from 3,790 tonnes in 1997 to 1,950 tonnes in 2001.⁵⁷ Losses suffered by fishermen from September 2000, when the intifada began, to April 2002 are estimated by the Palestinian Authority at US\$5.5 million, of which US\$700,000 is damage to equipment and boats.⁵⁸

'A process of deterioration': health, intifada and closure

'Hanadi, aged ten, experiences panic attacks as a result of Israeli shelling. This is manifested in terror, palpitation, difficulty in breathing, coldness of extremities and body shaking. In one instance, shelling occurred while Hanadi was returning home from school. After that she started to avoid going to school.'

Report from the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, 2002

In 1967 health care was almost entirely urban based and delivered through four separate channels: the military government; the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), which worked exclusively in the refugee camps; voluntary agencies; and private clinics and hospitals. Primary health care was almost entirely provided by government and UNRWA, but was wholly inadequate to needs. The absence of a national Palestinian authority to coordinate the health delivery system left a continuing fundamental weakness in provision. From the 1970s, Palestinian voluntary agencies took over the key role in providing health care. By 1992, locally organised clinics provided more than 68 per cent of primary health care.⁶⁰

On the whole, these indigenous ventures sought to meet the needs of marginalised rural communities that had always been neglected by government. By 1992 the four main NGO health networks estimated that they served about 45 per cent of the population.⁶¹ Even so, areas remained which were severely under-served, particularly in villages south of Hebron and others in the far north.⁶²

Creating a health service

In 1994 the PA took over a run-down government health system. The process of developing a national health service, in coordination with the voluntary sector, inevitably faced problems. Conditions and health needs differed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the Gaza Strip, the densely populated

refugee camps required fewer but more comprehensive health clinics than in the West Bank. Both areas, however, suffered the consequences of a lack of coherent national planning.

As part of the process of building national institutions, the PA wanted to formalise procedures, strengthen hospitals and create a national health system. The voluntary sector, specialising in primary, community-based health care, was anxious to maintain its flexibility. The inevitable result was some tension between the voluntary sector's grassroots approach and the PA's attempts to centralise.

Despite these teething problems, advances were made by both NGOs and central government in establishing coherent strategies. But a collapse in funding between 1993 and 1996 led to the closing of 53 per cent of NGO clinics. Some of the responsibility lay with the diversion of international donor aid from NGOs to the PA, but there was also an overall decline in funding from donors, particularly European donors. Overall, an estimated 20 per cent of health care facilities in the West Bank and Gaza ceased to exist in the first three years of the Oslo peace process.⁶³

Closure and health

But it is closure that has had the most immediate and damaging impact on health care. Closure has impeded the PA in its complex task of creating a coherent health system for the Palestinian people.

Women and the occupation

Women and work

Women head about nine per cent of all Palestinian households, yet these households constitute more than half of the poorest households, with 30 per cent falling below the poverty line.⁵⁹

Closure has hit women hard. Aziza, mother to five children in the West Bank village of Nahaleen, for instance, harvests honey from bees in an income-generating project funded by Christian Aid through the YMCA Women's Training Programme. After her husband lost his job in Israel because of the closures, she became the family's sole breadwinner. Finding it difficult to travel through checkpoints to sell her honey in the market, she got a job as a cleaner in the Red Cross Hospital in Jerusalem. The hospital had to apply for a work permit for her. 'Every day we suffer from the occupation,' she told Christian Aid. 'We are not living, we are existing.'

Christian Aid partners such as the YMCA, PARC and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) have devised income-generation programmes for women affected by the economic deterioration resulting from closure. This is done by providing loans, advice on setting up small businesses and support programmes to raise awareness among women of the important role they play in the development process.

An example of this – and of how women are increasingly fulfilling the role of breadwinner – is Amna, a mother of two from Bethlehem. She set up a livestock-rearing project with the YMCA to improve her family's income when her husband had to close his olive wood factory – a casualty of the dying tourist industry in Bethlehem. Her husband now works with Amna, raising and selling livestock.

At the MECC in Gaza City, women and young girls have access to secretarial and computer training, as well as high-quality courses in tailoring. These reputable training schemes improve the chances of finding work for their female graduates, but graduates are nevertheless entering a job market suffering more than 80 per cent unemployment.

And, as the closures have intensified over the past two years, many of these initiatives have stalled, leading to a further downturn in the standard of living, particularly for rural families. Many women receive their only livelihoods through the MECC's programme for women, which provides beneficiaries with a monthly salary of NIS 500 (US\$112).

Women and health

At the MECC clinics in the Gaza Strip, key problems identified by doctors are anaemia, malnutrition and mental health problems. At the ante-natal clinic held at Darraj, Gaza City, many pregnant women with small children are treated for anaemia – a result of a poor and iron-deficient diet. Advice is given to each of them on how best they can feed their families when all they can afford are the cheapest vegetables.

Hanan, a 22-year-old mother, has already lost one child to acute anaemia: 'My husband used to work in Israel as a tailor, but now he cannot get permission to go there. We have no money for our basic food.'

Stress levels are high for pregnant women, particularly in the countryside, as they reach full term and face the difficulty of reaching hospital through roadblocks. Health NGOs have tried to ensure that a sufficient number of midwives are trained, but still a large number of women have given birth at roadblocks.

During the February 1996 closure, for instance, the national vaccination programme was halted and the import of essential pharmaceuticals and medical supplies restricted. The Ramallah-based research institute, the Health Development Information Project, stated:

A process of disintegration is beginning to develop, whereby health organisations that operate in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip are having significant problems in preserving their vital operations in the Gaza Strip. The lack of communication and inability of health personnel to travel between the two regions have caused the Gaza branches to be completely isolated.⁶⁴

Abd al Hadi Abu Khoussa, coordinator of the Christian Aid partner organisation Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) in the Gaza Strip, echoed this point:

The separation of the Gaza Strip from the West Bank since Oslo has been a massive obstacle to the provision of an integrated health service and has undoubtedly adversely affected health services, especially services for poor communities. Even running a health organisation is almost impossible. I have been unable to attend coordination meetings in the West Bank without a permit, which has often been denied. I was unable to be involved in key meetings with our West Bank office. We have instead met in Beirut, Amsterdam and Valencia – all of which are easier to reach than the West Bank.

Closure stops the provision of even urgent care. 'Over the past five days,' reported UPMRC in a press statement of 19 November 2002, 'ten patients from Yatta who are suffering from chronic kidney disease were prevented from receiving their kidney dialysis treatment in Hebron. Their condition is highly critical.'

Intifada and health

Under occupation, particularly since September 2000, health services have become progressively

more inadequate. Israel has seized several hospital buildings, turning one into a police headquarters (in Jerusalem) and another into a military headquarters (at Beit El near Ramallah).

Christian Aid partner UPMRC also reported that its Jenin office was seized by Israeli forces. A spokesman for UPMRC reported: 'We have received information that much of our equipment was intentionally destroyed. Our doctors and nurses were threatened at gunpoint and prevented from accessing the centre, which is currently used as an operational base for the Israeli occupying army.'⁶⁵

Speaking in April 2002, at the time of major Israeli incursions, UPMRC president Dr Mustafa Barghouti reported:

The Israeli army is using members of medical teams as human shields. For instance, Dr Muhammad Skafi, the director of the emergency department at UPMRC, was detained for four hours while carrying out his work. He was threatened with the bombing of the UPMRC office if he refused to act as a human shield while the soldiers searched houses in the area.⁶⁶

Emergency services have virtually ceased to operate. In some cases, ambulances have come under fire from Israeli forces; in other cases, roadblocks have stopped people from receiving care or being taken to hospital. Emergency services now estimate that, if they obtain access at all because of closure and curfew, six to eight hours is the average time needed to transport patients to hospital.⁶⁷

In January 2001, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society reported 109 incidents of denial of access to ambulances at roadblocks. In June 2002 USAID found that 28 per cent of 320 households surveyed reported that at least one family member had not been able to gain access to medical care when it was needed.⁶⁸ In some cases, this has proved fatal. Nathir Nayef al Haj Hassen, age 23, of Jamma'in, Nablus,

testimony

Pressure on the health service: Abd al Hadi Abu Khoussa, UPMRC

'We suffer in Gaza from a lack of drugs and equipment from the West Bank. Many patients need treatment in the West Bank. The majority never receive treatment. Because our students cannot go to the community health school in the West Bank, we must train them here. This means we have to duplicate all our training equipment and material.

'Our main problem is that 80 per cent or so of people live in poverty in the Gaza Strip. We have to meet the costs of our services in their entirety because people have no money. They cannot pay health fees or for medicine even when these are at a very low price. We have started to cover 45 areas with a total population of 200,000 people with new mobile clinic services because these people cannot reach our static clinics. We are covering overcrowded areas.

'As a consequence we need funding to cover the costs of more doctors and health workers. Some areas remain inaccessible, for example, Mawasi Khan Yunis and Mawasi Rafah in the south, Siyafa in north-western Gaza and Mughazi camp. In each case it is because of their proximity to an Israeli settlement.

'We have suffered two casualties: 20 months ago one of our ambulance drivers was wounded when fired upon in his ambulance by a tank at Beit Hanoun. Then, a year ago, another driver was killed when an Israeli naval vessel moored off the coast opened fire on his ambulance.'

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died on 11 October 2000 after a tractor accident. He was prevented from reaching hospital and bled to death. Ala' Usama Hamdan, age 10, of al-Sawyeh, Nablus, suffering a lung infection, was unable to pass through a checkpoint and consequently died, on 13 October 2001. Nai'im Atallah Ahma, age 37, from al-Zawyeh, Salfit, required regular kidney dialysis. He died on 16 October 2000, having been refused passage to hospital at a checkpoint. Abd al Fattah Jawhar al-Sabkhi, age four, of Khan Yunis, suffered from a heart condition. He was not allowed to travel to Egypt or Jordan to receive treatment, and died on 20 March 2001.⁶⁹

Women in childbirth represent another group whose vulnerability has increased as a result of closure. In 1999, health attendants were present at 96 per cent of births and only eight per cent of births took place at home. By mid-summer 2002, births attended by health professionals had dropped to 67 per cent. Denial of access has resulted in women giving birth at checkpoints in at least 39 cases, according to the

Palestine Monitor.⁷⁰ One woman lost her seven-month-old baby when the car she was travelling in was fired on by a tank – a case that was later taken up by a Christian Aid partner, Physicians for Human Rights. In another case, Insaf al-Abeisi, aged 39, from Beit Dajan near Nablus, had a stillbirth after an ambulance sent to transfer her to hospital was denied access to her village.⁷¹

Another disturbing development since the intifada has been the sharp deterioration in public health. In addition to a dramatic increase in malnutrition rates, the incidence of waterborne and infectious diseases has also risen. In the Nablus governorate alone, from July to August 2002, 600 cases of shigellosis (bloody diarrhoea) were registered.⁷²

The rise in these sorts of diseases reflects the lack of public services, including the problem of uncollected rubbish. Water services are frequently disrupted and water used by consumers is more frequently polluted. In April 2002, public health researchers at Birzeit

testimony

Fatima, age 15, Khan Yunis

'Last night, when the shelling started, my mother told me to leave for a safer place. The first time we had to evacuate I remember everyone was very afraid. Every time there is shelling my little brother runs to my mother. "They are trying to kill me," he says. I know my mother is also very afraid. Some of my brothers and sisters dream of our parents, and the soldiers killing them, or settlers driving them out of the house.

'I do not want to throw stones. I want to study and develop myself. Then I shall fight the occupation with the tool of knowledge.'

University reported that during the previous month, more than three-quarters of villages in Tulkarm district were unable to get rid of their sewage. Two-thirds had suffered serious electricity cuts and in more than three-quarters of cases medical personnel had been unable to reach the village.⁷³ They also found similar problems in the five towns targeted by Israeli forces in April-May 2002, with regard to rubbish and sewage difficulties, electricity and water cuts.⁷⁴

Mental health and the intifada

Since the second intifada, the impact of stress – which was already having a marked effect on the civilian population – has greatly worsened. Loss of family income and the sense of the sanctity of the home, widespread troop invasions and destruction of homes or household possessions, humiliation or violence against parents and the knowledge that parents could offer no protection to their children have all led to a massive increase in mental distress. Men have increasingly lost their traditional status as the provider, thus losing the ability to support and care for their families. Women have had to assume new roles as breadwinners, sometimes the sole member of a family earning a wage, as well as continuing as the emotional centre of the family.

These circumstances are compounded by the humiliation, felt by so many Palestinians as they try to negotiate the daily ritual of checkpoints, curfews and closures. In 1998, a study by Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) found that 60

per cent of respondents in a random sample – a quarter of them under 12 years of age – had witnessed at least one traumatic event, and that a third of the population suffered from stress-related psychiatric disorders.⁷⁵

There has been a 105 per cent increase in new cases at mental health clinics since October 2000. Children under the age of 18 constitute the majority of these new cases.⁷⁶ A report on health in Gaza dated May 2001 stated:

Therapists from the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme are counselling increasing numbers of children suffering post-traumatic stress disorders. Symptoms include thumb-sucking, crying, clinging to parents, nightmares, bed-wetting, poor appetite, poor sleeping patterns, short attention spans, aggression towards siblings or parents, and fear of dying.⁷⁷

In addition to the increase in post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, the same study found that 13.3 per cent of children were suffering from a sharp increase in mental and behavioural problems. The study also found a strong correlation between the development of the mother's psychological problems and those of her children.

'Despair has crept into people's hearts'

With the outbreak of the intifada, the strain of constant violence caused a crisis for the whole of

testimony

Abd, age 16, Khan Yunis

'I want peace, but only with justice. We want to live like other people. My brother Ibrahim was injured by a bullet in his knee. He was going to play football when the Israelis started shooting. My brother's friend was shot. My brother went to carry him, and then he was shot. He needs three months' treatment but he will never play football again.

'My younger brother always has nightmares. He tells our mother what he dreams. I simply want a normal life, even for one day.'

Palestinian society, but particularly its children. In a profoundly moving report, the GCMHP reported:

The suffering of children, the primary victim, has increased. As children saw fear on television and in the eyes of their parents, bed-wetting increased, school performance deteriorated, and violence and other behavioural problems rose. With the deterioration in the economic situation and rising unemployment, the status of the man in the family was shaken, as he was not able to provide for his family... Complaints have become the everyday language of the people.

Discontent is commonplace. Helplessness is prevalent. Despair has crept into people's hearts. As a result, the percentage of people suffering from trauma has increased, as has the percentage of people suffering from depression.

There are, however, still feelings of anger that will surface... There is a desire for vengeance and resistance with all available means. This exposes people to contradicting emotions, fluctuating between the desire for stability and giving in to the situation.⁷⁸

7 Unequal playing field: the effect of integration on trade and the economy

'Even before Oslo there were closures, but nothing like this. There used to be 18 of us working in the soap factory. I was the only one to last 20 years. Since the intifada I have not worked a single day. I cannot even leave the village. What do we eat? Bread with a little oil. That is all I can give my children.'

Ramadan, Ramallah district

According to Hilel Sheinfeld, Israel's coordinator of operations in the OPT, Israel's goal was to 'integrate the economy of the territories into the Israeli economy'.⁷⁹

Integration has proved to be the OPT's downfall – a source of income, to be sure, for thousands of Palestinians working over the border, but also a fatal source of dependence. The policy of 'open borders' for Palestinian labourers resulted in Israeli dominance; the practice of closure, as we have seen, has led to economic strangulation. Either way, the result is increased poverty.

Unequal trade

Israel's ability to subsidise its goods and then sell them in the Palestinian market, but the inability of the Palestinians to do likewise, ensured that 'open borders' actually resulted in Israel dominating the market. One prominent Palestinian economist, Salah Abd al Shafi, writing in early 1994, noted:

If there is one point that unites all shades of Israeli political opinion about the Declaration of Principles [Oslo], it is [that] there must be open borders... But if Palestinians are made to buy and sell at Israeli prices, we may as well forget Jordan and any other Arab market for that matter. And this trade disadvantage would be reinforced if, after the DoP, there is peace and economic normalisation between Israel and the Arabs.

*Gaza, for example, simply cannot compete with an economy that in terms of GNP is ten times its own size. As with most free markets, this is not a level playing field.*⁸⁰

The weakness of the OPT is the acute trade imbalance. In 1998, for example, total Palestinian imports from Israel were valued at US\$2,374 million. Total exports to Israel were valued at just US\$673 million in the same year.⁸¹

Part of the deepening disparity is due to Israeli-applied controls introduced by the Oslo Accords over what, and how much, the OPT may import.⁸² Technically, both Israel and the OPT are able to issue import licences. In practice, however, Israel retains authority to issue import licences, with the PA acting as administrative intermediary. The doubling of bureaucracy implies long delays and imposes costs on importers, encouraging Palestinians to skip PA procedures and apply to Israel directly. Palestinians also believe that the overall costs of importing would be much lower if they were not compelled to import through Israeli customs and ports. But for now its imports and exports remain subject to Israeli veto and/or actual physical control through the ports.

Economic rise and fall

Real GNP for the territories (excluding East Jerusalem) rose by an estimated annual average

testimony

Sinking into debt: Mohammed, Gaza Strip

'Before Oslo I had a marble factory and I employed six labourers. After Oslo the business slowed down because people were fearful of security and stopped spending. So I closed it. I sold the machines at a loss. Then I went to work in Israel as a labourer. When I was working in Israel I got NIS 220 daily (US\$50).

'After the [second] intifada started I was without work for 18 months. So I spent all my savings just to live. I have six children, aged five to 13, and we live in a rented house. Now the rent has not been paid for eight months. I work perhaps every other day, for which I get NIS 40 (just under US\$10). It is not regular work – I lay marble stairs or a fit a kitchen sink.

'Before Oslo, my situation was excellent. Now, it is awful. I am unable to feed the children properly or buy them clothes because of the situation. I have also been affected mentally. I have begun to go to a [Gaza Community Mental Health Programme] clinic and I am taking medicine for my depression.

'We hope we will have our own state and that the children can live like children all over the world: that they will be safe to go to school, and that we shall have a chance to work.'

of 4.9 per cent during the 1980s, while the population grew by an annual average of a little less than three per cent. Thus, real income slightly outstripped population growth and per capita income grew modestly. In the 1990s, after the Oslo Accords, that process reversed.

Throughout the 1990s, annual GNP grew at an average of 2.5 per cent. However, the Palestinian population grew at about 4 per cent a year – which led to a real fall in per capita income. Moreover, the modest 2.5 per cent growth over the decade hid periods of dramatic hardship. From 1992 to 1996, GNP fell from US\$5 billion to about US\$4.1 billion, a decline of 18.4 per cent.⁸³ This arose primarily from closures and the subsequent loss of trade and employment in Israel. Real per capita income declined by twice as much, that is by 36.2 per cent.⁸⁴ In other words, the average person saw their income drop by more than a third.

A modest overall economic recovery was experienced from 1996 to 1998. Growth in these

years, primarily in construction and services, was largely explained by the creation of 46,000 jobs in Israel and 13,000 in PA public sector employment.⁸⁵ These employment gains were important, both because of the salaries they yielded and because they represented investment in the Palestinian public sector. But they only added marginally to real productivity. At the same time, workers were increasingly dependent on Israeli-owned construction and service companies for their livelihoods and were vulnerable to the loss of work permits and closure.

In any event, rapid population growth undermined the effects that the growth in GNP had on average living standards. As the World Bank pointed out in a 2001 report on poverty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, unless the economy grew by 4.8 per cent annually, the proportion of people in poverty would inexorably increase, simply because of the growth in population. In order to reduce the number of poor people, GNP had to grow each year by at least 6.9 per cent.⁸⁶

testimony

'I have not worked a single day'

Ramadan lives with his ten children, including three married sons and their families. Altogether there are 16 people in the household.

'I used to work in a soap factory, just over the Green Line, for 20 years. It was before Oslo. We used to work six or seven days a week without interruption. I used to make NIS 3,400 (US\$775) monthly.

'After Oslo I worked only five or six days per month. We had to go through checkpoints and clear our ID cards with the soldiers. If it was raining the soldiers would hold the ID card in the rain so that it became ruined. I could see it was deliberate. So every two months or so, the pass had to be changed, which wasted time and effort. Before Oslo, the passes lasted for longer and the checkpoints were much easier... Now I cannot even leave the village.'

Falling, falling...

Total export earnings during the first 12 months of the intifada (2001-02) are estimated to have dropped to 60 per cent of their original value, from US\$684 million to US\$410 million.⁸⁷ Comparing total trade in the first quarter of 2001 with the last quarter preceding the intifada closure, the figures show that the total value of trade halved.⁸⁸

The figures are even more dramatic for trade between and within each territory: trade between the West Bank and Gaza Strip fell by 83.6 per cent; trade within the West Bank fell by 66.44 per cent in terms of value; and trade within Gaza fell by 82.6 per cent in value over the same period.⁸⁹ It is difficult to overstate the impact of such a dramatic fall, given both the overall importance of trade in goods and services in a dependent economy and the massive reduction in the major alternative sources of livelihood, namely remittance income from Palestinians working in Israel.

Sixty per cent of the PA's budget comes from tax transfers from Israel for VAT adjustments on imports, fuel, income and health taxes. The process of VAT collection on imports from Israel and subsequent remittance to the PA was agreed by the two parties in Paris in the Protocol on Economic Relations, 19 April 1994. From the beginning of the

second intifada until July 2002, Israel withheld these taxes collected on behalf of the PA, claiming that funds might be used for corruption or to support terrorism. In July it began to release some of this money. Together with the inefficiencies of domestic tax collection, the PA's fiscal revenues fell from US\$87.7 million prior to the intifada to US\$20.6 million in the intifada period up to April 2001.⁹⁰

The PA itself bears some of the responsibility for economic decline. It has failed to develop an economic vision or to put in place a regulatory, legal and fiscal framework for development. The lack of a transparent regulatory system, including commercial law, has reduced the willingness of private sector entrepreneurs to invest in the OPT. Direct foreign and diaspora investments from Palestinians overseas have been discouraged by ambiguous rules and application procedures.⁹¹

The poor pay the price

As with any economic downturn, the failing Palestinian economy has hit the poorest sectors of the population hardest. Poor families are often dependent on casual labour, the most sensitive sector to changes in the economy or in security. They have little in the way of savings, assets or family networks, which would be able to assist them. Many poor people and families tend to be

geographically concentrated, most notably in the southern part of the Gaza Strip and in remote villages of the West Bank, reducing still further opportunities to access potential sources of income. By the end of 2001, after 15 months of the second intifada, at least four out of five households had less to spend than before. Roughly half had started to draw on the few personal savings that they held. More than a third had to borrow money to help make ends meet. About a fifth had sold personal assets, jewellery, personal effects or, in the case of women, dowries.⁹²

For the OPT, without fundamental change, the economic future is bleak. Decades of policies which have created and deepened economic dependence and vulnerability, Israel's tightening control over the economy, the PA's weakness and political uncertainty have all put an end to any chance of investment. Failure to address the most critical issues of the conflict – the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem, land and water expropriation, settlements and the refugee question – leave profound economic doubts.

8 The divided city: Jerusalem and the loss of an economic centre

'East Jerusalem used to be the centre of the surrounding villages... The result of the closure is that these villages now go to Ramallah or Bethlehem to buy and sell. The city is almost completely isolated from the rest of the country... All in all, I don't think that more than 20 per cent of the original business of East Jerusalem exists today.'

Hanna Siniora, 'The Declining Economy of East Jerusalem', *Palestine-Israel Journal*

The fate of Jerusalem is usually discussed in the context of the holy places and the possessive passions which this city arouses. Jerusalem's economic importance is rarely discussed, yet East Jerusalem is the indispensable economic fulcrum of any future Palestinian state.

Jerusalem has three critical economic dimensions. The first is as the economic centre for the central part of the West Bank – a role it had performed throughout the 20th century. It contained the market and the professional and administrative facilities to service its hinterland. Agricultural and other produce was brought into the city daily. The people of the surrounding villages came to Jerusalem for the goods and services that it offered, including health and education.

The second critically important role performed by Jerusalem emerged after Israel's military occupation, as it became increasingly clear that the West Bank would become the major part of any possible future Palestinian entity. The plain fact is that without East Jerusalem as its economic capital, the West Bank will remain divided into at least two economically separate cantons.

Such an outcome has serious negative implications for the coherent economic development of the West Bank. Unless Palestinians retain physical control of

East Jerusalem and its eastern hinterland, all movement of goods and people will be between two separated entities: (i) a principal (northern) segment of the West Bank, dominated by Ramallah which has become the *de facto* capital since the closure of East Jerusalem, and (ii) a much weaker southern segment, with its capital in Hebron. If the settlement bloc of Ariel remains, the northern segment of the West Bank will be effectively divided in two, thus making three cantons, based around Nablus, Ramallah and Hebron.

Tourism and the holy city

The third dimension is the internal economic importance of Arab Jerusalem. This is partly because the city itself contains a substantial population, over 200,000 people – more than 12 per cent of the West Bank population. Jerusalem has been the largest city of the West Bank since 1948. With its holy sites, it could generate substantial income for the Palestinian economy. In fact, given the relatively poor agricultural assets of the rugged West Bank uplands and the almost complete absence of mineral assets, tourism is a critical asset for a future Palestinian entity.

But for tourism to assist the Palestinian economy, Palestinians need to be able to manage their own tourist facilities, principally in the Old City of Jerusalem and in Bethlehem. With tourism once

contributing 58 per cent of East Jerusalem's economy, the almost complete halt of the tourist trade – the result of a combination of closure and tourists' concern about violence – is a major factor in the city's economic decline.

Encroaching on Jerusalem

Immediately after the Six Day War in 1967 Israel annexed East Jerusalem in all but name by greatly enlarging the municipal boundaries well beyond the Jordanian ones, and bringing it under the Israeli municipality of (West) Jerusalem.⁹³ This included village lands covering an extensive area, but the new municipality carefully excluded the villages themselves, thus keeping the Palestinian population within the confines of the enlarged city at a minimum.

In 1980 the Knesset enacted a 'basic law' confirming the incorporation of East Jerusalem by declaring 'Jerusalem, complete and united' to be 'the capital of Israel'. The international community condemned both acts as illegal⁹⁴ but took no substantive action to ensure compliance with international law. In May 1993 Israel expanded the municipality of Jerusalem again by a further 18 square kilometres, largely consisting of occupied Palestinian territory.

Israel enlarged the city boundary and populated these areas with Israeli settlers. By 1993 it had seized roughly 24,000 dunums (6,000 acres) of land, partly in the Old City, from which it evicted 5,000 Palestinians, and also in adjacent neighbourhoods, amounting to 34 per cent of the total available land in East Jerusalem.⁹⁵ It also developed settlement blocs outside the eastern perimeter of Jerusalem, thus creating a physical barricade to the historically contiguous Palestinian countryside on the eastern side of the city.

The land available to Palestinians in East Jerusalem was dramatically reduced. In 1967 Palestinians held 90 per cent of the land. By 1995 this proportion had been reduced to 13.5 per cent by a series of administrative measures that removed most of the

land from their control prior to it being allocated for Israeli use. Israel implemented a variety of measures. Thirty-four per cent of land was expropriated for 'public use', a term allowing the creation of Israeli neighbourhoods; 40 per cent of land was designated 'green areas' supposedly for parks but some of which has been subsequently converted to 'public use' prior to the construction of dwellings for Israelis; six per cent has been allocated to roads and infrastructure; seven per cent remains 'unzoned'; and three per cent is 'frozen'.⁹⁶

Since 1993: the end of Jerusalem as a Palestinian economic centre

In the Oslo Declaration of Principles the question of Jerusalem was specifically set aside for final status negotiations to commence in 1996. However, in October 1993 Israel's housing minister announced the construction of 13,000 additional housing units, principally in East Jerusalem.⁹⁷ In 1995 and again in 1996, hundreds of acres were scheduled for expropriation.⁹⁸ Having acquired direct control of 34 per cent of total available land in East Jerusalem by 1993, Israel had increased this to 30,000 dunums (7,400 acres), 42.5 per cent, by December 1996.⁹⁹

Since then there has been yet more expansion. The settlement bloc of Ma'ale Adumim, which is constructed on the east side of Jerusalem, has a projected population of 60,000, and will create a physical barrier together with Vered Jericho across much of Jerusalem's eastern side, thereby segmenting the West Bank.

Israel has also constructed new roads through Jerusalem and a beltway around the city was completed in 1996. This network links with Highway 60, a highway running the length of the West Bank to connect with Israeli towns in the south: Arad in the northern Negev and Afula in the Galilee. These highways further cement the integration of Jerusalem with Israel and with illegal settlements in the West Bank, and implicitly weaken Palestinian links to their hinterland.

Second class citizens: the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem

Various factors affect the economic well-being of Palestinians in Jerusalem, both directly and indirectly. An indirect effect is that East Jerusalem Palestinians are required to live in higher density accommodation than Israelis: 19.2 per cent of Palestinians live in housing accommodating more than three persons per room, compared with 1.5 per cent of Israelis; 11.2 per cent of Palestinians live in homes with a density of less than one person per room compared with 43.8 per cent of Israelis.¹⁰⁰

Nearly 300 Palestinian homes were demolished in East Jerusalem in the period 1987-2000, 230 of these since the Oslo peace process, because of lack of building permits.¹⁰¹ By 2001, 2,000 demolition orders affecting 12,000 Palestinian housing units had been issued, implying that one-third of East Jerusalem's Palestinian residents live under threat of house demolition. This number of demolition orders (2,000) is four times greater than the total number of house construction permits issued since 1967.¹⁰²

Various aspects of Israeli municipal discrimination militate against Palestinians staying in Jerusalem. For example, East Jerusalem residents are required to pay taxes like all city residents, but they do not receive the same quality of services. Less than ten per cent of the municipality's 1999 development budget, for example, was allocated to Palestinian neighbourhoods. Entire neighbourhoods are not connected to the sewage system and do not have tarmac roads or pavements. Despite Palestinians making up approximately 30 per cent of the population of Jerusalem, almost 90 per cent of the sewage pipes, roads and pavements lie in West Jerusalem. West Jerusalem has 26 public libraries, East Jerusalem has two. West Jerusalem has 531 sports facilities, East Jerusalem has 33.¹⁰³ Jerusalem's department of education allocates to Palestinian neighbourhoods only 12 per cent of the total budget received from the Ministry of

Education, although Palestinian children comprise at least one-third of Jerusalem's children.

Since the onset of the second intifada, unemployment in East Jerusalem has doubled to 22 per cent. This is far lower than the unemployment rate for the rest of the OPT. But mounting unemployment, and the impact of closure on business and trade, is a sign of the declining role of Jerusalem as a critical focus of Palestinian economic activity.

Poverty or development: the reform of the Palestinian Authority

'Trying to get the PA to engage with our problems is hard work. We dumped tonnes of rotting tomatoes in the street outside its offices to get its attention. It should not be like this. We want to build things democratically.'

Palestinian working with Christian Aid partner PARC, West Bank

The extraordinary symbolic importance of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) meant that Palestinians inevitably welcomed the establishment of the Palestinian Authority which grew out of the PLO leadership's return from exile with the signing of the Oslo Accords. But the experience has been dispiriting.

The pluralism of pre-1994 Palestinian society was reflected in a wide spectrum of political debate and activity, and in the remarkable range and creativity of Palestinian NGOs which formed the core of development work in the Occupied Territories. The PA, seeking to centralise government authority, did not reflect or substantially support this pluralism. Nor did it put poverty alleviation at the heart of its objectives. Instead, it was concerned with building state structures, often in response to the demands of the Oslo peace process and international donors, which put it, in part, at odds with the vibrant NGO community. Some sections of the new government quickly began to show that addressing poverty and the results of years of occupation were not the key priorities.

Lack of accountability and corruption, alongside abuses of human rights, are the two areas of PA behaviour most subject to criticism, including from inside the OPT. Within some sectors of the PA, the centralisation of power has led to the establishment of a patronage system in which benefits have been increasingly offered in return for services or loyalty to a particular interest.

The PA has also introduced monopolies where the encouragement of competition would have served the public interest far better. These unregulated and

unaccountable monopolies, in the hands of a few powerful figures, control major sectors of the Palestinian economy such as construction materials, and oil and petroleum. Such lack of accountability has led to corruption. It is commonly asserted that some ministers enjoy personal control of these basic resources. By 1998, the PA had established at least 13 monopolies for the sole importation of specific commodities in the Gaza Strip alone.

There is a clear link between this lack of accountability and the OPT's lack of development. The Palestinian Legislative Council, for instance, has been unable to monitor properly the PA budget. In spring 1997, the PA's general audit office reported the misappropriation of US\$340 million, nearly half the PA's budget for that year. But no significant reform resulted. In late July of that year, a commission of enquiry called for the dismissal of Arafat's entire cabinet, for charges to be made against three ministers and for the appointment of a cabinet of appropriately qualified personnel.¹⁰⁴

The PA has identified poverty as a problem. Yet it has failed to tackle it in practice. No PA policies, for instance, have been formulated to enhance and strengthen the livelihoods of rural women. This could have been achieved through development programmes for women, or by support for women to develop agricultural projects. Instead, this responsibility has been left, in the main, to grassroots organisations.

Palestinian budget allocations indicate the priority of security concerns over development. In the three years to 2000, allocation for health declined from 14 to 9 per cent of the total budget, with allocations for education falling from 22 to 17 per cent over the

same period.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, 37 per cent of the budget was allocated to the PA security services, which employs half of all the PA's 75,000 employees.

The legacy of the Oslo peace process
An underlying cause of these problems lies in the role of the PA emerging from the Oslo process. The PA was created in 1994, but by appointment, not by election. Elections were held only two years later, during the interim period of negotiating with Israel. Elections for the offices of president and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council were held in 1996. The terms of office expired with the end of the interim period, on 4 May 1999. Yet the present office holders have continued in their posts. From that day until the outbreak of the second intifada, they have continued in their posts despite calls from Palestinian civil society for new elections. In short, the legitimacy of the PA has diminished without a renewed popular mandate.

International pressure has led to the PA confirming its commitment to undertake significant reforms. Yet the respected Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR), a Christian Aid partner, has commented that:

The PA executive has shown no signs of genuinely adopting the principles that these reforms are meant to enshrine, namely the independence of the judiciary, rule of law, separation of powers, and protection of human rights. Moreover, many PA institutions have largely ceased to function due to constant Israeli incursions into PA-controlled areas and the ongoing Israeli military siege of Palestinian communities.

The PCHR added: 'Just as unprecedented Israeli attacks do not absolve the PA of its obligations to respect human rights, the Israeli and US governments' misuse of the rhetoric of reform to perpetuate the occupation does not lessen the need for strong and accountable institutions in Palestinian society...'¹⁰⁶

Bulldozing aid

By the end of 2000, the cumulative aid disbursements to the PA since the signing of the

Oslo Accords amounted to US\$4.87 billion. Of this sum, the US had contributed US\$660 million.¹⁰⁷ International aid has contributed to the construction of government buildings and schools, employment creation and infrastructure – the building blocks of Palestinian administration and economy. Yet much of this aid has been poorly spent, and much has been lost as a direct casualty of war.

Since September 2000, government buildings have been bulldozed and razed to the ground and schools abandoned following aerial bombardment. From September 2000 to the end of 2001, damage to physical infrastructure in the OPT, including roads, water and sewage, municipal buildings, orchards and homes, came to an estimated US\$305 million.¹⁰⁸ The cost of the damage to basic office equipment and information technology, the European Commission reported, was an estimated 15.7 million euros (US\$15 million).¹⁰⁹

It is difficult to see how the PA as presently constituted and given the extent of destruction can make fundamental changes to create a tangible and sustained difference for its ever-poorer population. In his speech of 25 June 2002, US President George Bush called upon the Palestinians 'to build a practising democracy, based on tolerance and liberty.' How, Palestinians ask, does one enjoy 'liberty' under military occupation? How can one 'build a practising democracy' under a hostile military occupation? How can the PA build schools and a health system when government ministries and school buildings are systematically destroyed? Or when PA tax revenue can be withheld by a neighbouring power?

For democracy to have any chance of working, the international community must attempt to provide a guarantee of peace and be willing to accept the democratic outcome of elections. Palestinians have very little confidence such a guarantee would be forthcoming. The obligation is on the international community to restore that confidence.

'I simply want a normal life, even for only one day.'

Abd al-Karim, 16-year-old boy, Khan Yunis

In March 2002, the World Bank posited three scenarios for the immediate future of the OPT and its economy: a continuation of the status quo; an early political rapprochement leading to a progressive resumption of economic activity according to the Oslo Accords; or much harsher closure, with continued confrontation, damage, loss of life and deep disruption to what is left of the Palestinian economy. Today it is clear that the third, the worst-case scenario, has been fulfilled. In its prognosis, the World Bank foretold that 'a further radical tightening of closure, with or without the demise of the PA, would push the Palestinian economy into a poverty trap in which any prospect of a recovery can be forgotten for a long time.'¹¹⁰

That situation has now come to pass. The Occupied Palestinian Territories are now experiencing a slide into disintegration and acute poverty. The overall average unemployment rate, reckoned at 26 per cent in 2001, was predicted to reach 36 per cent by the end of 2002 and 37 per cent in 2003. Yet by the second quarter of 2002, unemployment had already reached 50 per cent, and the proportion of the population living in poverty had risen to 66.5 per cent for the whole of the OPT and to 84.6 per cent in the Gaza Strip.¹¹¹

Shadow over the future

The prospect of intensified institutionalised closure casts an even darker shadow over the future. The wall now under construction along the western stretches of the West Bank is one indication. New closure plans are reportedly being drawn up. Given what has happened, it is all too easy to predict what the implications might be for the economy, employment and poverty eradication.

Even before the massive Israeli assaults on West Bank towns that commenced March and April 2002, the World Bank had this to say:

*Soon little will remain of the private sector other than subsistence agriculture, petty trade and workshop manufacturing. Public services will break down, with trash accumulating, frequent power cuts, intermittent drug supplies in hospitals and a shortage of textbooks and writing paper in schools. Notably vulnerable are the municipalities, which have received little emergency support and are in many cases in debt to Israeli utility companies. Poverty is deepening, particularly in isolated communities. Serious health and environment problems are emerging. Helplessness, deprivation and hatred are increasing.'*¹¹²

The institutional breakdown of the PA has left a vacuum. It has been filled, in part, by militant groups convinced, after the bitter experience of de-development during the Oslo peace process and Israel's intensified settlement of the territories, that it is only by political violence that they can liberate the Palestinian people. It is possible to foresee a gradual fragmentation and dissolution of normal civil governance, further capital flight and a reversion from modern business activity into small-scale trade and subsistence farming. A linked need would be for a massive increase in reliance on international food aid as hunger takes an even firmer grip on the population.

If there is a collapse of the administration, of income and in economic demand, one can see the emergence of an entirely new phase of permanent disorder, and loss of life and conflict, with the UN, NGOs and local municipal or village councils trying as best they may to maintain basic services of food, water, shelter and health. More likely is the maintenance of a bare-bones government infrastructure, crippled and struggling to provide a skeletal service, and the gradual deepening of poverty and misery.

Palestinians themselves do not need the reminder of the US or any other nation that reform is needed.

In a statement, representatives from leading Christian organisations in the OPT, including Christian Aid partners, wrote:¹¹³

We Palestinians are in dire need of genuine reform. But such reform cannot be undertaken under the barrels of Israeli guns and tanks. The impromptu discussions that Palestinians engage in on sidestreets and in sitting rooms all indicate an overwhelming consensus that things need to change, not to please Mr Bush or anyone else, but in order to spell out our own vision for our own society and its future.

Unfortunately, this is something we have not done since the Oslo Accords and we should have. Hence a grave responsibility lies on all of us as we examine the prospects for reconstruction and rehabilitation in all areas of government and society. But, as importantly, we need to decide ourselves on our own programme and political agenda – whether they relate to issues internal to Palestinian society or whether they deal with the thorny relationship with Israel.

‘I want to live without tanks’
When the first intifada occurred in 1987 it was expressed in mass demonstrations and stone throwing. The second intifada has been marked by aerial bombardments, shootings and suicide bombings. There is an alarming progression of violence as a solution to the conflict fails to materialise. Many of those who rebel violently, almost invariably young people, have no recollection of the territories before the Israeli occupation. Barely 15 per cent of Palestinians now remember Jordanian rule. Abla Nasser, director of a Christian Aid partner, the YWCA, in Jerusalem, explains: ‘Young people acquire the skills needed to deal with the threat of occupation and military presence at the expense of learning the meaning of citizenship. They fail to learn the skills of citizenship.’

According to John Dugard, UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: ‘Military

occupation is the main cause of the present conflict. It bears a heavy responsibility for the violation of norms of humanitarian law and human rights by both Israelis and Palestinians.’

Violence in the home is also increasing, according to Christian Aid partners. ‘The behaviour of everyone has got more violent,’ one woman told Christian Aid. ‘The basic reason? The occupation. It affects everyone. There is the constant noise of war: jet fighters, helicopters, tanks, jeeps, sirens, gunfire, bombs. We live with fear constantly.’

At the same time, the legitimate fears of Israelis, especially in regard to suicide bombings and other attacks directed at civilians in violation of the Geneva Conventions, must be recognised. Many Israelis interpret the history of the past century as evidence that the Palestinians pose a threat to their future and to that of the state of Israel. The deep insecurity felt by Israelis is a fundamental factor that needs to be addressed as one essential strand in the process of trying to formulate policies leading to constructive negotiations and a political solution.

B’Tselem, the Israeli human rights organisation and Christian Aid partner which has condemned violations of rights on both sides, reports that the sense of fear is now so great that ‘many Israelis perceive human rights as a luxury that Israel cannot afford...and hold that everything is fair in war. This is a position that is also supported by many Palestinians.’

‘These circumstances have pushed human rights organisations such as B’Tselem back many years,’ a B’Tselem staff member told Christian Aid. ‘Now we are not only reporting human rights violations, but actually having to justify our own existence.’¹¹⁴

In the midst of the daily media stories of violence and war, it is easy to forget that there are people on both sides of the border who want to return to normal lives – people who support a peaceful and just solution. The work of Christian Aid partners, along with that of

many other NGOs in the OPT and Israel, shows that this search for peace is not being abandoned.

Said one farmer who works with a Christian Aid partner PARC: 'When things became impossible, extremists said: "You must act!" – hence the bombers. But I need to live, first and foremost, and we need schools and roads. I want a state inside the 1967 line, although I have the Ottoman documents proving ownership of 13,000 dunums inside Israel. I want to live without tanks.'

West Bank farmer Daoud, who works with Christian Aid partner YMCA, said: 'Peace has to grow like a tree – with water, with care, and with investment in a new generation. You can create understanding and trust only when people stop thinking about stereotypes.'

Tackling the future

It is possible to reverse the movement towards such bleak humanitarian future prospects. Christian Aid urges the UK and Irish governments, along with the rest of the international community, to take all necessary steps to stem the humanitarian disaster and create the conditions for a lasting and durable peace.

Alleviation of the current humanitarian crisis Governments need to use the influence they have to:

- urgently work towards the establishment of an international presence to enable humanitarian work to be carried out unimpeded and to monitor and safeguard any peace
- ensure the immediate rapid withdrawal of Israeli forces to positions held prior to September 2000
- lift the closure and dismantle checkpoints inside the OPT
- facilitate unimpeded progress of Palestinian goods across international borders and through Israeli ports
- release all tax revenue currently held by Israel but owed to the PA to an appropriate, transparent fiscal agency within the PA

- repair water, sewage and other essential infrastructure
- undertake major relief and reconstruction aimed at both the public and private sector, including the reconstruction of damaged property and agriculture, and fund a relief scheme to help families out of debt
- bring a rapid end to all land confiscations and a freeze on settlement construction.

Such steps are vital but still fall far short of resolving the underlying causes of impoverishment. Virtually every Palestinian to whom Christian Aid has spoken made clear that after 35 years of loss and suffering, the Palestinian people do not want emergency relief but an end to the occupation.

Economic foundations for peace

Any chance of peace depends on the development of a stronger, more self-reliant and diversified Palestinian economy. Palestinians themselves are divided over how integrated they wish a future Palestine to be with the Israeli economy. Currently it is, and Israel seems to intend it to remain, in an Israeli pocket. The Oslo peace process never gave the Palestinians a chance to exercise choice in this regard.

Successful and viable economic strategy needs to guarantee Palestinian equality of authority and control with Israel in any negotiations. Palestinians must be free to negotiate any future economic arrangements with Israel, such as use of Israeli port facilities, as they choose.

The following represent the basic requirements of a Palestinian economy:

- sovereign control over its own borders and ports
- complete internal control, under international supervision if necessary, but not under the occupying power
- freedom to create independent financial and fiscal authorities and institutions

- guaranteed safe passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
- guaranteed freedom of movement within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank
- allocate to Palestinian control of lands in the West Bank and Gaza Strip seized by Israel since 1967
- use of Israeli ports but under international supervision to ensure all goods are treated as 'customs sealed' as they cross Israeli territory, so that all duties accrue directly to the Palestinian Authority, not via the Israeli authorities, and so that perishable goods may not be subjected to unwarranted transit or port delay
- establish a forum for deciding equitable water allocation and control across the region
- freedom to trade in any legitimate commodity and with any state, unfettered by Israel.

International aid and Palestinian poverty

No one can doubt the generosity of the donor response to Palestinian poverty. But for aid to address more than just emergency relief needs, a two-track strategy was required in the wake of Oslo – and this did not happen. Aid effectiveness could have been enhanced if it had obtained Israeli compliance with international law, while international investment and aid should have been used to address the underlying factors which have shaped the growing dependence of the economy on the labour market in Israel.

In the future, aid to address immediate short-term needs must be placed in a framework which allocates different forms of assistance to help address the underlying causes of underdevelopment. Assistance needs to focus on job creation within the Palestinian economy, through efforts to raise revenue, enhance rural livelihoods, and encourage the expansion of domestic and international investment and trade, underpinned by efforts to diversify the economic base. This requires the addressing of problems caused by loss and erosion of economic assets, including land, water, housing and the basic physical infrastructure. In the words of one observer:

*The international community has made the fundamental error of separating aid from the wider context of the Oslo deal. No amount of international aid will sustain the Palestinian economy if Palestinian workers are denied employment in Israel in the short-term. No amount of support for agriculture will help if the best land is being expropriated. But then this aid was never meant to stimulate economic development, but rather sustain a particular political process in the short-term.*¹¹⁵

In the months ahead, targeted aid for the most vulnerable will be a lifeline. Yet without a political solution, an end to Israeli occupation, and a long-term framework within which external help and assistance is clearly framed, structural dependency on short-term aid and emergency relief will grow. According to the World Food Programme, which is now providing a million Palestinians with food aid, 'hunger and malnutrition are rapidly increasing... Even when food is available in some of the markets, many impoverished Palestinians have become increasingly unable to meet all their food needs.'¹¹⁶

Responsibilities of the PA

Demands for reform of the PA by the US and echoed by others in the international community appear to be mainly focused on security issues rather than support for the well-being of ordinary Palestinians. Christian Aid partners have focused on reform that embraces wider issues: good governance, accountability and an end to corruption. They wish to encourage these values within civil society, but do not want them to be imposed.

Christian Aid partner Dr Mustafa Barghouti has spelled out the view of many Palestinians:

Our needs are greater than a pause for introspection, vaster than some new names in authority here and there in order to alleviate foreign pressures and placate international demands for reform. What we need is a new approach, one that sets its sights firmly on a

unified and unifying strategy. Only through such an approach will we be able to rally the energies of the Palestinian people and revive Palestinian institutions that are capable of mobilising and sustaining these changes both at home and abroad, towards the realisation of our national aspiration to freedom and independence.

The role of the international community
Approximately 160 UN member states are High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. Every one has solemnly pledged 'to respect and ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances' (Article 1). As this report has made clear, had they separately or collectively discharged that undertaking meaningfully from the moment Israel occupied the territories, the issues of settlers, settlements, land expropriation, water expropriation, the fundamental alteration to the boundaries and demographic composition of Arab East Jerusalem would have been confronted.

As major world powers, the US and EU member states bear the largest share of responsibility for the consequences of their failure to enforce international humanitarian standards since 1967. They have allowed an infinitely more complicated and adverse situation to develop in which Palestinians have every justification for believing that they have been abandoned and put beyond the protection of the law. These world powers must now have the courage to act in accordance with international law and in a manner which equally addresses the legitimate concerns, fundamental interests and fears of Israelis.

The international community must now take steps to dismantle the occupation:

- allocate to permanent Palestinian control land seized by Israel since 1967
- ensure a negotiated end to land confiscation and a permanent agreement on settlements

- support Palestinian-initiated reform of the Palestinian Authority to ensure good governance and accountability
- hold both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to account for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Christian Aid is committed to the impartial application of international law and views this as the *sine qua non* of any valid and durable peace process that will save both communities from further violence and impoverishment. In the context of the Occupied Palestinian Territories this must mean 'total compliance' with the requirements of international law and norms, namely UNSCR 242 and the requirements of the Hague Regulations and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Resolution 242 speaks unequivocally about 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war.' It is the resolution's overarching principle, and under it any change of the 1949 Armistice Line can only be by mutual and freely given consent.¹¹⁷ There can be no pillage of land, water or other assets. There can be no settlement of part of the occupier's population or any other individuals from outside the occupied territory. These are clear and absolute rules. If there is to be a durable peace in which Palestinians can escape poverty, these laws must be obeyed.

Like many in both Israel and the OPT, Christian Aid and its Palestinian and Israeli partners believe that a settlement can be reached based on international humanitarian law. Adhering to international law would mean the end of the illegal occupation and the right of self-determination. Any solution for the OPT must be found through a participatory process in which all Palestinians can be represented.

Also fundamental is the need for security for all, based on respect for economic, social, political, civil and cultural rights in both Israel and the OPT. This is the key to ending poverty and to ending the downward spiral of violence and the current humanitarian

disaster. South Africa's former Archbishop Desmond Tutu puts the case for change eloquently:

Injustice and oppression will never prevail. Those who are powerful have to remember the litmus test that God gives to the powerful: what is your treatment of the poor, the hungry, the voiceless? And on the basis of that, God passes judgement. We should put out a clarion call to the government of the people of Israel, to the Palestinian people, and say: peace is possible, peace based on justice is possible. We will do all we can to assist you to achieve this peace, because it is God's dream, and you will be able to live amicably together as sisters and brothers.¹¹⁸

Glossary

Areas A, B and C: As part of the Oslo peace process, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were divided into distinct areas of control. The Palestinian Authority exercises control (civic and security) in Area A. In Area B, control of security is shared by the PA and Israeli government with Palestinians retaining civic control. Israel controls Area C.

Checkpoints: Israeli military checkpoints surround towns and villages throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They are manned by Israeli soldiers and sometimes reinforced with tanks or armoured personnel carriers.

Closure: A system of Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks dividing up the West Bank and Gaza Strip and making the flow of people and trade contingent on Israeli approval. 'Absolute' closure means all travel is banned, both within and between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Curfew: Israeli government order restricting inhabitants of the OPT to their homes for up to 24 hours a day.

Green Line/Armistice Line: After the cessation of hostilities in 1948, an armistice agreement was signed in 1949. The agreement delineated the borders of each party and designated the no-man's-land between them according to the location of their respective armies. This line demarcated the borders between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip as recognised by the international community. The Armistice Line is also known as the 'Green Line'.

Intifada: In December 1987, collective Palestinian frustration erupted in the popular uprising against Israeli rule known as the intifada, or 'shaking off' in Arabic. A second intifada erupted on 28 September 2000 and is now in its third year.

Occupation: Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1967 war along with East Jerusalem, which had been partitioned between Israel and Jordan in 1948. Collectively these areas are known as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). An Israeli military administration was established to govern Palestinian residents of the OPT. After the Oslo Accords, the Israeli military administration was restricted to Areas B and C.

Oslo Accords and peace process: The Oslo peace process refers to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process begun in September 1993 which attempted to establish a framework for resolving the conflict and resulted in the signing of the Declaration of Principles, the first in a series of agreements which are known as the Oslo Accords.

Palestinian Authority (PA): The interim government of the Palestinian territories, established within the Oslo Accords and currently led by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Permits: Israel has effectively cut the West Bank into eight zones, isolated from one another, with movement between them controlled by Israeli armed forces. Palestinians needing to travel are required to apply to the Israeli occupation authorities for a special permit to enter or leave a zone. The new permits are only valid from 5am to 7pm and must be renewed every month. In addition, Palestinians are required to have permits for travel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to leave the country.

Settlements: Israeli colonies built inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem; they are illegal under international law. They are connected to each other and to Israel by roads controlled by Israel, which Palestinians are not allowed to use.

UNRWA: The UN's special agency, the United Nations Relief Works Agency, set up in 1949 to serve the needs of Palestinians in refugee camps in the Middle East. It still operates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

Waqf: The *waqf* is a social and religious institution which plays an important role in the social, cultural and economic life of the Islamic world.

Appendix

International law and the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Two specific instruments of international law apply particularly to territories under occupation. These are the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the 1949 (Fourth) Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Both were framed to create a code of conduct regarding the basic rules of behaviour in an armed conflict.

Over 160 states are signatories to the Geneva Convention. Israel accepts the applicability of the Hague Regulations but not the Fourth Geneva Convention, although it undertakes to respect its humanitarian provisions. It argues that the OPT was not part of the sovereign territory of either Jordan or Egypt when occupied, and therefore that the Convention does not apply. No other High Contracting Party to the Convention has accepted this argument.

Israel initially disregarded the Hague Regulations on the grounds that they were not framed to cover such an occupation which, it claimed, was *sui generis*. Later it accepted an Israeli Supreme Court ruling that it was engaged in a military occupation governed by customary international convention. Within the first 24 hours of the onset of hostilities on 5 June 1967, Israel announced it would apply the Fourth Geneva Convention. However, the government then revoked its order (Military Order No 3 of 7 June 1967).

The Fourth Geneva Convention states:

- Article 1: 'The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances.'
- Article 33: 'No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited. Pillage is prohibited. Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited.'

- Article 47: 'Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as a result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territory and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory.'
- Article 49: 'Individual or mass transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive...

'The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.'

In a statement to the House of Commons in August 2002, UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Jack Straw made the UK position clear:

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 were updated and expanded in the two Protocols of 1977. The Conventions and their Protocols form the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. This crucial body of law is applicable to all kinds of armed conflict; the challenge for all governments is to see that it is faithfully applied. The government remains determined that the United Kingdom will continue to play a leading role in securing the application and implementation of international humanitarian law worldwide.¹¹⁹

The Hague Regulations (1907) are concerned with the conduct of war, particularly where a civilian population is affected by the fighting, for example during the bombardment of a village or town. It

focuses only partially on military occupation *per se* yet has important things to say about what an occupying force may or may not do. Particularly relevant are:

- Article 46: 'Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Property cannot be confiscated.'
- Article 50: 'No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly or severally responsible.'
- Article 56: 'The property of municipalities, that of institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, even when State property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, destruction or wilful damage done to institutions of this character, historic monuments, works of art or science, is forbidden...'

Notes

- 1 The text was confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations on 24 July 1922. Article 4 read: 'An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country....'
- 2 Forty-four per cent of the West Bank and 71 per cent of the Gaza Strip population were refugees. The right of return for these refugees was affirmed by UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 1948. But by then Israel had already told the UN mediator that it would not accept the refugees back.
- 3 Roger Owen, 'Economic history of Palestine under the Mandate, 1919-1948', paper given at the Welfare Association International Symposium, Oxford, January 1986.
- 4 As soon as the territories were acquired Prime Minister Levi Eshkol stated that 'the new areas' would be retained for security reasons (Sydney Bailey, *The Making of Resolution 242* (London 1985), p. 129). He ordered the foreign ministry and the Bureau of Statistics to omit the 1949 Armistice Line from maps (Misha Louvish, 'The spectre of the Green Line', *Jerusalem Post*, international edition week ending 25 October 1986, p.15). The Information Minister said that 'Israel would not return to the 1949 Armistice Line' which was 'nullified' (*New York Times*, 11 June 1967).
- 5 Zachary Lockman and Josel Beinin, *Intifada* (London, 1990), p. 104.
- 6 CESR, 'Progress, Stagnation or Regression?', p. 6.
- 7 UNCTAD PR57, 12 September 2002. See also Sara Roy, *The Gaza Strip: the political economy of de-development* (1995).
- 8 Gaza-Jericho Agreement, Annex IV, Protocol on Economic Relations, Paris, 19 April 1994.
- 9 Graham Usher, *Palestine in Crisis* (London 1995), p. 36.
- 10 UPMRC appeal, 14 December 2000.
- 11 Military Order No. 1, 1967.
- 12 Military Order No. 144, 1968. From the first intifada, in 1988, a magnetic card was required in the Gaza Strip for all males aged 16 and over. From 1989, whenever closure was imposed, all magnetic-card holders were automatically refused exit permits. Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, *The Israeli Policy of Closure* (nd, Gaza), p. 3.
- 13 MAS, *Economic Monitor*, 19 August 1997.
- 14 World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 3.
- 15 Dr Salim Abdala, Darraj Clinic, Gaza City, November 2002.
- 16 Stephanie Nolan, 'Likud plays the closure card', *Palestine Report*, 2 August 1996, p. 16.
- 17 Mamduh Abu Jarrar, farmer and member of the Jordan Valley Palm Dates Association, Jericho, 6 July 2002.
- 18 PCBS, *Industry and Labour Statistics*.
- 19 World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 15.
- 20 USAID, 'Nutritional Assessment and Sentinel Surveillance System for the West Bank and Gaza', 5 August 2002.
- 21 Mission Report, Catherine Bertini, Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, 11-19 August 2002.
- 22 Bir Zeit Human Rights Record, 'High toll of human rights violations continue', no. 14, June 1994-March 1995, in PCHR, *The Israeli Policy of Closure*, p. 15.
- 23 A variety of means was used to expropriate. The most common, declaring land as 'state land', was often carried out without the knowledge of the Palestinian resident. By the time they had discovered that expropriation was planned, it was too late to appeal. Moreover, the burden of proof was on them. They were in a weak position since land registration in most of the West Bank had never been carried out. Thus families that had been on land for generations were unable to provide written proof of ownership in court.
- 24 According to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, it will be recalled: 'The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.'
- 25 Graham Usher, *Palestine in Crisis* (London 1995), p. 10.
- 26 Usher, *Palestine in Crisis*, p. 4.
- 27 Usher, *Palestine in Crisis*, p. 4.
- 28 B'Tselem, *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank*, May 2002.
- 29 'Settlement update', Peace Now, undated but downloaded from *The Palestinian Monitor*, 11 June 2002.
- 30 As quoted by Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London 2001), p. 582.
- 31 Only three states vote against the resolution: Israel, the United States and Micronesia.
- 32 AFP quoted by *The Age*, 19 April 2002.
- 33 Peace Now, 19 March 2002. While Israel officially claimed that this constituted only the expansion of existing settlements, according to Peace Now, the majority of 'expansions' were between 3/4 km and 2 km away from the nearest actual settlement. Said a Peace Now spokesperson: 'They are new settlements because they have an independent infrastructure and control new terrain.' Didi Remez, Peace Now, in the *Independent*, 20 March 2002.
- 34 During the Barak administration alone, 6,045 housing units were begun. Settlement building in 2000 reached its highest since 1992, with 4,499 'starts'.
- 35 Gaza's remained static at 5,000.
- 36 B'Tselem 'Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank', summary, May 2002, on *The Palestine Monitor* website under 'Settlers and settler violence', p. 4.
- 37 Judeh Abdullah, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, 9 July 2002.
- 38 By military order No.158, 19 November 1967.
- 39 By military order 291, 19 December 1968.

- 40 Oral information from Dr Ayman Rabi, Palestine Hydrology Group, 9 July 2002.
- 41 Gwyn Rowley, 'The Occupied Territories: The Deeper Reality', *Focus*, Winter 1987, p. 35.
- 42 B'Tselem, 'Thirsty for a solution: the water shortage and its resolution in the final status agreement', 2000.
- 43 Jad Isaac, *Water and the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Negotiations*.
- 44 B'Tselem, *Thirsty for a solution*, July 2002.
- 45 *The Palestine Monitor*, water fact sheet.
- 46 B'Tselem, 'Thirsty for a solution', pp. 40-41.
- 47 *The Palestine Monitor* website, Jessica McCallin, 'Making the desert bloom'.
- 48 B'Tselem, 'Thirsty for a solution'.
- 49 John Quigley, *Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice* (Duke University, 1990), p. 186. David McDowall, *The Palestinians: the Road to Nationhood* (1995) p. 88.
- 50 Quigley, *Palestine and Israel*, p. 187.
- 51 Quigley, *Palestine and Israel*, p. 186.
- 52 Interview with Mamduh Abu Jarrar, 6 July 2002.
- 53 PECДАР, *People under Siege*, September 2001.
- 54 Assuming seven persons per family. In fact, Muhammad Zakut, president of al-Tawfiq Cooperative Society for Fishermen, reckons on eight per family, ie 32,000 persons.
- 55 According to the interim agreement between Israel and Palestine, signed May 1994, article 11 of the protocol, Palestinians are permitted in area 'L', 20 nautical miles.
- 56 Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, 'A special report on Israeli human rights abuses against fishermen in the Gaza Strip during the second intifada, 29 September 2000-31 May 2002'.
- 57 General Administration of Fishing Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Gaza Strip.
- 58 Tariq Musbah Saqr, director, General Administration of Fishing Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Gaza.
- 59 Fifty-three per cent of direct recipients of the Ministry of Social Affairs social welfare programme are widows and divorcee-headed households. Penny Johnson and Jamil Hilal, 'Gender and poverty in Palestine: critical issues', Birzeit University, Institute of Women's Studies, 2001.
- 60 Mustafa Barghouti and Ibrahim Daibes, *Infrastructure and Health Services in the West Bank: Guidelines for Health Care Planning* (HDIP, Ramallah, 1993), p. xviii.
- 61 The networks were: the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC), Health Services Council (HSC), Union of Health Work Committees (HWC) and Health Care Committees (HCC).
- 62 By 1992, 70 per cent of rural communities in the south and 49 per cent of communities in the north still did not have access to clinics. Ibrahim Daibes and Mustafa Barghouti, *Infrastructure and Health Services in the Gaza Strip*, p. xviii.
- 63 Daibes and Barghouti, *Infrastructure and Health Services*, p. 49.
- 64 Daibes and Barghouti, *Infrastructure and Health Services*, p. 170.
- 65 UPMRC press release, 19 November 2002.
- 66 UPMRC press release, April 2002.
- 67 USAID, 'Assessment of the humanitarian situation'.
- 68 USAID, 'Assessment of the humanitarian situation'.
- 69 These are four out of 16 examples given in HDIP, 'Health Care Under Siege', pp. 14-15.
- 70 *Palestine Monitor*, 17 June 2002.
- 71 HDIP, 'Health care under siege' pp. 15-16.
- 72 Mission Report, Catherine Bertini, Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, 11-19 August 2002.
- 73 Rita Giacaman, Husam Nasir and Nidal Nasir, 'Environmental and public health crisis emerging in northern West Bank villages', Birzeit University, Institute for Community and Public Health, 29 April 2002.
- 74 Rita Giacaman and Abdullatif al Hussein, 'Life and health during the Israeli invasion of the West Bank', Birzeit University, Institute for Community and Public Health, five reports between 13 and 29 May 2002.
- 75 Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, *Annual Report, 1998-99*.
- 76 Palestine Ministry of Health figure, World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 41.
- 77 The Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute (HDIP), *Health care under siege*, II, May 2001, quoted by World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 41.
- 78 GCMHP, *Annual Report 2000*, p. 4-5.
- 79 Hilel Sheinfeld, Coordinator of operations, quoted by Asher Davidi, 'Israel's strategy for Palestinian Independence', *Middle East Report*, September-October 1993, quoted in Usher, *Palestine in Crisis*, p. 42.
- 80 Salah Abd al Shafi, 'We will be working for Israel in Gaza rather than in Tel Aviv', *Middle East Report*, January-February 1994, quoted in Usher, *Palestine in Crisis*, p. 41.
- 81 UNSCO report, January 1999.
- 82 Article III of the Paris Protocol gives Israel the power of veto regarding disputes over imports and exports through the Joint Economic Committee. The PA has no right of veto over Israel's imports and exports.
- 83 UNSCO Report for April 1997, executive summary.
- 84 UNSCO Report for April 1997, p. 6.
- 85 The share of public expenditure in GDP increased from 12 per cent in 1994 to more than 25 per cent in 1999, largely to employ 100,000 people, one quarter of domestic employment. Bishara, *Peace or Apartheid*, p. 109.
- 86 World Bank, 'Poverty in the West Bank and Gaza', 26 January 2001.
- 87 PECДАР, *People under Siege*, September 2000-April 2002.
- 88 Total market activities dropped by 49.9 per cent. Union of Chambers of Commerce, Trade and Industry, *Economic Monitor*, April 2001.

- 89 Ibid.
- 90 UNSCO, *Closure Update*, 1 October 2000 - 30 June 2001.
- 91 Yezid Sayigh and Khalil Shikaki, *Strengthening Palestinian Public Institutions*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, June 1999.
- 92 Bir Zeit University and PCBS surveys, quoted in World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 33.
- 93 On 27 June 1967 the Knesset passed an amendment to the Law and Administration Ordinance which stated that '... the law, jurisdiction and administration of the state shall extend to any area of Eretz Israel designated by the Government by order.' The following day the Israeli government issued an order applying this amendment to an area of 30,000 dunums of East Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank.
- 94 UN Security Council Resolution 252 of 21 May 1968 'considers that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change that status' (two abstentions: Canada and US) and UNSCR 478 of 20 August 1980 'Affirms that the enactment of the "basic law" by Israel constitutes a violation of international law and does not affect the continued application of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem.'
- 95 In the neighbourhoods of Shaikh Jarrah, Shu'fat, Lifta, Issawiya, Malha, Sur Baher, Beit Jala, Beit Hanina, Hizma, Um Tuba, Sur Baher, Beit Suhur, Bethlehem, Beit Safafa and Beit Jala. See Allison Hodgkins, *The Judaization of Jerusalem: Israeli policies since 1967* (Passia, 1996), p. 24.
- 96 The status of Palestinians in East Jerusalem was also changed. After annexation, they were refused Israeli citizenship and accorded the status of 'permanent resident', the same status granted to foreign citizens who have chosen to live in Israel. This immigrant status disregards the fact that not only were most of these Palestinians born in the city, but a large number were descended from families resident in Jerusalem for generations. B'Tselem, *Jerusalem Report*.
- 97 In the illegal settlements of Har Homa, Ramot, Gilo, Pisgat Ze'ev. Geoffrey Aronson, 'Israeli Settlements in and Around Jerusalem', in Ghada Karmi (ed) *Jerusalem Today: What Future for the Peace Process?* (Ithaca Press, 1996), p. 79.
- 98 In 1995 Israel announced the confiscation of an additional 131 acres in East Jerusalem, an act which the UN was thwarted in condemning by the US. See UN Security Council records, 50th year, 3538th meeting, doc S/PV/3538, 17 May 1995. See also *New York Times*, 18 May 1995. Israel then announced that it would suspend the expropriations but did not undertake not to reactivate them. Another 4,000 dunums (1,480 acres), primarily in south Jerusalem, were scheduled for expropriation in 1996.
- 99 Hodgkins, *The Judaization of Jerusalem*, p. 24
- 100 B'Tselem website.
- 101 B'Tselem and LAW (the Jerusalem-based Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment) statistics on demolition of houses built without permits since 1987.
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- 103 B'Tselem, 'Neglect of Infrastructure and Services in Palestinian Neighbourhoods', 2002.
- 104 *The Independent*, 30 July 1997.
- 105 Laura Fragiaco, 'Foreign Aid: Are the Palestinians Benefiting?' *Perspectives* (HIDIP Policy Watch Bulletin) No. 5, May 2000.
- 106 PCHR, 'Waiting for the unlikely: position paper on the PNA "reforms"', 22 June 2002.
- 107 By contrast, in the year 2000 alone, the US gave Israel US\$4.13 billion. Since 1993 the US is estimated to have given Israel US\$25.58 billion, more than five times the amount received by Palestinians, with their almost completely derelict economy, in the same period. Figures drawn from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), *Reports on Donor Assistance 2001*.
- 108 World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 17. The impact on investment, according to the Bank, was even higher, at US\$1.2 billion.
- 109 European Commission, 'European Commission decides on emergency rehabilitation of administrative infrastructure of Palestinian Authority', IP/02/947.
- 110 World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. 74.
- 111 Mission Report. Catherine Bertini, Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, 11-19 August 2002, p. 8.
- 112 World Bank, 'Fifteen months', p. vi.
- 113 Cited in Middle East Council of Churches, *MECC News Report*, Summer 2002, Vol.14, No 1.
- 114 Yael Stein, B'Tselem, 10 October 2002.
- 115 Emma Murphy, 'Stacking the deck: the economics of the Israel-PLO Accords', *Middle East Report*, May-June 1995, pp. 35.
- 116 World Food Programme, 21 May 2002.
- 117 This seems to be accepted by Israel. In an interview on *Hardtalk* on BBC World on 3 July 2002, Dore Gold, adviser to Prime Minister Sharon, accepted the principle of 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war' and accepted that any border changes would arise from negotiation.
- 118 *Guardian*, 29 April 2002.
- 119 Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report, 'Foreign policy aspects of the war against terrorism', Session 2001-2002, Cm 5589, August 2002.

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Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling

YMCA Women's Training Programme

Young Women's Christian Association

All interviews were carried out in July 2002 unless otherwise stated. Some family names have been omitted to protect individuals.

Exchange rate at 1 July 2002:

£1 = US\$1.53

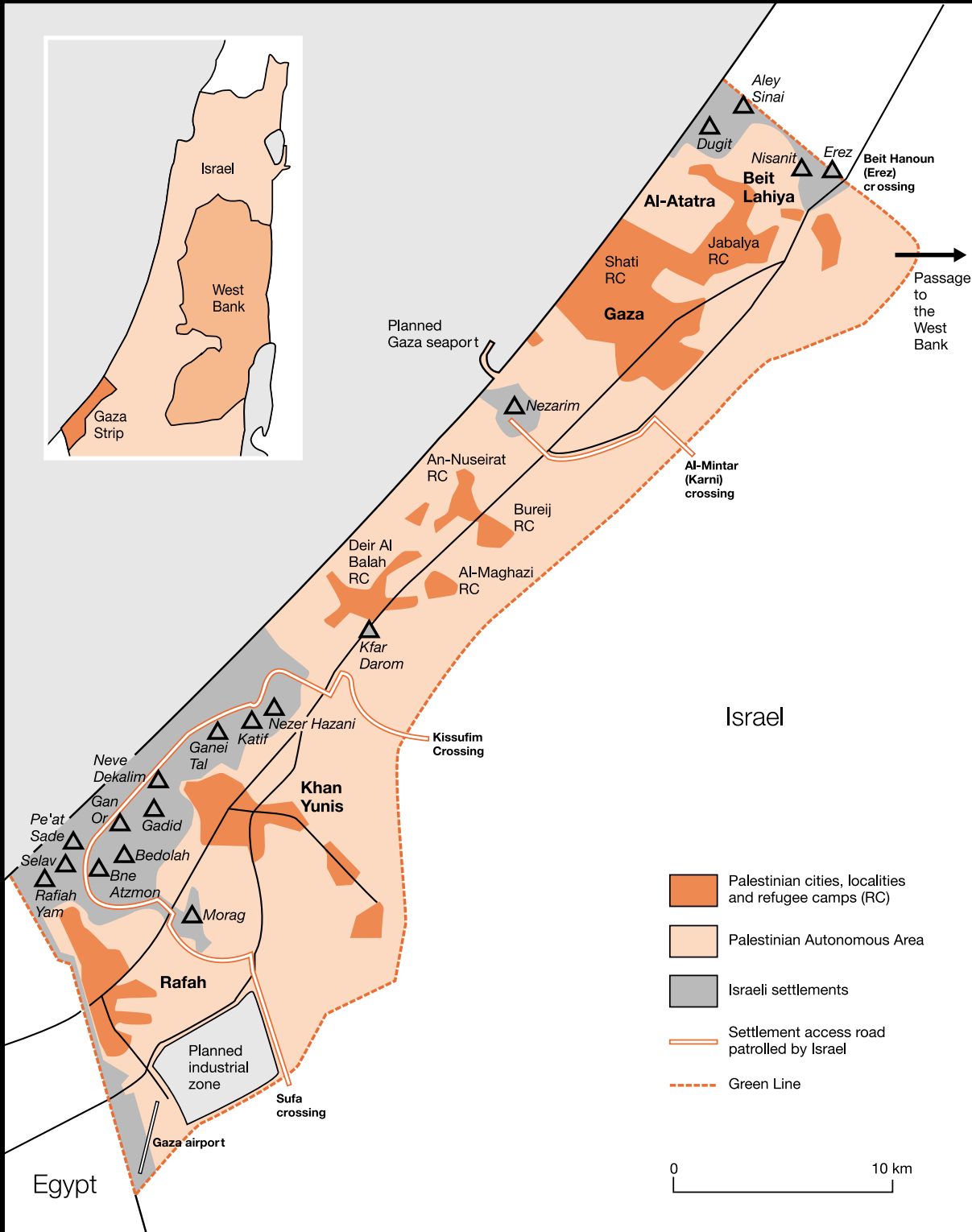
US\$1 = New Israeli Shekel (NIS) 4.75

£1 = NIS 7.29

Christian Aid links directly with people living in poverty through local organisations. It supports programmes with the aim of strengthening the poor through self-sufficiency. Christian Aid also seeks to address the root causes of poverty. It is the official relief and development agency of 40 British and Irish churches, working where need is greatest in 60 countries worldwide and helping communities of all religions and those with none.

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The Gaza Strip



'What we have left is five per cent of the land... everything else was lost. Some people planted olives; they have been uprooted by the Israelis. Often our water is not running and we have little to drink. Over the road, we see the sprinklers on the lawns of the Israeli settlements.'

A farmer near Ramallah

Front cover picture: Palestinians pass an Israeli army checkpoint on a main road from Ramallah to Jerusalem. Israel faces growing international pressure to lift its blockade of cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which is strangling the Palestinian economy.

Photo credit: Ziv Coren/Gamma/Katz