



## 20 FACTS: 20 YEARS SINCE THE OSLO ACCORDS

*This September marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the first Oslo Accord or Declaration of Principles.<sup>i</sup> Despite billions of dollars spent on international aid, and efforts by the international community to support Palestinian state building, the last 20 years have been marked by lost opportunity. People across the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT) continue to be negatively affected by Israel's ongoing occupation and the host of discriminatory policies and practices that accompany it. Today, a new round of negotiations is underway.*

### In the past 20 years:

#### **Israel has increased its control over land and lives in the OPT:**

- **Israel has rapidly expanded settlements across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem: The number of Israeli settlers has more than doubled** from 262,500 settlers in 1993<sup>ii</sup> to over 520,000 today, across the West Bank, including 200,000 in East Jerusalem.<sup>iii</sup> Israeli settlements are considered illegal under international law<sup>iv</sup> and are seen as a serious obstacle to peace. The Israeli government provides a subsidy of up to \$28,000 for each apartment built in a settlement,<sup>v</sup> and settlers enjoy access to numerous financial benefits, including tax exemptions.<sup>vi</sup> Despite the resumption of negotiations, in the past month the Gol has approved at least 3,600 new settlement units.<sup>vii</sup>

- **Israel controls 80 percent of Palestinian water resources** and the 520,000 Israeli settlers use approximately six times the amount of water that the 2.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank use.<sup>viii</sup> Most West Bank settlements are located close to water resources, which Palestinians are restricted from accessing. Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley use large quantities of water to grow agricultural produce for export, while Palestinian farmers struggle to irrigate their crops. Under the Oslo process a Joint Water Committee was set up to manage the West Bank's shared water resources. While this committee is made up of an equal number of Palestinians and Israelis, it effectively grants Israelis exclusive veto power over water resource and infrastructure development in the West Bank.<sup>ix</sup>
- **Israel has demolished over 15,000 Palestinian structures across the OPT** since 1993, including homes, water systems, agricultural facilities and other vital property. Today there are 4,500 outstanding demolition orders on Palestinian structures.<sup>x</sup> The vast majority of demolitions take place because a home or structure has been built without a permit. However, more than 94% of all Palestinian permit applications have been rejected by the Government of Israel (Gol) in recent years.<sup>xi</sup> In the past month, Israel has demolished at least 36 Palestinian buildings, leaving 11 families homeless.<sup>xii</sup>

- **Expanding Israeli settlements now have control over more than 42 percent of the land in the West Bank.**<sup>xiii</sup> One fifth of the land occupied by settlements is built on private Palestinian land.<sup>xiv</sup> While built up areas of Israeli settlements cover 1.5 percent of the West Bank, Israel's overall settlement enterprise includes much more than this. The allocation and use of land reserves, agricultural and industrial facilities, bypass roads, and other infrastructure also comes under the purview of Israeli settlement regional councils, on which Palestinians have no representation.
- **Today, there are more than 100 outposts; combined, they control over 16,000 dunums**<sup>xv</sup> **of land in the West Bank.**<sup>xvi</sup> Outposts are settlements established without official Israeli authorization. While demolition orders are sometimes issued by Israeli authorities they are seldom enforced, and outposts are often assisted by Israeli government ministries. They began to be established in 1996, after the Gol increased its oversight over the expansion of new settlements. While the text of the Oslo Accords did not expressly prohibit the expansion of settlements, the spirit of the agreement recognised the territorial integrity of the West Bank and Gaza as central to a future Palestinian state.
- **Palestinians remain unprotected from settler violence.** Following Oslo, in February 1994 an Israeli settler notoriously killed 29 Palestinians in Hebron. Since then more systematic recording shows that settler violence is on the rise, and is undermining the physical safety and livelihoods of Palestinians. The number of settler attacks resulting in Palestinian casualties and property damage has increased by 32% in 2011

### The Oslo Accords

The Oslo Peace Process was intended to lead to a final negotiated settlement between the parties within five years. Permanent issues such as the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, security arrangements, international borders, and the rights of Palestinian refugees were left to be resolved during this period.

It also led to the creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA) with responsibility for the administration of territory under its control. In 1995, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C, fragmenting the West Bank and limiting Palestinian sovereignty. In Area A, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has full civilian and security control; in Area B, the PA has civilian control, but security is maintained by the Government of Israel (Gol). In Area C, over 60 percent of the territory of the West Bank and the only contiguous Area, the Gol maintains full civilian and security control.

compared to 2010, and by over 144% compared to 2009.<sup>xvii</sup> In 2011, alone 10,000 Palestinian-owned trees, primarily olive trees, were reportedly damaged or destroyed.<sup>xviii</sup> Over 90% of monitored complaints against settler violence have been closed without indictment in recent years.<sup>xix</sup> Eight Israeli settlers were also killed and 37 others injured by Palestinians in 2011.<sup>xx</sup>

### ***Gaza has been increasingly closed off from the outside world:***

- **Unemployment rates in Gaza have soared from less than 10 percent**<sup>xxi</sup> **in the early 1990s to over 32 percent today.**<sup>xxii</sup> Only 11 percent of women in Gaza are employed, the lowest rate for female employment in the region.<sup>xxiii</sup> Nearly 50 percent of youth are

unemployed and job prospects are severely curtailed by severe restrictions on movement out of Gaza for work.<sup>xxiv</sup>

- **The Gaza fishing industry has been decimated.** Under Oslo, a 20 Nautical Mile (NM) fishing zone was agreed; today, fishermen are not allowed to go further than a maximum of six NM off the coast of Gaza and are frequently subject to live fire by the Israeli Navy that patrols the fishing limit. From 2009 until November 2011 this limit was only three NM. The restrictions mean that approximately 1,400 metric tons of catch are lost every year at an annual price to the Palestinian economy in Gaza of around \$26 million.<sup>xxv</sup> Fishing was traditionally one of Gaza's primary industries; today, at least 95 percent of Gaza's 3,500 fishermen receive international aid.<sup>xxvi</sup>
- **Gaza's growing population has nowhere to go.** Population density in 1993 was 1,870 people/km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>xxvii</sup> Today, the more than 1.7 million people in Gaza still live on 365km<sup>2</sup> of land at a population density of 4,657 ppl/km<sup>2</sup>. That is nearly 14 times as densely populated as Israel, where in 2011 there were 359 people/km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>xxviii</sup>
- **Making a small place smaller, the security perimeter agreed on in Oslo has been unilaterally and progressively expanded by Israel.** Today, Israel regularly uses live fire to maintain total control over the no-go area inside Gaza and around the perimeter of Israel. It restricts the access of Palestinians who live and work close to the perimeter to their land.<sup>xxix</sup> As a result, up to 35 percent of Gaza's agricultural land is largely unable to be cultivated; this costs Gaza's economy more than an estimated \$50 million annually.<sup>xxx</sup>

***Palestinian land, people and society have been fragmented and divided:***

- **Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem struggle to continue living in their own homes.** It is estimated that the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem demolished over 1,600 Palestinian structures, residential, public, and commercial—since 1993.<sup>xxxi</sup> More than 86,500 people are potentially at risk of having their homes demolished.<sup>xxxii</sup> This is despite the issue of Jerusalem being left for final-status negotiations in the Oslo Peace Process.
- **A system of nearly 550 Israeli-controlled checkpoints, barriers and gates has severely curtailed the movement of Palestinian civilians.**<sup>xxxiii</sup> From 1972 until 1991, a general system of exit permits was in place whereby residents of the OPT were able to freely enter Israel and East Jerusalem, and could pass between Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>xxxiv</sup> In 1991, this came to an end and a new Israeli permit system was introduced restricting Palestinians freedom of movement, and marking the beginning of a policy of closure. Additionally, there are over 400 ad-hoc checkpoints which are deployed on average every month.<sup>xxxv</sup>
- **The Wall has physically separated Palestinian communities, cutting them off from their agricultural land and vital services.** In 2002, the Gol began construction of the 708km long Wall; its planned route will effectively render 9.4 percent of West Bank land, including East Jerusalem off limits to West Bank Palestinians. Thousands of Palestinians have been confined to isolated pockets in the area between the wall and the Green line, severely restricting their livelihoods

and access to basic services, including schools and hospitals.

- **East Jerusalem once the focus of Palestinian political, commercial, religious and cultural life is increasingly being cut off from the rest of the OPT.** Over 55,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are separated from the city centre and find it difficult to access services to which they are entitled and for which they pay taxes).<sup>xxxvi</sup>
- **Separated Palestinian families require approval by the Gol to be together.** Family reunification applications have only been processed since 2000 on an ad-hoc 'political gesture' basis. A family reunification request can take over 10 years to process; a Palestinian who marries a non-resident this month will only be able to live with his/her spouse in the OPT in a decade, if then.<sup>xxxvii</sup> A 2005 survey estimated that more than 640,000 Palestinian residents of Gaza and the West Bank are affected as they have a parent, sibling, child, or spouse who is unregistered on the Israeli population registry.<sup>xxxviii</sup>
- **The Gol has unilaterally revoked the residency rights of more than 11,200 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem.** Only several hundred Palestinians have ever had their permanent residency status restored once it has been revoked.<sup>xxxix</sup> An estimated 293,000 Palestinians still maintain their residency in East Jerusalem today.<sup>xl</sup>

***A once-independent Palestinian economy has been stunted:***

- **Palestinians continue to pay the price for the ongoing Israeli occupation.** If Palestinians were allowed a fair share of water resources and if restrictions in Area

C were lifted, the Palestinian economy would generate an estimated additional \$1.88 billion annually.<sup>xli</sup>

- **While Israel's GNP has boomed, Palestine's has stagnated.** Since 1993, the Israeli GNP per capita has risen from around \$13,800 to over \$32,000 today.<sup>xlii</sup> At the same time the West Bank GNP per capita has gone from roughly \$2,000 in the early 1990s<sup>xliii</sup> to \$2,093 today, while Gaza's has decreased from \$1,230 to \$1,074<sup>xliv</sup>. If productivity had continued to increase at pre-Oslo levels, real GNP per capita in the OPT would be an estimated 88 percent higher.<sup>xlv</sup>
- **Land in Areas A and B costs up to 150 percent more than comparable land in Area C.** The cost of land in Area A and B is heavily inflated because of restrictions on Palestinian development in Area C. Lack of land has directly resulted in lower outputs, higher unemployment, and has decreased the competitiveness of Palestinian products.<sup>xlvi</sup>
- **The centre of a once-vibrant Hebron has been turned into a ghost town.** Once a commercial hub for the entire Southern West Bank, Hebron was divided into two as part of the Oslo negotiations. Approximately 500 Israeli settlers, protected by several thousand soldiers have taken control of the city centre. In 1994, an Israeli military order closed Shuhada Street, the main market street to Palestinian vehicles and pedestrians. Since 2000, the economic collapse of the city centre resulted in more than 1,800 Palestinian businesses closing.<sup>xlvii</sup>

<sup>i</sup> The Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. The Oslo Peace Process was intended to lead to a final negotiated settlement between the parties within 5 years. Permanent issues such as the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, security arrangements, international borders, and the rights of Palestinian refugees were left to be resolved during this period. It also led to the creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA) with responsibility for the administration of territory under its control. In 1995, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C, fragmenting the West Bank and limiting Palestinian sovereignty. In Area A, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has full civilian and security control; in Area B, the PA has civilian control, but security is maintained by the Government of Israel (GoI). In Area C, over 60 percent of the territory of the West Bank and the only contiguous Area, the GoI maintains full civilian and security control.

<sup>ii</sup> 110,900 in the West Bank, 146,800 in East Jerusalem: 'By Hook and By Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank.' B'Tselem. July 2010, p10. A further 4,800 settlers lived in Gaza: 'Israeli Settler Population, 1972-2006.' Foundation for Middle East Peace. Accessed 2 September 2013 <[http://www.fmep.org/settlement\\_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/israeli-settler-population-1972-2006](http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/israeli-settler-population-1972-2006)>

<sup>iii</sup> The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies, Update December 2012.' OCHA OPT.

<sup>iv</sup> IV Geneva Convention, Article 49.

<sup>v</sup> 'By Hook and By Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank.' B'Tselem. July 2010.

<sup>vi</sup> 'Encouragement of migration to the settlements.' B'Tselem. January 2013.

<<http://www.btselem.org/settlements/migration>>.

<sup>vii</sup> 'Facts on the Ground Peace Index.' IMEU, 29 August 2013

<sup>viii</sup> 'Joint Parallel Report submitted by the Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene group (EWASH) and Al-Haq to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the occasion of the consideration of the Third Periodic Report of Israel.' September 2011.

<sup>ix</sup> Emergency, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene group (EWASH) Fact Sheet 2: <http://www.ewash.org/files/library/Factsheet%202%20-%20A4.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> 'The State of Palestine.' IDMC. Accessed 4 September 2013 <[http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/%28http Envelopes%29/98F0726BF7D6AA45C12574B30055BD32?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/%28http%20Envelopes%29/98F0726BF7D6AA45C12574B30055BD32?OpenDocument)>. And 'Statistics on demolition of houses built without permits in the West Bank (Not including East Jerusalem).' B'Tselem, 16 June 2013. Accessed 4 September 2013 <[http://www.btselem.org/planning\\_and\\_building/statistics](http://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building/statistics)>.

<sup>xi</sup> 'Frozen out in the West Bank,' Human Rights Watch Report, February 2011. Accessed 6 September, 2013.

<sup>xii</sup> 'Facts on the Ground Peace Index.' IMEU, 29 August 2013.

<sup>xiii</sup> 'By Hook and By Crook: Israeli Settlement Policy in the West Bank.' B'Tselem. July 2010.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xv</sup> One (1) dunam is 1000km<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xvii</sup> 'Israeli Settler Violence in the West Bank', OCHA Fact Sheet, November 2011.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xx</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxi</sup> 'Developing the Occupied Territories: the Economy.' World Bank, Vol. 2, September 1993. Accessed 26 August 2013 <[http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/09/01/000009265\\_3970311123239/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/09/01/000009265_3970311123239/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf)>. p12.

<sup>xxii</sup> GISHA Update. 24 February 2013. Accessed 2 September 2013

<[http://www.gisha.org/item.asp?lang\\_id=en&p\\_id=1849](http://www.gisha.org/item.asp?lang_id=en&p_id=1849)>.

<sup>xxiii</sup> 'On the occasion of May 1 International Workers' Day: Indicators of the Labour Force in the Palestinian Territory.' PCBS. Accessed 6 September 2013 <[http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_pcbs/PressRelease/workers\\_day\\_08e.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/workers_day_08e.pdf)>.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxv</sup> 'Between the Fence and a Hard Place: the humanitarian impact of Israeli-imposed restrictions on access to land and sea in the Gaza Strip.' OCHA. August 2012. Accessed 18 August 2013

<[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_special\\_focus\\_2010\\_08\\_19\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_special_focus_2010_08_19_english.pdf)>.

<sup>xxvi</sup> 'Access Restricted Areas (ARA) in the Gaza Strip.' OCHA Factsheet, July 2013.

<sup>xxvii</sup> 'Developing the Occupied Territories: Overview.' World Bank, Vol. 1, September 1993. Accessed 2 September 2013 <[http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/09/01/000009265\\_3970311123238/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/09/01/000009265_3970311123238/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf)>. p7, Box 2.3.

<sup>xxviii</sup> 'Population density (people per sq. km of land area).' The World Bank. 2012. Accessed 2 September 2013

<<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST>>.

<sup>xxix</sup> This is currently referred to as the Access Restricted Area (ARA).

<sup>xxx</sup> Access Restricted Areas (ARA) in the Gaza Strip.' OCHA Factsheet, July 2013.

<sup>xxxi</sup> 'House Demolitions in Jerusalem', Research Report by Dr. Meir Margalit, Yet to be published officially.

<sup>xxxii</sup> 'East Jerusalem, Key Humanitarian Concerns', OCHA, March 2011.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> 'Special Focus: West Bank Movement and Access Update.' OCHA, September 2012. Accessed 2 September 2013

<[http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_move](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_move)

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ment\_and\_access\_report\_september\_2012\_english.pdf>.

<sup>xxxiv</sup>

[http://www.btselem.org/freedom\\_of\\_movement/closure](http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/closure)

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<sup>xxxv</sup> Ibid. This type of checkpoint renders a road/location impassable for several hours each time, however, no permanent infrastructure is present on the ground.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> 'East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns.' OCHA Factsheet, December 2012.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Carmi, Na'ama. Tr. Zvi Shulman. 'Oslo: Before and After – the status of human rights in the Occupied Territories.' B'Tselem: May 1999.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> 'Israel: End Restrictions on Palestinian Residency.' Human Rights Watch, 5 February 2012. Accessed 2 September 2013

<<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/02/05/israel-end-restrictions-palestinian-residency>>.

<sup>xxxix</sup> 'Revocation of Residency.' B'Tselem. 18 August 2013. Accessed 2 September

<[http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation\\_of\\_residency](http://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/revocation_of_residency)>.

<sup>xi</sup> 'East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns.' OCHA Factsheet, December 2012.

<sup>xli</sup> 'The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the occupied Palestinian territory. A bulletin published by the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy in cooperation with the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ).' September 2011. Accessed 2 September 2013

<<http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/docs/2012Cairo/p2%20jad%20isaac%20e.pdf>>.

<sup>xlii</sup> '2012 World Economic Outlook.' IMF. Accessed 3 September 2013

<<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/02/weo/data/index.aspx>>.

<sup>xliii</sup> 'Developing the Occupied Territories: Overview.' World Bank, Vol. 1, September 1993. Accessed 2 September 2013 <[http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/09/01/000009265\\_3970311123238/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1993/09/01/000009265_3970311123238/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf)>. p7, Box 2.3.

<sup>xliiv</sup> 'GDP per capita.' PCBS. Accessed 2 September 2013

<[http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_Rainbow/Documents/GDP-PerCapitaConstant2000-2012E.htm](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/GDP-PerCapitaConstant2000-2012E.htm)>.

<sup>xlv</sup> 'Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory.' UNCTAD, 15 July 2011. Accessed 1 September 2013

<[http://unctad.org/en/Docs/tdb58d4\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/en/Docs/tdb58d4_en.pdf)>.

<sup>xlvi</sup> 'Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.' UNCTAD, 8 July 2013. Accessed 4 September 2013

<[http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/db60d3\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/db60d3_en.pdf)>.

<sup>xlvii</sup> 'Ghost Town: Israel's Separation Policy and Forced Eviction of Palestinians from the Center of

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Hebron.' B'Tselem, Joint report with The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, May 2007. Accessed 2 September 2013

<<http://www.btselem.org/printpdf/66021>>.