



THE UNTOLD STORY: THE COSTS OF ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION TO THE PALESTINIANS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

FACT SHEET 2 LOSSES FROM THE SECOND INTIFADA *

The 37-year Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem has been marked by damage, destruction and loss of Palestinian life and property. As yet, there is no full account of such losses. These four fact sheets illustrate the kinds of losses that should be documented to underpin a compensation regime.¹

LOSSES FROM THE SECOND INTIFADA Palestinian living conditions have deteriorated markedly since the launching of the Second Intifada against the occupation in September 2000.

FACT SHEET SERIES

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- By 2004, over 600 "obstacles" restricted Palestinian movement in the West Bank: checkpoints, mounds of earth, trenches, and roving checkpoints. The Israeli policy of closure and checkpoints is regularly cited as *the* key factor in the economic decline of the West Bank and Gaza.²
- By 2000, per capita income had already fallen some 10% below pre-Oslo figures.
- Total unemployment reached 41% by 2002. As one economist noted, "Applying the same ratio to the U.S. labor force would yield a total number of unemployed of some 60 million persons."³

One study estimated that lost income opportunities in the first 27-months of the Intifada topped \$4.8bn and continued to rise.⁴ Another stated, "The decline in real per capita GDP reached almost 40% by the end of 2002, exceeding the scale of economic losses suffered by the US in the Great Depression."⁵

HOME DEMOLITIONS Some 1,600 homes were demolished and over 14,000 damaged during the first two years of the Second Intifada.⁶ This affected some 80,000 people – the equivalent of 8.5 million persons in the United States.⁷ Major incidents include:

- The April 2002 invasion of Jenin Camp rendered 800 families homeless and damage to private housing alone at about \$27mn.⁸ This works out to \$33,750 per housing unit; a figure that could prove useful in any future estimates of costs to Palestinians in this sector.⁹

* *The fact sheet series is based on the full-length study by Souad Dajani, "The Untold Story: The Cost of Israel's Occupation to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (Washington, DC: The Palestine Center, 2005). The Palestine Center is the educational arm of The Jerusalem Fund for Education and Community Development, www.thejerusalemfund.org. All rights reserved.*

¹ This study has as its point of departure the continued applicability of international law, which clearly defines the West Bank and Gaza Strip (including East Jerusalem) as occupied territories from which Israel is obliged to withdraw.

² See for example, UNSCO Update, *Closure in the West Bank and Gaza* (2 October 2003).

³ Salim Ajluni, "The Palestinian Economy and the Second Intifada," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, No. 3 (Spring 2003), 69.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The World Bank, *Disengagement, the Palestinian Economy and the Settlements* (23 June 2004), 1.

⁶ Israel has demolished some 20,000 Palestinian homes since 1967 – for "military" or "security" needs or on "administrative" grounds. Some highlights: the Mughrabi Quarter and its 135 homes in East Jerusalem were destroyed after the 1967 War to make way for the Wailing Wall; three Palestinian villages near Jerusalem, which total 1,460 homes, are now the site of Canada Park; a massive invasion of the Gaza Strip in 1971 obliterated several Palestinian refugee areas.

⁷ Ajluni, *supra* note 3, 69.

⁸ See LACC, Donor Support Group, "Physical and Institutional Damage Assessment. West Bank Governorates." Summary Report (23 May 2002), 3, <http://www.support-group.org/DAM%20Final%20Report%20WB/Damage/%20Summary%20Report.htm>.

- Israel's invasion of Rafah in May 2004 resulted in over 277 buildings destroyed and 3,451 Palestinians made homeless. In a single week from 18-24 May 2004, over 167 buildings were destroyed, affecting around 2,066 people in this area.
- Over 2,000 Palestinians were made homeless in month of July 2004 (mainly in the Gaza Strip). During five days in July 2004, Israeli forces destroyed 74 Palestinian homes in Khan Younis.¹⁰

LOSSES DUE TO THE WALL IN THE WEST BANK In June 2002, Israel began to build a "security fence" in the West Bank. Between 943-975 sq. km., or 16.6% of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, will fall to the west of the Wall, effectively annexing these areas into Israel and absorbing at least 66 settlements with a total settler population of over 320,000. The Wall will *de facto* annex between 45-50% of the West Bank into Israel as Palestinians are isolated in separate enclaves and militarily closed areas.

- The Wall will affect 875,600 Palestinians, close to 38% of the population in the West Bank.¹¹
- An estimated 480,000 Palestinians (excluding refugees) will require food aid.¹²
- The northern West Bank, known as the "fruit basket" of Palestine has already lost more than 60% of its prime agricultural lands and key water resources to the Wall.¹³

In the Gaza Strip, Israel has surrounded the area with an electrified fence since the mid-1990s. It is now constructing walls and other barriers near certain settlements, especially in the Rafah area to the south. A 7-km. long "Iron Wall" is to be built in Rafah in the area separating it from the border with Egypt. Targeted areas in Rafah have been totally razed – since the beginning of the Intifada, over 1,497 Palestinian homes have been destroyed in Rafah, and more than 14,666 Palestinians have been rendered homeless.

The Story of Manal Awad, architect, Brazil Refugee Camp (Rafah)

One of the 120 homes demolished by the Israeli military in the Brazil refugee camp belonged to architect Manal Awad. This was the third time since 1948 that her family has been left homeless—and the second time that Ariel Sharon was responsible. Now all 19 people are crowded into a tiny two-and-a-half-room apartment belonging to one sister, on the edge of the destroyed area of their refugee camp. The curtain blowing in the breeze allows intermittent glimpses of the view from the window: mounds of rubble all the way to the end of the street.

On Thursday, May 20, two bulldozers approached their home, threatening to raze it with the occupants still inside. The 85-year-old aunt barely managed to climb out. She says that in 1948, when she fled from her first home, and in 1972, when the Israeli military razed her home again, it was easier for her—she was still young then. Her sisters tried to save the coffee table that Manal had designed, but couldn't....

Manal Awad recalled, "In 1948, the family fled from our village near Ramle to a cave. In 1972, Sharon demolished our house in the Shabura camp, when I was a baby. Now this is the third house... I lost all my memories there. A house isn't just walls. I can buy new furniture, a new refrigerator. But that's not it. The photographs with the family history - every one holds a memory for me... We also had a book collection. It wasn't so big, but it meant a lot to us. ... The house is destroyed. Life is destroyed. Thirty years of life was wiped out."¹⁴

⁹ There are examples of other losses during this period: damage to old buildings and historical sites in the old city of Nablus exceeded \$47.1mn and to Palestinian government and non-government institutions in Ramallah \$52.4mn. Damage and destruction to private housing reached over \$63mn, and to private cars surpasses \$7.3mn.

¹⁰ Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), "Israeli forces kill elderly disabled Palestinian during demolition of 34 homes in Khan Yunis," Report (12 July 2004), at <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article2899.shtml>.

¹¹ Most of the data for this section are from B'Tselem (March 2004). Figures have fluctuated over the years, as Israel continuously adjusts its building plans, usually to accommodate more settlers and settlements and to expand control in the Jerusalem area.

¹² As of 2004, the total number of Palestinians requiring food aid had reportedly reached 1.9 million, well over half the total Palestinian population. See Amira Hass, "Separation fence forces expanded UN food program," *Haaretz* (30 June 2004).

¹³ For more information, see the Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON), Report No. 1 on the Apartheid Wall, <http://www.pengon.org>; LAW, "Israel's Apartheid Wall: We are here and they are there" (2002); B'Tselem, *Behind The Barrier: Human Rights Violations As a Result of Israel's Separation Barrier* (April 2003), http://www.btselem.org/Download/2003_Behind_The_Barrier_Eng_doc; and "The Impact of Israel's Separation Barrier on Affected West Bank Communities," LACC (4 May 2003), <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/VID/29F7516E5E08750385256D1D00699A70?OpenDocument>.

¹⁴ Gideon Levy, "Twilight Zone/End of the Rainbow," *Haaretz* (3 June 2004), <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/434662.html>.