

2007: Apartheid Wall and colonial settlements



The Occupation authorities continued their racial policy of aggression against the Palestinian people and their land and property during 2007. In Gaza, the unjust siege and closure of the international crossings continued while in the West Bank the ongoing establishment of military roadblocks and flying checkpoints have blocked roads and entrances to Palestinian towns and villages. The isolation of Jerusalem continued. Across the board, the ongoing demolition of homes and the confiscation and destruction of Palestinian land has not ceased.



The Occupation authorities have continued to expand the colonial settlements and pushed ahead with construction of the Apartheid Wall, in defiance of international law. In 2004 the International Court of Justice in the Hague ruled that the Wall was illegal and must be dismantled and that there must be compensation for damages resulting from its construction. This decision continues to be flagrantly disregarded. However, work on the Wall has been slow this year in comparison to previous years, with the Occupation ministry responsible claiming financial constraints.

During 2007 the scope of popular resistance against the Wall and settlements has expanded with protests in Palestinian towns and villages affected by the Wall. Internationally, the movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions against the Occupation has gathered pace.

The Apartheid Wall

- Occupation forces constructed around 48 km of the Wall during the year: 6% of the total planned 790 km route. 80 km are currently under construction. In the past five years 450 km have been built. The amount of Wall completed in 2007 is less than half that built in 2006, when 102 km were completed.
- The Occupation authorities made a series of adjustments to the path of the Wall in areas where it has already been built, further destroying Palestinian land. Alterations are planned in Jenin district in the villages of Zububa, Faqqua and Jalboon; in Qalqilya governorate in the villages of Jayyous, Falamyia, and Azzoun Atme which is completely encircled by the Wall; in Ramallah alterations were made in the villages of Bil'in, Budrus, Midya, Dir Qaddis, Ni'lin, Qibya.
- The amendments to the route actually increase the length of the Wall from the originally planned 630 km to 790 km, according to statistics published by the Occupation. Work will begin on the amendments in 2009.
- The Occupation has set out plans for the complete isolation of the southern ghetto, laying and starting work on the ground for apartheid infrastructure between

Jerusalem and Jericho. Confiscation orders have been issued for two to three thousand dunum of land and tens of thousands more will be isolated in the area around Khan al-Ahmar along the historic Jericho-Jerusalem road. The aim is to build a new apartheid road under control of Occupation checkpoints to separately connect northern and southern areas to Jericho.

- The Occupation authorities now anticipate completion of the Apartheid Wall in 2010 rather than in 2008 as was originally planned. This means that the Occupation will have spent eight years building the Wall from its ratification in 2002, all the while under the passive gaze of the international community.

Land confiscation

- Occupation authorities confiscated around 3,143 dunums of land, concentrated mainly in the Jerusalem area. The confiscations either benefit of the settlements or will be utilized for the construction of the Apartheid Wall.
- Occupation forces razed more than 3,000 dunums of land in the West Bank, uprooting more than 2,480 trees, leading to significant losses for the Palestinian agricultural sector.

Industrial Zones

Joint industrial zones, which are set up behind the Wall, are part of the Occupation's project of establishing control over Palestinian labour and movement, creating economic dependency on the Occupation, and normalizing Palestinian relations with the Occupation under apartheid conditions. The industrial zones complement the system of control established by the Apartheid Wall, checkpoints, segregated roads and tunnels, and the settlements.

During 2007 plans to establish industrial zones as part of Palestinian-Israeli joint projects were revived. It was agreed to reactivate the planned industrial zone in Jalame in the Jenin district and another one in the governorate of Hebron. A tourist area is planned for Jericho and the ground was laid for the establishment of an agro-industrial zone in the Jordan Valley with support from the Japanese government. Local councils in the Jordan Valley are campaigning against the agro-industrial zone on the basis that it will promote normalisation with the Occupation.

Settlement policy

- The Occupation announced plans for three large new settlements on land belonging to Jerusalem, comprising around ten thousand units per settlement. One of the settlements will be on the territory of Qalandia, the second in Atarot northwest of Jerusalem and the third southwest of Jerusalem. The settlements will form part of a ring around Jerusalem, encircling Palestinian communities.
- Plans were announced calling for the addition of 1101 units to existing settlements concentrated in Ma'ale Adumim east of Jerusalem and Har Homa in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area in Bethlehem.
- The Occupation authorities granted permission for the establishment of the neighbourhood of Matiyahu Mzrah, part of the religious settlement of Modi'in Illit, built on Palestinian land belonging to Bil'in village to the west of Ramallah. The new neighbourhood will eventually comprise approximately 1500 housing units, currently in varying stages of construction.
- The Occupation authorities announced the conversion of the so-called 'College of Judea and Samaria', in Ariel settlement in the occupied West Bank, into a university.

- There are now 148 settlements, of which 78 fall west of the Wall with some 369,280 settlers, while around 70 other settlements lie to the east of the Wall, inhabited by 54,750 settlers.

House demolitions and forced displacement

The Occupation demolished at least 165 houses during 2007 in addition to the destruction of dozens of businesses and the razing of agricultural land. Demolitions were concentrated in Jerusalem and its suburbs, which witnessed the destruction of around 137 houses.

Occupation authorities carried out the eviction of two Bedouin communities in a process of ethnic cleansing similar to that of 1948. The Occupation demolished the community of al-Hadidiya in the northern Jordan Valley, evicting a population of around 150 and also destroyed the Bedouin community of Khirbet Qasa, which is isolated behind the Apartheid Wall, expelling 263 residents at gunpoint.

Blockades, barriers and crossings

The siege imposed on the Gaza Strip resulted in the death of 60 Palestinians who were prevented from travelling to receive treatment.

In the West Bank an estimated 13 Palestinians died after being held up at Occupation checkpoints and crossings on the way to hospital. Of particular note is a girl from the village of Anata who died after being hit in the back of the head with a sound bomb fired by Occupation forces.



Bethlehem terminal: Metal gates imprison Palestinians waiting to be able to cross to Jerusalem.

Popular resistance

- There was widespread popular resistance in Palestinian towns and villages including weekly demonstrations in Irtas, Walaja and al-Masara and Um-Salamuna in South Bethlehem, in addition to the continuing events in Budrus and Bil'in.
- 2007 saw the expansion of popular resistance against the expansion of the settlements and settlement roads. In Mazra'a al-Qbliya, there were weekly protests against the bulldozing of land for the expansion of Talmon settlement. There were weekly protests in the villages west of Ramallah against apartheid settler road 443, which runs from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and forms part of the wider plan for apartheid roads segregating Palestinian movement.
- The 31st anniversary of Land Day was taken up as an occasion to target the Apartheid Wall. Dozens of demonstrations against the Apartheid Wall took place and demonstrators destroyed gates and parts of the wall in the village of Rafat in Salfit, Ras Attiah in Qalqilya district and Budrus in Ramallah district.
- On January 11, Palestinian trade unions reconfirmed their role in the campaign for boycott and sanctions against the Occupation. In a press conference they appealed to the Arab League and international unions to boycott Israel. The Unions calling for boycott are the General Union of Palestinian Workers (GUPW), the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), the Coalition of Independent Democratic Unions and other Palestinian professional and vocational unions.
- On 18 April a coalition of Palestinian organisations announced their intention to unify their activities on national occasions including the demonstrations and actions against the Wall, and commemoration of forty years occupation and the sixtieth anniversary of the *Nakba*. The coalition brings together the National and Islamic Forces, the Grassroots Anti Apartheid Wall Campaign, the National Committee for the Commemoration of the Nakba, PNGO, the National Coalition for the Defence of the Rights of the Palestinians in Jerusalem, and Ittijah in Palestine '48.
- On October 16, under the title "Towards a Common Strategy for Palestinian Civil Society and Overcoming Division", a conference held in Cyprus brought together representatives of 44 organizations, associations, coalitions and networks. Palestinians from Palestine and the Diaspora convened to develop strategies and action plans to unify the Palestinian cause, and to discuss strategies for commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the *Nakba*. The Occupation authorities prevented the delegation representing the Gaza Strip from attending the conference.
- On 22 November, the first national conference for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel was organized by the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, PNGO, the Palestinian Campaign for Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) and the Occupied Palestine and Golan Heights Advocacy Initiative (OPGAI).

Key international conferences in 2007

- o On March 12-14: An all-India conference, entitled "War, Imperialism and Resistance: West Asia", gathers speakers from the Arab world giving a first hand account of developments in the region. Some 400 people – activists, academics, trade union leaders, party representatives – come to listen and to discuss strategies of solidarity. Special priority is given to the campaign to end all arms trade with Apartheid Israel.
- o 30-31/8/2007: The European Parliament in Brussels hosts the Sixth UN Civil Society Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The conference calls for the international boycott and isolation of the Occupation for its ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people, its policy of apartheid and its building of the Wall and settlements. The conference calls on the international community to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the *Nakba* and to compel Israel to recognize the right of return for Palestinian refugees.
- o On October 6-7 2007: PSC UK organizes an international conference at the University of London Union building under the title "Building a New Anti-Apartheid Movement" The conference is attended by some 70 activists from Palestine, Europe, North America and Africa and aims to explore methods of coordinating BDS campaigns through effective collaboration. The conference focuses on an exchange of ideas and strategy discussions on aspects of different BDS campaigns.
- o 24/11/2007: The Palestinian Youth Network conference in Paris brings together around 100 young Palestinians from countries around the world, including occupied Palestine. Lectures, workshops and cultural evenings aim at creating a work plan for the formation of regional commissions representing Palestinian youth all over the world.
- o 15-17/12/2007: The Madrid Forum for Just Peace: In the face of pressure from the Spanish Foreign Ministry to include institutional Zionist representatives, the Palestinian delegations boycott the conference, turning it into a show of unity against normalisation with the occupiers. The event sends a powerful message that Palestinian civil society is not prepared to let governments dictate the agenda of the Palestinian people and civil society at large.

International Solidarity

Trade Unions

- The youth congress of the CUT, the confederation of Brazilian trade unions calls for BDS. (February 2007)
- A South African trade union, the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) condemns three major national food stores for their import of agricultural produce from Israel and asserted the call for boycott in support of Palestine. (February 2007)
- The Irish academy of artists, Aosdána, approves a motion encouraging its members to take into consideration the Palestinian call for cultural boycott. (April 2007)
- Britain's National Union of Journalists (NUJ) passes a motion calling for the government to put sanctions on Israel and for union members to follow a boycott of Israeli goods. (April 2007)
- The Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) calls for BDS. (June 2007)
- UNISON, UK, confirms its boycott call with further motion. (June 2007)
- The British Academic Union (UCU) passes motion for debate on boycott. (June 2007)
- The Irish Trade Union Conference passes a motion for BDS. (July 2007)
- The Transport and General Workers Union, UK, calls for consumer boycott. (July 2007)
- The postal workers union in Canada adopts boycott and awareness raising campaign on Israeli apartheid. (December 2007)

Doctors and Architects

- A group of prominent British architects demands that apartheid Israel's architects and planners 'end their indifference and blindness to the political implications of their professional work and ethics'. (June 2007)
- In response to the call for a boycott of the Israeli Medical Association launched by 18 Palestinian health organizations, 130 UK doctors publish a letter in the Guardian newspaper endorsing the call. (April 2007)

Political parties

- The Canadian Action Party is the first Canadian political party to officially support the call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israeli 'apartheid-like' practices. (March 2007)
- The Communist Party India-Marxist, without whose support the government would fall, re-launch their campaign against arms trade with Israel. (March 2007)

- The Socialist Left Party (SV), one of three parties in the Norwegian government, renews its support for BDS against Israel. (April 2007)

Churches

- The US Methodist church blacklists 20 companies and moves towards divestment (June 2007)

Jewish National Fund

- Protests against JNF fundraisers and galas are organized in Canada, Scotland and Australia.
- The UN's Committee on NGOs has rejected the application of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) USA for consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The final decision taken on 21st and 22nd May 2007 at the ECOSOC meetings confirmed the inherently racist nature of the organization.

Agrexco

- UK activists blockade Agrexco headquarters in the UK on various occasions. (February 2007)
- Belgium activists picket supermarkets calling for the boycott of Israeli products, especially Agrexco. (December 2007)

Legal prosecution

- Court action against Veolia, constructing the apartheid light railway in Jerusalem starts in Egypt and France (March 2007)
- Israeli war criminal Avi Dichter is forced to cancel visit to the UK because he risks arrest. (December 2007).

Diamonds

- IPSC launches pickets around Valentine's Day calling for the boycott of Israeli diamonds. (February 2007)
- Adalah NY stages since November weekly pickets against Lev Leviev's jewelry shop in New York.

Sports boycott

- PSC UK launches a petition and mobilization against Israel playing England in London for the Euro football qualifiers (July – September 2007).

Action Days

- 3rd International Israeli Apartheid Week held in universities in New York, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and Hamilton. (February 12-17)
- Global Days of Action on the 40 year anniversary of the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (June 9/10) – actions in 25 countries around the world
- **Week against the Apartheid Wall (November 9-16) - actions in 18 different countries around the world.**