

MA'AN Development Center  
&  
Jordan Valley Popular Committees

Eye on the

# JORDAN VALLEY

2010







# Introduction

The Jordan Valley is located in a stretch of land (about 2400 km<sup>2</sup>) that runs the length of the West Bank next to the Jordan River. The area has rich agricultural land, a warm climate and abundant water sources offering great economic and political prospects.

Israel has continually coveted the Jordan Valley since the 1967 war when Israeli occupation strived to maintain the area for its great political, economic, developmental and strategic importance. The occupation has continued to implement policies of colonization of the Jordan Valley over the decades, dramatically increasing after the beginning of the second Intifada in 2000. In the midst of international events and the wavering power scale in the world as well as while Palestinians were distracted with internal fighting, Israel focused on more destruction of the Jordan Valley. Infrastructure was destroyed, and there were increasing restrictions on movement, further isolating Palestinians in and around the area. All of this was an effort to start dividing the area in harmony with the Israeli development plan to colonize and separate the Jordan Valley.

In order to analyse these issues further, this factsheet, as a part of the “To Exist Is To Resist” project, hopes to contribute to the empowerment of Palestinians in order to enable them to effectively resist the devastation caused by the construction of the wall around the West Bank. The project also aims to enable the Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign to better advocate its cause and mobilize the national and international community to illuminate the issue of the Jordan Valley. Hence, this supplement includes detailed facts on the Jordan Valley, serving as a basis of information for the issues affecting the area in relation to Israeli violations of basic human rights and international law as well as policies of isolation and expulsion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.





## Geography

The Jordan Valley, part of the Afro-Asian Great Rift Valley, is the lowest point on Earth at around 400 meters below sea level. The area extends on the eastern side of the West Bank from Ein Gedi in the south, near the Dead Sea to Bardala in the north (the 1967 cease fire line) and from the Jordan River on the east to the mountain slopes that run the length of the West Bank to the west, accounting for about 2,400 km<sup>2</sup> or 28.5% of the total area of the occupied West Bank. After Jerusalem, the Jordan Valley is the second most popular tourist attraction in the region with over eighty historical and cultural sites. It has a pleasant year-round climate, wide green fields and religious and historical sites, which give the area a magical aura and inspiring view. Its location also completes the triangle with Jerusalem and Bethlehem and connects Palestine to Jordan, conveniently attracting tourists worldwide.

Furthermore, the salt and minerals found in the Dead Sea are used for cosmetics and spa therapies that are unequalled by any other natural mineral sources. The Dead Sea contains fifteen times the amount of magnesium found in ordinary seawater, which helps the metabolism of skin cells and serves as an anti-allergen. Other valuable Dead Sea minerals include zinc, bromine, iodine and potassium. Although a large proportion of the Dead Sea lies within the West Bank, Palestinians are denied access by the Israeli authorities.

For the Palestinians, the Jordan Valley offers great potential for a viable state in terms of its strategic location and economic success. Its borders with

Jordan are the only foreseeable land entrance and exit for a future Palestinian state. It serves as the conduit for Arab-Palestinian communication and is the only real option for movement and trade with the Middle East and the rest of the world. Moreover, its abundance of water resources, fertile soil and natural minerals offer competitive economic advantages in agriculture, industry and tourism. It also constitutes the geographical “reservoir” of land where the Palestinians could establish housing projects and public facilities to build a successful state. The Jordan Valley also constitutes the natural extension for the expansion of Jerusalem. These same features are the reason Israel has maintained the occupation so forcefully in the area and why the Jordan Valley is such a contentious point of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Despite its advantages and potential, Palestinians in the Jordan Valley have suffered significantly from the consequences of isolation and Israel’s colonial project.

The Jordan Valley has abundant land and water resources, including one-third of the underground water reserves for the West Bank. It is home to predominantly agricultural and herding communities who rely on the land and water resources for their livelihoods. Today, settlements control half of the land of the Jordan Valley, and closed military zones and nature reserves comprise an additional 44 percent. Access restrictions to these areas have had a particularly devastating impact on the Palestinian population that live and work in the Jordan Valley.





## Israeli Occupation Policies since 1967:

### LAND GRAB AND COLONIZATION

Israel's justification for occupying the Jordan Valley has always been "security". Consecutive Israeli governments have implemented plans that have granted them complete control of the area. Through such policies and acts, Israel has forcibly displaced thousands of Palestinians and destroyed Palestinian villages and continues to eliminate Palestinian presence in the Jordan Valley and to isolate it from the rest of the West Bank in order to extend their control and presence before executing a unilateral annex of the area. The Israeli Cabinet began a project to encourage young Israeli couples to settle in the Jordan Valley, including promises and plans to develop agricultural and tourism projects in the area and to confiscate more Palestinian land for settlement expansion. By surrounding the Jordan Valley with checkpoints, closures and roadblocks and confiscating more land for settlements and military bases, Israel is securing segregation, making it a fact on the ground. These occupation policies place Palestinians under siege in cantons. The following table shows the distribution of Jordan Valley land according to the Oslo Accords.



*Closed Palestinian farms near the border*

*Table 1: Distribution of land in the Jordan Valley according to the Oslo Accords.*

Classification	Description	Areas	Area (total = 2,400 km <sup>2</sup> )	% of total JV area
A	Palestinian Civil & Security Control	Jericho, Al-Uja	85 km <sup>2</sup>	3.54%
B	Palestinian Civil Control & Israeli Security Control	Ein al-Beida, Bardala, Fasayel, Marj Na'jeh, Zubeidat, Nassareyyeh	50 km <sup>2</sup>	2.08%
C	Settlement Regional Council Control	36 settlements	1200 km <sup>2</sup>	50%
	Closed zones	Border line, military bases, natural reserves	1065 km <sup>2</sup>	44.37%
Total under Palestinian control			135 km <sup>2</sup>	5.62%
Total under Israeli control			2265 km <sup>2</sup>	94.37%





Bedouin Village recently demolished by the Israeli Occupation Forces.

**A**s the United States tries to restart peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, the Jordan Valley is emerging as a key point of contention: Palestinians envision it as a core part of a future Palestinian state, and Israeli officials forcefully assert the longstanding claim that control over the area is vital to their security. The new settlements of Givat Salit and Maskiyot and the expansion of all settlement farmland are just some of the tangible signs of tension in the area. When Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad issued a two-year development plan, he said he wanted to place a Palestinian-controlled airport in the Jordan Valley, and he recently said that any state that does not include it would be ridiculous.<sup>1</sup>

Israeli officials and others close to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu have been saying that the Jordan Valley should remain in Israeli hands, encircling any Palestinian state to the east and controlling the international border with Jordan – steps needed, they say, to make sure militant groups do not infiltrate.

The Jordan Valley is almost entirely under Israeli control, with an electronic fence running the length of the eastern border facing Jordan. It is an argument that recalls Israel's initial occupation of the West Bank after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, when the Labor Party government viewed the Jordan Valley as a security buffer against an Arab invasion and began authorizing the first settlements to create what was intended to be a permanent Israeli presence.

Although Palestinians can still cultivate any land remaining that has not been confiscated

and colonized, Israel prohibits Palestinians from constructing any infrastructure or other development projects, such as reclaiming agricultural land, opening agricultural roads or extending irrigation networks. Moreover, Israel continues to confiscate land, demolish homes and prevent renovation of existing houses and roads belonging to Palestinians, but maintains plans for settlement expansion and infrastructure development for Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley.

The first colonization wave hit the Jordan Valley in 1968 when Israel built three settlements: Mehola in the north, Argaman in the center and Kalia in the south. It reflected the Alon Plan, which was developed in July 1967 by former Labor Party leader Yeg'al Alon to offer solutions to help Israel overcome “demographic danger” by building settlements in the West Bank, particularly in areas with little Palestinian presence. Mehola settlement was the first such effort in the Jordan Valley to support the Alon Plan. It was built on lands which were confiscated from the Palestinian villages of Bardala and Ein Al Beida in order to create military bases and state land.

Settlement activity accelerated in the early 1970s until the early 1980s, a period in which Israel built more and more settlements for agricultural, industrial, religious and military purposes. Since the 1990s, the number of settlements has increased from 11 to a total of 36, accommodating more than 9,000 settlers. The area currently covers 1,200 dunums and is continuously expanding into Palestinian land.

<sup>1</sup> Reuters Oct 2009 14 Fayyad to Obama' :Tell Israel no Mickey Mouse state '<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE59D32120091014>



The following table gives a detailed description of the settlements in the Jordan Valley.

Table 2: Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley

Settlement	Area (dunum)	Year established	Population	Activities
Mizpe Yeriho		1978	1641	Vegetables, flowers
Ma'ale Ephraim	714	1970	1384	Carpentry, carton and plastic factory, blacksmith, printing press, religious school
Kokhaf Hashahar		1977	1530	
Shedmot Mehola	609	1979	536	Palm trees, dates, spices, medical herbs, citrus, flowers, vegetables, turkey, chicken, loquat, pomegranate, herbal animal feed, raising cows
Maskiyot		1982	507	Sheep, olive trees, date palms, argan trees.
Mehola	233	1968	351	Palm trees, dates, spices, medical herbs, citrus, flowers, vegetables, turkey, chicken, loquat, pomegranate, herbal animal feed
Tomer	366	1978	282	Tomatoes, peppers, dates, artichokes, bananas
Kalia	417	1968	266	onions, grapes, dates, watermelon, ostriches
Peza'el		1975	214	Grapes, flowers
Gitit		1973	214	Herbs, grapes, flowers
Almog		1977	192	Watermelon, grapes, onions, dates, cows
Argaman	833	1968	166	Herbs, roses, grapes
Mitzpe Shalom		1971	180	Tourism
Vered Yeriho		1980	180	
Beqa'ot	675	1972	171	Grapes, turkeys
Yitav		1970	175	Dates, grapes, vegetables
Gilgal	650	1970	162	Grapes, lemons, turkeys, cows, agricultural research



Massu'a	817	1970	142	Grapes, dates, flowers, vegetables
Netiv Hagedud	1037	1976	125	Grapes, corn, melons, vegetables
No'omi	425	1982	129	Herbs, dates, vegetables
Hamra		1971	132	Flowers, onions, tomatoes
Hemdat		1983	147	Grapes, flowers, medical herbs, spices
Ro'i	264	1976	128	Grapes, flowers
Mekhora		1973	114	cucumbers
Yavit	1066	1980	104	Aubergines, dates
Beit Ha'arava	25	1980	87	Melon, watermelon, grapes, dates, onions
Niran	225	1977	52	Chickens, dates, bananas, grapes
Maale Efrayim Preparatory			~30 students and staff	School
Rotem	50	2001	18	Olives, dates, dates
Mul Nevo	66	2001	5	Government services, packing house, exports, storage refrigerators
Mitzpe Jericho North East		Before 2001	`29 families	
Rotem			~20 families	
Givat Salit		2001	~15 families	N/A
Mevo'ot Yericho		2002	~15 families	Dates
Mitzpe Kramim		2001	~15 families	
Ovnat			~10 families	
Ma'ale Shlomo		1999	~9 families	
Ahavat Hayim			A few families and students	
Omer Farm		2005	1 family	
Bitronot [nahal outpost]			0	N/A
Elisha [nahal outpost]		1983	0	N/A
En Hogla [nahal outpost]		1982	0	N/A
Giv'at 'Olem [nahal outpost]		1998	0	N/A

Source: Peace Now, *Settlements in Focus* (Vol. 4, Issue 4): «A New Jordan Valley Settlement - Facts, Background, and Analysis»; FMEP [http://www.fmep.org/settlement\\_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/settlements-in-the-west-bank-1](http://www.fmep.org/settlement_info/settlement-info-and-tables/stats-data/settlements-in-the-west-bank-1); and Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign



Table 3: Main economic activities for selected Jordan Valley settlements

Settlement	Economic activities
Mechola	Agriculture, youth rehabilitation school and clinic, insurance office, carpentry workshop, factory making mobile homes, kindergarten, telecommunications towers (Cellcom, Orange and Motorola) construction of new houses.
Shadmot Mehola	Agriculture including flowers and cattle, Dairy factory, religious institution located outside the settlement
Maskiyot	Agriculture and livestock
Beqa'ot	Agriculture, supermarket, 3 telecommunications tower, public park, mobile clinic, packing factory, kindergarten
R'oi	Agriculture, 3 telecommunications towers, fisheries, health clinic
Hamra	Agriculture, supermarket, swimming pool, emergency first aid unit, used to be a school but now it is a military base.
Rotem	Agriculture, cafe, residents are mainly employed outside the settlement

Although Israel has held campaigns to attract more settlers to the Jordan Valley since the early days of occupation, efforts were boosted after implementing the unilateral evacuation plan from Gaza in 2005. Israel expanded available grants to facilitate further settlement activity in the Jordan Valley, and settlers in this area now enjoy free high quality services. As a result of this policy, hundreds of Palestinian families, particularly in the northern part of the Valley, were issued with orders to evacuate their agricultural land and grazing fields to make way for the new Israeli settlements.



Trench isolating Bq'e'a from Tamoun &amp; Tubas

For the remaining Palestinian residents, stricter policies have been implemented to terrify and pressure them into leaving or to actually expel them from the Jordan Valley.

The table below shows the differences in benefits and policies for Settlers and Palestinians in the Jordan Valley:

*Table 4: Policies and benefits for Israeli settlers and Palestinians.*

Settlers	Palestinians
75% discount on drinking water, electricity, utility, communication and transportation.	Several Palestinian communities still have no connection to electricity or utility.
Free education, health care, irrigation water, and housing.	Communities located in area C have no schools or health centers because Israel refuses to issue building permits.
Every settler is offered a free house.	Building is allowed only in Jericho and 5 other locations; any building outside these areas is demolished.
Every family is offered 70 dunums of land as soon as it settles in the Jordan Valley.	Land around settlements or military bases is confiscated for “security” purposes.  Land owned by Palestinians not registered in the statistics is confiscated, even if the heirs are still alive.  Any land that has not been cultivated for 3 consecutive years is confiscated, even if it was closed by military order.  The military can offer land under its control to a settlement but can never return it to its Palestinian owner under Israeli law.
\$20,000 long-term loan for every settler in the Jordan Valley.	“Development endowment” which gave JV farmers loans with high interest rates. Those who could not pay back the loan & interest had to sell their land, other lands were confiscated.
Non-government organizations like the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and Hadassah offer huge grants to support individual projects for settlers as well as large strategic projects, such as roads, water ponds that accommodate 10 million m <sup>3</sup> , etc. In addition, private sector companies and universities support research and studies.	Strategic projects are forbidden. Organizations fund normalization projects and refuse to work on strategic projects.
Settlers can get their produce to the local markets within a few hours and can export to any country through Israeli export companies.	Palestinian farmers cannot export their produce freely, nor can they reach the local market easily; it may take them several days to get to the closest local market. Palestinians are not allowed to build packing houses in their fields.
Any amount of drinking water or irrigation water is available for settlers at any time.	Palestinians have never been allowed to dig or build agricultural wells after 1967, and they are not allowed to build reservoirs or recondition their buildings.



## Eastern Segregation Wall

The first section of the segregation wall was built in 1999 in the Jordan Valley near the River Jordan, extending from the Dead Sea up to the borders of the 1967 cease fire line in the North at a width ranging from 1-3 km. In 2003, the then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon officially announced plans to isolate the Jordan Valley by building an eastern segregation wall, which would run along 300 kilometers of the Jordan Valley from the Jalbou' Mountains in the northwest to Mount Hebron in the south and passing by east Jerusalem. The Israeli Cabinet's Ministerial Committee adopted the plan, originally developed by Israeli Agriculture Minister Yisrael Katz, and voted to invest NIS 145 million (\$36.25 million) between 2006 and 2008 under the pretext of "agricultural development." In 2003 a part of the Wall was built from the Jordan River in the east to Matalla village, located east of Jenin, in the west. It segregated 6,000 dunums of land from the village of Bardala in the northern Jordan Valley, in addition to 1,000 dunums of Jenin lands in Raba. Israel left no gates or pathways for Palestinians to reach their agricultural lands, which are located behind the wall. Instead Israel gave these lands to settlers to cultivate. In practice, this act isolated the eastern sector of the West Bank, as well as areas adjacent to the Jordan River, the northern Dead Sea and the eastern slopes of the West Bank.

Table 5: Confiscated land for settlements and military purposes in selected Jordan Valley settlements.

Settlement	Village land confiscation	Area of land confiscated	Closed military areas
Mechola	Ein El Beida Al Feqha family land	300 dunams of agricultural land. 10,000 dunams of hilly areas for military training purposes.	Sal'et is both a residential and military area.
Shadmot Mehola	Ein el Beida	Thousands of dunams	Inside segregation wall between Jordan and the West Bank, to the east of road 90.
Maskiyot	Khirbet Tabaqa	200 dunams.	400 dunams
R'oi	-	-	Beside the settlement, there is a training ground for military purposes.
Rotem	Khirbet Sdor Shikha	200 dunams	Yes.

## Isolation and Restrictions on Palestinians

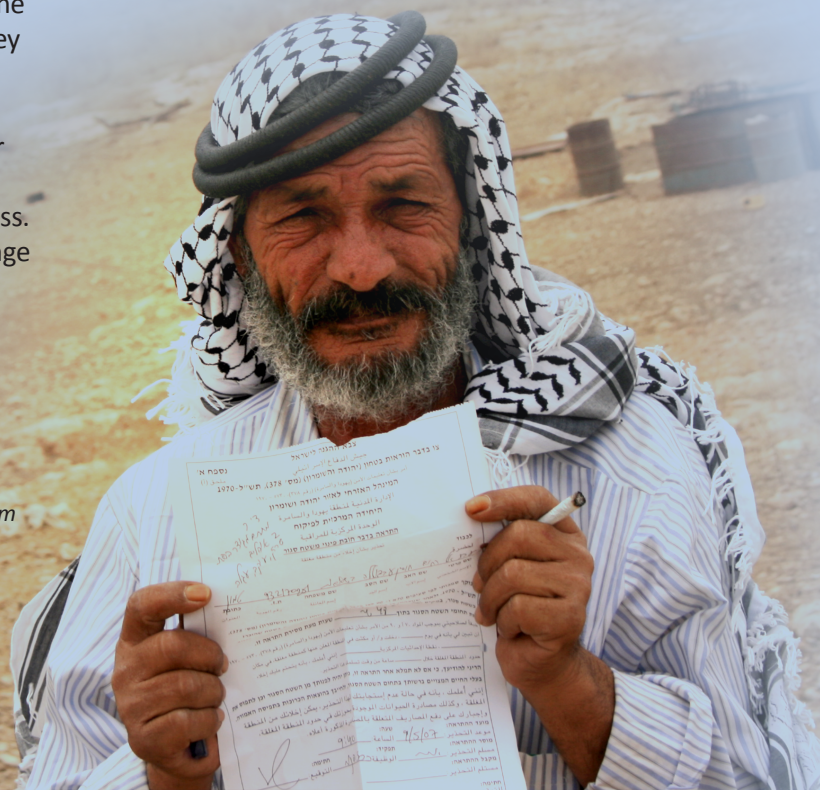
**On** 12 January 2006 Israeli leaders officially announced the isolation of the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank, dropping the Jordan Valley from final status negotiations. As a result, 200,000 landowners are deprived from their basic right to enter their lands and cultivate them. Furthermore, Israel continues its escalation of military procedures in the area by:

- Imposing strict military procedures on areas inhabited by Palestinians, such as placing watch towers and cameras at the entrances of Jordan Valley villages and along Road 90, setting up 24-hour military routes, breaking into villages and houses and imposing regular and continuous curfews;
- Preventing landowners whose IDs do not show a Jordan Valley residential address from reaching their lands, resulting in loss of sources of income and making it easier for Israel to confiscate their land under Israel's "absentee" property law;
- Preventing Palestinian farmers from selling their produce to Israeli traders at the Bardala-Bisan checkpoint, forcing them to travel 50km more to get to Al-Jalameh trade crossing, increasing the cost and making crops, especially fruits and vegetables, far more vulnerable to damage;
- Preventing traders from 1948 land from entering Palestinian villages or farms, based on the excuse of "security," creating problems with regard to quality, price and payments;
- Closing thousands of dunums of pastures to Palestinian farmers, surrounding some with trenches and declaring others as closed military zones;
- Building settlements along the eastern borders of the Jordan Valley, giving Israel full control over the northern, central and southern parts of the Valley as well as the huge water basin in the area;
- Issuing military orders that prevent Palestinians who do not have a Jordan Valley address in their IDs from living there and arresting or expelling those whose IDs do not show a change of address. Additionally, Israeli authorities prevent any change of address in this area;
- Forcing Palestinians to deal with Israeli Civil Administration for their daily dealings.

***In addition to these restrictions on rural areas of the Jordan Valley, the military has also imposed restrictions on the city of Jericho, they have included:***

- Placing checkpoints and roadblocks operated by Israeli soldiers around the city especially outlets to road 90, and closing roads with mounds of earth and rocks;
- Surrounding Jericho with a trench: 30km long, 2m deep, and 2-5m wide;
- Closing all entrances/ exits to Jericho by roadblocks permanently and controlling movement through two permanent checkpoints;
- Stopping coordination with the Palestinian Civil Coordination Office in Jericho;
- Invading Jericho, resulting in killings and arrests of many Palestinians;
- Demolishing and destroying public buildings by bulldozer and air strikes;
- Preventing Palestinian vehicles and tour guides from moving out of Jericho towards the Dead Sea.

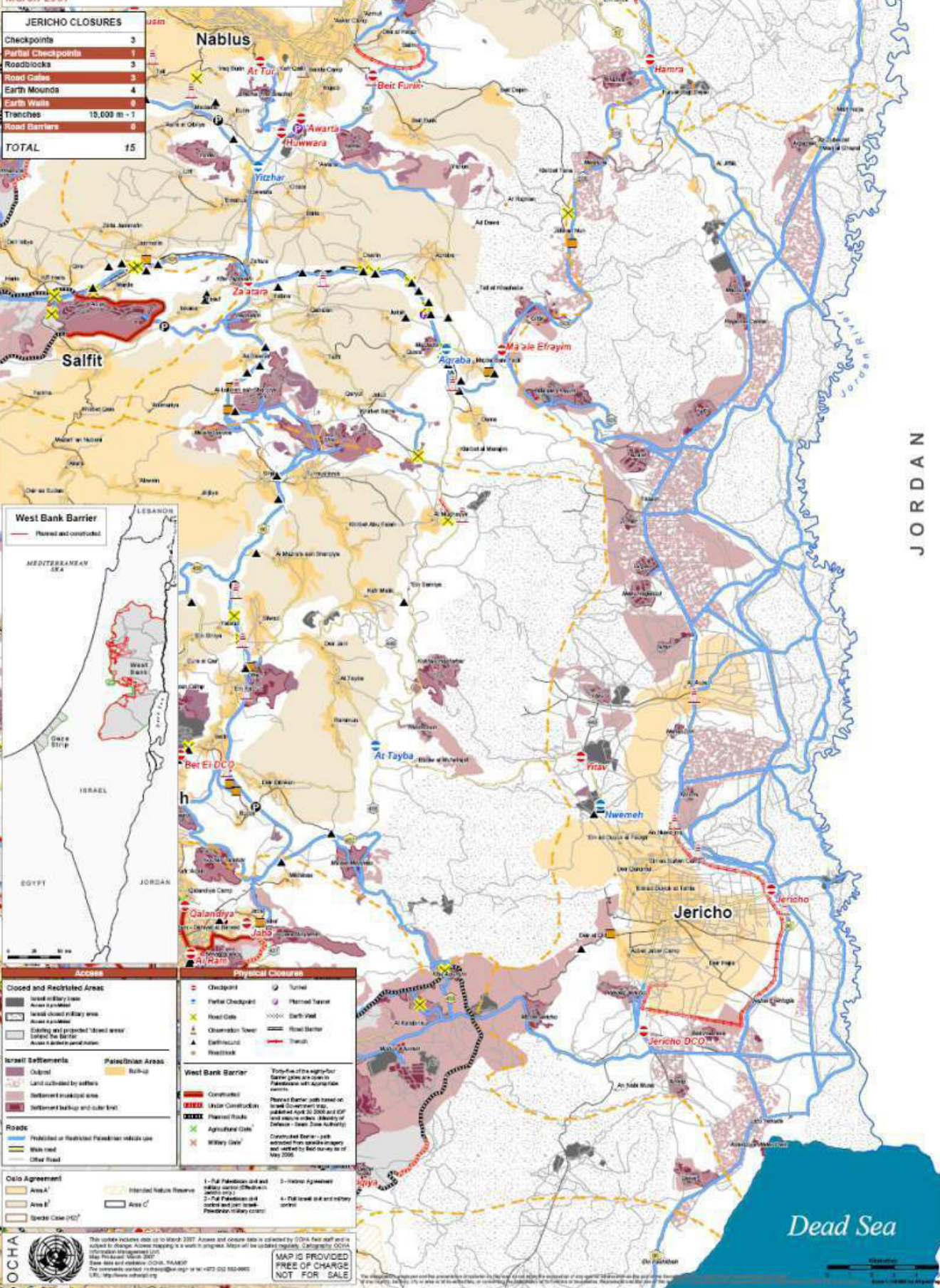
*a Palestinian man shows the demolition order issued to him by the Israeli Occupation Forces.*





## March 2007

JERICHO CLOSURES	
Checkpoints	3
Partial Checkpoints	1
Roadblocks	3
Road Gates	3
Earth Mounds	4
Earth Walls	0
Trenches	15,000 m - 1
Road Barriers	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>



## Israeli Checkpoint Search Mechanisms

- *Waiting for long hours under extreme heat or bitter cold.*
- *Having to put up with the mood of Israeli soldiers.*
- *Conducting detailed body searches in private rooms, forcing people to take off their clothes.*
- *Forcing people to abide by “age laws,” preventing those under 30 from passing through checkpoints on Israeli holidays, official vacations and closures.*
- *Humiliating people by beating them up, making fun of them, playing with their belongings, such as mobile phones, personal wallets and purses, and sometimes confiscating these belongings.*
- *Preventing people from carrying some household goods under the excuse of “security,” such as bread, chemical cleaners, gas bottles and solar cells.*
- *Preventing people from entering with agricultural goods without special permits, such as fertilizers, pesticides, drugs and agricultural tools (e.g. sickles and axes).*

During the last few years, Israel has placed 17 roadblocks and checkpoints in the Jordan Valley. It has also imposed more restrictions on movement by limiting access to the area to only those people who reside in the Jordan Valley, as stated on their ID. Other West Bank residents who wish to travel on Road 90 must show special permission from the Israeli Civil Administration.

Table 6: Roadblocks and checkpoints in the Jordan Valley:

No.	Checkpoint	Location	Opening hours	Type and details	Presence	
			From	To		
1	Jericho southern checkpoint	Jericho southern entrance	5am	10pm	Permanent Gate Strict procedures	Military Police D.C.O
2	Gate of southern checkpoint	Jericho southern entrance	5am	7pm	Permanent Trade crossing Closed Saturday & Sunday	Military Police D.C.O
3	Jericho East (to Allenby Bridge)	East of Jericho			Staffed on and off. Only public transport and diplomatic vehicles are allowed to cross.	
4	Dyouk “Na’ran”	North-west of Jericho	6am	5pm	Permanent Gate Strict procedures	Military Police D.C.O
5	New’me	North of Jericho	Closed with cement blocks	Permanently closed	Border guards	
6	Taybeh “Caramelo”	North west of Jericho	open	Permanent	Military Police	



7	Hamra "Bqe'a	Al Nassareyya & Wadi Al Bathan	5am	10pm	Permanent Gate Beginning in mid-June 2009, the checkpoint is open around the clock. Palestinians may cross by foot or in vehicles with permits. Only Palestinians from the Jordan Valley are allowed to cross without permits, provided the vehicle is registered on the driver's name.	Military Police
8	Tayaseer	Near Tayaseer village	5am	9pm	Trade crossing Permanent Gate Strict procedures. Beginning in mid-June 2009, the checkpoint is open around the clock. Palestinians may cross by foot or in vehicles with permits. Passenger cars are allowed to cross only when the vehicle is registered on the name of the driver.	Military Police
9	Ma'ale Efraym "Gate Tate"	Entrance of Efraym settlement	6am	9pm	Permanent Strict procedures	Military Settlers
10	Yitav/al- Mu'arrajat	Northwest of Jericho		Permanent. Entry to the Jordan Valley is permitted only to Israelis, foreigners, and Palestinians living in East Jerusalem or whose ID card indicates they live in the Jordan Valley.		
11	Jericho southern entrance	Vered Jericho junction	Daily	Not permanent	Border guards Police	

Source: B'tselem

## *Forbidden Roads in the Jordan Valley*

Road number	Travel restricted from	To	Prohibition	Length
Road 90	Bardala crossing, the Green Line	Ein Gedi	Partial prohibition	120 km
Road 578, 508	Mehola intersection, from Route 90	Ma'ale Efraim intersection	Partial prohibition	44 km



*Israel has also turned the Hamra, Tayaseer and Bardala-Bisan checkpoints into “border crossings” and equipped them with electronic search rooms, pedestrian and vehicle paths.*



# VULNERABLE ECONOMY

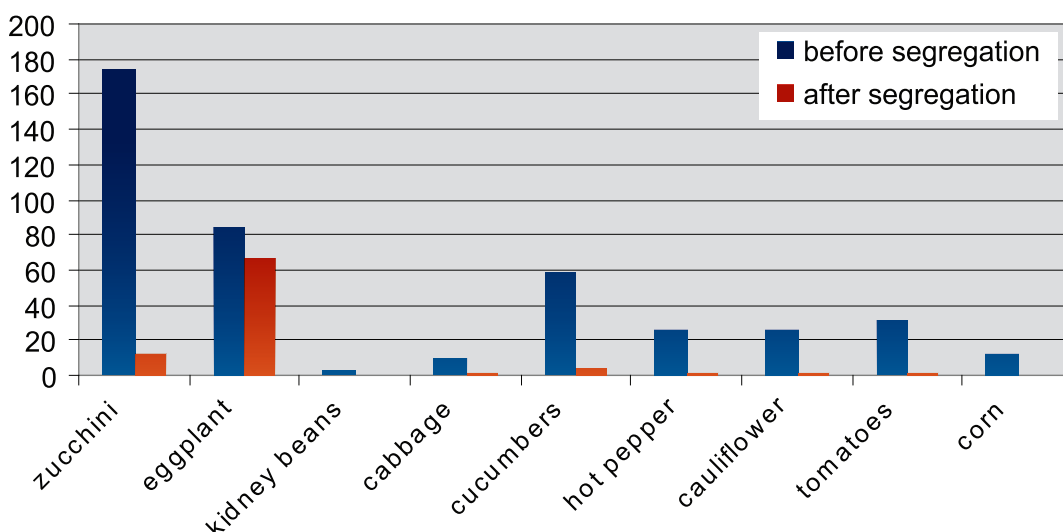
## Agriculture and Markets

The Jordan Valley area heavily utilizes its agricultural resources and is able to provide 35% of the total produce distributed to the Palestinians. It produces 60% of the vegetables, 40% of the citrus and 100% of the bananas and dates consumed in Palestine. This agricultural success is thanks to the area's unique location below sea level, which is likened to a giant greenhouse in which crops ripen early in the winter.

However, Israel inhibits any further enhancement of the agricultural sector, implementing policies that destroy agricultural activity, confiscating fertile land and controlling Palestinian exports to Arab markets. The result of this has seen an increasing number of Palestinians working in the settlements. In other words, while it destroys Palestinian agricultural infrastructure in the area, Israel turns Palestinians into low-paid, mercenary workers in settlements, offering no social security, medical care or labor rights. For those who do attempt to maintain their land for agricultural purposes, Israel isolates the farmers from Arab markets, leaving them completely dependent on the Israeli market for exports as well as limiting their internal trade. Marketing of Jordan Valley products to central Palestinian markets is subject

to military checkpoints and closures being open. Under normal circumstances, Palestinian farmers take three hours to get to the West Bank markets, but with the checkpoints, it can take at least six hours, making fruit and vegetables more vulnerable to damage. Israel has on several occasions prevented farmers from even passing through the checkpoints/crossings, causing products to be returned completely. Since 2000, occupation forces have prevented Israeli trucks from reaching Palestinian fields. Instead, they have imposed back-to-back methods of produce transfer, meaning that Palestinian farmers have to take produce from the field to the Bardala-Bisan crossing on the 1967 cease fire line where the load is emptied into Israeli trucks and delivered to Israeli markets.

As a result of these restrictions and harsh procedures, the Palestinian farmers' expenses have increased both on the production level and trade to the markets, including transportation costs, however, the prices have remained the same. Also, the amount of Jordan Valley crops actually making it across the 1967 cease fire line is dramatically decreasing and causing drops in sources of income. For example, in 2000, 1,900 tons of produce reached Israeli markets; in 2001, only 15 tons were transferred.



Source: Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign



## *Agricultural Barriers Israel imposes on Palestinians in the Jordan Valley*

- Complete dependence on Israeli production components, such as fertilizers, seeds and irrigation networks; it is difficult to find Palestinian alternatives to Israeli goods, meaning that Israeli companies control price and quality.
- Continued confiscation of agricultural land to complete the eastern segregation zone and expand settlements and closed military zones.
- Dumping the Palestinian market with Israeli goods produced in settlements, especially during peak production, in order to eliminate Palestinian products that may supply the local markets.
- Demolition and destruction of infrastructure, such as ruining agricultural lands, demolition of agricultural barracks and retention of walls, stone terraces and irrigation networks.
- Consumption is restricted to whatever is allowed by the Israelis after succumbing to “security” instructions.
- The nature and quality of agricultural production components exported to the Palestinians is lacking and the strength of fertilizer is far weaker than those sold in Israel. Additionally the fact that many components are prohibited or confiscated and a permit needs to be issued to transport these materials to Palestinian farmers.
- Prevention of building new wells, reconditioning existing wells and digging deep wells near springs and other Palestinian wells, which prevents water from running to Palestinian fields. The Israeli water company, Mekorot, monopolizes this work.
- Destruction of livestock sector through the imposition of high fines on shepherds who let their sheep cross into an Israeli zone from which Palestinians are forbidden.
- Prevention of land owners who do not have a Jordan Valley residential address on their ID from reaching or cultivating their lands.
- Closure of Arab, Israeli and regional markets to Palestinian farmers.

*A Palestinian farmer stands near the ruins of an agricultural pool*



*Destruction of agricultural well in the Bardala and Froosh Beit Dajan area by Israeli Occupation Forces*





## Agrexco

**N**early all Jordan Valley settlements are run as collective farms. These farms cover most of the viable agricultural land in the Jordan Valley and produce large amounts of produce exported by Israel. Due to its climate, the Jordan Valley is able to produce large volumes of crops including fruit such as dates, bananas and grapes, as well as a variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Agrexco, the largest Israeli export company, controls 70% of all fresh produce exports from Israel, with most of its supply coming from settlement farms in the Jordan Valley, is also 50% owned by the Israeli state. It operates under Carmel, Jaffa and Coral brand names.

Palestinian farmers used to sell their produce through Agrexco too but lost too much money because of the dishonest and exploitative tactics used by Agrexco. For example, one infamous incident involved Agrexco effectively stealing produce from Palestinian farmers by claiming the ship taking it to Europe had sunk en route and therefore the farmers would not receive payment. Now Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley have to fend for themselves and negotiate checkpoints and closures in order to get their produce to market in time.

Agrexco is supplied by farms that operate on illegally occupied territory and that participate in dubious and illegal hiring practices. Consequently, at the expense of the Palestinians, it maintains the livelihood of the settlers and supports the expansion of settlements, thus planning a significant part in the apartheid policies in the Jordan Valley.









# PALESTINIAN LABOR

## *in Jordan Valley Settlements*

Israel's occupational policies on Palestinian movement, construction and development in the Jordan Valley make sustainable, self-sufficient livelihoods impossible. These conditions mean that Palestinians are forced to work in Israeli settlement farms where they receive meager wages, no job security and few rights.

Because of a lack of development, industry, welfare support and the high cost of education, children too are often forced to work in Israeli settlement farms in order to contribute to their families' income and survival. Israeli law stipulates that it is illegal for children under the age of 16 to work, however many children are forced to work because their fathers are ill or in prison or the wages they bring in are simply not enough to feed an entire family.

The Israeli workers' rights organization *Kav LaOved* (Workers Hotline) has documented this issue. In a recent report they chart how 14 year olds, although they may be younger, wake up at 3.30 in order to get to the fields. *Kav LaOved* reports that men earn about 50NIS a day but other sources report earnings as little as 30 NIS a day for working in packing houses.<sup>2</sup> These wages are way below the Israeli minimum wage and women and children earn still less than this. Added to this are difficult working conditions such as suffocating heat (temperatures in the Jordan Valley can reach up to 40°C in summer) only receiving one break in their shift, lack of safety equipment and training when doing dangerous work such as harvesting from date palm trees and receiving no protection from harmful pesticides.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bigcampaign.org/index.php?page=who\\_exports\\_israeli\\_goods](http://www.bigcampaign.org/index.php?page=who_exports_israeli_goods)

<sup>3</sup> See a recent video report by Kav LaOved <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwT22xeSAkM>





**Israeli** employers justify the low wages for Palestinians by claiming their wages are higher than those paid by Palestinians in other parts of the West Bank and that they are providing essential employment for thousands of Palestinians who would suffer otherwise. However this ignores the real issue at hand, that the Palestinian economy in the Jordan Valley has been so stifled by the occupation and its restrictions on movement and development that Palestinians have no other means to livelihood but to work in settlement farms. If Palestinian residents were allowed to develop land in the Jordan Valley and did not face land confiscation, restrictions of movement and bans on construction then there would be no need for them to seek exploitative work for a few meager shekels a day as laborers in Israeli settlement farms.

In addition, enforcing the law on child labor in Jordan Valley settlement farms will not solve the underlying reasons why they were working there in the first place. If the law is enforced, children will be left with nothing to do, they cannot attend school because it is too expensive and/or too far to travel each day and their families will suffer from lack of income.



*Ada Fresh truck transporting settlement produce. Produce from Jordan Valley settlement farms can reach foreign markets in 10 hours.*



Table 7: Labor, wages and companies working in selected Jordan Valley settlements

Settlement	No. of workers	Child laborers	Average wage	Companies working in or with settlements
Mechola	350	17 during vacations	1800NIS/month	Arava Ada Fresh Carmel Agrexco
Shadmot Mehola	From 50-100 (depending on season)	none	1700NIS/month	-
Maskiyot	-	None	-	Carmel Agrexco
Beqa'ot	-	None	56NIS/day	Carmel Agrexco previously Mahdreen
R'oi	80	none	60NIS/day	Ada Fresh Carmel Agrexco
Hamra	50	None	60NIS/day	Carmel Agrexco
Rotem	-	None	-	Carmel Agrexco

### Poverty and Unemployment

*As a result of all of these restrictions and oppressive policies, Palestinians in the Jordan Valley suffer high rates of poverty and unemployment. 60% of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley live under the poverty line. In 2008, unemployment rates reached 10% in the Jericho district and 17% in the Tubas district. Furthermore, despite its agricultural advantages, according to a 2009 World Food Programme study, approximately 18% percent of Jericho district residents and 33% of Tubas district residents were food insecure.*

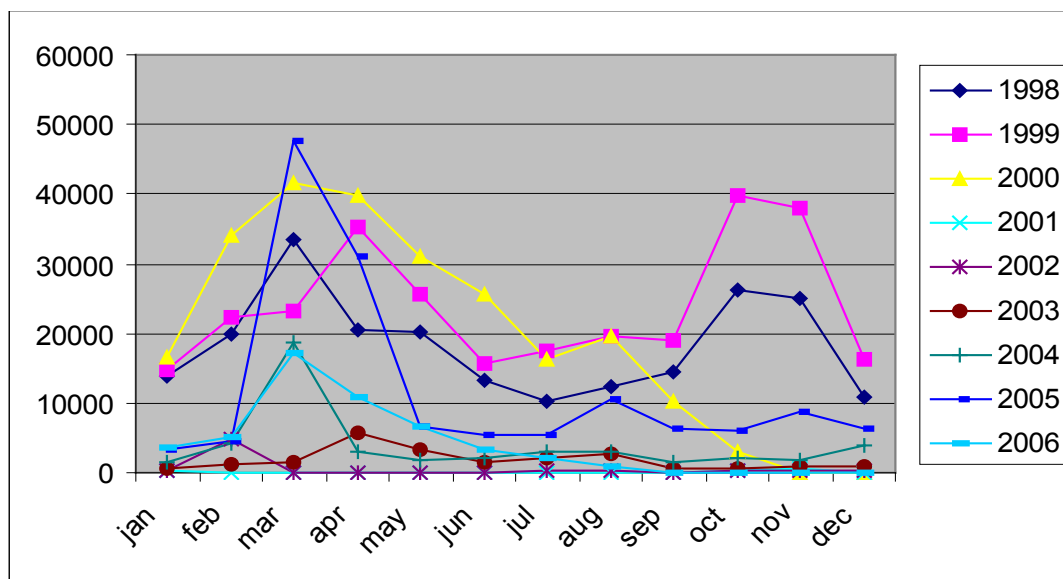
*Source: This Week in Palestine, PCBS and World Food Programme*



## Occupation Procedures that Inhibit Tourism



- Strict procedures on checkpoints leading in/out of the valley.
- Isolation and complete Israeli control of Jericho.
- Military closure and/or destruction of some tourist sites.
- Ongoing Israeli military training and explosions, leaving some sites, such as the Greek Monastery of Hijla, damaged.
- Prevention of Palestinians from holding religious or cultural festivals.
- Closure of Wadi Qelt Road, which leads to the Monastery of St. George.
- Cancellation of visits to Jericho and its archaeological sites from Israeli and international tourist programs.
- Construction of the Separation Wall, which prevents geographical continuity between the three main tourist centers (Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jericho).
- Halt in investment after the second Intifada.
- Halt in all projects between the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and donor countries and organizations after the Palestinian legislative elections. Projects include annual diggings, reconditioning and rehabilitation of infrastructure.



Tourism rates in Jericho (January 1998 – August 2006)



## Water Rights

The Jordan Valley is situated over the Eastern Water Basin. However, Palestinians in the area suffer from lack of access to water due to Israeli restrictions and over usage. They are only permitted to use 40% of the water in this basin, or approximately 58 MCM of water per year.<sup>4</sup> Since Israel occupied the Palestinian territories in 1967, it has monopolized, destroyed and exhausted the area's water resources. Over the last four decades, Israel has isolated 162 agricultural wells in the Jordan Valley, prohibiting Palestinians from using them.

An example of these measures is what recently took place at "al-Auja" spring which was the strongest spring in the area, but since the Israelis dug wells next to it and siphoned off the water, the spring has become completely dry. Thus, thousands of dunums of Palestinian arable land have been transformed into a desert. This has also resulted in completely destroying an aromatic variety of banana called "Abu-Namleh" which is native to the valley and famous all over Palestine for its distinct aroma and sweet taste.

Israel also forbids Palestinians from using the Jordan River, which would provide 250 million cubic liters of water per year.

With discriminatory allocations, Israel controls where wells can be placed, how deep they can run and how much water can be pumped from them.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, Palestinians are left to use dirty water from unconditioned, neglected water sources, because, oftentimes, untreated settlement water seeps into Palestinian artesian wells and springs.



Furthermore, settlers in the Jordan Valley, who cultivate around 27,000 dunums (6,672 acres) of land, consume about 41 MCM of water per year. They mainly extract Palestinian water sources, in addition to restricting its access to the Palestinians, to cultivate their lands.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Palestinians cultivate about 53,000 dunums of the Valley's land, consuming 37 MCM of water per year. Overall, settlers consume about six times more water than Palestinians, pumping water at an incredible rate of 1700 MCM per hour.

<sup>4</sup> The annual water capacity of the Jordan Valley is about 178 MCM.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Israeli company Mekarot pumps around 20 million cubic liters of water for settlers in the Jordan Valley, while Palestinians living next to the wells are not allowed access to it. However, Palestinians can purchase water from the Mekarot Company at a higher cost than settlers.

<sup>6</sup> Most of the produce grown on settlement land is exported abroad, serving as a key source of revenue for Israeli settlements.





## *Measures taken by Israel to Control Jordan Valley Water*

- Isolating and destroying 162 irrigation projects east of Road 90, claiming they were closed for “security” purposes. Israel also destroyed wide areas of irrigated fields, denying thousands of Palestinians their only source of income—agriculture—and prohibiting any further development or reconditioning of the wells.
- Preventing Palestinians from using their share of 250 million cubic meters (MCM) of the Jordan River, destroying Palestinian agricultural projects along the banks. Moreover, Israel closed up to five meters of the western Jordan River and is draining excessive amounts of river and *wadi* water to feed the huge reservoir lakes it has built.
- Controlling underground water and digging wells at critical depths, which hit the salt beds, causing the water to be salty.
- Situating new “Jewish-only” wells near Palestinian springs, drying out or using much of the Palestinian water. In the past, these wells served the Palestinians with 6 MCM per year, but now Palestinians must buy water from Mekorot (the Israeli water company).
- Closing most areas that have a good capacity to hold water for military zones, natural reserves or other “security” reasons.
- Prohibiting Palestinians from digging new or reallocating wells, causing the Palestinian wells to have shallow depths. In addition, Israel measures the amount of water used by the Palestinians and imposes fines on those who exceed the allocated amount.
- Polluting the springs and underground water by not controlling the leakage of sewage water from the settlements.

*Israel measures the amount of water used by the Palestinians and imposes fines on those who exceed the allocated amount.*



*Well destroyed by Israeli Occupation Forces.*



*Al Awja Spring drained by Israeli pumping motors.*



## The Threat to the Dead Sea

Israel fully controls the Dead Sea and denies Palestinians rights to access its water, minerals and shores. Palestinians should have control of 30% of the Dead Sea as its border, but since 1967 they have been prohibited from using or investing in the area. The Dead Sea is a massive tourist attraction and income generator for Israel and Jordan but not for Palestine; Israel maintains unilateral control of its entire Western side. Israel's exploitative environmental policies, disregard for the effects of industry, and over-development of tourist infrastructure mean that the Dead Sea is now facing a crisis of survival.

Israel has exhausted Dead Sea water, threatening its existence over the next 20 years. As a result of the shortage of water draining into the Dead Sea from the Jordan River and *wadis*, caused by Israel's plundering of water resources for agricultural purposes as well as its excessive pumping of sea water, aerial photos show the Dead Sea splitting into two separate, smaller lakes. This decrease in the water level has led to a dramatic change to the shoreline. The average decrease in the shoreline thus reaches approximately one meter each year, almost ten centimeters per month, even during winter months.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, the Israeli factories built around the Dead Sea, which have already been functioning for decades, pump more than 250 MCM from the northern basin of the Dead Sea annually. This in itself constitutes the main cause behind the continually receding shoreline and eventual drying up of the sea. In addition, this has caused an almost total disconnection between the northern and southern sections of the Sea. Experts predict that the northern basin will continue to recede by 1-1.5 meters annually due to the decrease of water resources feeding into it. In August 2009 the level of the Dead Sea reached 423 meters below sea level, whereas it reached 413 meters ten years ago, meaning the sea's level has fallen by ten meters in the past ten years.<sup>8</sup>

Despite this the Dead Sea has been enrolled as a candidate to win a place as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, as it has rare local and international value such as beautiful natural scenery, health benefits and a rich history.

Currently the Israelis are allowing huge amounts of sewage to flow into the Dead Sea from its illegal settlements in the Jerusalem area and surrounding hillside. The natural water flowing into the Sea has become restricted to that flowing from the north western springs such as 'Ein Fasheh, Ein Farah and to flood water.

A joint Israeli-American solution to stop the recession of the Dead Sea by taking water from the Red Sea and depositing in the Dead Sea has been criticized heavily by groups such as Friends of the Earth Middle East and various Palestinian NGOs for attacking the problem externally and not addressing the causes of its receding shoreline. In addition, the promotion of these calls to resolve the crisis of the Dead Sea both objectively and comprehensively assert Israeli sovereignty over the Palestinians' pillaged water resources. Therefore, if this right to sovereignty is relinquished, Palestine will be transformed into beggars for water. A successful Palestinian state cannot function if it has no sustainable water sources.

If proper conservation measures are taken and Israel stops its destructive use, the Dead Sea will be a rich source of sustainable income for an independent Palestinian state.

7 Friends of The Earth Middle East 'The Dead Sea' <http://www.foeme.org/projects.php?ind=21>

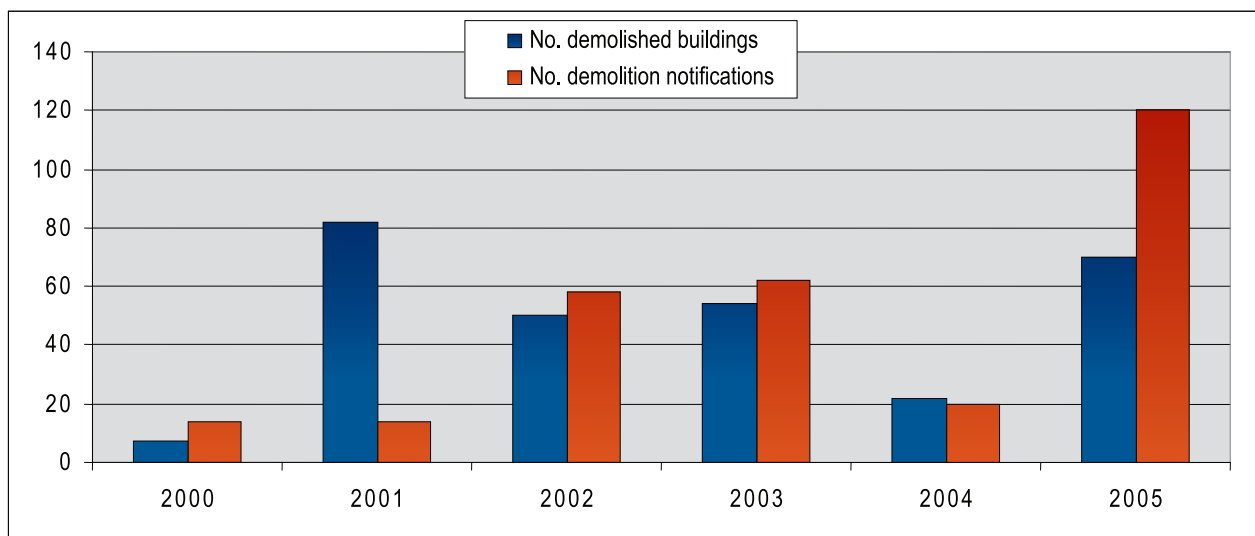
8 Friends of The Earth Middle East 'The Dead Sea' <http://www.foeme.org/projects.php?ind=21>



## Living Conditions

Since 1967 Israel has prevented Palestinians from building new buildings or expanding existing buildings. Israel has demolished many houses and also prohibited the reconditioning or restructuring of Palestinian houses built from mud and roofed with corrugated iron.

Since the beginning 2010 the Israeli authorities started to give demolition orders to all Palestinian families living in Area C, which is 95% of the Jordan Valley.



*Statistics of demolished buildings and demolition notifications (2000 - 2005)*

Jordan Valley Palestinians have also been subjected to several Israeli expulsion and killing policies. Between 1948 and 1967, the Palestinian population of the area from Ein Gedi in the south to Bisan in the north was around 320,000. However, once the occupation began, hundreds of Palestinians were killed, dozens of Palestinian communities were leveled, and Palestinian residents were forced to emigrate. Currently, only 52,000 Palestinians permanently live in the Jordan Valley. Other landowners in the area reside in towns throughout the West Bank. Many Palestinians live in the Jordan Valley on a seasonal basis, moving down from the mountains to cultivate their lands.

Residential areas are concentrated in Jericho and 24 of its surrounding villages as well as dozens of Bedouin communities. The Jordan Valley spreads across 3 governorates: Tubas, Nablus and Jericho.





The following tables show the population of the Jordan Valley by locality:

Table 8: Estimated Population for Tubas Governed Localities in Jordan Valley by Locality  
(Mid-year, selected years)

Locality	Population mid-year				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Bardala	1577	1626	1675	1724	1773
Ein Al Beida	1081	1114	1148	1182	1215
Kardala	165	170	176	181	186
Al Fareseyya	213	220	226	233	240
Al Maleh	206	213	219	226	232
Hadidiyya	183	189	194	200	206

Table 9: Estimated Population for Nablus Governed Localities in Jordan Valley by Locality  
(Mid-year, selected years)

Locality	Population mid-year				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ein Shibli	198	204	209	215	220
Beit Hassan	1192	1226	1259	1293	1326
Al Nasareyyeh	1354	1392	1430	1468	1506
Al Akraneyyeh	895	920	946	971	996
Froush Beit Dajan	1159	1191	1224	1256	1289

Table 10: Estimated Population for Jericho and Al-Aghwar Governed Localities in the Jordan Valley by Locality  
(Mid-year, selected years)

Locality	Population mid-year				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Marj Na'jeh	767	791	814	838	861
Zbeidat	1340	1382	1423	1464	1504
Marj Ghazal	385	397	409	420	432
Jiftlik	4401	4536	4671	4805	4939
Fasayel	900	928	955	983	1010
Al Uja	4010	4133	4256	4379	4501
Nwe'meh	1165	1200	1236	1272	1307
Ein Dyouk el Fouqa	814	839	864	889	914
Ein Dyouk el Tahta	967	996	1026	1055	1085
Jericho	20,416	21,044	21,669	22,293	22,915
Aqbet Jabr Refugee Camp	6343	6538	6733	6926	7120
Ein el Sultan Refugee Camp	2036	2098	2160	2223	2285
Other localities	76	79	81	83	85
<b>Total population in different areas</b>	<b>51,843</b>	<b>53,426</b>	<b>55,003</b>	<b>56,579</b>	<b>58,147</b>

Note: The above statistics do not include the Bedouin communities.

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

## *The Bedouins of the Jordan Valley*

Approximately 15,000 Palestinian Bedouin live in the Jordan Valley. A community of tribes linked by common history, culture, ancestral bloodline and lifestyle, the Bedouin are a semi nomadic herding people and are core to Palestinian tradition and culture having roamed the land for thousands of years. Living in traditional tents made of goats' hair and moving across the land rearing livestock and producing goods such as cheese and milk, the Bedouin have been very adept at coping in hostile environments. Their survival has always been dependent upon locating in areas rich in natural resources with water and grazing land, migrating to hillsides in the summer and back down to the valleys in early winter.

At almost one third of the landmass of the West Bank, the Jordan Valley should provide ample opportunity for the Bedouin to flourish and retain their traditional way of life. The region's abundance of fertile land, warm weather and abundant water sources and natural beauty also means it has a rich potential for supporting the indigenous population.

However, with most of the Jordan Valley categorized as Area C and due to Israel's policies for Palestinians living in these areas, living conditions are dire. This is especially the case for Jordan Valley Bedouins who live in third world conditions. Their need to graze cattle and sheep has meant they have historically lived a life away from urban and built up areas. As Area

C communities are denied room for population expansion and most of their water resources and arable land have been confiscated by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), the Bedouin who live on the land and for whom freedom of movement is integral to their way of life and existence, face severe consequences. The current pattern is one of displacing Bedouin out of their rural, predominantly Area C, lands and forcing them to resettle in sedentary communities, thus losing their traditional way of life.

The Oslo Accords were catastrophic for the Jordan Valley Bedouins. With the vast majority of Jordan Valley land becoming Area C, Israel has continued with its colonial policies and its de-facto annexation of the region and control of the Israeli Civil Administration over the Jordan Valley effectively leaving Bedouins unrecognized and treated as if they are illegal on their own lands. Nor do many Bedouin in the Jordan Valley benefit from humanitarian assistance. Although refugees, and thus eligible for UNRWA support, significant numbers of Bedouin, suspicious of the organization and the potential limitations it may have posed to their right to return, did not register as such.

Unprotected and largely ignored, the Bedouin of the Jordan Valley have been living in a process of de-development that also undermines their indigenous identity. Today large Bedouin families find themselves crammed into overcrowded shelters made of metal, scrap wood and old containers. They are, in some cases, forced to live in the same dwellings as their animals, unconnected to water, electricity and sewage networks.





## Public Services

The Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley suffer from severe shortage in basic services. Most communities, especially those located in Area C, are not connected to electricity, water, telephone, or sewage networks in addition to lacking public transportation. The development of the Jordan Valley, in terms of the Palestinians, has never been on the agenda, and Israel has refused all demands raised by residents to guarantee these basic services. Consequently, many Palestinian communities still live in harsh, primitive conditions with no access to any services. The following table gives the percentage of those basic services covered in some Palestinian localities in the Jordan Valley:

Table 11: services in Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley.

Locality	% Clean drinking water	% Water network	% Electricity	Internal roads	% Palestinian telephone land lines	% Public transportation	% Waste disposal	% Sewage networks	Classification of built-up areas, according to Oslo
Bardala	70	60	80	20	0	40	60	0	30% B
Kardala	30	30	100	20	0	0	80	0	100% C
Ein el Beida	80	70	100	80	0	60	80	0	50% C
Qa'oun (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100% C
Al Himma (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100% C
Al Maleh (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	100% C
Al Hulwa (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100% C
Al Shak (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100% C
Hamsa (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100% C
Hadidiyya (Bedouins)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100% C
Ein Shibli	0	90	90	10	40	80	60	0	30% B
Beit Hassan	0	90	80	10	40	70	70	0	80% B
Aqrabaneyyeh	0	80	80	10	40	70	70	0	80% B
Nassareyyeh	0	60	80	10	40	70	70	0	0% B
Frush Beit Dajan	0	30	Motor	10	40	60	70	0	80% C
Marj Na'jeh	0	0	80	70	0	0	80	0	10% B
Marj Ghazal	60	90	90	90	0	0	80	0	40% B
Zbeidat	40	90	80	80	0	30	80	0	5% B
Jiftlik	30	0	20	0	10	30	30	0	100% C
Fasayel al Tahta	80	90	80	80	90	20	80	0	20% B
Fasayel al Fouka	70	0	60	0	80	0	0	0	100% C
Al Uja	80	20	70	30	90	70	60	0	40% A
Arab Mlehat	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	100% C
Arab Trefat	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	100% C
Arab Ka'abneh	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	100% C
Jericho and its suburbs	80	70	70	65	90	90	95	0	100% A

Source: Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign





*Jiftlik Clinic.*



*Al Kabaneh School.*

**Health** There are only 24 health clinics in the Jordan Valley operated by the Palestinian Ministry of Health and NGOs, such as the Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, Palestinian Red Crescent, Union of Health Work Committees and UNRWA. The clinic buildings are very old and/or poorly constructed from concrete, metal sheets or simply tents. Israeli policy prohibits the construction of health clinics as it does with housing or other kinds of infrastructure. They also threaten to demolish any illegal building or reconditioning of clinics. Consequently, health services in the Jordan Valley are almost non-existent and, if available, do not meet the needs of the population, particularly in emergency situations. In addition, due to occupation policies, civil organizations are limited in capacities and cannot provide dependable primary healthcare. For example, health clinics are only open 2-3 days a week for about 2 hours a day. Any critical cases or emergencies must be transferred to hospitals in the major cities. Oftentimes, Israeli soldiers place obstacles at checkpoints for medical staff, often forcing them into long, detailed searches resulting in patients facing a delay in receiving medical attention.

**Education** There are 29 basic and secondary schools located in the Palestinian communities of the Jordan Valley, serving more than 11,325 students. There is a lack of infrastructure and

supplies, such as drinking fountains and sanitation facilities, in about 12 schools. Israel also refuses to give permission to build new schools in most Palestinian communities. According to the sources in the Palestinian Ministry of Education, most Jordan Valley schools lack sufficient classrooms, thus many students continue their education in classrooms that fail health and safety regulations or travel to schools farther away.

**Sewage/Waste Services** No sewage network is available for Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley. Instead, each household uses a private septic hole and the solid waste is either collected by municipal/village tractors, buried or burned. In 2002, the occupation started digging into 500 dunums of Palestinian land east of Road 90, which was confiscated during the early days of occupation for “security” purposes. It was later revealed that the land would be used to build a garbage dump for solid, industrial and chemical waste produced in Israel. The location—between Fasayel and south of Al-Jiftlik—was strategically selected because of the direction the wind would blow the smell to avoid the settlements. The waste dumped in this area is extremely dangerous for the local environment, particularly the water resources and public health of nearby communities.

*Dumping ground for settlement waste on confiscated Palestinian land.*





Table 12: Conditions of Jordan Valley schools.

Locality	School	# students	# teachers	Need for new schools	Need for new classrooms	Need for educational resources	Need for playgrounds	Need for hygienic facilities	Need for clean water
Jericho		3761	195	Need new girls school		lack			Available
	Omar Bin Al Khattab School	43	4				Need playground		
New'meh		372	19.5	Need new basic mixed school		Lack		Available	Available
Al Uja		347	30.5	Need new boys school		Lack		Need reconditioning	Available
	Al Uja Secondary School	77	11			Lack		Need reconditioning & building new units	Not available
	Al Uja Girls School	270	33			Lack		Need reconditioning & building new units	Not available
Fasayel	Fasayel School	310	22			Lack		Need reconditioning & building new units	Not available
Marj Na'jeh	Marj Na'jeh Secondary Mixed school	217	23		4 classrooms	Lack		Need reconditioning & building new units	Not available
Marj Ghazal		70	13			Lack	Need playground	Need reconditioning	Not available
Zbeidat				Need new girls school				Need reconditioning & building new units	Not available
	Zbeidat Girls School	240	26			Lack		Need reconditioning & building new units	Not available
	Zbeidat Secondary Mixed school	255	27			Lack		Need reconditioning	Not available
Jiftlik	Jiftlik Secondary School	102	11.5		Need new school	Lack	Need playground		Need reconditioning
Bardala	Bardala Secondary School	240	26			Lack		Need reconditioning	Not available
	Bardala New Girls School	170	10			Lack		Not available	Not available
	Bardala Girls School	80	8			Lack		Need reconditioning	Not available
Ein al Beida		341	20					Not available	Not available

Source: Jordan Valley Solidarity Campaign



## Conclusion

The Jordan Valley has, along with East Jerusalem, become the focus of Israeli colonization and development for Israeli settlers. The Jordan Valley is suffering from serious social, environmental and economic devastation as a consequence of Israel's apartheid policies and its actions aimed at securing and controlling the area. As a result of the restrictions on development and human rights violations such as house demolitions, water and land confiscations and restrictions on movements, Palestinians have been forced into conditions of severe poverty, isolation and dependency while the Israeli settler population thrives. Although the Jordan Valley has one of the highest birthrates in the West Bank, the population is stagnating because people are forced to move out, not only in search of education and employment opportunities but also to find housing and a better quality of life away from the daily abuse and torment from IOF soldiers, settlers and the policies which deny their human rights.

It is essential that NGOs, both Palestinian and international, focus on the issues in the Jordan Valley and work with local popular committees on both development issues to improve the daily lives of Palestinians but also to work on advocacy and campaigning at local and international levels to tackle human rights abuses.











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