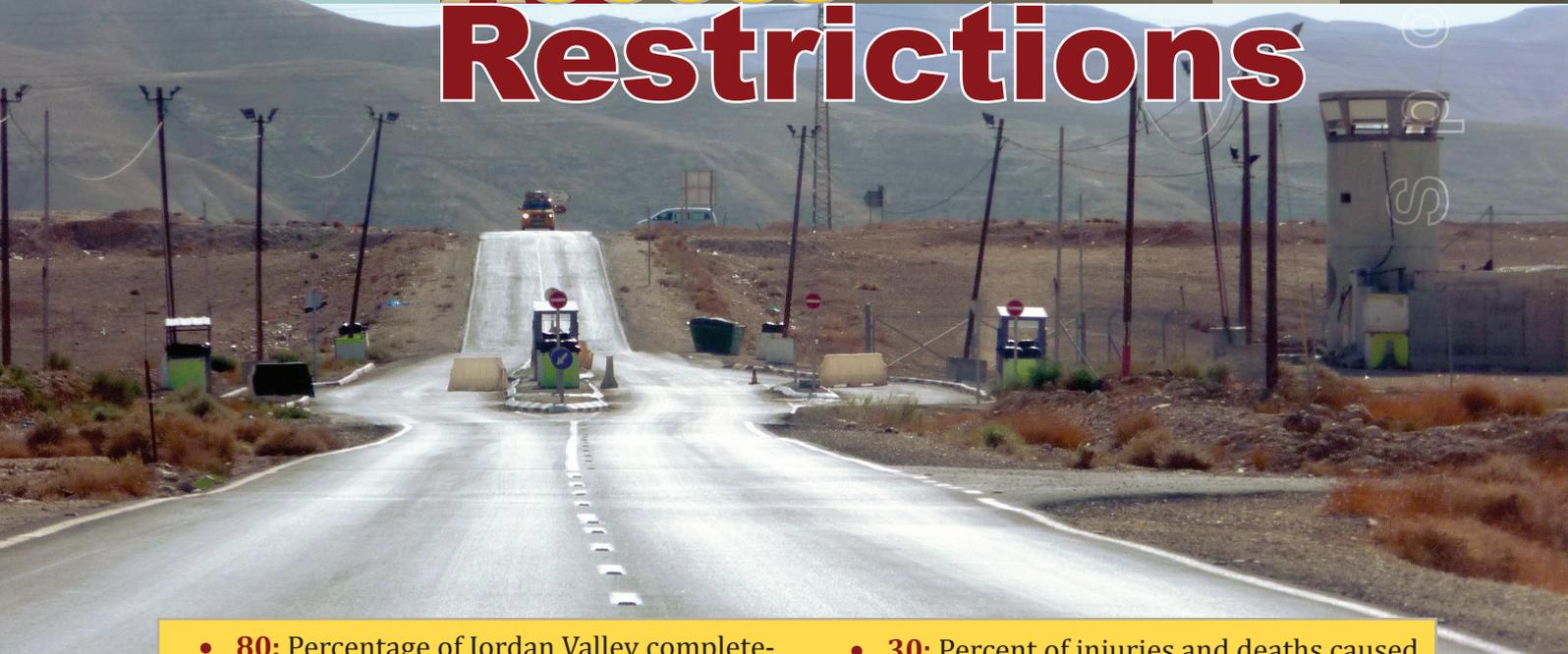




Movement & Access Restrictions



- **80:** Percentage of Jordan Valley completely prohibited from Palestinian use
- **5:** Percent of the Jordan Valley available for Palestinian development
- **200,000:** Dunums in the West Bank, most of which is in the Jordan Valley, that are covered with Israeli land mine fields
- **30:** Percent of injuries and deaths caused by landmines that are children
- **85:** Percent decrease of Palestinian population in the Jordan Valley since 1967
- **0:** Dunums of open grazing area in Areas A or B

Although there are very few places in the West Bank where Palestinians have true freedom of movement, as guaranteed to all human beings under international law, the Jordan Valley has been described as “one of the most restricted areas on earth.”¹ While there are several blocks to movement within the Jordan Valley, the movement restrictions in and out of the Jordan Valley are especially limiting. Israel utilizes numerous methods to restrict Palestinian freedom of movement in the Jordan Valley, including the installation of military zones, the use of checkpoints, and the creation of a strict permit system. In fact, over 94% of the Jordan Valley is restricted for Palestinians.²

International Law and the Freedom of Movement: Israeli policies vastly restrict the freedom of movement of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley through a complex matrix of discriminatory laws and inconsistent provision of information. Military zones, in which the army will sometimes conduct drills and exercises, are inadequately demarcated, which has resulted in the death and injury of Palestinian civilians. The freedom of movement for civilians and their products is a fundamental right enshrined in international legislation, specifically the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights, which Israel has ratified. In addition, Israel is a signatory to the Geneva Conventions, which outline the responsibilities of an occupying power in occupied territory. Considering all of this, it is clear that Israel has grossly failed to uphold the most basic standards of conduct in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially with regard to freedom of movement.

Access to the Jordan Valley: The natural contiguity between the Jordan Valley and the rest of the West Bank has been ruptured by four checkpoints that are permanently staffed by the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF), named Tayasir, Hamra, Ma'ale Efrayim, and Yitav. The checkpoints create and reinforce the now *de facto* separation of the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank.³ This is done by the strict rules of entry into the Jordan Valley: Palestinians who do not have registered residency in the Jordan Valley are not allowed to pass through the checkpoints. Palestinians who own land in the Jordan Valley but live elsewhere must apply for permits to access their land. Israel stated that they reversed this trend, but this is only a half truth as reported by the Israeli NGO B'Tselem.⁴

Palestinian Agriculture: Prior to the Israel occupation, the Jordan Valley was the center of the Palestinian agricultural sector. Today, however, the designation of over 94% of the Jordan Valley as Area C has left Palestinians with very little room for the development of this once dominating sector: the Israeli limitations have left Palestinians with only 60,000 dunums of land in the Jordan Valley (60 km² or 2.5% of the Jordan Valley.)⁵ In 1967 the agricultural sector made up over half of the Palestinian GDP; in 2008,⁶ due to Israeli land restrictions, the agricultural sector represented only 4.6% of Palestinian GDP.⁷ According to the World Bank, the Palestinian agricultural sector would produce over \$1 billion in exports if freed from the constraints of Israel's movement restrictions.⁸

Land Mines: This system of Israeli dominance is made worse by the implementation and maintenance of land mine fields in the West Bank in general, and in the Jordan Valley in particular. Currently, 200,000 dunums of the West Bank are polluted with land mines, most of which are located in the Jordan Valley. In addition to the obvious danger of land mine explosions, the size of these fields tend to grow every year as rain and floods cause the land mine fields to expand naturally. Many of these minefields are in unfenced or unattended areas with no warning signs. As such, children are the victims of 30% of injuries and deaths caused by land mines. In the Jordan Valley, these tragedies occur most often while children are herding family animals around their villages in grassed areas, which are the most likely to be mined. Palestinians are unable to deliberately avoid these areas because Israel has never officially released detailed maps of where the minefields are located.⁹

Endnotes

- 1 Palestinian Trade Center, *The Jordan Valley: Challenges and Lost Potential*, 2010 pg. 2
- 2 MA'AN Development Center, *Eye on the Jordan Valley*, 2010 pg. 3
- 3 B'Tselem, *The Jordan Valley: Dispossession and Exploitation*, 2011, pg. 75, and World Bank, *Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank*, 2008 pg. 5
- 4 B'Tselem, *The Jordan Valley: Dispossession and Exploitation*, 2011, pg. 43
- 5 MA'AN Development Center (2011.) *Restricted Access*, pg. 21
- 6 Butterfield, D., Isaac, J., Kubursi, A., & Spencer, S (2011.) *Impacts of Water and Export Market Restrictions on Palestinian Agriculture*.
- 7 Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (October 2006.) *Overview of the Palestinian Economy*, 2010, pg. 6.
- 8 The World Bank (2010.) *The underpinnings of a future Palestinian state: Sustainable growth and institutions*, pg. 15.
- 9 MA'AN Development Center, *Restricted Access and its Consequences*, 2011 pg. 19