

Israel's land colonization policy and the viability of the Palestinian State

Written by: Jad Isaac and Majed Rizik

Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem

<http://www.arij.org>

Abstract:

The Palestinian issue lies at the heart of the Arab - Israeli conflict, which has been going on for decades. The Madrid conference offered a historic opportunity for arriving at a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace. Yet, after 11 years of negotiations, peace is still not in place. The Palestinian National Authority has now full control over 18.2 % of the West Bank and 74 % of the Gaza Strip. These areas are not contiguous. At the same time, Israel is continuing its colonization activities in the West Bank and Gaza. This will not only affect the outcome of the final status negotiations, but will render a future sustainable Palestinian entity unattainable and, more immediately, cause intolerable hardship and suffering.

Introduction

In 1923, the borders of mandate Palestine were defined to include an area of 27000 km². In 1948, a UN partition plan was proposed to divide Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state. The Arabs rejected the partition plan on the ground that Jews who represented at that time 7 % of the total population cannot be entitled to such a large proportion of historic Palestine. War erupted and the result was that Israel in 1948 had control over 78 % of mandate Palestine. In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza. The West Bank including East Jerusalem covers an area of 5,845 km², while Gaza strip covers an area of 365 km². Since 1967, Israel has adopted a policy of colonizing the West Bank and Gaza hindering the prospect for a viable Palestinian state over the remaining 22% of historic Palestine. This article will shed light on Israeli land policy in the Palestinian areas and the impacts of such policies on the sustainability of the Palestinian state.

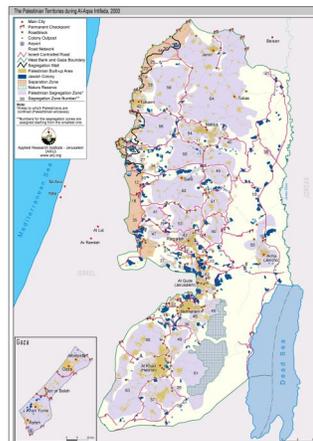
The Geopolitical situation

The Palestinian people, by and large, accepted the discourse of peaceful negotiations based on the grounds outlined in the Madrid Conference of 1991. The guiding principles of these negotiations were 'Land for Peace' and the United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. After several rounds of formal talks in Washington, the PLO and Israel were able to come out with the historic agreement of the Declaration of Principles (DOP), which was signed in September 1993. The DOP called for an interim period of 5 years during which the representatives of the Palestinian people and the Israeli government will initiate negotiations over the final status,

which include Jerusalem, refugees, colonies, borders and water. It was also agreed upon that neither party should initiate any action during the interim period that might jeopardize the outcome of final status negotiations. The "Oslo II" agreement, signed in Washington D.C. in September of 1995, sets out the interim stage for Palestinian Autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, pending "final status negotiations" which were scheduled to begin in May 1996 and finish by May 1999.

The interim agreement divided the Palestinian lands into three areas: Area A, B and C. Area A where Palestinian authority has complete autonomy over administrative and security issues. In area B, the Palestinians have civil responsibilities. In Area C, Israel has full control over land, security, and people. Subsequent protocols were made between 1995 and 2000 that resulted in further withdrawal of Israeli military forces and expanded the area under Palestinian control. At present (December 2002), Area A comprises 1,004 km² of the West Bank. A further 254.2 km² of the Gaza Strip is also under Palestinian control. Area B now comprises 1,204 km² of the West Bank, while the rest remains under full Israeli control in Area C. **See Map 1**

Map 1



The Interim Agreement states that the first phase of the Israeli military forces redeployment will be completed prior to the eve of the Palestinian elections. The further redeployments were to be completed within 18 months from the date of the inauguration of the Council. During this time, the powers and responsibilities relating to territory will be transferred gradually to Palestinian jurisdiction to cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for the issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations (i.e. borders, Jerusalem and settlements). This meant that about 95 % of the West Bank and Gaza should have become under Palestinian control 18 months after the inauguration of the Council.

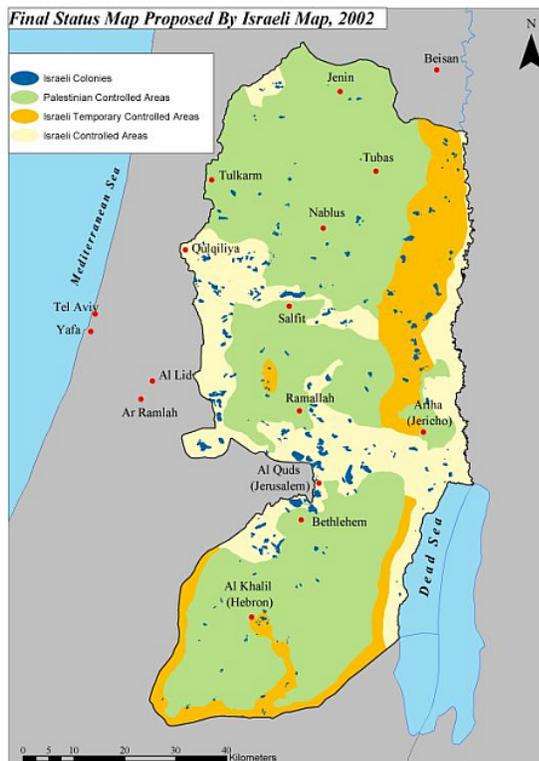
However, on the ground, this did not happen. Stalling of negotiations and delays as well as renegotiation of what was already agreed upon led to partial Israeli withdrawals so that by the March 2000 the areas under effective Palestinian control amounted to no more than 18.2 %. The following table outlines the various stages of the interim agreements and the changes that occurred to them.

Table 1: The Redeployment percentages according to the agreements.

Agreement	Date	Area		
		A	B	C
Oslo II	May 1994	3 %	24 %	73 %
Wye I	October 1998	10.1 %	18.9 %	71.0 %
Wye II & III (not implemented)		18.2 %	21.8 %	60.0 %
Sharm I	September 1999	10.1 %	25.9 %	64.0 %
Sharm II	January 2000	12.1 %	26.9 %	61.0 %
Sharm III	March 2000	18.2 %	21.8 %	60.0 %
Third redeployment (not implemented)				
What should have been	1997	> 95 %	0 %	< 5 %

Meanwhile, Israel was proceeding with its expropriation of Palestinian land for building settlements and bypass roads casting serious doubts about its peace intentions.

In July 2000, President Clinton hosted the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships for a summit in Camp David in an attempt to revitalize the peace process through an agreement on a final status framework. The Palestinian negotiators were offered a map that translates to 62% of the West Bank on fragmented cantons in addition to the Gaza strip to establish their future state
See Map2.



According to this map, Israel will annex 38% of the West Bank incorporating Gush Etzion, Ariel, Modi'in and Latroun settlements blocks as well as Metropolitan Jerusalem. Israel also demanded that the Palestinians lease to Israel the majority of the Jordan Valley areas. Naturally, the Palestinians rejected this "generous" offer which lacks any elements of viability for Palestinian statehood and perpetuated Israel's control.

On 28 September, 2000, the Intifada erupted following the provocative entry of Mr. Ariel Sharon to the sacred vicinity of Al Aqsa. Political analysts believe that the lack of progress in the peace negotiations and the Israeli settlement policies were the main driving forces behind the Intifada. The closure imposed by Israel on the Palestinian Territories since the beginning of the Intifada has restricted the ability of Palestinians to travel and work to a degree unprecedented in the 34-year Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The internal closure separates Palestinian localities from each other and results in the hampering or complete freezing of the economic, political, educational, medical, and social service activities necessary for a healthy society. Such a cantonization of the Palestinian Territories is achieved through the use of roadblocks (including destroying the roads themselves), checkpoints, and military patrols, all built upon the skeleton of the Jewish colonies.

In December 2000, President Clinton presented his parameters for a final status agreement between Israelis and Palestinian that included the following:

" Territory:

Based on what I heard, I believe that the solution should be in the mid-90 percents, between 94-96 percent of the West Bank territory of the Palestinian State.

The land annexed by Israel should be compensated by a land swap of 1-3 percent in addition to territorial arrangements such as a permanent safe passage.

The parties also should consider the swap of leased land to meet their respective needs...

The Parties should develop a map consistent with the following criteria:

- *80% of settlers in blocks*
- *contiguity*
- *Minimize the annexed areas*
- *Minimize the number of Palestinian affected"*

Jerusalem:

The general principle is that Arab areas are Palestinian and Jewish ones are Israeli. This would apply to the Old City as well. I urge the two sides to work on maps to create maximum contiguity for both sides.

Regarding the Haram\Temple Mount, I believe that the gaps are not related to practical administration but to symbolic issues of sovereignty and to finding a way to accord respect to the religious beliefs of both sides.

I know you have been discussing a number of formulations. I add to these two additional formulations guaranteeing Palestinian effective control over the Haram while respecting the conviction of the Jewish People. Regarding either one of those two formulations will be international monitoring to provide mutual confidence.

1. Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram and Israeli sovereignty over a) the Western Wall and the space sacred to Judaism of which it is a part or b) the Western Wall and the Holy of Holies of which it is a part.

There will be a firm commitment by both not to excavate beneath the Haram or behind the Wall.

2. Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram and Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall and shared functional sovereignty over the issue of excavation under the Haram and behind the Wall such that mutual consent would be requested before any excavation can take place.

In an attempt to rescue the peace process, President Arafat launched an initiative to resume negotiations. In January, 2001, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held marathon negotiations in Taba. By then, Israeli elections were close and thus, the Israeli leadership could not take the necessary decisions. The Israeli side repackaged their old positions which do not meet Palestinian aspirations. The Israeli side blamed the Palestinians for not accepting their “generous” offer and played the percentage game claiming they offered the Palestinians more than 97 % of the West Bank. The fact is that Israel insisted on retaining the large settlement blocks of Modi’in, Gush Etzion, Ariel and Jerusalem which account for more than 12 % of the West Bank. The Taba negotiations failed and Israel continued its unilateral actions.

During the period of July-September 2001, Sharon's government launched its new-old policy of unilateral segregation between the West Bank and the Israeli-controlled territories. Military orders were issued to seize a total of 224,000 dunums from the northern districts, especially Jenin, Ramallah, Qalqilyia and Tulkarem. According to these military orders, isolated sectors along the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) were rendered closed military areas; i.e. no one was allowed to enter these areas without having a special permit issued by the Israeli authorities. Sharon's plan was more intensively implemented during the latest massive invasion in the West Bank, where most of the annexation of land to create military zones, concentrated around the Jerusalem boundaries, thus, expanding the illegal boundaries of Jerusalem

Israeli occupation policy of land expropriation

The scope and type of land affected by the colonization of the Palestinian territory is determined by the unique geopolitical ambitions of Israel to create an ethnic Jewish state in as much of historical Palestine as possible. Two primary goals guide the expropriation of Palestinian land for the colonization project: expansion and separation from the Palestinian population. Though Likud emphasises the former and Labor the latter, both of Israel's main political parties pursue these two goals as they extend and reinforce Israeli control over the Palestinian territory. Land is therefore chosen for expropriation on hilltops overlooking and surrounding Palestinian built-up areas, areas that block the merging of Palestinian built-up areas while facilitating the merging of colonies, areas that may be easily annexed to Israeli proper in the future, or that secure economic resources, military advantage or negotiating leverage.

According to Israeli data, there are 140 colonies in the West Bank and Gaza. However satellite images show 282 Jewish built-up areas in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 26 in Gaza. This is excluding military sites. These built-up areas cover 150.5 km² (GIS database, ARIJ, 2000). Currently the total number of colonists in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is over 400,000. There are 18 Israeli colonies in the Gaza Strip housing an estimated 7,000 Israeli colonists, and over 200 in the West Bank with a population of about 400,000 colonists, half of whom reside in colonies in expanded East Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, Israel expanded the borders of East Jerusalem from 6.5 km² to 71 km² to cover areas from Ramallah and Bethlehem districts. Those borders were drawn to include as much vacant land and as little Palestinian built up area as possible. Today Israel is in complete control of the city, yet most of the property and real estate still legally belongs to the indigenous Palestinians who have been living continuously in Jerusalem for centuries. Israel's intensive development program after 1967 has involved the construction of housing and associated infrastructure in the unilaterally annexed and expanded territory of occupied East Jerusalem. In addition, in Jerusalem's Old City, the Israeli authorities evicted immediately following the 1967 war an entire neighbourhood (Al Maghareba) and levelled it to the ground in order to make way for the Wailing Wall Plaza. Over the years, Israel has been able to take control over 55 locations in the old city of Jerusalem.

Most colonies are built in particularly strategic areas. In the Gaza Strip they lie predominantly:

- To the south along the coast, securing Israeli control of the coast and its waters.
- Near the Egyptian border to likewise secure control of the border now and in the case of a final colony with the Palestinians.
- At two junctions further north in the Strip. The Israelis use these to split the Gaza Strip in three isolated areas.

In the West Bank, the focus has been on the following areas:

- The Jerusalem area, to create demographic barricades to preclude of any Palestinian claims to it.
- Along the West Bank's western edges so as to make the return to the 1967 borders practically impossible, to control its water resources and so as to make the colonies appealing to colonists, who commute to work inside Israel.
- The Jordan valley for its presumed importance to Israel's security as well as for its agricultural resources.

Furthermore, the growth of colonies is mainly geared to the formation of blocks; i.e. they grow outwards and towards each other. Successive Israeli governments have encouraged the development of specific blocks more than others. The result of such growth is the grouping of Palestinian towns and villages into many separate cantons. Indeed, the Israeli intention is to make the contiguity of any Palestinian state in the future practically unattainable.

Like colonies, military camps are scattered throughout the Palestinian territory but are concentrated in particularly strategic areas. The vast majority of military camps are in the Jordan Valley, which all Israeli planning schemes intend to retain as an "eastern security zone" in the event of a colony with the Palestinians and much of which has been declared a closed military zone. Camps are also located near Palestinian population centers. In the past, many of the military camps constructed by Israel were actually precursors to civilian colonies. But this practice has declined in recent years, as the Israelis no longer attempt to legitimate colony building with military necessity.

The term bypass road was born with the Oslo Accords to designate roads in the Palestinian territory that link Jewish colonies to military camps and to Israel proper while circumventing Palestinian built-up areas. The Israeli military has complete control of these roads and frequently forbids Palestinians to use them. These roads carve up the Palestinian areas into isolated ghettos and often deprive Palestinians of vital agricultural land. These practices have fragmented both land and people. The situation is very serious within the major cities of the West Bank where by-pass roads form asphalt boundaries that limit the expansion and development of the Palestinian communities, and further disconnect Palestinian communities from each other. The Israeli bypass roads so far built in the West Bank exceed 228 km in length, whereas the planned roads are estimated at 565 km. The construction of bypass roads with the 75-meter buffer zone on each side of the road has destructive impacts on the Palestinian lands and their economy. Complementing the bypass roads is a complex system of military checkpoints. Together, they allow the Israelis to cut off Palestinian areas from one another. During the Intifada, the Israelis have made full use of this capability, splitting the Gaza Strip into three separate cantons and the West Bank into 64 (*Map 1*). This has caused immense damage to the Palestinian economy and has dispossessed them their land.

Between 2000 – 2002, Satellite images showed that there were 24 new Israeli colonies and 113 new outposts established on Palestinian lands as nuclei for new colonies.

Financial Incentives offered to Israeli Settlers

Settlers receive an income tax exemption of 7% in the West Bank and 10 % in Gaza. This is equivalent to 34 million US dollars per year. Every settler is granted 80,000 NIS from the ministry of Housing. For the year 2003, the Israeli government is devoting 1.9 billion dollars from its budget for the colonies.

- The Keren Keyemet is providing 172.4 million Shekels for the seizure of lands.
- The ministry of transportation will use 253.5 million shekels from Israeli taxes to pave roads.
- The ministry of Defense will take the responsibility of opening new bypass roads with a cost of 228 million shekels.
- The ministry of Commerce & Industry will provide between 22.3 million Shekels and 51.9 million shekels for the colonies.
- The Ministry of Housing is providing the colonies with 350 million shekels. Also the ministry is paying 20.6 million shekels for the protection of those colonists who are living in the old neighborhoods of Jerusalem. In addition, the ministry is giving 76.8 thousands Shekels as loans for each person who wants to buy a new apartment where 16.8 thousand shekels of which are grants.
- The Ministry of Agriculture is participating with 137.8 million shekels for colonies.
- The Ministry of Religious Affairs is giving 50 million shekels which 30 % of its budget for the building of Synagogues in these colonies.
- The Ministry of Education is offering the free education for children at the age of 4 years in addition to privileges provided for the teachers working in the colonies schools such as free studies at the university to upgrade their diplomas and levels of higher education, which will cost the ministry 30 million Shekels
- The Ministry of Infrastructure is providing 9.7 Million Shekels for water projects.
- The Ministry of Interior is offering 480 million Shekels for the small colonies and localities, with the privilege of recuperating half million shekels of taxes each year.

Impact of Israeli colonization

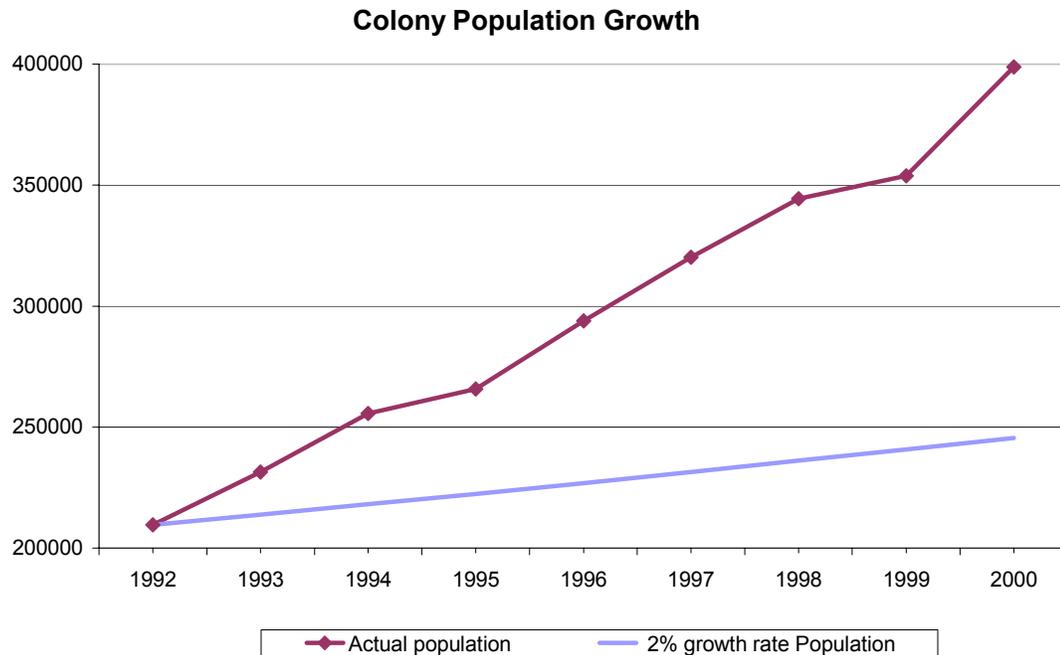
The colonization of the Palestinian area by Israel is limiting the possibilities of establishing a viable Palestinian state. Continuous construction of Israeli colonies by the successive Israeli governments split the Palestinian areas into isolated cantons (*Map 1*).

Demography

In an attempt to increase the number of Israelis in the west Bank the Israeli governments were always encouraging the settlers to live in the West Bank. The incentives were always the temptation of many young Israelis to live in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These incentives offered on the form of long-term grants or free taxation encouraged non-religious Israeli group to live in the fortress Israeli colonies, which is mostly subsidised and supported by the Israeli government. It is obvious that the Israeli governments failed to change the demography in the West Bank since the annual growth rate is 4% percent, which is considered to be one of the highest rates in the world. However, the game of changing the demography in

east Jerusalem to certain extent showed great influence on the demography in which around 200,000 colonists live both in the old city and in the surrounding colonies.

The Israeli government claims that the expansion of the colonies is natural, however this is not true at all, the growth rates at the Israeli colonies reach 8.5% which is four times the Israeli growth rate (**Graph 1**). After extensive efforts to increase the Israeli populations in Jerusalem the population growth rates in Jerusalem area and in neighbouring districts (Ramallah and Bethlehem) showed drastic increase.



Graph 1: A comparison between the Israeli population growth and the actual colony population growth

Agriculture

The Israeli military administration has issued many military orders to limit the Palestinian accessibility to water and land. These laws has directly control the Palestinian agricultural sector and consequently exacerbating the economic problems in the PALESTINIAN AREAS. The legacy of the Israeli governments to control the Palestinian economy increased the reliance of the Palestinian on Israeli employment. It is very significant to mention that most of the agricultural areas are located in Area C (fully controlled by Israel). Through orders issued by the ottoman and British mandate and Israeli military order Israel was able to retain 60% percent of the West Bank and 22% of Gaza where the main agricultural areas located. The confiscation of agricultural lands and open space as well was a policy of land war by the Israeli governments, the policy continue even at the time of peace negotiation, the table below shows significant figures about the incidents and areas confiscated since the beginning of the peace talks.

Table 2: Land Confiscation from September 1993-October2001

Year		Land Confiscated (Dunum)	
		Incidents	Quantity
1993	Sept-Dec	5	7775
1994		14	8945.67
1995		5	1100
1996		10	30834
1997		33	41386
1998		24	23880
1999		16	25912
2000		11	4588
2001	Jan-Oct	23	12759.5

Source: ARIJ database

Large areas of cultivable areas were confiscated under the pretext of closed military areas. 30% of the West Bank lands mostly located in the eastern slopes are not accessible to the Palestinian and used solely by Israeli military forces. The cultivated area has declined in recent years from over 240,000 hectares to 178,669 hectares. Only 70,000 hectares of the total rangeland area (220,000 hectares) in the West Bank and Gaza is accessible to Palestinian shepherds. This limited area provides food for less than 15% of the Palestinian people. Moreover, an area of 7,000 hectares adjacent to the Jordan River was completely sealed off and confiscated, including 800 hectares of highly fertile cultivable land.

Population density

The control of Palestinian Authority over area A and B increased the pressure on the lands located in these areas. Most of the urban expansion is bounded to Area A and B due to the difficulties in building in Area C. unfortunately, this pattern of urban development destroyed large areas of the agricultural areas within Area A and B due to the scarcity of open space for urban development.

The analysis of satellite imagery with the aid of aerial photography to detect Palestinian urban agglomerations showed no more than 368.5 km² of the urban areas in the West Bank, which is equivalent to 6.29% of the total area of the West Bank. In Gaza, Palestinian built-up area is 50.3 km², which is 13.7% of the total area. Calculating population density as the number of population over the total Palestinian built-up area, we find that Palestinian density in the West Bank is 5,449/km² and that in Gaza is 23,600/ km². The population densities are staggering and extremely very high due to restriction on land use and the volatile political situation. Under stable conditions, population density could be defined as the total number of inhabitants by the total area. Table 3 shows the population density at stable situation in which the Palestinian

population density calculated by dividing the population over Area A and B in the West Bank and over the controlled area in Gaza (76%). For the case of Palestine this quite impossible, since the political boundaries are no more than lines on a maps, and the actual area accessible to Palestinians is far much less than the political categorization of Area A, B and C. the population density of Israel (238/km²) that comply with the European standards where Palestinian has much higher population densities 725, 4454 in the West Bank and Gaza respectively.

The implications of the Israeli policies have increased the pressure over the land accessible to the Palestinian. Palestinian physical infrastructure including road networks, houses and sewage system has suffered from excessive deterioration. Additionally, overcrowding and deteriorated infrastructure create a breeding ground for health problems and social de-development. The depletion of resources due to Israeli occupation policies prevents the possibility of establishing Palestinian sovereignty over their land. This, in turn, has been the key reason for conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Table 3: A comparison between Israeli and Palestinian population densities.

Territory	Person/ Km²
Israel	238
Palestine	1234
West Bank settlers	60
West Bank Palestinians	725
Gaza settlers	51
Gaza Palestinians	4454

Economic obstacles

The sovereignty of Israel over most of the Palestinian lands and the erection of checkpoints, Israel expropriation of land and the lack of geographical continuity prohibit the possibility of sustainable Palestinian market. The Palestinian economy is dependent on the Israeli one due to the legacy of more than 30 years of Israeli occupation. The two overarching reasons behind the dependency of the Palestinian economy is the lack of accessible international gateways to export the Palestinian goods abroad and the dependency on Israel as major employment for the Palestinian workers hence most of Palestinian turn to work in Israel after the excessive expropriation of the land and water resources by the Israeli governments.

In the wake of Intifada, Israel tightened the grip over the Palestinian living resources. In a daily bases Israeli forces and settlers harass the Palestinian farmers in which they uproot trees, restrict their movement by erecting roadblocks and separating the villages and destroying the agricultural lands under the pretext of security. The limited access to Jordan valley minimizes the utilization of agricultural land as a result minimizes the profits from the agriculture sector. Having a dependent economy without sovereignty over resources and lacking appropriate development policies, especially for land and water management, has made Palestinians vulnerable to external economic and political shocks

Re-demarcation of the Geographic Boundaries of the Palestinian State

The latest plan declared by the Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon in the Israeli press, Israel will retain under its control over 60% of the West Bank and return to the Palestinian about 40% of their land. The complete sovereignty of the Palestinians over Area A and B (40%) and 76% of Gaza to establish the Palestinian state will bring a catastrophe to the Palestinian people and seriously threaten their existence. The 40% of the West Bank land not only deprives Palestinians of most of their agricultural and natural grazing lands, it fragments the West Bank into 64 and Gaza into 3 disconnected entities (*Map 1*). Such an arrangement would, in fact, eliminate the possibility of a viable state and leave the Palestinians in permanent subjectivity to Israel. The resulting Palestinian enclaves would be completely surrounded by Israel and movement from and between these areas dependent upon Israeli approval. Furthermore, what Sharon calls the western and eastern security areas, along with the hill aquifer, are the most fertile parts of the West Bank and the richest sources of water. The plan will leave 80,000 Palestinian inhabitants reside in 70 locality under the Israeli control. On the other hand, all Israeli colonies would be included in a special devised security zone and additional areas would be slated for their expansion. Implementing this plan will have a detrimental impact on the sustainability of the development of the Palestinian economic sectors and render the Palestinian aspiration of a Palestinian state.

During the period of April-November 2002, Sharon's government launched its new-old policy of unilateral segregation between the West Bank and the Israeli-controlled territories. In April 2002, an order by the steering committee dealing with the Apartheid Wall (security fence) called for the immediate commencement of the Apartheid Wall in the northern West Bank and the Jerusalem area. The Apartheid Wall will cover at least 350 km encircling the West Bank and re-demarcating new boundaries of the West Bank. The first phase of the Apartheid Wall is to be approximately 115 km long and is to include electric fences, trenches, cameras, and security patrols. In the first phase, more than 2% percent of the West Bank will be expropriated to Israeli proper, while at least 30 villages will lose parts or all of their lands. Military orders were issued to seize a total of 224,000 dunums from the northern districts, especially Jenin, Ramallah, Qalqilyia and Tulkarem (*Map 1*). The consequence of more Israeli military orders to expropriate agricultural lands, water resources will force the Palestinian living within the Green Line (1949 Armistice Line) and the Apartheid Wall to leave their homes, bringing about a population transfer. The apartheid Wall is designed to incorporate all Israeli colonies that have been built on Palestinian territories to the eastern side of the Green line into Israel. The Apartheid Wall is not intended to demarcate the 1967 border and that the route of the Apartheid wall satisfy the settlers security needs and has nothing to do with a solution based on the 1967 borders but creating de – facto on the ground that can benefit Israel in the future peace negotiations.

Furthermore, Israeli control over large parts of the Occupied Territories has affected geographic contiguity in a way that it is unfeasible to undertake integrated planning throughout the region, or to formulate and implement comprehensive developmental plans.

Peace, justice and sustainability will not be achieved in the region without an equitable distribution of the natural resources between Israelis and Palestinians. The denial of Palestinians to exploit their natural resource contradict with the international laws that gives the right to the Palestinians to exploit water and other natural resources under the geographic boundaries of the West Bank and Gaza. The continuation of the Israeli polices toward the Palestinian people and their land caused intolerable hardship and suffering. A lasting peace can only be based on United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, in which a fully sovereign Palestinian state will be established on the Palestinian land occupied by Israel in 1967, neighboring a secure and independent Israeli state. Finally, peace should be built on equity of resources and rights will sustain and will grantee the security for Palestinians and Israelis whereas peace built on the equation of superpower won't sustain forever.

Endnotes

Amnesty International, (1999) **Israel and the Occupied Territories: Demolition and dispossession, the destruction of Palestinian homes.**

Applied Research Institute – **Geographic Information System Spatial Database.**

Applied Research Institute, (2001) **The Impact of Urbanization on Land Use and Local Communities**, April 2001, Bethlehem.

B'Tselem, (1997) **Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories as a Violation of Human Rights: Legal and Conceptual Aspects.**

Isaac, Jad, (1999) **The essentials of sustainable water resource management in Israel & Palestine**, A University of Michigan Symposium. Water Conflicts in the Middle East: Environmental Health and Socio-economic implications, April 14, 1999.

Isaac, Jad and Beatrice Filkin, (2000) **Natural Resource Availability and Accessibility in Palestine**, Applied Research Institute, 2000.

Isaac, Jad and Maurice Saade, (1999) **Strategic Options for Sustainable Resource Management in Palestine.** The Palestine Conference on Agricultural Policy and Strategies, Palestine 1999.

Mao, H., Ishaq, I., and Isaac, J. (1999), **The status of transportation in the West Bank**, World Transport Policy and Practice 5,4, 18-25 (1999).

Palestinian Bureau of Statistics: www.pcbs.org, visited on December 3rd 2002.

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, (2002) **The Palestine Question in Maps 1878-2002**, Jerusalem.

The Arab Association for Human Rights, (2001) **Land and planning policy in Israel**, Nazareth.

Salman Abu Sitta, (1999), **Palestine Right to Return: Sacred, Legal, and Possible.** The Palestinian Return Center, London.

Ibrahim Mater, (1997) **The Quit War: Land Expropriation in the Occupied Territories.** Palestine – Israel Journal, Vol IV No. 2.

Marwan Bazbaz, (1997) **Settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.** Palestine – Israel Journal, Vol IV No. 2.

Zaid Abu-Zayyad, (1997) **Land: The Core of the Conflict**, Palestine – Israel Journal, Vol IV No 2.