

# The Wall: 10 years of dividing Palestinians in the oPt and restricting access to health care



8 July 2014

**708** kilometres of solid wall, fences, trenches and gates have been constructed along a jagged perimeter within the West Bank to enclose and separate Palestinian population areas, keeping major Israeli settlements outside. The Wall divides Palestinian communities, encircles some, and isolates others from their surroundings, while stranding West Bankers from Jerusalem. The International Court of Justice ruled 10 years ago that the Wall is illegal under international law. In addition to the system of checkpoints, roadblocks and the permit regime, the Wall controls the movement of Palestinians within the occupied Palestinian

territory. WHO monitors how these barriers negatively affect access to health services for Palestinian patients, ambulances and health workers, hindering access to emergency health services, primary health care and hospitalization and compromising their right to health.



Patients with permits may only cross Jerusalem checkpoints on foot, and may use only 3 main checkpoints. This means increased physical difficulty for ill persons, long delays in access and higher transportation costs. Patients are sometimes arbitrarily turned back by checkpoint personnel and checkpoints often close unpredictably.



**8,180** patients from Gaza who were referred by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in 2013 for medical treatment in East Jerusalem or in the West Bank required permits to access hospitals. 15% were denied or delayed in 2014.

**40,219** or **1 in 5** West Bank Palestinians who applied for permits to travel to Jerusalem for medical treatment, or to accompany patients to hospital, were refused in 2013. **35%** were denied for unexplained 'security' reasons or no reason was given.

**1,040** patients had to be transferred to another ambulance after being stopped at checkpoints at entrances to Jerusalem in 2013. More than **9 in 10**



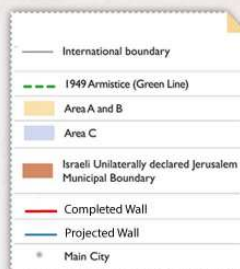
Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances transferring patients to Jerusalem hospitals are subject to prolonged security checks, usually not permitted direct entry and must transfer the patient to an Israeli-registered ambulance, incurring unnecessary delays.

**10%** of hospital beds in the oPt are located in Jerusalem. The 6 hospitals in East Jerusalem have served Palestinians for more than 50 years, offering specialized treatment that is not available in the West Bank or Gaza.

**20%** of referrals are cancer patients and patients for nuclear medicine such as radiotherapy, a main treatment for cancer. Radiotherapy services and special chemotherapies are not available in the West Bank or Gaza. **25%** of essential drug items are at zero stock in Palestinian Authority drug warehouses, putting more demand on referrals.

About **100,000** of the 300,000 Palestinians living in 532 gatherings in Area C have difficulty with accessing health services due to movement restrictions, physical barriers, long detours and high transportation costs (OCHA 2013).

**25,000** Palestinians live in the 'seam zone' area between the 1949 Armistice Green Line and the Wall construction and have severe problems with health access, in addition to the Palestinian population of Jerusalem which has been divided by the wall, e.g. Kuft Aqab and Shuafat refugee camp.



(The map is adapted from OCHA).



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