

The length of the planned separation barrier is 790 km, of which an estimated 167.3 km will be built in and around Jerusalem (referred to as the '**Jerusalem Envelope**'). By mid-2008, it was estimated that some 50% of the construction was completed (Ir Amim, *Progress of the Separation Barrier in Jerusalem*: July 2008). The barrier in the Jerusalem area now *de facto* annexes 228.2 km<sup>2</sup> or 3.9% of the West Bank. It will separate or isolate over 230,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites from the rest of the West Bank and will further separate over 2 million Palestinians living on the "eastern" side of the Wall from East Jerusalem. The Wall will further *de facto* annex to Israel three major settlement blocs surrounding metropolitan East Jerusalem - Givon, Adumim, and Etzion – and associated land which is critical to Palestinian population growth and economic development. (PLO – NAD. *Barrier to Peace: Assessment of Israel's Wall Route*, July 2008). In late 2008, the Israeli Supreme Court rejected a petition by Palestinian residents demanding that Israel re-route its separation wall so that their neighborhoods - Ras Khamis, Shu'fat RC, and the Dahiet As-Salam part of Anata - remain inside the city, instead of isolating them from the rest of Jerusalem. In Wala-jeh, Kufr Aqab/Semiramis, and the Shu'fat RC, the route of the barrier severs either the entire neighborhood or a significant portion of it from the city, thus separating Palestinians not only from Jerusalem, but also from each other. Upon completion, the Israeli barrier will not only minimize options for future development of Palestinian localities but keep large areas of 'open space' and 'nature' as reserves for the future expansion of settlements.

There are currently 12 **routes and crossings** available for entering Jerusalem from the West Bank. Palestinian traffic into Jerusalem is limited to only four barrier crossings: (1) **Qalandia** from the north, (2) **Gilo** from the south, (3) the **Shu'fat Refugee**



Qalandia Checkpoint

**Camp** from the east, and (4) **Ras Abu Sbeitan** ('Mi'bar Hazitim in Hebrew) between Al-Izzariya and At-Tur (for pedestrian residents of Abu Dis and Al-Izzariya). The eight other routes and crossing points into Jerusalem, now closed to West Bank Palestinians, will remain open to residents of Israel and non-Israelis with valid visas and are as follows: the **Beitunia** commercial crossing, **Hizma**, **Az-Za'im**, the **tunnels** on north-south bypass Road 60, **Ein Yalow** near Gilo, **Ramot Alon**, and **Bir Nabala-Atarot**. An additional four entrances are planned in Ras Al-Amud, Nabi Samwil, Sheikh Sa'ad/Jabal Mukaber, and near Bethlehem (the **Mazmura** Trade Passage; UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Update*, Feb. 2006). In February 2009, Israeli authorities closed the gate at Dahiet Al-Barid and dismantled the



Ras Abu Sbeitan Checkpoint

Ar-Ram checkpoint, which was the only remaining passage between Jerusalem and Ar-Ram, thus requiring all travel to go through the already overcrowded Qalandia checkpoint.



Closed Gate in Dahiet Al-Barid

### ◆ Jerusalem Light Rail - Mass Transit System

The Israeli government approved the light rail project in 1999. The project is 'marketed' as an ecological and economic necessity to lessen the congestion in Jerusalem and will serve both Jewish settlements and certain Palestinian neighborhoods. However, there is little doubt that the main aim is to link the settlements in East Jerusalem (Neve Ya'acov, Pisgat Ze'ev, French Hill, Ma'alot Dafna, and Ramot) with the West Jerusalem city center.



Light rail trains

The plan contradicts International Law, which stipulates, *inter alia*, that "all measures taken by Israel to alter the physical character, the demographic composition, the institutional structure, or status of the Palestinian territories including Jerusalem, have no legal validity" (UNSC Resolution 465 of 1 March 1980).

Accusations that the project is primarily consolidating the occupation and Israel's settlement policies as well as the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem are based on the following facts:

- The project includes part of Route 60, which is one of the main roads used by Palestinians to reach Jerusalem and to travel between the north and south of the West Bank.
- The PA was not involved in the discussions, although the project claims to serve Palestinians as well as Israelis.
- Many of the potential Palestinian passengers (e.g., residents of Ras Khamis, the Shu'fat Refugee Camp, and Anata) will not be able to use the tram, as they are located on the 'wrong' side of the separation barrier.
- At the north Shu'fat stop, a 50-dunum plot owned by several Palestinian families - currently zoned as 'green area' - has been earmarked as a park-and-ride lot. The owners of the land, however, have not been offered decent compensation, nor can they afford to build shops and homes on part of the land as proposed.
- The suggested fare (\$1.37), although reasonable for Israeli passengers with their higher incomes, is far from reasonable for many Palestinians, whose minibus public transportation system charges roughly half the amount (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, 8 Feb. 2007).

The public sector's investment in the project has soared from an initial NIS 500 million to NIS 1.3 billion as from the end of 2007. In addition, to the financial problems of the light rail project, the two French companies involved in the construction face numerous boycott initiatives. In March 2009, for instance, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council in the UK stopped considering Veolia's bid for a contract, and in April, Veolia lost a contract in Bordeaux, France, while the Stockholm