
# Gaza – Palestine: Out of the Margins

Edited by

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**Cover:** Picture by Raed Bader

"A wall graffiti in Ramallah downtown shows the interrelationship between Gaza and Palestine. Without Gaza it's impossible to complete the Palestinian scene as it's difficult to read the graffiti."

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## Dr. Khalil Hindi:

## Statement of the President of Birzeit University

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this international conference at Birzeit University, organized by the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies entitled **'Gaza - Palestine: Out of the Margins'.**

May I take this opportunity to thank all participants, particularly those who have come from abroad to share our concerns. I trust that this conference will mark the beginning of a long-lasting collaboration that will benefit Birzeit University, as well as your academic research.

The conference aims to encourage reflection on the situation in Palestine; more particularly on the status of Gaza, thereby bridging a research gap clearly perceived by everyone interested in Palestinian public affairs and concerned about the increasing marginalization of Gaza.

Birzeit University has always sought to encourage sound scientific research on Palestine, as part of its effort to have a leading role nationally, regionally and internationally.

Our reflection on Gaza is not thinking about the other, but about the self. It is reflecting on the Palestinian identity, though, according to our late great poet, Mahmoud Darwish, it is an identity "under construction", for "identity is what we bequeath, not what we inherit; what we invent, not what we remember."

I am looking forward in particular to the opening speech by the Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, which considers, contrary to all expectations, "advancing human development in the Gaza Strip."

Thank you for accepting the invitation to submit papers or to participate in the debate on the important topics under discussion. I wish the conference all the success it richly deserves and for which you have, no doubt, worked hard.

## Asem Khalil:

## Statement of the Director of the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies

Dr. Khalil Hindi, President of Birzeit University,

Mr. Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of UNRWA,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are honored at the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies to inaugurate the Conference entitled 'Gaza – Palestine: Out of the Margins'.

The title and the theme of this conference may invoke questions for some and elicit curiosity on the part of others. In any event, we, the organizers of the conference, are its main beneficiaries. You have collectively emphasized the importance of the event by your presence here, even though it is a Friday morning, and despite the timing of the conference which, albeit by coincidence, comes after three international conferences held at Birzeit University in the past few weeks.

Among the many communications we received in the run-up to this event, I shall always remember a message from someone inquiring about the "conference about Hamas which Birzeit is organizing." As most of you in attendance know very well, this conference is neither about Hamas nor about Fatah, nor even the Palestinian Authority nor the Hamas-led government. It is about Palestine and the Palestinians, and about rejecting a situation in which thinking of a part of the nation has become a source of suspicion and a reason to question. Gaza is a part of the Palestinian nation, and its centrality needs to be recognized. Hence the title of this conference.

As for the papers to be presented, they are all by academics who responded to the call for proposed research papers sent out by the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies more than six months ago – with the exception of Mr. Filippo Grandi who will honor us with his keynote address today, and I am personally grateful to him for having saved some of his time to be with us, despite all his many preoccupations, and Professor Sara Roy of Harvard University who will

give the second keynote address on 'A land diminished - Reflections on Gaza's landscape.'

This conference is one in a series of activities that the Forced Migration and Refugee Unit (FMRU) at the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute is organizing, generously supported by Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC), the sole external sponsor of this conference. On behalf of the Institute and Birzeit University I would like to thank the IDRC and particularly Ms. Roula El-Rifai who is present with us today.

A word of thanks goes out to all who have contributed their effort and time in the development of the foundations of the FMRU, which has now culminated in the development of a new concentration in Forced Migration and Refugee studies within the MA program in international studies. This places Birzeit University in a leading position in terms of pedagogy and research specialization, not simply at the Palestinian level, but also at that of the Arab world.

The existence of such a concentration – the first of its kind in Palestine – is of particular importance with regard to understanding and treatment of issues of forced migration, refugees, and displacement which have faced and continue to face millions of Palestinians. We thus intend to summon up memories and enrich our understanding of the present, helping to supply these millions with tools for creating a better future.

Here is a 'deportation order' against parliamentarians from Jerusalem; here is another order deporting a child, thus separating him from his family on the pretext of having thrown stones; here is an Israeli High Court decision allowing the demolition of Palestinian houses and approving the construction of the separation wall. Here is a military order to be added to other thousands making the inhabitants of Gaza foreigners in the West Bank and prohibiting the inhabitants of the West Bank from entering Gaza Strip, and threatening the inhabitants of Jerusalem with a loss of their identity cards, for whatever reason and at any time.

This bitter present reminds us of an unforgotten past – I hope that we will not forget it, that it will not be forgotten by the governor, the negotiator or the opponent. It will most certainly not be forgotten by

generations of Palestinian living without a land, or a State for more than sixty years, as they nevertheless dream of a state and of their return to the soil.

Distinguished guests, I very much look forward to hearing your contributions to this conference, and hope that the event will be worthy of your continued interest over the next two days. There is not the slightest intent here to affirm particular views while suppressing or excluding others.

We are here to put forward ideas and, I hope, to be creative, even if some arguments turn out to be controversial. At any rate, we as Palestinians believe in the essential humanity of our cause. We will not tolerate our – or Gaza's – marginalization, and we reject the kind of serenity and indifference that promote the acceptance of mere half-solutions.

## Filippo Grandi:

## Against all Odds - Advancing Human Development in Gaza

I thank you, Mr. President, for your warm remarks. I also thank Birzeit University, the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies and Professor Heacock for inviting UNRWA to give the keynote address at this important international conference. The focus is very timely, as we are perhaps at a crucial moment when new political horizons may well be shaped.

Birzeit University's reputation for academic excellence is well known and well-deserved. As the first institution of higher learning in the occupied Palestinian territory, it continues to make truly outstanding contributions in socially and politically relevant teaching and research. Birzeit serves as a reminder of the heights Palestinians can achieve if given the opportunity, the freedom to create, and the liberty to act. Its perseverance and commitment to excellence are also a reminder of the human desire for normality and progress against all odds – one of the key themes of the thoughts I would like to share with you this morning.

Opportunity, freedom to create, and the liberty to act – these are the diametric opposites of the conditions of enforced deprivation that flow from the occupation of Palestinian land. The occupation is now entering its forty-third year. It blends with the other injustices of exile since 1948 and the effects of decades-long armed conflict to give Palestinians and Palestine refugees their unwanted place in the modern history of human suffering.

Within this context, Gaza has its own distinctive character, one that is forged from so many years in the eye of the conflict. At the same time, Gaza has come to embody the suffering and the yet unfulfilled aspirations of the Palestinian people. And as crisis after crisis have broken around Gaza, its image as a forlorn and dangerous place has been reinforced to a point where, consciously or not, many embrace the self-fulfilling rhetoric that seeks to justify its exclusion as a place beyond salvation. As the title of our conference puts it, for much of the world, Gaza and its people are very much "in the margins".

The current situation fits the mould. The recent easing of restrictions

on the importation of consumer goods is a welcome development and has brought some benefit to the people of Gaza, even if the boost to the formal economy is limited to a few sectors and falls far short of the free flow of goods and people envisaged in the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. Most Palestinians, however, still face harsh conditions of isolation. Few, if any, can avoid the effects of paralyzed public services, a collapsed formal economy, and the physical and psychological threats from the conflict. It is self-evident that further, bolder measures are needed to open Gaza to the world and in particular to the West Bank, with which it is intended, along with East Jerusalem, to form a Palestinian state, while reviving its economy and placing its people on the road to recovery.

The closure of Gaza's borders has been the direct cause of debilitating, widespread poverty. Over sixty percent of Gazans live below the poverty line, some forty percent are unemployed, and eighty percent rely on food handouts. And yet we know that the statistics do not tell the whole story of a people whose dreams and hopes seem to have been deferred to a later time.

We at UNRWA see the effects of Gaza's ordeal up close. Just last month we measured an abject poverty rate of more than 30% among pupils in UNRWA schools. Outrageous as it may seem, it is a fact that these children come to their classrooms hungry, relying on our school feeding to provide the energy they need to learn and grow.

So, yes, Gaza is still suffering. But Gaza is complicated in every dimension in a region rich in complexities. The question we must ask ourselves – given that it will be arduous, indeed, to address Gaza's problems – is whether we can afford to leave Gaza in the margins where it presently lies, preferring to direct our attention and resources to other, less thorny or intractable issues? Can we afford to look the other way while this large Mediterranean community and its 1.5 million people remain locked out of the mainstream of normal interaction with the world? To put it starkly, will we declare it a lost cause?

As representative of the UN organization which for 61 years has carried out the world's commitment to stand by millions of Palestine refugees I say, "Certainly not!" to each of these questions and firmly believe that this is the right response not only for UNRWA but also for the international community, in particular at this crucial moment when

political developments may affect, hopefully for the better, the reality in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Gaza, for refugees and other Palestinians. I am sure I am joined in this belief by all who share the aspirations of peace and human dignity for everybody. I say this from the standpoint and perspective of Palestine refugees, and of UNRWA – a specific point of view, but one that fits well with the thrust of this conference and has value for contributing insights into the situation in Gaza, given that around 70% of Gaza's population are refugees from Mandate Palestine. I also believe that UNRWA's views and experience can provide useful food for thought to your deliberations, not least because our focus on human development and our delivery of services directly to refugees provide us with a uniquely close view that is informed by a relationship of trust and confidence with the refugee population.

Through decades of extensive interaction with refugees on the ground, we have drawn on a resource which we recognize as the very foundation of our human development work. I refer here to the strength of the Palestinian spirit - that human element which emboldens people to aspire and achieve, regardless of their circumstances and against odds that are seemingly overwhelming. Seen in a different way, it is perhaps because of the overwhelming difficulties facing Gaza that its people have developed a positive energy, which manifests itself in so many constructive ways. I say this not as mere praise: there is a social dynamism that is special in Gaza. UNRWA – and I – have encountered it, and its potential, time and time again – working with refugees who with the minimum of support are able to build their own reserves to create better lives for themselves and their families; or inspired by the thirst for learning, and maturity of character, that we see in the children in our primary schools; or awed by the entrepreneurial abilities displayed by our microfinance clients. Such qualities, I say with pride, are also demonstrated on a daily basis by the UNRWA staff working tirelessly to improve their community. In these and in many other ways, we have learned that the human factor remains the driving force of development work. In short, it is the resilient people of Gaza that make this development possible, against all odds.

If the dynamism of Gaza drives its human development, that same dynamism must continue to benefit from the contributions of

relief and development organizations. It is important and positive that the reconstruction of Gaza is clearly a priority of Palestinian state building. However, until the compounded effects of conflict, closures and internal political divisions are eliminated, and until a Palestinian state is fully established and normal development mechanisms restored, international support will remain a critical requirement in responding to the enormity of the challenges of Gaza. A defining theme of UNRWA's operational identity is the Agency's focus on creating opportunities for refugees and strengthening their ability to seize them. It may be useful, in opening this conference, to share a few lessons in this respect. We take the view that at the heart of our mandate is the imperative of investing in refugees as people – investing in ways that enable them to develop their potential in spite of the constraints imposed by exile and conflict. This approach is at the core of what "human development" means for UNRWA. It was evident at the outset of the Agency's operations and is exemplified particularly by the massive investment in refugee children through primary education, our largest programme and one that symbolizes what UNRWA represents - and continues to represent - for generations of Palestinians. Our education programme aims to recognize the potential of individual refugees and nurture them in directions consistent with United Nations values: tolerance for diversity and opposing views; peaceful resolution of disputes; respect for the human rights and dignity for all without any distinction; and respect for the rule of law.

I believe that in the situation of Gaza – desperate and protracted as it may be, and even more so because of that – important lessons can be learned from an orientation that puts individuals at the centre of interventions and focuses on lending them what assistance we can as they strive to improve their lives, their communities; and, through them, the region. This is very similar to the paradigm of human security; a concept influencing the foreign policy of many States and which is relevant to the Middle East. This concept holds that ensuring the basic needs of individuals and helping them grow and realize their potential can both improve people's lives and ultimately reduce conflict. Education belongs of course to the realm of development. Our experience in Gaza – but also in the West Bank, Lebanon and elsewhere – has taught us that fulfilling the right to a good quality education is also, and fundamentally, a strategic interest of the international community.

Taken together with our focus on refugees as individuals, the themes of quality services and creation of opportunities constitute the leitmotiv of an agency which, though fully cognizant of the odds stacked against refugees in Gaza and elsewhere, understands from experience that a measure of human development is nevertheless attainable, and remains firm in the pursuit of that goal.

UNRWA's work in Gaza offers many compelling instances of how the themes of quality services and opportunities for refugees reinforce each other and are demonstrated in practice. The Schools of Excellence programme is a prime example. It was borne from a recognition that years of underfunding, coupled with the effects of the occupation and the impact of border closures, were threatening the very foundations of learning for the over 200,000 refugee children in UNRWA schools in Gaza. The threat was dramatically reflected in shocking failure rates revealed through independent testing in the 2006-2007 school year.

I have seen these educational initiatives played out in classrooms throughout Gaza. They are a revelation, and as proof of their human value and of their dedicated teachers, we are seeing student test scores begin to rebound. Take into account that these children are doing homework by candlelight because of daily electricity cuts, or live in homes where armed conflict and poverty and despair have fuelled domestic violence and trauma. Many adults are overcome by the same hardships that Gaza's children are struggling bravely to confront. It is imperative that we continue to support them.

There are other key examples of the innovation and construction of real opportunities for refugees in Gaza. UNRWA's "Equality in Action" programme is designed to improve the capacity of women to exercise freedom of choice, to take advantage of opportunities for personal professional development and ultimately to address gender discrimination and inequality at all levels of social and economic life. We are supporting women's access to the labour market, including through leveraging the services offered by the agency's microfinance services. We raise awareness of domestic violence, offering advice and counseling to promote women's capacity to cope with the phenomenon. We provide women with spaces for social interaction and recreation and foster, through support for a radio station for women, their right to freedom of opinion and self expression.

And another example is our Summer Games activity, drawing, in 2010, almost 250,000 of Gaza's conflict-scarred children to much needed recreational activities. Sports, arts and crafts, and student theatre thrive in these Games. They reveal that children in Gaza (contrary to perceptions of many on the outside) are just like children in New York, Beijing, or Cairo.

These are just a few instances of how the refugees we serve are able to look beyond the harshness of the immediate circumstances in Gaza and to focus, against all odds, on promoting independent livelihood opportunities for refugees, maximizing their learning and self-improvement, and working to expand the life choices of individuals in the face of severe conditions.

Due to military occupation, outbreaks of violence and over a decade of closed borders, Gazans continue to endure significant impediments to a normal life. Among the most visible of these is the slow pace of rehabilitation and reconstruction – far too slow to address with the urgency that it deserves the damage and destruction caused during the most recent war in Gaza and years of conflict and closures. The United Nations, including UNRWA, have in place extensive plans for the reconstruction of Gaza. These plans have been paralyzed for years by the prohibition on importation of construction materials. This has had multiple negative consequences. Let me just mention here, by way of example, one impact that it has had on education: we have permission to build only a handful of the 100 new schools needed for refugees in Gaza; this year we had to turn away almost 40,000 refugee children for lack of space, and the problem will be compounded by the average annual increase of 8,000 students among the refugee population. We are forced to "double shift" almost all of our Gaza schools, administering one school in the morning and a second in the afternoon. We shall now have to start triple shifting, or create even more schools out of shipping containers.

It bears repeating here that the recent easing of the blockade is welcome. The situation, however, continues to be extremely difficult, as most materials needed for reconstruction remain subject to cumbersome import procedures and crossing points with facilities that are not yet adequate for large flows of goods. With the support of the

international community and of the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations continue to negotiate approval of reconstruction projects with the Israeli authorities. Although several approvals have now been granted, and the logistical capacity is being upgraded, overall needs are far from being met, in particular for reconstruction and the private sector. While recognising Israel's legitimate security concerns, we will continue to urge the Israeli authorities to expand the range and quantity of goods for import to Gaza, while also insisting that the blockade not just be eased, but be brought to an end. However, as we do so, we should not forget that at the root of the problem are complex and unresolved political issues. Even the best logistical solution will not solve the political problems before us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This leads me to my concluding points. The international community bears responsibilities for refugees, who, as persons without the protection of a state, require the protection of international law and legal norms. It is this aspect of refugee status, and our responsibility to act, that remind us that they were never meant to be alone in fending for their needs.

In my remarks so far, I have offered UNRWA's response to the question: "can we afford to leave Gaza in the margins?" I have answered "no" to this question and shown how – availing themselves of the extraordinary Palestinian resilience – UNRWA and other agencies, thanks to the support of the international community, take head-on the challenges of contributing to the well-being of the population. However, it is important to remind ourselves that while these organizations' mandate is comprehensive in the humanitarian, human development and protection sphere, they are not the exclusive duty-bearers in relation to the people of Gaza.

The international community has contributed significantly to Gaza, and much more can (and must) be done as the blockade eases further and is hopefully lifted. But it is even more crucial to address the root cause of those needs, in particular where the needs and concerns of refugees and others intersect with the political realm and impinge on the larger questions facing Palestinians and the quest for peace.

While UNRWA, clearly, has no political mandate and is not engaged in the negotiations which will hopefully resolve both the conflict and the dispossession of the refugees, I believe that it is incumbent upon us to remind those involved in these important discussions of two important issues which, with the remainder of my time today, I would like you to consider.

The first is reconciliation among Palestinians. I am fully aware that the process of achieving reconciliation is for political actors to undertake and support. However, the healing of Palestinian rifts has implications for the well-being and future of Palestine refugees and other affected civilians in Gaza. It is from that vantage point that I appeal for Palestinian unity to be restored. And it is from that vantage point that I ask – with a sense of urgency – that the welfare of the people of Gaza is not held hostage by politics. I would be remiss, as representative of the Palestinian refugee agency, if I did not convey to all those with a stake in regional peace this simple but clear message which our teachers, doctors and social workers hear every day as they do UNRWA's work among Gaza's communities – and indeed among all Palestinian refugee communities across the region.

The second is peace, and the refugees whose destiny is bound up in it. As refugees emerged from - and exist as a consequence of - the 1948 conflict, it stands to reason that addressing their plight is a prerequisite for resolving the conflict. The extent to which refugee rights and choices are addressed in a negotiated settlement will affect the credibility of the settlement itself. Refugees are an essential constituency on account of the size of the population and its wide geographical distribution and significant presence in a volatile region. What is crucial to bear in mind is that – in the inevitably difficult discussions which will hopefully lead to the end of the conflict and, as part thereof, a just solution to their plight – we must ensure that refugees remain a constituency for peace and contribute constructively to the efforts to find solutions. Refugees hold a substantial stake in the Israeli-Palestinian future. Including them will ensure that the process will benefit from the wealth of insights they have to offer. This, in turn, will yield substantial advantages in enhancing the credibility and sustainability of the peace process. I will repeat this because it is important: Palestine refugees are a reality whose role and significance genuine peacemaking efforts can no longer afford to neglect.

So, Palestine refugees must not be ignored, and this goes hand in hand with the need to abandon the habit of marginalizing Gaza and keeping it in the shadows. We appeal for genuine efforts to help restore normalcy to Gaza, fully aware that the challenges are indeed daunting. The gloom surrounding Gaza may be formidable, but I ask you to join us in insisting that we have at our disposal the means to dispel it. My call today is achievable. Let us do everything we can to give Palestinians and Palestine refugees opportunities to attain their considerable potential; the freedom to create for themselves a future of dignity and prosperity, and the liberty to make their own choices as further steps are hopefully taken towards the creation of a Palestinian state.

Thank you.

## Sara Roy:

## A Land Diminished: Reflections on Gaza's Landscape

I am going to begin with a story, one I have written about before but it bears retelling. I have many stories of my days in Gaza and shall share some of them with you but will begin with this one.

It was the summer of 1985 during my first visit to Gaza. I was taken on a tour of the area by a friend of mine named Alya who has since passed away. As we drove along Gaza's coastal road I saw an elderly Palestinian man standing at the shoreline with some boxes of oranges next to him. I was puzzled by this and asked Alya to stop the car. One by one, the elderly Palestinian took an orange and threw it into the sea. His was not an action of playfulness but of pain and regret. His movements were slow and labored as if the weight of each orange was more than he could bear. Not understanding what I was seeing, I asked Alya why he was doing this and she explained that he had been prevented from exporting his oranges to Israel and rather than watch them rot in his orchards, the old man chose to cast them into the sea. I have never forgotten this scene and the impact it had on me.[1]

Over 25 years later, after peace agreements, economic protocols, road maps and so called disengagements, Gazans are still casting their oranges into the sea. Yet Gaza is no longer where I found it so long ago, but is actually someplace far worse and more dangerous.

Israel's occupation of the Palestinians, now in its 43rd year, has, without question, resulted in the systematic incapacitation of Gaza's economy, and in the slow but consistent decline of its society, a process that I first defined as "de-development" in my earliest writings. De-development refers to a process that undermines the ability of an economy to grow and expand by preventing it from accessing and utilizing critical inputs needed to promote internal growth beyond a specific structural level. Unlike underdevelopment, which may distort but not forestall development entirely, de-development precludes, over the long term, the possibility of any kind of developmental process even a disarticulated one, by destroying the economy's capacity to produce. In Gaza, the de-development of the economic sector during the first two decades of

[1] See Sara Roy, "The Gaza Economy " Palestine Center Information Brief No. 143 (October 2, 2006).

Israeli rule transformed that economy into an auxiliary of the state of Israel. Today, given the massive destruction of its economic base over the last five years in particular, the full effects – both economic and social – of the de-development process are painfully visible.

When I began my research I was primarily concerned with the economic impact of Israel's then almost 20-year occupation of the Gaza Strip because it was the economy that so starkly and unsparingly illustrated the profound inequities that form the structural and philosophical core of occupation policy.[2] My initial focus on the economy stemmed from the profound shock and confusion I felt when I first lived in Gaza. The chasm between what I had been taught and what I actually encountered in Israel's treatment of the Palestinians stunned me. As an American Jew growing up in the 1960s and 1970s and educated in elite schools I was told – often implicitly – to believe in and never question Israeli beneficence and morality and Arab incompetence and incivility. Although my parents taught me to think critically and often provided some much needed balance, the intellectual and political weight of the times was difficult to cast aside. There was simply no context for speaking critically about Israel or sympathetically about Arabs, who were forbidden—as we were—to use the word "Palestine" or "Palestinian."

Although I had visited Israel many times during my childhood, my first trip to the West Bank and Gaza occurred in the summer of 1985. I traveled there (against the wishes of my Israeli family) to conduct fieldwork for my doctoral dissertation at Harvard, which examined an American program of bilateral economic assistance to the Palestinians. My thesis asked whether economic development was possible under conditions of military occupation and my search for an answer immersed me in a reality, indeed, a world, I was wholly unaware of and unprepared for. As a well-trained graduate student I felt I had an understanding of the political complexities of the area, the actors involved, their histories, and the many arguments and sides of the conflict. I went, I believed, with a critical but open mind, prepared for anything. I was wrong. Those first months in Gaza and the West Bank changed my life.

[2] Parts of this section are taken from Sara Roy, *Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 1-7.

I distinctly remember the day I first entered Gaza in the summer of 1985. I had been in the West Bank for some time and had acquired some familiarity with the people and the region and felt comfortable living there despite the harshness of the occupation. However, the thought of living in the Gaza Strip made me nervous, even scared. I had heard terrible and frightening stories about Gaza and its people especially from my Israeli friends. I remember one UN official telling me that there were never more than 35 foreign visitors in Gaza at any one time (excluding those who worked for international organizations) because it was so unfriendly a place. I have no idea where he got that information or really, what it meant, but it did not ease my anxiety. Much was weighted against Gaza despite my best efforts to remain open-minded.

I was taken to the Marna House, which was then one of only two hotels in the area and, I was told, the best (I read: safest) place for foreigners to stay. It was managed by Alya Shawwa who belonged to one of Gaza's oldest and wealthiest families and who would become one of my dearest friends. Alya welcomed me but clearly viewed me with some suspicion. After all, why would an American be visiting Gaza? The implicit answer was obvious. And when she learned I was Jewish her concern (and my anxiety) grew. In those days prior to the first Palestinian uprising, one of the first questions I was often asked by Gazans was "Are you a Christian?" I never lied and told everyone who asked that I was a Jew.

To my surprise, it was not fear or anger I typically encountered when people learned I was Jewish but shock, suspicion, some confusion and considerable curiosity. I took advantage of their curiosity and my somewhat unique status to begin a discussion of why I was there, explaining that I had come to Gaza to learn about its economy, people, society, and history, and about military occupation and how it affects their lives. I thought it would take a long time to gain their trust but again I was wrong.

Within one week of arriving in Gaza, I was immersed in local life in a manner I could not possibly have foreseen, taken from one end of the Strip to the other by people I barely knew but whom Alya initially vetted. I still remember Alya standing in the driveway of the hotel insisting quite

forcefully that I be returned to Marna House in time to eat dinner! I entered areas seldom (if ever) seen by foreigners, helped by people whose support and encouragement would have been unimaginable to me just days before. (Many of those same people would later risk their lives to help me collect data during the first Palestinian uprising for my book on the political economy of de-development). I was invited into homes, both rich and poor, where no request was too great or question too burdensome. Not only did my being a Jew cease to be a source of concern, it actually became an asset. People could not do enough to help me.

Although I could not possibly have known it at the time, that summer of 1985 set the stage for the next two and a half decades of my life. The injustice of the occupation and the inability of Palestinians to defend themselves against it affected me deeply. My research among them was not only a matter of scholarship – it went to the core of who I was, where I came from, the meaning of my Judaism, my identity as a child of Holocaust survivors, my relationship with Israel and the nature and purpose of my work.

One of the most troubling and frightening aspects of the occupation during my initial encounter with it was its mundane, prosaic nature. For Palestinians, occupation was *the* ordinary – a way of life that had to be lived defensively without recourse or appeal, without protection or choice, largely absent of accountability, predictability, rationality or control. Furthermore, the distortion of Palestinian life remained unquestioned by those beyond it for whom the realities of occupation were wholly unknown. What was for Palestinians a narrative of crisis, of territorial dispossession and displacement, was for others an example of benign and legitimate control. It is this absence of context and its continued mystification that my research has always sought to redress.

From my earliest time in Gaza the underlying impulse of my work has always been toward society – women, children, families, neighborhoods, and communities. I focused not only on the occupation's destructive impact on people but on how they – whether as individuals or communities – were able to resist it; the resilience of Gaza's people amazed me and still does, a topic that has received far too little attention in the literature on the conflict. My most powerful

experiences in Gaza and the most poignant memories I have are not of violence or despair but of kindness and generosity, the qualities that drew me to the people of Gaza from the very beginning. I shall never forget one visit I made to a refugee camp during the first Intifada. On this particular day and for one or two days before, all water to the camp had been shut off as a form of collective punishment, which was a punitive measure used with some regularity at the time. My friend Abeer had arranged for me to meet with a family and when we arrived we were escorted into a large room where several women spanning at least three generations were already seated. Clearly, they were expecting us. What followed was an animated discussion about life in the camp, the importance of the Intifada and the difficulties it imposed, the growing Islamist movement and so forth.

At some point during our discussion the mother of the family whom I shall call Um Ali entered with a large pot of tea, which she placed in front of me. She poured a cup for me and then for the others. I remember how good it tasted and how warmed it made me feel. I thanked her and drank my cup of tea, which she kept refilling as I continued with my interview, Abeer at my side. When the time came to leave I thanked the family for speaking with me and for their gracious hospitality. As Abeer and I walked away, I suddenly remembered that the water supply to the camp had been cut off. I immediately turned to my friend and asked her how had Um Ali gotten the water to make us the tea. Abeer told me that when she had asked if I might visit some time before, Um Ali began collecting water from a slow drip in her kitchen faucet to make certain that I would have enough tea to drink while I was in her home. It took her one 24-hour day to collect the water for my pot of tea.

Then, as now, people struggled to remain whole and humane despite the terrible pressures imposed upon them. Yet people in Gaza today struggle with something far more damaging that did not exist during the first intifada: an inability to visualize a future for their children that departs from the damaging reality they must currently endure. In so many conversations with friends and colleagues in Gaza their fears are absolutely consistent. These fears no longer center on the wasting of Gaza but on the deepening unwillingness to repair it, on a complacency and complicity among many actors – Israeli, American, European and

Arab – to relegate Gaza to the status of a dustbin, unworthy of redress and rehabilitation. One friend, a trusted observer, expressed it this way: "We are not charity cases; we are an animal farm where all kinds of products are dumped on us whether we want them or not. We are not asked what we need or want. We are not allowed to participate in our own lives but must accept our decay. Our horizon is vague. There is no vision, no debate, no critique. The critique that does exist is for the benefit of the individual, not society. We are not allowed to plan, even to think of planning and we are rejected if we try. We are denied the right to live as normal people and there is a growing feeling among people here – despite the fact that some still resist – that this will not change. If there is a plan, we believe it is to insure that our abandonment is total."[3]

From the time I started researching the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over two decades ago, I have consistently encountered two recurring themes regarding Gaza. The first theme concerns Israel's desire to rid itself of any responsibility for the territory while maintaining absolute control of it. As Tanya Reinhart argued long ago, this is because Israel cannot free Gaza if it wants to control the West Bank—its main objective—since such freedom would enable Gaza to establish direct ties to the Western and Arab world, and become a center of resistance to Israeli occupation, Avigdor Lieberman's recent proposal of turning Gaza into a European enclave notwithstanding.[4] The second theme is Israel's desire to "exchange" Gaza, as it were, for full and internationally (i.e., American) sanctioned control of the West Bank, thereby precluding the creation of a Palestinian state and safeguarding a Jewish demographic majority in an enlarged Israel.[5] Israel has now achieved both these ends. This points to Gaza's defining centrality in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in the conflict's resolution and in the future configuration of the area.

In November 2003, just before the announcement of the Gaza disengagement, Ehud Olmert – then Ariel Sharon's deputy – in a

[3] Phone conversation, September 2010.

[4] Tanya Reinhart, "Sharon's Legacy in Action," Lecture given in a conference on *The Dimension of the Shared Word – What Future for Palestine/Israel?* (Biella, Italy, May 2006).

[5] Elaine Hagopian, "The 1988 Compromise Revisited, It's Not Hamas Terror Israel Fears," *Counterpunch*, May 22, 2006. In this regard, see Jonathan Cook, "Israel's Demographic Demon in Court," *Middle East Report On line*, June 1, 2006.

*Ha'aretz* interview, described what he considered to be Israel's most serious problem. He stated that as Palestinians become the majority in the region, Israel must prevent them from engaging in a struggle similar to the one against South African apartheid especially if that struggle turns out to be nonviolent, "popular," "cleaner," and ultimately more "powerful." Israel's response, therefore, must be unilateral: "to maximize the number of Jews; to minimize the number of Palestinians…; [the] division of the land, with the goal of insuring a Jewish majority, is Zionism's lifeline."[6] Severing and isolating Gaza from the West Bank and maintaining that separation was a critical part of the Israeli response. Indeed, as Amira Hass has argued, Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza represented the end of a 10-year project designed to sever the Gaza Strip from the West Bank begun during Oslo, destroying, finally, the Palestinian national body.

Without its disengagement from, and isolation of, Gaza, Israel would not have been able to complete, in effect, the implementation of Oslo's 1994 *Gaza and Jericho First* plan, which similarly aimed to create a separate, marginalized entity in the Gaza Strip, freeing Israel to pursue, in one form or another, the de facto annexation of the West Bank, which it did with stunning success during the seven years of the "peace" process. In fact it was the physical changes to the West Bank imposed by the Oslo agreements – another albeit more shielded expression of Israeli unilateralism – notably its division and segmentation into areas A, B, and C, that facilitated Sharon's usurpation of Palestinian lands and their steady incorporation into Israel.

Having "relinquished" responsibility for (but not control over) volatile Gaza, Sharon strengthened his argument for maintaining direct control over those areas of the West Bank deemed essential for security or settlement purposes including the strategic Jordan Valley – thereby eliminating any prospect of a Palestinian state that would include the entire West Bank. Hence, the disengagement from Gaza, while technically a reversal of some of Sharon's annexationist policies, should be understood as part of the same political continuum created by the Oslo process (and indeed by Israeli policies since 1967 beginning with

[6] Jonathan Cook, "Israel's road to 'convergence' began with Rabin," Electronic Intifada, May 11, 2006; and idem, *Blood and Religion: The Unmasking of the Jewish and Democratic State* (London, UK: Pluto Books, 2006).

the Allon Plan). The disengagement plan should also be understood as serving the same goals: to maintain Israel's full control – both direct and indirect – over Palestinian lands and resources; and consolidate and institutionalize direct and permanent (military and political) control over a majority of the West Bank and over East Jerusalem, among other objectives. Moreover, after the 2005 disengagement from Gaza, Israeli policy abandoned diplomacy in favor of military attack, a shift also reflected at the economic level with the almost total destruction of Gaza's private sector after 2006 – well before the 2008 assault - transforming Gaza's already fragile economy from one driven in large part by private sector productivity to one dependent on public sector salaries and humanitarian assistance. Today, approximately 80 percent of Gaza's once productive (and overwhelmingly young) population, who want to work, has been made dependent on aid to survive. (Gaza's marginalization, which has been facilitated by the establishment of an Islamic regime, has also produced damaging internal fragmentation as seen in increasing levels of violence between and within political factions and in growing economic and class divisions.) The change in Israeli (and international) policy away from diplomacy was designed, among other things, to undermine and debilitate Gaza and further remove it from any political equation that might produce a Palestinian state.

**Gaza as defining: more recent illustrations**

Gaza's defining role has more recent and tragic illustrations, notably Israel's December 2008 assault on Gaza that killed between 1300 and 1400 Palestinians – the overwhelming majority civilians. The immediate pretext for Israel's attack was Hamas rocket fire into Israel and Israel's right to defend itself but this does not explain the disproportionality of the Israeli attack.[7]

The devastating assault on Gaza was not only about destroying Hamas as a political force; in fact, Hamas rockets had very little if anything to do with Israel's attack. Furthermore, various human rights reports and IDF soldier testimonies make it clear that Israeli forces encountered little if any resistance by Hamas fighters. In fact, not a single battle was

[7] Parts of this section are taken from the postscript to my book, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011).

fought either in densely or sparsely populated areas for the 22 days of the war. According to Amnesty International, many of the Palestinians killed were not caught in crossfire but were killed in their homes while they slept or going about their daily routine.[8] And these reports were clear to point out that although Hamas, like Israel, was guilty of war crimes, it was on a far smaller scale.

The attack on Gaza was an attack against the Palestinian people and their continued resistance – be it by Hamas or by the people of Gaza – and their consistent refusal to accede to Israeli demands and conditions. The Israeli government argued that since all Palestinians in Gaza supported Hamas, there were no true civilians in Gaza and all attacks against them were therefore justified, including the reduction and denial of humanitarian supplies, military incursions and invasions, and the continued assassination of the Hamas leadership.

Unlike the West Bank, which has effectively been subdued by Israeli policies of land expropriation, settler expansion, territorial cantonization and other forms of military control (now supported by a cooperative PNA security structure), Gaza has continued to resist and defy. This is a characteristic feature of Israel's relationship with Gaza and has been since 1967. Israel's attack, which aimed to wreck Gaza's economy, destroyed or partially destroyed 6,300 Palestinian homes (compared with the near destruction of one Israeli home) and 30 mosques; and destroyed or damaged 280 schools and kindergartens, and nearly half of Gaza's 122 health facilities, including 15 hospitals and 1500 factories and workshops.[9] (And here it should be noted that between June 2005 and September 2008 the number of operating factories in the Gaza Strip had already declined from 3,900 to 23 due to Israel's siege.)[10] The attack against Gaza was also about pacification and sending a clear message to Palestinians in the West Bank that says Israel will not withdraw from settlements or return any lands already taken. This linkage, illustrating yet again Gaza's crucial role in securing Israeli control of the West Bank, is critically important, yet seldom acknowledged.

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[8] Norman G. Finkelstein, *'This Time We Went Too Far': Truth & Consequences of the Gaza Invasion* (New York: OR Books, 2010), 87.

[9] Ibid, 60-61, 63, 70.

[10] The World Bank, *Palestinian Economic Prospects: Aid, Access and Reform* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 22 September 2008), 7 & 22.

There were other reasons for the war on Gaza. One was to enhance Israel's deterrence capacity, particularly after its defeat in Lebanon in July 2006, and to rehabilitate Israel's image as an effective ally in the American-led war against terror.[11] Furthermore, during the 6-month period of the truce (June-December 2008) consensus was beginning to emerge, both among the international community and within certain sectors in Israel, for restarting a political process; engaging Hamas directly or indirectly, particularly given a clear indication by its leadership, both in Damascus and in Gaza, that it was seeking a settlement of the conflict along June 4, 1967 borders; freezing Israeli settlement expansion; and boycotting Israeli settlement products. There were also efforts, albeit troubled, by the Egyptian government to mediate internal divisions between Hamas and Fatah and reunify the Palestinian government, a critical prerequisite to achieving any kind of workable political agreement. In fact, Israel's attack occurred just before a scheduled meeting between Fatah and Hamas in Cairo that had been aimed at political reconciliation and unification.[12]

Furthermore, it should be noted that a rocket has never been fired at Israel from the West Bank. Yet, during the period of the 2008 truce, Israel continued and indeed intensified its policies of extrajudicial killings, settler expansion, territorial cantonization, movement restrictions, home demolitions, and other measures against Palestinians in the West Bank, the control of which remains uppermost on Israel's political agenda.

It is difficult to imagine that these measures, among others, are about peace or security. This leads to my second main point: the subjection of Gaza (and the West Bank) is not a discrete event without history or context, despite the fact that it has been portrayed that way. The December 2008 attack did not emerge in a vacuum, but is a tragic though inevitable part of a far larger context of prolonged Israeli military occupation and colonization that preceded Hamas by several

[11] See Finkelstein, *'This Time*. For a different interpretation, see Jim Zanotti et al., '*Israel and Hamas: Conflict in Gaza (2008-2009),* CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, 15 January 2009, http://opencrs.com/document/R40101/.

[12] See the piece I co-authored with Augustus Richard Norton, *End Game in the Gaza War, Parts I, II & III,* http://icga.blogspot.com/2009/01/end-game-in-gaza-war.html.

decades and would undeniably continue should Hamas disappear from the map tomorrow. This occupation, which is the fundamental reason underlying Palestinian resistance, has been all but forgotten, but its impact is felt daily. In fact, the word "occupation" has largely disappeared from the lexicon.

Gaza's central status in Israel's West Bank policy was again seen in August 2010 when Israel's foreign minister Lieberman surprisingly proposed that Israel end its status as an occupying power in Gaza and allow Hamas to establish an independent Palestinian state on the territory. He called for establishing a border regime that would end Israel's effective control over Gaza's economy as a way to address Israel's security needs. With this proposal Lieberman expected Hamas to end its resistance in exchange for an arrangement that would allow Israel to deepen its colonization of the West Bank.[13]

Henry Siegman further states, "Lieberman has advanced this proposal because he favors any measure he believes would relieve U.S. and international pressure on Israel to withdraw from much more than about half of the West Bank, the rest of which he and Netanyahu want to annex to the Jewish state – and for all practical purposes have already done so. He and Netanyahu are desperately in search of strategies that would distract the outside world long enough to enable them to anchor the settlement enterprise even more deeply and more irreversibly than they already have; and what better way of doing that than by getting the international community (i.e., George Mitchell, Denis Ross, the Quartet) to busy itself for the next five years with arrangements for Gaza's independence and statehood that satisfy "Israel's legitimate security requirements" – as Israel completes its "Judaization" of East Jerusalem and of much, if not all, of the West Bank."[14]

**A concluding thought**

In the continued absence of a political resolution to the conflict, why must occupation be the default position? Why must Gaza be pauperized

[13] Henry Siegman, "An immodest – and dangerous – proposal," The Middle East Channel, 9 August 2010, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/

[14] Ibid.

and the West Bank cantonized and annexed, and Palestinians treated as a humanitarian problem rather than as a people with political and national rights entitled to self-determination? Why should Palestinians be forced to accept their own decay, as my friend said? And why must they be punished for resisting?

We are living through one of the most severe periods of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The challenges are formidable and are not restricted to re-defining and addressing Palestine's relationship with Israel but include overcoming and healing intra-Palestinian divisions, which is absolutely crucial, perhaps most crucial of all to a sustainable resolution of the conflict. As I have argued, the isolation and diminution of Gaza has been a key factor facilitating Israel's dismemberment and deepened control of the West Bank and preclusion of a Palestinian state. If Gaza is to be brought back from the margins into the center – a center I define as a politically and economically coherent Palestine – Gaza's diplomatic, political, and economic isolation must end and its future must be seen as part of, and central to, Palestine's own. For this to happen political reconciliation and unification among Palestinians must proceed, and all attempts by external and internal actors to thwart such unity will consign both Palestinians and Israelis to continued and worsening conflict.

The imperative, as I see it, is not only to reclaim Gaza as part of a future Palestinian state – whatever form it may assume – but to reclaim the West Bank as well, which arguably also exists in the margin. And one cannot be reclaimed without the other, in much the same way that Israelis and Palestinians cannot truly be separated, nor can Gazans and West Bankers. Of course, the task is enormous and fraught with difficulty, but if recent history is any indication, the alternative, in the form of a deteriorating status quo, will prove far worse.

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## Helga Tawil-Souri:
## The Hi-Tech Enclosure of Gaza

### Introduction

When we speak about the Israeli regime's spatial control of Palestinians we usually focus on the stark realities on the ground: checkpoints, closures, terminals, walls, soldiers and border guards, razed houses, demolished buildings, uprooted trees (and with respect to the West Bank we can add settlements and by-pass roads). As Christian Salmon notes, "what is most striking in Palestine now is the violence wrought against the land" (quoted in Graham 2003, 64). There is grounded reason for such statements and important basis to focus on these as they are indeed the concrete formations that define the contemporary landscape, whose combined effect has been to deepen the splintering and isolation of Palestinians and keep the possibility of national unity, and national flows, a distant dream.

But Gaza is also sealed by the use of remote-control operated cameras and weapons (wo)manned by female soldiers safely tucked in a control booth outside of Tel Aviv, by unmanned aerial drones, by databases that ID cards are issued by and cross-checked with, and a range of other hi-tech surveillance mechanisms. Similarly, the limitations imposed on the realm of hi-tech within the Gaza Strip, also function to contain and border Gazans: such as a constrained telecommunications infrastructure and the permission of only lower-speed internet routers. The 'sealing' of Gaza and Gazans is as much technological as it is in the physical form of the wall around the Strip, control of its shores, or coded (and more recently bio-metric) ID cards. The materiality of borders is not simply in the way the physical landscape is reconfigured, but through various other technologies that bound Gazans into place. Hi-tech is the means through which, as Israel's Ministry of Defense has argued, the occupation will result in "minimize[d] human friction" (quoted in Weizman 2007, 150; 'frictionless' is a term also used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to denote post-disengagement control: Israel MFA, 2005;).[1] The Israeli regime is increasingly relying on hi-tech

[1] For example, in reference to the unilateral decision to pull settlers out of the Gaza Strip in summer 2005, the *Disengagement Plan* states "the relocation from the Gaza Strip… will reduce friction with the Palestinian population… The process of disengagement will

methods to surveil and control Palestinians, but, my argument here, is that *the infrastructure of hi-tech in the Gaza Strip* – that which is used by Palestinians as opposed to Israeli soldiers – *is also an arena of control*, and one that has received very little, if any, scholarly focus. As has been argued elsewhere, Israeli controls over Palestinian life have not subsided with the Oslo Accords, nor specifically in the case of the Gaza Strip with Israel's 2005 'disengagement' (see Ophir et al, 2009). I take that premise as a (on-going) *fait accompli*: it is the forms and materialities of Israeli control that change, not the fact that they have ended or do not exist.[2]

There seems to exist a paradox in our age that is particularly salient as concerns spatial control in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict *writ large* and in the sealing of Gaza specifically. On the one hand are issues having to do with the physical landscape. First, land is a finite resource. Second, the power, sovereignty, autonomy, and jurisdiction attached to (territorial) space are also perceived as finite. To speak of control over space is usually to assume a zero-sum game in which one side is excluded and/or separated from the means of control. On the other

serve to dispel claims regarding Israel's responsibility for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip… Israel will guard and monitor the external land perimeter of the Gaza Strip, will continue to maintain exclusive authority in Gaza air space, and will continue to exercise security activity in the sea off the coast of the Gaza Strip" (Israel MFA 2004, 1, 2). While Israel would remain in control, forms of control would become more abstract and remote, and in essence absolve Israel of being labeled an 'occupying power' and absolve it of any responsibility for Gaza. Moreover, Israel is pursuing a hi-tech 'securitization' of its 'border' with the Gaza Strip, and the border between Gaza and Egypt (along the 'Philadephi Route'): for example installing "black lights; power tools and a compressor for the tools; technology to be agreed, possibly including sonic imagery, gamma detection (full vehicle or hand held), and/or millimeter wave imagery; mirrors and bore scope equipment [… and] cameras will be installed to monitor the search process" (Israel MFA 2005, 3). Against the background of an increasingly globalized security-military-hi-tech industry is the transformation of the mechanics of Israeli occupation, rooted in specific political changes at home, continuously framed under the rubric of 'security' (see Gordon 2008). The realm of the technological becomes the means by which the 'problem' of the Gazans (their existence, responsibility over them, any violence and terror they exert on Israel, their economic dependence, future political solutions, and so on) is rendered more manageable, cleaner, cheaper, and where 'friction' and direct contact between Gazans and the state of Israel (and of course its military) is abstracted.

[2] There are both territorial and hi-tech differences in Israel's strategy of bordering the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is largely marginalized, isolated and excluded; whereas the West Bank is infiltrated, fragmented and cantonized. Often however, similar hi-tech mechanisms are used in both context. I focus primarily on the Gaza Strip in this essay.

hand, the realm of hi-tech, is presumed in our collective imagination to be territory-less, placeless, boundless, and exclusionary-less. Without the problem of scarcity of land (and thus of access and control over land), hi-tech is often imagined to be a 'win-win' playing field. This is a tension that I challenge here, by posing rather simple questions at the on-set: Are new spatialities and control over these rearranged in this age of 'infinite' and 'placeless' communications? Can we speak of a territorially-sealed Gaza and a virtually boundless one? Does the liberatory, exclusionary-less and boundless 'place' of hi-tech hold in the context of Gaza? There seems to be no shortage of scholars, politicians, investors, and pundits who suggest precisely that: Gazans may be territorially locked up, but with satellite television, mobile phones and the internet, they're not just plugged in to the global (and globalized) world, they can overcome their territorial 'imprisonment.' As a consequence of this liberatory logic, it is also presumed that hi-tech can positively contribute to economic growth and state-building.[3]

My objective here is to unpack this tension in the specific context of Gaza, and show that *both* physical and hi-tech spaces are subject to control, and *both* imperative to Israel's strategies of containing and bordering Gaza. What I will demonstrate below, in focusing on telecommunications, is the following: first, hi-tech infrastructure is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in built-form. Second, in the global network age of hi-tech, there are new forms of borders and bounding mechanisms. Thus there is nothing placeless or indeed limitless, infinite, or exclusionary-less about hi-tech. The manifestation of new kinds of borders are not simply metaphoric. Hi-tech networks have their own forms of controls, their own 'checkpoints' and nodes that serve to limit, bind, and contain flows (see Galloway 2004, Lessig 1999). In other words, Gaza is sealed through both real and virtual 'walls'. Closure – that favorite policy of the Israeli military apparatus, as a strategy of separation, control, and confinement, which crafts spaces in which a particular form of power is wielded – is not simply in the form of physical walls and checkpoints (see Hass 2002, Peteet 2009, Fields 2010) and bureaucratic measures (see Zureik 2001), but the

[3] This line of argument is by no means exclusive to Gaza and/or Palestinians, but fairly evident in discussions about the importance of media and IT development, access, and use across the entire world, and not simply in 'developing' nations. For a critique specific to the development of IT in the Palestinian Territories see Tawil-Souri 2007.

more abstract ones of hi-tech. In fact, we can think of Gaza as the place – both real and virtual – in which conceptions of territory and hi-tech, of borders and flows, of access and (property and communication) 'rights' and differing conceptions of and controls over space, come into stark question.

Of course the hi-tech 'sealing' of Gaza should not be thought of as a completely *a priori* strategy, nor ever complete. The actions of Gazans influence Israeli policies and vice versa, just as one must consider the dynamics of what Gazans do in the hi-tech realm: whether in their telephone calls, text messages, internet chatting, web production, or hacking. But my focus here is not on what Gazans do, and not on hi-tech and media content. Because I want to address the space of control and of flows, I am analyzing the infrastructure itself. In the broadest sense my analysis is about the politicization of technology and the formations of new kinds of controls in the age of networked globalization. More specifically, I am seeking to understand the spatial landscape of control by (re)applying of the concept of 'enclosure' onto the hi-tech realm. How we can use the concept and practice of enclosure in comparative terms? What are the different ways in which 'property rights' are imagined in this new landscape? What are the similarities, differences, and contradictions between territorial enclosure and hi-tech enclosure in the case of Gaza?

**From Territorial to Digital to Hi-Tech Enclosure**

Numerous scholars have analyzed physical, geographic and architectural manifestations of Israeli power and its resulting fragmentation and containment of Palestinians. A growing body of scholarship critically looks at 'traditional' bordering mechanisms – such as walls and checkpoints, to name but two – from the framework of comparative or theoretical concepts such as mobility, frontiers and ghettos, apartheid/ Bantustanization, space and non-place, global inequality, surveillance, among others. Many who take a critical stance on the on-going 'spacio-cid-izing' of Palestine (to bastardize Sari Hanafi's term (Hanafi 2009, 111) – which emphasizes the deliberate exterminatory logic employed against livability that has underpinned the Israel assault on Palestinian space) – analyze how the Israeli regime has bureaucratically, politically, economically, legally, geographically and historically subjugated

and attempted to erase – although obviously not completely – the Palestinians. Israel's mechanisms of fragmenting, surveilling, and bounding Palestinians (particularly inside the Territories, and even more harshly in the Gaza Strip) are increasingly documented. But the hi-tech barely factors in. This is the point at which I am intervening, by drawing specifically on the concept of 'enclosure', from the traditional disciplines of geography and history and the newer area of digital media studies.

Enclosure is a historically, geographically and economically specific process that evolved out of and within the industrial revolution in 18th century Great Britain. Enclosure was the *process* and *product* of active landscaping aimed at transforming the social economy, demography, and culture of a territorial space. In its remaking of land, it was a product transformed by processes of socioeconomic power creating a territory with unique attributes. Enclosure stemmed from the desire to separate and exclude, resulting in a landscape of mutual exclusivity that was highly uneven. Powerful and hegemonic groups with territorial and economic ambitions recast the systems of ownership of the landscape through two overlapping mechanisms: one was economic through capitalist industrialization, and the second was political through nationalist state-building (Fields 2010, 64). In other words, enclosure was used by dominant groups to consolidate systems of control over subalterns by reshaping the landscape itself. The practice of taking control consisted of two elements: one, a legal element that redefined 'property rights' and imposed different structures of sovereignty and access on territory by reorganizing systems of ownership, use, and circulation; second, an architectural element that reinforced the new legalities of property and recast the land's physical contours – such as in the building of fences, gates, low-lying walls, etc. As Gary Fields explains, "enclosure is thus the application of force to land by groups with territorial ambitions who mobilize the institutional power of law and the material power of architecture to reorder patterns of land ownership, use, and circulation and reorganize socioeconomic life and demography in a place" (Fields 2010, 66).

Enclosure resulted in a series of 'enclosed spaces', marked with barriers of different kinds, limiting free (meaning both sovereign and not to be paid for) mobility and movement. The combination of

legal and architectural 'signs' served to then communicate the new territorial meaning of property rights and assumed an equally crucial and important function as instruments enforcing a different system of circulation, flow, and trespass on the landscape. This redefinition and re-landscaping of 'property rights' essentially fenced off 'common land' and turned it into private property – allowing greater control over exploitation, and in general, ensured that resources could be put to their most 'efficient' and 'productive' use (as defined by the new industrial capitalist logic). Enclosure then is a process that shrinks the possibility of 'commonness' and increases privatization, and with it, incentivizes large-scale (and usually private) investments. As a historical point of encounter between hegemonic and subaltern blocs, enclosure created new forms of exclusion, deeply tied to economic, political, demographic transformations and goals of the dominant and hegemonic interests of society.

As some scholars have suggested, the construction of the wall in the West Bank is an example of a similar land enclosure process (Fields 2010). Taken in combination with other spatial mechanisms – settlements, by-pass roads, checkpoints, etc. – this has resulted in what Julie Peteet (2009) and Alessandro Petti (undated) have both called 'enclaves.' Petti describes the (West Bank) enclaves as a spaces of exception, neither connected to the outside nor to each other, but "isolated by some kind of power that may be internal or external to them, a power they submit to." In other words, they are enclaves because they are *disconnected* from a network. At the risk of stating the obvious, the disconnection is not voluntary neither in the Palestinian nor Gazan case, it is instituted by the Israeli regime through numerous, inter-laced mechanisms.

Let me now make a leap to the hi-tech network of the internet. While the architecture of the internet functions on a balance between flow and control (and not, as is popularly believed, complete free-flow), there is nothing in its inherent design that determines a commercial, private (in the economic meaning), or exclusionary structure (both in theory, and in the sense that we are not going to 'run out of space' on the internet). That the building of its backbone, that access to it, that it has become a largely commercialized and commercial 'space' is due to legal, political, economic, and social decisions to have made it so. What began as a network that could theoretically be 'common'

and public has become a leading edge in trans-national capitalism (see Schiller 1999). But it is not just the network (or parts of it / access to it) that has become increasingly privatized, and thus shrunk the possibility of 'commonness.' As information commodities become more valuable resources, the construction of privately-owned and operated interactive 'enclosures' serve to separate users from the means of interaction, transaction, communication, and expression. This process has been called 'digital enclosure' by scholars such as Dan Schiller (1999, 2007), James Boyle (2003), and Mark Andrejevic (2007). Thus the model of digital enclosure traces the relationship between a material, spatial process— the construction of networked, interactive environments—and the private expropriation of information. Digital enclosure literalizes the physical metaphor of what legal scholar James Boyle has described as a "second enclosure" movement devoted to the "enclosure of the intangible commons of the mind" (Boyle 2003, 37), a kind of metaphorical process of information enclosure. In more concrete terms, digital enclosure refers to a variety of strategies for privatizing, controlling, and commodifying information and intellectual property, highlighting the importance of structures of ownership and control over productive resources in determining the role they play in what Schiller (2007) has described as "the struggle against continuing enclosures of non-proprietary information." As in the case of land enclosure, digital enclosure facilitates control over resources so as to structure the terms of ownership and access. The model of digital enclosure further suggests that interactivity also has the potential to facilitate unprecedented commodification of previously nonproprietary information and an aggressive clamp-down of centralized control over information resources.

Digital enclosure is primarily drawing from the economic aspects of land enclosure. The land enclosure movement, for example, served as a palpably spatial strategy for shaping relations of production in an emerging capitalist economy. Separating workers from the land they cultivated was a necessary precondition for restructuring the terms of their access to productive resources. Against the background of restructured property relations, workers had little choice but to enter "freely" into exploitative wage labor agreements. Free acquiescence to the surrender of control over one's own productive activity was secured by depriving workers of any other option for sustenance— this is after all

the version of freedom that underlies capitalist exchange relations. It is a form of freedom that is, in turn, reliant upon a spatial reconfiguration: workers must be separated from the land so that their access to it can be contractually regulated. The same is argued in the realm of the digital. Digital enclosures limit access to interactive networks and services to those who "freely" submit to increasingly comprehensive forms of monitoring. If land enclosure helped produce the spatial conditions for the exploitation of wage labor, digital enclosure enables the exploitation of information generated by users as they go about their daily lives (Andrejevic 2007). Digital enclosure describes then the economic logic at the heart of digital capitalism: increasing privatization (of access, of information, of knowledge), shrinking 'commonness,' the commodification of information, networks, and intellectual property, structures of ownership which 'prefer' large-scale investments, and the restructuring of users' interactions. Whether land or digital enclosure, the process is omnivorous in its drive for total assimilation, in that all spaces become inscribed and appropriated within its logic. To put it another way, enclosure (land or digital) 'grounds' a previously open subjectivity in a newly fabricated colonized space.

In the case of Gaza, as everywhere else, we witness the increasing privatization of networks and information, the fact that it is large corporations who manage the network and structure the terms of access (although here, with clear Israeli 'oversight'), and a redefinition of (digital) property rights. But, similarly to the process of land enclosure, there is an active process of landscaping in the 'virtual' realm, of demographic control, of transforming the social economy and cultural of a space, and of exclusion. New kinds of spaces are actively structured by motivations not only by the capitalist logic, but also by political concerns of the Israeli regime that have everything to do with containing and bordering and surveilling Palestinians across a range of physical and virtual spaces. I am using the term 'hi-tech enclosure' to refer to this multi-faceted process: it is not simply territorial like 'land enclosure' nor driven by the economic dynamics of 'digital enclosure.' This combination is what makes the Gazan case unique.

**Connected, But With Boundaries**

In the realm of hi-tech, Palestinians have historically been excluded

or marginalized with respect to Israeli advances. Like the political and economic relationship between them, their technological relationship is one of control and restrictions on the part of Israel, and dependence on the part of the Palestinians. During the formal years of occupation, Israeli restrictions on Palestinian hi-tech were either imposed through the fact that telecommunications in the Occupied Territories was controlled and maintained by Israel or through the implementation of legal and military restrictions. The occupation did very little to develop telecommunications in Palestinian areas, if at all, rendering the network subservient to Israeli infrastructure and controls. For example, all of the switching nodes for telephony systems were built *outside* the areas that might possibly be handed over to a 'sovereign' Palestinian state, so as to make it possible for Israel to control, surveil, and limit all telephone traffic within, out of, or into the Territories. For the few Palestinians who did have telephones, a call from Gaza City to Khan Younis, or even within Gaza City, was routed through Ashkelon, for example. Under formal occupation, the Israeli government, and after 1985 the state telecommunications provider Bezeq, was in charge of telecommunications across Palestine/Israel. Despite the fact that Palestinians paid income, Value Added and other taxes to the Israeli government, Bezeq was neither quick nor efficient in servicing Palestinian users in the Territories (the same was largely true of Palestinian communities inside Israel). Residents of the Palestinian Territories had to wait on average ten years to obtain a telephone line, requesting official permission from the Israeli military apparatus governing the Territories, and many never got one. After the outbreak of the First Intifada, the Israeli military passed a law in 1989 that prohibited the use of telephone lines for the sending of any faxes, emails, or "any form of electronic posting" from the Territories (Israeli military order no. 1279, quoted in Parry 1997). Not that making telephone calls or using telecommunications for other purposes was either easy or common before then. Before the signing of Oslo, a little more than 2% of all Palestinian households had fixed phone lines, compared to almost 30% of Israeli households (PalTel 2001; Israel MoC, 2008; Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2008). In a similar way to how Palestinians were forbidden or limited in their geographic mobility, they lived under a regime which restricted their technical mobility and restricted access to the outside world. Telephonically, Palestinians

were enclavized, largely disconnected from the network.

Oslo II, signed in September 1995, reversed many of these restrictions. In the wake of the 'peace talks' Palestinians found themselves with the promise of direct and international phone, fax, email and internet access. The Accords stated: "Israel recognizes that the Palestinian side has the right to build and operate a separate and independent communication systems and infrastructures including telecommunication networks" (Oslo 2, Annex III, Article 36). However Palestinians have still not obtained sovereignty: over the allocation of frequencies, where to build parts of the infrastructure, where to install equipment, and much else. As is the case with other infrastructures (broadcasting, sewage, population registries, water, transportation, etc.), Palestinians were *promised*, not *guaranteed*, to be able to build their own independent infrastructures. The founding principle of the Oslo Accords is one of Israeli imposed controls, limitations, and bordering, *not* of Palestinian sovereignty and freedom.

In the realm of telecommunications,[4] the Oslo Accords specified all the conditions within which an 'independent system' would be constrained and bordered. The Accords stipulated: "the Palestinian side shall be permitted to import and use any and all kinds of telephones, fax machines, answering machines, modems and data terminals[…] Israel recognizes and understands that for the purpose of building a separate network, the Palestinian side has the right to adopt its own standards and to import equipment which meets these standards[…] The equipment will be used only when the *independent* Palestinian network is operational" (Oslo 2, Annex III, Article 36, D.2; emphasis added ). The point that independence would only happen when the system is operational is crucial, because until today, the Palestinian network is not *independently* operational and continues to rely on Israel's.

Israel handed over the responsibility of the telecommunications

[4] By telecommunications I am including land-lines, cellular telephony, and the internet; although I focus throughout on the land-lines and by consequence the internet backbone. There are extremely important and contentious issues in the realm of cellular telephony today, in the interest of space, I will not include these here. For an analysis that deals specifically with the internet, see Tawil-Souri (2007); for the entire realm of telecommunications and broadcasting, see Tawil-Souri (2010).

infrastructure in the Territories to the PA in 1995. Infrastructure-building is a capital intensive affair, and the PA approached the challenge in one of two ways: by relying on assistance from the outside (in the form of foreign government assistance, international aid institutions such as the World Bank, NGOs, or parts of the wealthy Palestinian diaspora) or pushing for a home-grown private sector.[5] Reflective of the neo-liberal agenda of both the PA and foreign donors, private sector growth, liberalization and privatization were posited as the only options of a successful 'state.' Accordingly, the PA passed the responsibility of the telecommunications systems to the private sector. Sixty-six institutional investors came together to form the Palestine Telecommunications Company, known as PalTel. With an initial investment of $600million, PalTel's largest institutional investors were the economic powerhouses of Palestine (such as PADICO, by far PalTel's largest investor and shareholder, itself the largest Palestinian for-profit organization).[6] In the interest of space, suffice it to say that the economic hegemonic interests among Palestine would be over-represented in telecommunications, and would continue to benefit from it – for example, in 2009, PalTel's market capitalization represented more than half of the entire Palestinian stock exchange, and its revenues represented close to 10% of the Palestinian GDP. But there would, until now, remain other level of controls and enclosures determined by Israeli limitations.

I will provide a few examples. Article 36 had stipulated that "Israel recognizes the right of the Palestinian side to establish telecommunications links (microwave and physical) to connect the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through Israel. The modalities of establishing such telecommunications connections, and their maintenance, shall be agreed upon by the two sides. The protection of the said connections

[5] Pushing a neo-liberal agenda did not preclude PA corruption and nepotism nor the establishment of a rentier-regime. The economic landscape of the 'state-building years' can be defined by the spread of both neo-liberalism and nepotism.

[6] PalTel, PADICO and other large corporations and institutions operating in the Territories all have close ties to one particular family (most notably in the figure of Munib Al-Masri) who variably function as CEOs, Presidents, Chiefs of the Board of Directors, etc. My objective here is not to point a finger in blame at PalTel, PADICO, or the Masri family, but to highlight that – like in much of the rest of the world – investment in and profit from large-scale infrastructure projects, such as telecommunications, most often benefit those who already wield substantial economic power.

shall be under the responsibility of Israel" (Oslo 2, Annex III, Article 36, D.3d ). A microwave link was installed in 1995 to connect the West Bank and Gaza Strip so as to bypass reliance on Bezeq, but was quickly saturated so that the majority of traffic had to be re-routed back through Bezeq's network. PalTel was forbidden from importing equipment – whether telephone exchanges, broadcasting towers, or otherwise – that could have allowed it to build an actual independent network, and one that could connect across all Palestinian territories. After years of negotiation, in Summer 2001 PalTel was granted authorization to install a fiber optic link between Gaza and the West Bank. The Second Intifada broke out a month later and permission to dig under Israeli territory became out of the question. It has yet to happen. This means that to call in or out of Gaza (to/from anywhere: the West Bank, Israel, Egypt, or farther afield), calls must still be routed through Israeli providers.

PalTel's and telephony's growth have been remarkable given the barriers against them – too many to enumerate here, from the forbidding and confiscation of equipment, the release of less frequency and bandwidth than was necessary, unfair competition by Israeli providers, not being permitted to install equipment in many places, the purposeful destruction of machinery and infrastructure at the hands of the IDF, delaying approval, etc. By the end of 2009, more than 10% of Palestinian households had fixed line service, with approximately one-third of the lines in Gaza and two-thirds in the West Bank.[7] What this growth symbolizes however is how local Palestinian flows have been allowed to flourish since the 'peace process,' against the background of the continued impossibility of independent national and international flows. Much of inter-Palestinian Territory telecommunications traffic today takes place on PalTel's infrastructure, but it is constrained by territorial boundaries imposed by Israel – such as a clear separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in the case of the West Bank having to circumvent settlements, all of Area C and much of Area B and A.

The infrastructure needed to connect to the internet is much the

[7] Fixed-line capacity refers to the number of individual telephone lines installed and capable of being used, not to be confused with the number of actual subscribers (PalTel 2005; PalTel 2009).

same as that for telephony, as such the possibility and limitations of 'independent' internet connection parallel that of telecommunications. Before Palestinians were promised the possibility of 'direct' internet access in 1995, as per Annex III in the Oslo Accords, various ISPs existed all relying on the Israeli backbone at one point or another in the network. Israel would only provide limited bandwidth for Palestinian internet use, making it invariably slower to surf the internet in the Territories than in Israel. Israeli providers also sold bundled bandwidth rates to Palestinian providers at substantially higher rates, making internet access exponentially more expensive – and slower – for those in the Territories than for users within Israel. Moreover, Israel has enforced strict limitations on the kinds of equipment permitted, and in the case of the Gaza Strip, all switching routers for internet traffic are located inside Israel. This kind of 'bondage of bandwidth' essentially means that Palestinian internet flows are limited, thus also limiting Palestinians' integration into the 'network.' As WJT Mitchell argues, "if you cannot get bits on and off in sufficient quantity, you cannot directly benefit from the Net […] Tapping directly into a broadband data highway is like being on Main Street, but a low baud-rate connection puts you in the boonies, where the flow of information reduces to a trickle, where you cannot make so many connections, and were interactions are less intense" (Mitchell 1995, 17). Moreover, in January 2005, PalTel began to gobble up Palestinian ISPs. Hadara, PalTel's internet subsidiary, was created after PalTel purchased the major Palestinian ISPs. By the Summer of 2005, Hadara had a complete monopoly on the ISP market, further demonstrating the privatization of access.

As was the case before the 'peace process', all international telecommunications traffic (telephony and internet), at one point or another, must go through the Israeli backbone. Israel controls Palestinians' international connections, their access to the global network. In order to connect across the nation, Palestinians also still largely rely on Israel: the enforced 'disconnection' between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has meant that Palestinian telecommunications flows are not national. Even on more local levels, much telecommunications flow is dependent on the Israeli backbone, and if not, then at least constrained by Israeli limitations – whether in speed, price, or otherwise. While Israel no longer fully controls the hi-tech infrastructure as it did previous to the Oslo Accords, it hasn't

permitted Palestinians to fully control it either. In other words, hi-tech flows are constrained, contained, limited, resulting in a largely enclosed hi-tech 'space.' But Israel's containment of hi-tech doesn't simply stop in this abstract realm of imposing limitations.

When Israel 'disengaged' from the Gaza Strip, it made sure to destroy the entirety of its built telecommunications infrastructure in the settlements and along by-pass roads. Although Sharon's disengagement plan had clearly stated that Israel would hand over the infrastructure to the Palestinians, the IDF severed – as in literally cut – the main connection line between the north and the south of the Strip, and even went so far as burying parts of that line under the rubble of what was the Kfar Darom settlement (Personal interview, MTIT Minister 2006). Both purposeful destruction and prevention of equipment limit the development of the hi-tech infrastructure. In some cases, the destruction waged against infrastructure is wide-spread and debilitating, most obviously during the 2008-09 assault on Gaza. PalTel's Gaza network was destroyed to such an extent that the estimated cost to rebuild it is US$10 million (*Global Telecoms Business* 2009). The prevention of a 'normal' infrastructure does not only happen during times of heightened violence or during military 'operations,' as is clear in the case of all kinds of other infrastructural limitations imposed on Gaza from electricity and gasoline to water treatment and sewage.

There is no denying that without Israeli controls, Palestinian and Gazan hi-tech infrastructure would look different. But we must remain in the realm of speculation. This is important however, for 'Palestine' – as a present and future nation-state – also remains in a state of perpetual speculation. This is precisely the point of continued Israeli controls. In this way, the realm of hi-tech makes for a microcosm of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict: there are Palestinian advances, but there are also 'retardations' set by Israel; there is room to maneuver, sometimes room to grow, to invent, to develop, to 'modernize,' but only if Israeli-imposed limitations allow for this room to exist. Palestinians push the boundary of these controls, but controls do not disappear, they simply shift to a different spectrum. Palestinian spatiality and its borders become more multi-faceted, polyvalent, contradictory. The borders, moreover, are largely there to impede or prevent Palestinian flows, not Israeli ones (most exemplary in the hi-tech realm is the reach of cellular signals, about twelve times stronger for Israeli firms than Palestinian

ones, even within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). These invariably prevent the full (and independent) 'development' of hi-tech sectors, but also serve as hi-tech bordering mechanisms that prevent not only sector or economic growth, but territorial, communicative and symbolic connections of Palestinians. The nation remains 'contained,' Gaza remains marginalized.

It is thus extremely ironic that in its 2008 Annual Report, PalTel chose the phrase "expanding everywhere in Palestine… without boundaries" as a means to showcase its growth (formidable growth for sure, given the limitations against it). The phrase is repeated throughout the report. In one instance, where PalTel lists its 2008 subscriber numbers, it is even more disparaging as the background image on the page is of two boys on a skiff in 'the Sea of Gaza' – a body of water which in 2008 was already completely off-limits to Gazans (see Fig. 1). To suggest that telecommunications could expand everywhere in Palestine is a tremendous fallacy, even more so that it could do so without boundaries. For not only are the boundaries that Gazans – and PalTel for that matter – face territorial, as well as naval and in airspace, but also within the technological realm itself. These may not be the kinds of borders that we are used to seeing or speaking of, but they serve to limit Gazan flows.

**Conclusion**

As society shifts into a modern or post-modern era, states have gradually shifted to smoother and more comprehensive regimes of control, often more ubiquitous and pervasive. Of course technology, and especially telecommunications and computer systems, is an integral part of this process today: changes in state power and changes in technology parallel each other. It is the work of Michel Foucault (1977, 2009) that immediately comes to mind here: that government is inevitably a technical matter whose practices rely on an array of formalized and specialized technical devices.

Foucault located disciplinary societies in the 18th and 19th centuries, which reached their heights in the 20th century. They initiated the organization of vast spaces of enclosure. Foucault's notion of the relationship between technology and government(ality) operates with two images of discipline: first is the enclosed institution on the edges

of society, turned inwards towards negative functions (such as the prison); and second, a *dispositif* that improves the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective. A *dispositif* is a flexible method of control, or, in his words, "a whole margin of lateral controls."

It is the *dispositif* that Gilles Deleuze (1992, 1995) will employ to analyze the emergence of "societies of control," whereby contemporary technologies constitute a new social topology, in which the geographical and institutional delimitation of discipline (that is, the distinction between inside/outside, or local/global) becomes obsolete. Deleuze draws on Foucault's argument that power moves and is no longer an image of discipline as persistent, but rather a technique that endeavors to 'fix' mobilities. In control societies, a 'subject' no longer moves between one closed site to another (prison, barrack, family, school) but is subjected to free-floating, nomadic forms of control. Inclusion and exclusion take place through continuous, mobile forms of surveillance such as electronic tagging, networks, cross-border regulation, regulation over flows of subjects and objects. Deleuze explains that while enclosures are molds and distinct castings, controls are a modulation, like a sieve whose mesh will transmute and continuously change from point to point (1992).

For Deleuze control is digital (or perhaps digitizing), translating everything into the logic of codes and passwords. Individuals become 'dividuals' and masses become samples, data, markets or banks. Others have taken this argument and suggest that we live in a post-panoptic world (and yes, largely post-disciplinary), where forms of power target the conduct of mobile subjects, so that the (individual) body itself is transformed into a password. In the age of databases, biometric ID cards, remote-controlled surveillance cameras, 'naked' body scans at airports (originally invented by an Israeli firm), software cookies, data mining, and the like, control is discipline without walls. If discipline established sovereignty and power by creating zones of exception by means of confinement, control reverses this. Control society in some ways becomes a virtual order, a simulacrum, echoing the 'fantasy' (or nightmare, as it stands) of Baudrillard (1991), Virilio (2000, 2007), and Zizek (2001). Control society comes to be described as a physical geography cancelled by networks.

Some suggest that this changes not only the structure of the state but also its exercise and scope of power. Manuel Castells for example posits

that "the fundamental dilemma in the network society is that political institutions are not the site of power any longer. The real power is the power of instrumental flows" (Castells 2000, 23). Thus in the 'space' hi-tech what we have is a diversification, multiplication, specialization and digitization of 'borders' and controls, and consequently new forms of enclosure and exclusions. As Etienne Balibar suggests borders "are dispersed a little everywhere, wherever the movement of information, people, and things is happening and is controlled." Unlike the promises of a liberatory, exclusionary-less and free-flow space, the technological is (also) a form of bordering mechanism itself – or can certainly be used as such.

What we see in Gaza however is a kaleidoscope of bordering mechanisms and containment devices, in which 'borders' are multiple points and overlapping zones of control that are juxtaposed – some diffused, some centralized, some contradictory. The containment of Gaza is not one that has simply witnessed a shift from a form of disciplinary enclosure to a society of control, but a *simultaneous existence and reinforcement of the two*. Gaza's borders are both conventional and new, abstract and real, physical and cyber. In other words, Israel exercises different forms of enclosure: digital and 'analog,' low-tech and hi-tech, directed both at discipline and control. Bounding, bordering and containing Gaza is necessarily tied to both processes. Discipline (à la Foucault) and control (à la Deleuze) coexist, containing within them elements of one another. Their topologies overlap. It is in fact increasingly difficult to distinguish one form of power from another in the Gazan landscape, for the Israeli space and practice of power has become one of in-distinction. There is a wall, there are unmanned drones flying around, there is a limited telecommunications infrastructure, internet traffic must pass through the Israeli backbone... Gaza is for all intents and purposes a 'real' territorial penitentiary (a term the Israeli apparatus uses to describe Gaza as well, see Israel MFA 2005), but it is also a hi-tech one. The containment of Gaza(ns) is not simply manifested on the level of individual bodies and territory, but also over both individual and collective *flows.*

As being plugged into the global network becomes more pervasive and necessary (for whatever reason – economic growth, political mobilization, social connectedness, etc.), it is access to the network and the flows this network affords that are important, not necessarily

the network itself. What matters is the points of contact, the junctures, the on-ramps and off-ramps, the lines and cables underneath it, and particularly the control (and ownership) of access to these. Here, it is the Israeli state and its apparatus (the government, the police force, the military, the hi-tech industry, all with incestuous ties to each other) that is the 'site' of power – and to a lesser extent PalTel. Power may be exercised at the level of technological infrastructure (access, flow, speed, etc.), but it is the state apparatus that decides whether PalTel may install, manage, maintain infrastructure, just as it is the Israeli apparatus that conversely limits and destroys that infrastructure for particular ends. What this further suggests, is that it is both control over land and hi-tech that defines Israel's spatial containment of Gaza, thus unlike the implicit argument in Deleuze's conception of a society of control (and others who follow him such as Castells), the power of the state has not at all withered; certainly not the Israeli one.

As with territorial borders, power is manifested in defining what qualifies as legitimate movement, or movement at all. The electromagnetic spectrum, internet routers, land lines, cellular towers, broadcasting signals – the 'stuff' that hi-tech infrastructure is 'made of' – function politically and spatially in Palestine-Israel. Israel's lockdown of Gaza is not only a geo-political and 'territorial' issue, but a technological one too. There are increasing kinds of 'hard' conventional borders erected on the land, but bordering Gazans is also at once diffused and concentrated very clearly in the ethereal and 'soft' realm of hi-tech infrastructure.

Everywhere, the technological is a deeply political struggle to bring about a certain social or political order. As I have tried to demonstrate, what makes the case of Gaza mostly unique and certainly problematic, is that hi-tech infrastructures are bordering mechanisms that aim to limit – and often negate – certain kinds of Palestinian living spaces and flows. This is a kind of remote-control form of occupation, a 'frictionless' techno-bordering, both a disguise to ongoing (territorial) bordering practices and a new form of containment. Hi-tech enclosure is the limitation, control, bordering and containment of Palestinian hi-tech flows, and by extension other kinds of flows: political, economic, financial, of ideas, etc.

However, hi-tech infrastructures are bordering mechanisms that limit

Gazan flows in contradictory ways: while they are used to limit and surveil, they also permit and are capable of connecting Gazans to wider networks – of telephony, of digital networks, of global capital, etc. Hi-tech enclosure then exposes contradictions at the heart of 'globalization': on the one hand transforming the way in which Israel directly and indirectly subjugates Gazans, yet, on the other hand, how Gazans are part of the new global techno-revolution (even if it serves mostly to constrain them). Moreover, hi-tech infrastructures are discursively used as symbols of democratization and modernization on the part of Israel towards Palestinians, and more generally in the rhetoric that posits technology as liberatory – and this is especially manifested in the rhetoric and practice employed by the slew of foreign funders and powerful local corporations (such as PalTel) that drive technology (and particularly telecommunications and IT) development in the Territories (see Tawil-Souri 2007).

Hi-tech infrastructure is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in built form. It is not a metaphor, it *is* the conflict. It is the 'space' in which Gazans are both subsumed and marginalized in the larger networked world, economically, technologically, and otherwise. To speak of the possibility then of a placeless, boundless, exclusionary-less hi-tech realm is to fail to see that, just like on the territorial scale, the Israeli regime continuously produces, reproduces, shifts, and tunes territorial and hi-tech margins and borders to dynamically enclose Gaza. Hi-tech too is 'grounded' and in the case of Gaza largely bordered and contained itself. Similarly then to suggest that Gazans can overcome their territorial containment through the realm of hi-tech, fails to recognize that changes on the ground also need to happen. Gaza remains marginalized: on the margin of a colonial regime (Israel), on the margin of a fragmented and disconnected 'proto-state' (Palestine), and on the margin of global technological networks.

But a margin leaves wiggle room. Although limited, controlled and surveilled by Israel, the hi-tech infrastructure in place in the Gaza Strip does provide some (virtual) connectivity and mobility to Gazans. And it is here, in the realm of content – but arguably, and unfortunately, only in the realm of content – in the realm of what Gazans actually *do* with technology, that their containment can be loosened, that they can push open those margins bit by bit, byte by byte.

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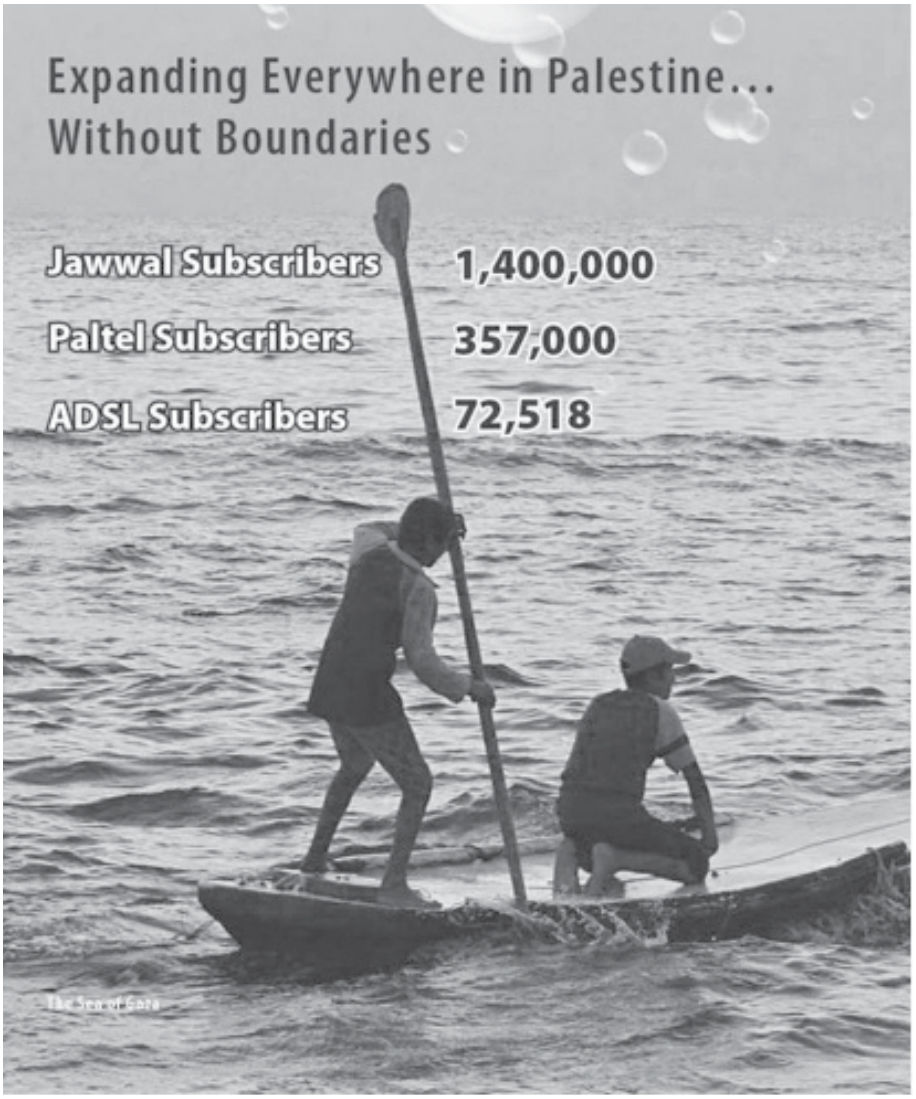
**Figure 1: PalTel Annual Report 2008, 24**



## Julie Peteet:

# A Fortress Country and a Gated Enclave: Locating the Palestinian Margin

### Introduction

To posit Gaza as on the margins begs the question: where is the center? Margins exist in relation to centers and this relationship has temporal and spatial scope as well as a power differential. In other words, both concepts are relational and historically contingent. When the margin is invoked, its meaning, as well as the presence of state, is assumed to be given. The center/margin or core/periphery formulation of a state's geo-spatial and economic, political and cultural contours, once a critical subject of inquiry in the social sciences, has rarely appeared in the literature on Palestine. The margins/periphery paradigm is rooted in 1960s and 1970s dependency theory scholarship when it was critical to understanding underdevelopment in a historical fashion arising from colonial relations where the margins provided raw materials and labor and the core profited. The margins made possible the development of metropolitan centers. In other words, the two spaces worked in asymmetrical tandem. Events in Gaza over the past four-five years compel a questioning of this formulation. Conceptual formations from past scholarship will necessarily have to be reconfigured in light of the specificity of the Palestinian case, with its absence of state and sovereignty and a history of colonial occupation. The emergence of a multi-polar world further complicates this formulation.

With Gaza, questions immediately arise: On which margin is Gaza positioned: a colonial entity to which it is geographically contiguous or a putative, but fragmented, non-contiguous Palestinian society/state? Das and Poole (2004, 3) claim the idea of the state as "weakened or less fully articulated" in the margins can be superseded by approaching margins as "places from which we seek to understand what counts as the study of the state." Gaza certainly challenges the notion that state practices are somehow diluted at the margins. In a globalized world of states, where do spaces outside the boundaries of a state, with their stateless and, in this case besieged, population, fit in a center/margin formulation? We should be less interested in debunking a center/

margins formulation and more focused on problematizing it, locating the specific external and internal dynamics driving it, its geo-political complexity, and examining the effects of its invocation.

This chapter tentatively explores some of these questions by detailing the process of marginalization by Israeli practices such as siege, closure, and techniques of bio-power. Events, what Lisa Wedeen (2008) calls "units of analysis" in Gaza over the past several years, from continuing occupation and a devastating siege, to intermittent military assault, are, as those in marginal spaces usually are, rarely newsworthy for long. More recently, the 2008-09 Israeli war on Gaza and the 2010 attack on a humanitarian flotilla briefly rendered Gaza front page news and brought to the fore questions about margins and cores. Yet these events and the continuing blockade of Gaza, as well as the attack on the Mavi Marmara in the early morning of 31 May, 2010, do mark a discernible, although short-lived, shift in Gaza's socio-political spatial location in conceptualizations of Palestine and Israel.[1]

Contemporary Gaza, once a crossroads connecting Africa and Asia, can be situated historically in colonial projects to fragment Palestine spatially and the continuing impulse to miniaturize and separate its remnants, as well as derail a sense of shared Palestinian identity. The goals of Israel's closure and blockade of Gaza are multi-pronged. First, Israel is trying to compel Egypt, or exert international pressure on Egypt, to take control of the area. A second goal is to decimate Palestinian political life and voice such that they become a humanitarian issue rather a political one, echoing the 1950s when a similar strategy was pursued. Third, Israel's acts of abandonment and blockade engender a space of dis-order on its margins against which it can define and defend its own sense of order and homogeneity. It can hold at bay that which threatens its claims to place and social homogeneity.

Gaza should not be extracted from the collective Palestinian historical drama. In the Palestinian narrative, Gaza's location is often that of a footnote. Journalist and cartoonist Joe Sacco's seminal graphic text *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009) attempts to rectify this positioning by exploring the monumental but often overlooked events in Gaza in

[1] In the wake of the Gaza flotilla incident, two books appeared on Gaza: Bayoumi (2010) and Finkelstein (2010).

1956.[2] A broader historical and spatio-temporal approach avoids extracting Gaza from analyses of Palestine and instead seeks its double marginality: marginal to a colonial center to which it is geographically contiguous and to a Palestinian center to which it is geographically non-contiguous. I argue Gaza is not actually marginal but is often understood as such.

In a regional colonial context, geo-spatial fragmentation and an ethnic-sectarian ordering of society and polity, known in anthropology as the social mosaic, harkens back to Orientalist and early anthropological imaginings of peoples and cultures of the region. The mosaic has been a prominent feature of Zionist conceptualizations of the region. In their varied ways, invasions, occupations and internal meddling in Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine have given concrete and often violent expression to a vision of the region as a series of sectarian and ethnic pieces of a mosaic. This regional imaginary, epitomized by Iraq's fragmentation and the continuing dismemberment of Palestine, suggests a terrain open to re-visiting center/margins formulations.

Elaborating on the category of the margin draws attention to the specificity of Gaza's position. To proceed in the endeavor to locate the margin, its constitutive features must be identified, as must also their social effects. Palestine is now constituted by multiple geographically non-contiguous pieces, yet each piece or social formation, including refugee camps, considers itself an experiential piece of Palestine.[3] All individuals carry a piece of Palestine wherever they are in exile. On a political level, headquartering of the Palestinian resistance movement in Amman, Beirut, Tunis, and Ramallah has clearly been a constitutive element of a Palestinian center.

As with many regions formerly or now dubbed "margins," a look at Gaza suggests that center/margin formulations are shifting, contingent, and

[2] The 1956 Israeli, British, and French assault on Gaza and subsequent Israeli massacres in Rafah and Khan Yunis are not often included in the litany of violent punctuations beginning with Deir Yassin and Kfar Kibya, continuing through Sabra-Chatila and more recently Jenin.

[3] "Palestine is here in this camp." This pithy little phrase embodies more than its short, straightforward prose might suggest. It refers to Palestine as mobile, as something refugees carry with them and deploy to organize in exile. It refers to a way of being in the world and an organization of space. It is akin to Little Havana in Miami, or Tehrangles in Los Angeles, and Little Saigon in Orange Country, California. Identity and place are reconstituted outside of geographical space (see Peteet 2005).

historically embedded. Indeed, the title of the conference is suggestive of shifting margins. How are evaluations of place determined and hierarchized? Is Gaza evaluated as culturally inferior to, or somehow as less than, a putative core or center? Is this a political assessment as well, with Hamas-led Gaza positioned as marginal to a West Bank core? What features of this space might constitute it as on the margins? In the hierarchy of spatial valence, the margin/center is usually drawn along a line of difference arrayed along an urban/rural divide with the former usually associated with modernity, an industrial economy versus an agriculturally based one and with rural areas associated with backwardness or the folk quaintness of distant regions.

In a fragmented Palestine, where are the center and periphery located, and how are they identified as such? Formerly marginal locations such as Ramallah can become central Palestinian locales. Does Ramallah, headquarters of the PA and unofficial capital of Palestine, currently occupy center stage? Gaza's status as the launching site of some of the first guerilla actions against Israel and the first intifada, birthplace of Hamas, and its recent place in headline news for war and the flotilla destination have located it center stage for brief fleeting moments of time. It certainly has more resonance in the west than does the West Bank as a site of human rights violations and a site for humanitarian assistance. What does this mean for formulations of a Palestinian center/margin? Palestinian political divisions and the positioning of the PA as the representative of the Palestinians in negotiations and an alternative, although marginalized, leadership ensconced in Gaza certainly bring to the fore the state, or quasi-state, determination of center and margins. Can there be multiple centers and margins? What confluence of events prompts shifts in center/margin determinations? What is the role of the state in making determinations of margins and cores through divisions of districts and administrative headquarters?

In locating margins and centers we must pay attention to regional concepts of selfhood and how they articulate with the national identities promoted by the state, a problematic not unique to Palestine but that Palestinian certainly complicates. The burgeoning body of scholarship on Palestine has been more focused on the West Bank. Part of the problem is access and part is the sense of its marginality –

that the important things happen in the West Bank.[4]

Shifting focus to the colonial dimension positions Israel as center and Gaza as its margin in a relation of asymmetrical dependence. The colonial dimension brings into focus the mutually-constitutive relations between the quarantined and stateless and the fully franchised, highly mobile citizen. The latter derives his mobility, and sense of security, from the immobilized, abandoned Palestinian; in other words, the Palestinian, the ever-present threat, is immobilized while Israeli mobility is unimpeded. Israel has crafted a doubled or twinned project of order and disorder, or what I call calibrated chaos, to ensure both order and domination. In other words, crafting of spaces of disorder and immobility produces and reproduces a space of order in the core of the state. In short, state and margins are mutually constitutive. Separation, closure, incarceration, and immobility are spatial devices and technologies of rule that draw a tangible classificatory impulse of order/disorder and inclusion/exclusion. These fault lines take shape around ethnic, religious and national difference. On the margins are that which disturbs the order and homogeneity of the state. Israeli practices in Gaza invoke threat and security to produce both order and disorder. The invoking of an ever-present threat by Palestinians serves to call forth and justify techniques of siege, blockade and immobilization. An analysis of the state from the margins may indeed provide a remarkably different view of the state (Das and Poole 2004, 4). It may be as Talal Asad contends, that margins are "places where state law and order continually have to be reestablished" (2004, 279). Thus what we think of as margins may actually be central to the project of state. Conditions of disorder then function to decimate daily life.

The relation of dependency, as in the classic formulation of core/periphery, worked when Gaza was on the periphery of a colonial state exploiting its cheap and unprotected labor. But this is no longer the case. As history often makes clear, once central locations can, and often do, transition to the margins as a result of changes in colonial priorities, shifts in the trade of goods and their routes or the demand for labor, and centralizing political projects. As trade patterns and the locales for the production of goods shift over time, once vibrant centers

[4] For exceptions see Sara Roy (1995) and Ilana Feldman (2010). In the 1990s and early 2000s, dozens of graduate students pursed research and wrote dissertations on the West Bank; few chose Gaza as a site for generating knowledge about Palestine.

of commerce, trade, and culture can quickly morph into backwaters. With the 2005 Israeli redeployment, the occupation entered a new era: enclavization through a combination of high and low tech means such as walls and fences and the collection, storage, and encryption of identity cards with bio-metric data.

On an ideological note, we should be reminded that the initial PLO conception of a democratic, secular state appeared more modern and cosmopolitan than Zionist conceptions of a religious/ethnic based state, part of the larger regional mosaic. Being excluded from a state, consigned to the geographical margins, engendered the idea of an inclusive state.

By its very marginalization, Gaza epitomizes the Palestinian condition of both fragmentation and unity. This is one of the profound contradictions of the Zionist project to obstruct the emergence of a contiguous Palestinian entity and national consciousness. For it is the prolonged, shared experience of this project, with its massive human rights violation associated with dispossession and displacement in the quest for resource control and an exclusivist sovereignty, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, inside Israel, or in the refugee camps scattered across the border states, that continues to be central to Palestinian identity and a sense of belonging.

**Fortress State and Gated/Walled Enclaves: Closure and Separation**

Contemporary accounts of violence and warfare often focus on the displaced, those traumatized by warfare, victims of massacres and mass rapes. Seldom are the immobilized, those locked in and besieged, subjects of research. The origins of Gaza's closure can be tracked on a regional, as well as global, scale to a politics of (im)mobility and the deployment of siege and blockade as weapons of war, and to an economy where peace is no longer a pre-condition of economic growth. Zionism's ability to implement its separatist impulse was captured by Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, when he declared in 1994, "We have to decide on separation as a philosophy" (Makovsky 2004, 52). This move coincided with the rise of Israel's high tech communications and security industry. Separation certainly was feasible economically and could be marketed as a prophylactic measure to ensure security. Indeed, the global politics of securitization, while growing in the

1990s, forcefully took off in the post-9/11 period. Israel was presented with a golden opportunity to expand its export capacity, and thus its economic prosperity, around the development of, and trade in, new security technologies. Klein (2007a, 422) noted that the "conventional wisdom" had long been that conflict and political turmoil impeded economic development and that peace was foundational to economic growth. Israel recognized that it could sustain an unending war with the Palestinians and enjoy economic growth. Global instability that "generates huge profits for the high-tech security sector" was the new conventional wisdom (424). In other words, conflict and the politics of threat and fear have propelled the high-tech security industry now vital to Israel's economic health. Indeed, Klein contends that "Israel has crafted an economy that expands markedly in direct response to escalating violence" (428). Israel has over 350 corporations devoted to security products and expertise. She also notes that "the rapid expansion of the high-tech security economy created a powerful appetite inside Israel's wealthy and most powerful sectors for abandoning peace in favor of fighting a continual, and continuously expanding, War on Terror" (430). Captive populations on the margins provided a laboratory setting and test subjects where security technologies, such as checkpoints, the wall, and identity cards encrypted with biometric information are designed, tested, advertised, and then marketed globally. Israel markets security and weapons products and know-how by advertising their lengthy experience in dealing with Arab and Muslim 'terrorists.' In this arrangement, Israel has become a "kind of twenty-four-hour-a-day showroom," integral to its status as the "fourth-largest arms dealer in the world" (Klein 2007b). Gaza's status as a bio-tech laboratory suggests that the parameters of core and periphery need to be re-articulated and new criteria appended.

Closure joins other forms of structural management of inequality and punishment. The literature on gated communities is relevant to understanding Palestine/Israel yet we must remain cognizant of the uniqueness of the project in Palestine in terms of level and scope of violence and differences in geo-political scale. Anthropologist Teresa Caldeira (2001) and Mike Davis (2006) wrote seminal works on gated communities and fortressing in Los Angeles and Brazil. Yet rather than simply erecting gated communities for the elite, a sort of voluntary self-segregation, Israel has constructed a gated, or fortressed, country.

The gated communities described by Caldeira were designed to keep out certain people, basically the poor, except for those selectively allowed in to service the lifestyles of the wealthy and to enhance the physical security of those residing behind the gates. Those outside the gated communities did not have their movement hindered in the urban areas outside the gated communities; they simply were not allowed unmonitored access to the gated enclaves. Israel is both distinct and similar. In other words, there is what Wittgenstein called "family resemblances." In the fortressed state, and its surrounding occupied territories, the parameters of (im)mobility are based on ethnicity, religion and nationality. Agier's description of gated communities as "an elementary system of bio-segregation anterior to any thought of the other, compatible only with thinking of oneself, to the point of self-obsession and fear of the least physical contact" (2004, 60) echoes with the closure. Palestinian circulation halts at the gates of the fortress, yet Palestinian circulation is also severely hindered within and between areas in Palestine. Beyond the fortress, space is carved into multiple, non-contiguous enclaves where people are simultaneously locked in and out, further complicating margin/center formulations.

**Closure of Gaza**

In Palestine in general, the circulation of goods and humans is selectively mediated by fences/walls, a multitude of checkpoints and terminals, and the permit system. Closure and siege obstruct circulation in and out of Gaza and within the West Bank. Are fences, walls, and checkpoints, which craft fortressed spaces, becoming the *nomos* of the new century as they appear in Palestine and Baghdad and along the US-Mexico border? Most significantly, they create the conditions of disorder and calibrated chaos as a form of collective punishment, as a means of inducing emigration and compelling humanitarian intervention to de-politicize the Palestine issue. Closure, and its structural mechanisms, indicate a lack of interest in settling grievances, reference a desire to transform the demographic landscape and ultimately, through extreme forms of containment and incarceration, engender ethnically homogenous and exclusivist spaces of rights and privileges.

Spaces of confinement assume multiple forms: reservations to contain the dispossessed Native Americans, gated communities where the

power ratio is inverted by elites locking themselves in and dangerous others out, European ghettos that incarcerated the Jewish population, Bantustans in South Africa, besieged cities, and asylums, among others. Building fences and walls disrupts the intimate relationship between landscape and human mobility, the way landscape is produced, reproduced, imagined, and endowed with meaning through mobility. They give rise to spatial enclaves and immobile bodies. Enclaves are spatial zones where populations are contained, isolated from others, and surrounded by a dominant state; in other words, marginal spaces. Enclaves, like reservations, ghettos, and Bantustans, are unilateral moves and as such reflect the power of one party to act in its interests and the weaker party's inability to halt such moves. Fenced/walled Gaza resembles a holding pen while the West Bank is more akin to an archipelago. Palestinian enclaves are distinguished by their physical mechanisms of incarceration: the fence/wall and terminals/checkpoints, and the bureaucratic controls, the permits, necessary to move beyond them. These enclaves facilitate the unhindered mobility of a dominant, privileged group.

Most importantly, while states are not the only force involved in producing margins; margins, like place and region, are not inert, simply acted upon arenas; they play a role in producing themselves, highlighting the internal dimension. These are more than simply zones of incarceration. They can also be creative arenas. The internal dynamic in Gaza is evident in the mundane as well as the spectacular, from simply proceeding with daily life to tunneling under the wall and, more recently, breaching Egypt's underground steel wall, to networks of trade carried on though the tunnels and the garnering of international support as evidenced by the summer 2010 flotilla. Israel closes an eye to some smuggling in order to reinforce an economic tie with Egypt and to prevent a total humanitarian catastrophe. When space is re-ordered, whether through colonial or urban designs to put out of sight undesirable people that disrupt social homogeneity, those cast out do respond with voice and action. In short, the banished, confined, or quarantined are active subjects creating social worlds.

Gaza (and the West Bank) presents a comparative and semantic challenge. Extant concepts for describing confinement such as ghetto, gated community, reservation, prison, bantustan, gulag, or enclave do

not quite capture the novel reality of confinement in a blockaded and besieged Gaza. As a geo-spatial term, in English, enclave can embody a more neutral cast, unlike Bantustan or ghetto, whose meanings are freighted with negative connotations. Yet enclave can also refer to socio-spatial formations with grounding in particular social arrangements of inequality. Gulags capture the element of imprisonment that is so prevalent when Palestinians describe the blockade, closure, and the wall. So what should Gaza and the isolated spaces in the West Bank be called? "Open-air prisons" is used frequently to reference siege and closure; it captures the incarcerating effects of closure and enclavization.

Comparisons with the ghetto are limited because the economic factor is not applicable. The economic integration, however unequally, of African-Americans, Jews, and Blacks in the ghettoes of the US, pre-World War II Europe, and the Bantustans, is not paralleled in Palestinian enclaves, for these groups, however spatially confined and marginalized, occupied a pivotal position in local economies. Palestinian confinement is novel in that their circulation outside and between their confines is severely circumscribed. "Stigma, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional containment" are defining elements of the ghetto (Wacquant 2004, 2). Institutional containment is where Gaza departs from the comparison; Gazan institutions are being strangled, rather than contained, by their inability to receive goods from outside, or to coordinate with institutions in the West Bank, as well as by Israeli military attacks on their physical structures and personnel. Oddly, Wacquant focuses little on (im)mobility. Jews were allowed mobility outside the ghetto, albeit temporally circumscribed, for they played a critical economic role. In addition, ghetto has been used to refer to urban concentrations of African-Americans in northern cities when their labor was central to US industry; these ghettoes were not physical constructions but rather were maintained by widely observed social patterns of segregation. Wacquant argues that the ghetto is a "Janus-faced institution as it serves opposite functions for the two collectives that it binds in a relation of asymmetric dependency. For the dominant category, its rationale is to confine and control…"; for the dominated sector "it is an integrative and protective device insofar as it relieves its members from constant contact with the dominant and fosters consociation and community building" (2004, 3).

Under siege, we need to be asking on-the-ground questions: is community building or the sense of unity that arises from confinement maintained? How severely stretched and compromised are networks of solidarity such as kin, or have they been newly re-invigorated, or re-formulated? What new sorts of networks are emerging? What sorts of cultural expression? With this extreme level of punitive incarceration and continued destruction, can Gazans claim pride in community building and cultural florescence as did some pre-1960s African-American urban communities (Wacquant 2004, 5) and pre-war European ghettoes? Whereas the ghetto can serve to enhance group identity and cohesion, especially in relation to the dominant external community, it remains to be seen how Gazan identity and social cohesion are currently being contoured. Most any state contains regional diversity and a consequent diversity of identities; in Palestine this question takes on heightened significance in the wake of extreme forms of fragmentation and obstructed social interaction. Is Gaza marginal to the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Palestinians outside? For Wacquant, the ghetto is both weapon and shield, but when it loses its economic function for the dominant group, the enclosed group runs the risk of warehousing and ostracism, and it can be a precursor to annihilation. Native American reservations, a by-product of ethnically driven forced removals and dispossession, may be a more appropriate spatial analogy. Their resources, but not their labor, were coveted by the settlers. The reservations are semi-autonomous zones within a larger state and Native Americans were eventually incorporated as US citizens.

Thus comparisons can be fraught with the perils of over-simplification and inaccuracy. Elsewhere I have critiqued the South African Bantustan-Gaza analogy, particularly in the area of labor (Peteet 2009); the global traffic in labor has weakened this particular point of comparison. When Israel depended on Palestinian workers from Gaza (1967-1993), which functioned as a dormitory for a reserve pool of labor, comparisons with Bantustans worked fairly well. Unlike the white dependency on a black labor force in South Africa, from mine workers to nannies, Palestinians became expendable. Now, however, it might be more fruitful to search for different analytical terms. I suggest we shift the paradigm from Apartheid comparisons and begin to probe the Israeli plan for separation using terms that resonate locally. How

is *hafrada* (Hebrew for separation) conceptualized and enacted and what are its consequences? What we are witnessing in Gaza is the shift to spatial forms that not only contain, monitor, and discipline but now incarcerate a surplus, abandoned population that is no longer of much value to the colonial project.

When and why did the Palestinians under occupation become surplus bodies to be disciplined and controlled, but also subjects of technologies of bio-power? After the first intifada, which overlapped with the influx of Soviet Jews, the rise of neo-liberalism, and the increasing privatization of the Israeli economy, Israel found it possible to implement a policy of separation. They were able to wean themselves from Palestinian labor by importing workers from South Asia and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, Oslo signaled Palestinian acquiescence to Israeli plans and a surge in colony building. What is the place in the world for those whose resources are coveted and expropriated with impunity and who provide less and less profit? Prolonged siege, bio-power, or the way a state acts on the body as an aggregate, and a politics of abandonment and the spaces they bring into play, operate together. Anthropologist Joao Biehl writes of "ex-human" and the "social death" that precedes "biological death" (2005, 52). When Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni declared there is no "humanitarian crisis" in Gaza, she underscored that the siege maintained Palestinians above the level of disaster and that Palestinians are not civilians because combatant distress and casualties are not referred to in humanitarian terms.

Under Israel's blockade of Gaza, the items banned entry are capricious and arbitrary and signal the un-human or the ex-human. The list of permitted and banned items suggests punishment and the imposition of uncertainty. Why cinnamon but no coriander? Why no plastic toys or wood or textiles? The items allowed or disallowed change over time, an arbitrariness that imposes severe constraints on the work of humanitarian organizations. An Israeli group, Gisha, that brought a court case seeking documents related to the blockade, acquired four documents, one of which spelled out the blockade's rationale: "The limitation on the transfer of goods is a central pillar in the means at the disposal of the State of Israel in the armed conflict between it

and Hamas."[5] One document, "Food Consumption in the Gaza Strip – Red Lines," details the minimum caloric intake by sex and age in Gaza. Wars on Gaza, and the siege of Gaza, are not just about spatial tactics to produce a particular type of disciplinary space, but also about particular bodies, about pursuing subjugation through bodily regulation and punishment. Israeli spokesman Dov Weisglass' ominous, and now widely quoted, statement: "We are putting the Palestinians on a diet" is highly suggestive of intent and the sorts of results it expects to produce from a siege and mass destruction: capitulation by a hungry population and the subsequent overthrow of the Hamas government. It aims to accomplish these goals through seemingly arbitrary regulations governing food, shelter, medicine/medical care, electricity, water/sanitation, and items for education.

Anthropologist Darryl Li (2008, 4) referred to Gaza as an animal pen where lives are controlled through the "leash and diet". With the elements to ensure an economic livelihood and basic components of human life severely compromised, Palestinians are seemingly reduced to bare life. Bio-techniques of caloric determination aim to shape the living individual as well as the political body. The Palestinian body is a designated target of a deprivation that will compel submission. Recourse to the language of "humanitarian essentials" is designed to ward off international criticism and keep Gazans just above malnutrition but not able to thrive. Thus the targeting of Gaza's last working flour mill, the attacks on educational and medical facilities, homes (58,000 destroyed), factories, electrical station, mosques, and so on aimed to destroy the infrastructure of the area.

(Im)mobility is also a technique of bio-power. Mobility, crucial to human life for hundreds of thousands of years, is a fundamental component of human social life. Indeed, taking the long historical view, sedentarization is a new phenomenon. Palestinian mobility is severely constrained, in part as punishment, but more to ensure unfettered mobility for Israelis, maintain an absence of contact, and push forward the colonization project.

The Goldstone Report noted that the destruction in Gaza was planned

[5] "The List of Goods allowed into Gaza Strip (April 2010)" May 3, 2010, www.alzaytouna.net/arabic/.

and deliberate. With their high casualties, Israeli military assaults on Gaza beg the question: are there civilian Palestinian bodies? In any form of existence, this body poses an inherent potential threat to the Zionists' project and ideology, for it is an ever-present reminder of their position as interlopers among the indigenous population. Like most colonists, Israelis fear the wrath of the native indigenous, a fear that underwrites their brutality.[6] Palestinians in general, whether in Palestine or outside, have only rarely been allowed to be framed as what Butler refers to as "grieveable bodies" (2004, 19-49). The silence over Palestinian deaths is a "refusal of discourse" that dehumanizes (Butler 2004, 36).

In this scenario, Palestinians are neither a political issue nor a humanitarian one. The skewed death toll, about 1400:10, reflects Israel's absence of risk-taking and infliction of mass destruction, through massive air power which pulverized Gaza's built environment and infra-structure and killed hundreds of civilians. Soldiers were to consider the area "devoid of civilians" (quoted in Finkelstein 2010, 60). To reassert deterrence and remind the region of their power of destruction, in other words, to terrorize the region, they "intentionally raised the level of destruction to a degree that was unpredictable, even insane"[7] (Finkelstein 2010, 79). The assault on Gaza was designed to impose maximum destruction and suffering, make a point to the region about deterrence, and reduce the Palestinians to quiescent subordination.

**Abandonment**

It is significant that during the 2008-09 Israeli assault on Gaza, there was no escape route, no way out. The concept of abandonment may be suited descriptively and analytically for Palestinians in Gaza (and to some extent the West Bank). The term raises a number of questions for future research: How is Palestinian abandonment constituted and what are its features? Who has abandoned them – the world community, the international system of law, the Arab states, Palestinians elsewhere,

[6] See Norman Finkelstein (2010) for an astute analysis of the invasion of Gaza and the rhetoric of destruction.

[7] Precedents and parallels with Israel's infliction of severe bodily punishment have precedents in, and analogies with the British assault on the Mau Mau movement in Kenya in the 1950s (see Elkins 2005).

or the colonial occupier? What is the relation between the margins and abandonment? Are punishment and abandonment constitutive components giving shape to a margin?

With the 2005 redeployment of Israeli troops, the evacuation of bases, and the dismantling of the colonies, Israel claims it is no longer an occupying power and thus bears no responsibility for Gaza's population (they never did recognize their responsibilities as occupiers under the Geneva Convention). With the outsourcing of control to the PA, Israel could absolve itself of responsibility while retaining near complete control of Gaza's borders and air and sea space. Redeployment, along with the blockade, marked a new phase in colonial rule and relations of dependency. Gazans were dependent on Israel for basic resources such as electricity, water, communications, for the import/export of goods, and for permits to enable travel, but Israel was no longer dependent on their labor. Relations of dependency have become so skewed that Gazans are essentially captives in a perilous state of calibrated abandonment. Most importantly, Palestinian attempts to develop structural or developmental alternatives are obstructed at every turn under the guise of preventing "terrorism." Agamben (1998, 109-10) writes insightfully of the paradoxical relations of abandonment:

> The relation of abandonment is so ambiguous that nothing could be harder than breaking from it. The ban is essentially the power of delivering something over to itself, which is to say, the power of maintaining itself in relation to something presupposed as nonrelational. What has been banned is delivered over to its own separateness and, at the same time, consigned to the mercy of the one who abandons it – at once excluded and included, removed and at the same time captured.

Yet there is an aspect of this relationship to which Agamben does not pay much attention, and that is the internal dynamic of the abandoned. The one banning and excluding lives in a continuous relation with the banned; the former must be vigilant and continuously deny the existence and the rights of the banned. Abandonment must be vigilantly monitored because the abandoned, "delivered" over to themselves, do resist their exclusion and dispossession. This is the internal dynamic

that Agamben, in his often unelaborated and ungrounded philosophy, is unable to appreciate. In other words, abandonment must be vigilantly monitored, patrolled, and maintained by force, because those in states of abandonment are not quiescent. In still other words, these margins have to be continuously produced. Thus those enacting abandoning must make use of the abandoned to justify violence against them. In the Palestinian case, abandonment has been mediated by the international community in the form of donor funds and humanitarian assistance. Thus abandonment is rarely total and the internal dynamic is never completely destroyed. Amid the suffering, destruction, and trauma, Gaza maintains a dynamic rhythm; political life has not given way to bare life even in the midst of severe forms of incarceration. The task is to identify the elements of this dynamic and its contour as they are played out in Gaza.

Both Deleuze (1995) and Packer (2008) have noted the emergence of new forms of control in late capitalism, identifying a shift from discipline to control societies. The siege of Gaza compels a turn to abandonment. In Gaza, control and discipline are accompanied by abandonment and calibrated attempts to obstruct internal structures and relations of development. What happens when neo-liberalism (or late capitalism) is combined with a form of colonialism that no longer requires the laboring native, whose resources are still being expropriated and whose mobility is conceptualized as a threat? I conceptualize discipline, control, and abandonment as triangulated rather than points on a spectrum of more of one and less of the other. Controls over Gazan spaces and the populations' mobility are draconian. Israel is a walled fortress, what A. Burg described as a "fortified haven" (2008, 16) accompanied by military power to contain any possible threats. The impulse to compare across the globe must be tempered by recognition of specificity and openness to exploring always mutating forms of domination.

Surplus populations, or disposable, discardable people, are of little use to those who once exploited them and now have little investment in either their presence or well-being. Contemporary zones of abandonment occur at the intersection of several forces. With disparities in access to power, resources, and citizenship, bolstered by practices and an ideology of privilege on the one hand, and acute

demonization on the other, abandonment crystallizes as a sort of collateral damage of the neo-liberal model of the market, and in this colonial case, the impulse to extreme forms of segregation and the dispossession of the indigenous population. The abandoned have often been forcibly confined to designated spaces (as lepers and the mentally ill once were). The existence of such zones is illustrative and, perhaps diagnostic of, the very social processes that puts people in them. Joao Biehl penned a stunning and poignant ethnography of Vita, a Brazilian site of abandonment, housing the mentally ill, drug addicts, and sufferers of AIDs, among others. One informant described Vita as a "'dump site of human beings'" and Biehl cast it as "the end-station… where people go when they are no longer considered people" (Biehl 2005, 1). Such sites are not unusual in the neoliberal world – shanty towns, squatter settlements, poverty belts, displacement and detention centers, and refugee camps.[8]

What are Israel's long-term plans for Gaza? Is Egypt to take administrative control as it did after the war of 1948-49? In the West Bank, the intent of closure over the long term is to propel emigration and to thin the population. Gazans are not easily allowed to leave, and Egypt, while complicit with the blockade, has little inclination to take in the displaced or to be saddled with administrative responsibility for Gaza. This leads to the question: what is the goal of prolonged immiseration? It may be that this particular space of abandonment is to be retained as a testing ground and a spot for conveying the message of deterrence. And indeed, Gaza, particularly the rocket issue, is always available to be mobilized as a threat to the Jewish state for both international and domestic consumption. Gaza has generated its own vocabulary. Israeli discourse on Gaza has some unique features. For example, the verb "to rain" is used consistently in the media in the US, to the point of predictability, to describe rocket fire from Gaza. Rain implies the fall of boundless, innumerable, and unlimited things, hardly relevant to these particular rockets.

The use of the term "abandoned" is freighted with meaning on multiple levels. Abandonment can be large scale – of aggregate populations or communities, or individuals as described by Biehl. Indeed, the historical

[8] Warehousing is a term common in immigration and refugee studies. Palestinians in refugee camps in neighboring Arab states can be said to be "warehoused."

record is chock full of such spaces: asylums, refugee camps, leprosy colonies, prisons, detention centers, safe havens, and concentration camps, to name a few, as well as practices such as banishment. Even streets can be spaces of abandonment. Scheper-Hughes writes about the murder, with impunity, of street children in Brazil who are considered little more than "rubbish people" in a sort of "symbolic apartheid as urban space becomes increasingly 'privitized'" (2004, 372). There are discernible lines of distinction among these spaces. Refugee camps and reservations occupy a middle ground between spaces of confinement and abandonment (the asylum or leprosy colonies, for example) and places where populations can be reconstituted. Refugee camps were initially conceptualized as transit spaces mediating between former citizenship, sentiments of belonging, and attachment to place and national reconstitution through resettlement or repatriation.

Spaces of abandonment are quite different – they are places where people will find minimal recognition and protection and are, by and large, left to their own devices. Like refugee camps, they are characterized by a high level of dependency on outside sources, in this case the international donor community which provides what Agier calls an international "'transfusion'" to keep alive the population (2008, 47). Donor aid has facilitated Israel's abandonment of its responsibilities under international law to a population under occupation and participates in the bio-segregation of human life that excludes some behind walls and fences and privileges the other whose voluntary segregation has few effects on the pace of daily life. While the humanitarian impulse is a necessity in an era of warfare that produces unprecedented levels of civilian displacement and casualties, it also now a part of the apparatus of war, picking up the human debris and enabling the war machine to proceed. In the case of refugees, or those excluded from the state, humanitarian activities tend to the excluded, keeping them spatially contained in camps or safe havens which enables exclusivist entities to keep dis-order and the excluded outside the bounds of sight and interaction. Agier aptly describes refugee camps as "on the margins of the world" (62). Palestinians under the regime of closure are neither largely bio-life nor political life, but an ambiguous category in between.

The potential expansiveness of the concept of abandonment

crystallized when I recalled the summer of 1982 and Israel's invasion of Lebanon when the refugee camps became what their residents described as "*mustabah*" (Peteet 1991). Most refugee camps are under UN/and or host state protection, however minimal, except Palestinian camps. In Lebanon, the PLO filled this void for well over a decade, providing services and protection. With their evacuation in the wake of the invasion, the camps were left exposed and highly vulnerable, and indeed an Israeli-sponsored massacre ensued. The term *mustabah* meant an absence of protection, vulnerability, and exposure to extreme violence with no recourse or accountability. Palestinians understood that it was not only the international community and host countries that had abandoned them but also their own leadership. That is why women could exclaim that the resistance "took their milk and blood" and left them vulnerable to being killed at will (Peteet 1995). West Bank villagers have referred to abandonment by the Palestinian leadership. And, indeed, the construction of the wall was minimally addressed by the PA. At village protests, local and de-centralized affairs by villagers whose lands and livelihoods were and are being threatened by the wall and settlements, the urban-based PA leadership have rarely made an appearance. By and large, villagers have been left to their own devices in confronting the wall and encroachments on their lands.

What are the warning signs of impending abandonment? What policies, actions, and ideologies of the other are precursors of abandonment? Is there a discernible set of socio-economic, political and ideological conditions that foster possible abandonment? Creeping closure, physical separation and its mechanism, walls and checkpoints, denial of employment and eventually a siege, along with a racialized and demonized conceptualization of the other, are the warning signs in Palestine. The increasing bureaucratic nature of the checkpoints, their gradual transformation into border-like terminals with the latest technology in biometrics, where physical distance between military-functionaries and Palestinians grows, suggests extreme forms of separation. Soldiers can avoid physical contact with Palestinians by speaking to them through plexiglass and taking or handing back identity cards through trays. This de-humanizing behavior is an early warning sign of abandonment and non-recognition of a fully human being. Paradoxically, as Israel attempts non-recognition of a Palestinian presence, it simultaneously engages in hyper-vigilant surveillance

and control over their movements. Where do signs of abandonment and a discourse of dehumanization ultimately lead? Narrative, claims de Certeau, precedes "social practices in order to open a field for them" (1984, 125, quoted in Caldeira 2000, 19 Caldeira says "talk of crime is not only expressive but productive" (2000, 19). What sort of narrative and discourse accompanies and legitimizes abandonment? The rhetoric of Israeli security, Palestinian threat, and security offer both a justification for Palestinian confinement and abandonment and simultaneously blames them for their own incarceration.

In these zones of marginality and abandonment, questions abound about human rights. Victims must conform to certain parameters of suffering established and validated by the international human rights community. Having consistently responded to subordination and dispossession with militancy, Palestinians do not conform to the parameters of "good" victims. That kind of agency cannot easily be squared with victimhood as it has been constituted in the West. In these marginal zones, outside the purview of law, the subject of human rights, the universal body, itself a problematic concept, fades from sight. No one is accountable for the violations of their human rights. Indeed, according to the dominant Israeli narrative, Palestinians are punished because of their own actions and thus cannot be victims of human rights abuses. Zionist colonialism lacks the notion of a civilizing mission that, however nefarious, assumes some sort of common humanity to which the native can, with the proper guidance and subsequent cultural elevation, aspire and join. Without a civilizing imperative and in the absence of a need for native labor, the Palestinian, with his militant response, falls outside the bounds of humanity.

The category of "humanity" poses the problem of other universal categories: who is excluded and how? Indeed, Israel's actions suggest a pre-modern conception of humanity's lines of inclusion and exclusion. Just as natives, slaves, and women were often excluded from an Enlightenment conception of humanity that marked rights and protection, Palestinians, relegated to pathological category analogous to the "savages" of earlier colonialisms, are thus excluded from the ostensibly universal category of humanity. Palestinians under Israeli rule find themselves on the margins of humanity and thus continue to be vulnerable targets.

Biehl writes:

> The concept I worked with most hesitantly was that of the *ex-human*. I use this term neither to posit an abstract condition nor to upset and generate a response coded in our now familiar language of human rights. One of the main problems in human rights discourse is the a priori assertion of an irreducible common humanity that should provide the basis of our interactions and our social organizations. In the face of that assertion, the term "ex-human" helped me to make relative the claims of a generic humanness and to think about the contingency and pervasiveness of the forms of human life I found in Vita. (Biehl 2007, 317)

His ethnography makes clear that there are "places in the present… where …rights no longer exist, where the living subjects of marginal institutions are constituted as something other, between life and death" (Biehl 2005, 317). Palestinian abandonment clearly differs from abandonment of the poor and the ill, or of the destitute in ghettoes and shanty towns. In the Palestinian enclaves, there are rich and poor, the well and unwell. What people in these zones have in common is that they are Palestinians and they inhabit spaces and own resources coveted by an occupying and expansionist entity. Most significantly, the prefix "ex-" points to the temporal and contingent dimension of the human.

The suppression of voice is integral to, and constitutive of, abandonment. Along with silencing, there are concerted attempts to prevent witnessing. Journalists' mobility is obstructed, press reports are censored, and when voice or images do slip out, they are roundly decried as exaggerations or justified by the all-encompassing and justifying "security concerns." In elaborating on Vita, Biehl writes that "one is faced with a human condition in which voice can no longer become action. No objective conditions exist for that to happen. The human being is left all by herself, knowing that no one will respond, that nothing will crack open the future" (2005, 11). Yet Palestinians have managed to retain a voice, however marginalized. What does ring true with Biehl's description is that little will "crack open the future." Legal cases air grievances and may rule on their behalf, the academy is full of articles and papers on Palestine, supporters come from around

the world to express solidarity, US presidents call for a Palestinian state and yet do not condemn, let alone impose sanctions as a result of, military assaults, blockades, and the expropriation of Palestinian land for colonies and their confinement in shrinking enclaved spaces.

Spaces of abandonment are indicative of socio-political systems where forms of human life are ranked and assigned rights and spaces according to location on a scale of inclusion, exclusion, and belonging, based on ethnicity, religion, and nationality. Some lives are highly authorized with a full complement of rights deriving from citizenship and ethnic or national identity, while others are excised to the margins of statelessness and now incarceration, producing a social order composed of the disenfranchised and the super-franchised. The abandoned may be located on the margins, but through their every excision to the margins, they remain a constitutive element of the center. Exclusions are built-in components of the core state. This argument works when we configure Gaza as on the margins of Israel, but what about its position on the margins of Palestine?

Is the immobilized and confined Gazan, bearer of no citizenship, akin to Agamben's *homo sacer* who can be killed at will and with impunity or with Biehl's abandoned people? How do these articulate with the margins? Gazans are outside the Israeli polity and on the geographical margins of a state that has assumed control over the population, with the power of life and death. Agamben argued (1998, 6) that analyses of power cannot separate bare life (zoe) from bio, or the political life. "*It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power"[Italics in the original].* Yet what are we to make of a state that has not officially extended sovereignty over a territory, but in every other way acts as a sovereign with almost total control over the bio-political life of the subject Palestinian? Palestinians are *homo sacer* – human beings who can be killed at will, with impunity; *homo sacer* is included in the political order by virtue of his exclusion. The Palestinian is part of the political order, but only through his exclusion and, as Agamben argues, the political system rests on this exclusion. "Bare life remains included in politics in the form of the exception, that is, something that is included solely through an exclusion (1998, 11). "He who has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather a*bandoned*

by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable" (28). Is Gaza, as a margin, a holding pen for *homo sacer* who has been abandoned, yet is still included in the politico-judicial system precisely by its very exclusion?

**Conclusion**

Closure, siege and enclavization mark the continuing fragmentation of Palestine and challenge the formulation of either center or margins. When Israel withdrew its military presence and colonists from Gaza, it continued the occupation and renounced any sort of obligation incumbent upon an occupying power. Israel is crafting spaces that are neither here nor there: they are not completely incorporated yet neither are they completely destroyed or marginalized. Gaza continues to be a site for a show of deterrence and also a readily available laboratory for the testing of new military technologies and strategies. In short, Gaza might be a harbinger of things to come elsewhere in the region.

The world briefly turned its attention to the Gaza siege when the Mavi Marmara, traveling with foreigners, was attacked in international waters and nine Turkish citizens were murdered.[9] Interestingly, the unprovoked assault on the margins might begin to widen the extremely thin crack in the US support for Israel (See also Beinart 2010).

Israel has crafted a regime of (im)mobility organized around the lack of circulation of selected people and the hyper-circulation of others. In this it is not alone, and I would argue for a comparative perspective on the Gaza siege, enclavization and abandonment, and for a re-thinking of the margins/center formulation. There is a global strategy of fortressing space to demarcate and protect privilege and the unequal distribution of rights. In Mexico, the wall is an attempt to regulate labor and drug trade and pacify US anti-immigration forces, often racially motivated.

[9] The Israeli assault on the flotilla ship Mavi Marmara conveyed a message about international support for Palestinian rights and the provisioning of humanitarian aid: those who engage in it are at risk of death or serious injury. In a sort of update to the murder of US activist Rachel Corrie, the attack at the beginning of the summer was undoubtedly also aimed intentionally at activists who travel to Palestine to show support for Palestinian rights and witness the violations of human rights law.

In Palestine, fences and walls accomplish the crucial task of preventing Palestinian circulation and enforce separation as punishment and to maintain homogenous, exclusivist space. In the process, they are engendering a body of surplus and abandoned people. The enclaves may be lines of an imagined and actual border between Israel and Palestine, laying out their future social and political relationship.

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## Maha Samman Mansour:

# Israeli Colonial Contraction: The cases of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip

### The case of the Sinai Peninsula

As a result of the Israeli-instigated 1967 war, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights came under Israeli control. The Israeli government began building settlements in these newly conquered areas to create new realities on ground. The Sinai Desert had its share of Israeli settlement construction, based on the 'Galili document', named after Minister without Portfolio Israel Galili, and adopted as part of Labour's programme in 1973. The document, which "affirmed the annexation of north-eastern Sinai," paved the way for the construction of several dozen settlements after Ariel Sharon, then head of the Southern Command of the Israeli army, expelled the region's Bedouin inhabitants.[1] They were expelled because the spaces they inhabited were seen to be the most strategic locations. Israel also invested in a network of roads and fortifications linking the Sinai with other parts of Israel. It aimed to attract settlers to a calm place with access to cheap labor, seeking to transform the Sinai desert into an Israeli populated area and to create a new border with Egypt. As the area offered various kinds of potential, the motive behind building settlements was not only ideological but also strategic and economic. Two major goals were important to Israel: the control of the Tiran Straits and the provision of a belt that would cut off the Gaza Strip from Egypt.[2] The economic goal was exploitation of the geographical strengths of the area. The territory was rich in resources, with oil fields in the western coastal area, and good land for agriculture. It also had a potential for attracting tourism, and a strategic geographical location facing the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea. New streets, buildings, and other economic, social, cultural, and touristic amenities were constructed, creating infrastructure well suited for implementing all the plans proposed for the area under Israeli sovereignty.

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1 Adam Keller, *Terrible Days: Social Divisions and Political Paradoxes in Israel* (Holland: 'Uitgeverij Cypres', 1987), 118.

2 Shmuel Sandler, *The State of Israel, the Land of Israel: The Statist and Ethnonational Dimension of Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 188.

Although the area was annexed by a Knesset decision in 1973, construction of Israeli settlements had already begun in 1968. The 18 settlements which were built, mostly on Bedouin lands, were Yamit, Talmei Yosef, Pri'el, Merkaz Avshalom, Netiv Ha'asara, Ogda, Sufa (Succot), Holit, Sadot, Nir Avraham, Dikla, Haruvit, Sinai, Yam, Kadesch Barnea, Neviot, Di-Zahav, and Ophira[3] (Fig. 1). Construction of the largest settlement, Yamit, started in May 1974; it was often described as a town, and 13 of the other settlements were located around it in the northeastern part of Sinai and south of Rafah town. Most of them were cooperative settlements, particularly *moshavim*. Most of the settlers there worked in agriculture, while others worked in fishing, in small services, and in tourism and beach resorts, in addition to military activities (Fig. 2).[4]

The extent of thinking and planning that preceded the approval of the building of the Yamit settlement complex was vast. A few individuals were key actors in the effort to populate the Sinai area with settlers. Moshe Dayan and Israel Galili from the Labour party were the architects of building Yamit. Dayan was the Defence Minister in the government of Golda Meir between the years of 1969 and 1974. Galili was Minister without Portfolio in both the Meir and Rabin governments. They viewed building settlements in Sinai as establishing an important line of defence that would strategically separate Gaza from Sinai. The building of Yamit developed after they took initiatives on several levels. To get approval from the government to build, Dayan requested a study in 1971 for developing a city in northeastern Sinai. He worked to convince the government that it was important to populate the area with Israeli settlers. The Galili document actually emerged from a cabinet meeting in which Dayan suggested the building of Yamit. The document, which basically aimed for the annexation of northeastern Sinai, was approved on September 4, 1973 and adopted as part of Labour's programme.[5]

Another method to pressure the government into approving the

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[3] Compiled from Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel, Volume II: From the Aftermath of the Yom Kippur War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 56, and Ann Lesch, "Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories: 1967-1977," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7 (1977): 26-47, 31-32.

[4] Fig. 2 is a table listing all Sinai settlements with basic information on each of them, 19.

[5] Liane Sue Rosenblatt, *Building Yamit: Relationships between Officials and Settler Representatives in Israel* (PhD diss., University of Rochester, 1984), 45.

construction was to find a settler group that would want to settle in Yamit. Dayan thought that finding a settler group would pressure the government, and improve the chances of getting Yamit approved. First, a Russian immigrant tried to gather some Russians and convince them of the idea.[6] Then Americans Dina and Frank Wrightman[7] worked on gathering Americans, and convincing them about the future of a settlement named Yamit. To implement his settlement policy Galili worked together with the representatives of Yamit on building projects in it, seeking, for example, to get them to agree with the Minister of Tourism on building tourism services there.[8] Thus, enormous efforts preceded approval of the building of Yamit and the other settlements even before they were inhabited. These settlements represented a security buffer first and foremost; the motivations or needs of potential settlers were not the primary factor for building settlements in Sinai. Likewise, as we shall see, the decision to evacuate the settlement was based on state aspirations, overriding settlers' opinions and desires.

*Colonial contraction from Sinai*

At first after the 1967 war, Israel regarded the possibility of peace with Egypt as distant. Normalization of relations with Egypt and the exchange of diplomatic missions seemed inconceivable at the time. While there were discussions on a unilateral withdrawal from Sinai and the Golan Heights, "the overwhelming majority of the Jewish public, and accordingly of its Knesset electees, ha[d] been determined since 1967 not to relinquish any territory except if forced to do so."[9] Israeli colonial contraction from Sinai took place only after the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1978 was signed. It came after Israel's power weakened as it became more dependent on the U.S. superpower. On this front, diplomacy replaced war after the 1973 war. There was international pressure on both Israel and Egypt through the UN and the U.S.[10] As part of the peace treaty between Egypt and

6 Ibid., 54.

7 Ibid., 55.

8 Ibid. For details on building a motel, 270-272.

9 Israel Shahak, "Israel will withdraw only under Pressure," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (July 1991): 20.

10 Sadat viewed it as in Egypt's interest, on the other hand, to shift Egypt's strategic alliance from the Soviet Union to the United States, as the Soviet Union had decreased its supply of weapons. Sadat's major concern was to normalize the relations with the powerful U.S. as a new link with the superpowers.

Israel, several restrictions were imposed on Egyptian sovereignty over the evacuated territory. These restrictions included details about the stationing of Egyptian forces in the whole area according to subdivided zones. United Nations forces were also to be stationed in some of these divided zones, and the use of airfields was limited to civilian purposes for all nations.[11] On the Israeli side, the process began with complete uncertainty[12] among actors within the state. Decisions were therefore made as an outcome of the dynamics of interaction on different levels between mainly the Israeli government, influential individuals, and the Israeli settlers who had inhabited the area.

The Israeli government wanted to neutralize the southern border and to develop diplomatic relations with Egypt. The party in power was the right-wing nationalistic Likud Party headed by Menachem Begin. As part of its strategic planning, it adopted a bilateral approach to agreements, in contrast with the multilateral agreements in the Arab region, aiming for relations which could guarantee Israel's existence in the region. With the peace agreement with Egypt, the largest Arab country bordering Israel, the Israeli government pressured Egypt to persuade other countries in the Arab world to normalize relations with it. It sliced potential relations with the Arab world into separate bilateral ones so that the various territories it had occupied would become separately negotiable. The other goal was to exclude from the bilateral negotiations any discussion on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. If peace was not reached with Egypt, Israel would face a continuous threat from all the surrounding Arab states. The government saw peace as a necessary condition for its external survival (with the Arab world) and internal survival (continued occupation of the West Bank). This is also illustrated in Israel's insistence on discussing security. During the negotiation process with Egypt, Israel based its discussion on the protection of its security, constantly raising this as the most important theme. The demilitarization of the larger part of Sinai, the persistence of settlements, the retention of two airports in Sinai, the installation of Israeli warning stations, and the limitations on the Egyptian forces,

[11] Walter Laqueur, *Confrontation: The Middle-East War and World Politics* (Abacus, London: Wildwood House, 1974), 614-615.

[12] The issue of uncertainty is discussed in Baruch Kimmerling, "Exchanging Territories for Peace: A Macrosociological Approach," *Journal of Applied and Behavioural Science* 23 (1): 13-33 (NTL Institute).

were all part of its security. It was therefore "a policy, a strategy, a means, and an end."[13]

The key individuals associated with demolishing Yamit were Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon from the Likud party, who played a leading role in the evacuation and demolition. They were military men, and often known to change their positions according to the political context. Before starting with the peace negotiations Begin met the representatives of the Sinai settlements and promised that if "signing a peace agreement depended upon returning the settlements, he would pack up his bags and return home."[14] But he went back on his word, deciding in the end to approve the return of the settlements. As a tactic he was ready to give up the Sinai area, in exchange for closing the discussion on the West Bank, which in his view was the important territory. Sharon was appointed as Defence Minister by Prime Minister Begin to implement the mission of evicting the settlers from Yamit. It was strange that Sharon accepted this mission, because he was the one who evacuated the Bedouins from the Sinai and had been committed to the development of the settlements there. "On April 25, 1982, Sharon proceeded to raze Yamit to the ground, as ruthlessly as he had destroyed the Bedouin dwellings which stood in the same place ten years before."[15] His strategy towards the settlers could be summarized by "wearing them down and then suddenly collapsing them in a surprise attack."[16] At the time it was evacuated, the settlers had used it for nearly seven years. It was the last to be demolished among the surrounding settlements. The settler population then was around 6,000: around 500 settler families in Yamit and another 600 families in the dozen or so farm villages that surrounded it.[17] The context and the evacuation itself were considered unprecedented by the Israeli public, causing much tension during the process. The settlers protested against the decision to evacuate them, but eventually gave in and accepted compensation.

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[13] Mohamed Abdel Ghani El-Gamasy, *The October War* (Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989), 379.

[14] Rosenblatt, *Building Yamit*, 13, cited in H. Wall, *Jerusalem Post*, October 17, 1987.

[15] Keller, *Terrible Days*, 143.

[16] "Sharon's Outpost Strategy." www.freeman.org/m_online/jul03/sones.htm, 6.

[17] "Sinai – Slow march from Yamit," *Economist*, January 9, 1982.

Sharon's acceptance of this task implies that the benefit from this action was huge. Begin and Sharon mutually benefited from their collaboration on the evacuation. For Begin, Sharon was the ideal person to implement the eviction as he was familiar with the settlements and settlers, and had the necessary skill. Sharon had puzzled the settlers; on the one hand, they trusted him and could not think he could ever betray them by supporting the evacuation; on the other, he urged them to try to benefit as much as possible from compensation. For Sharon it was rewarding to occupy the post of Defence Minister and to work closely with Prime Minister Begin. Sharon, in fact, seems to have positioned himself well enough with Begin to influence the objectives of the 1982 war in Lebanon which began a few weeks after the demolition.

The settlers were the third main actor in the process of evacuation. There were large protests by the settlers, and the issue dominated the attention of the Israeli public. "The Sinai settlements, after all, were evacuated and ploughed under ... even though the process brought Israel, according to several scholars, almost to the brink of civil war."[18] For the settlers, who were composed of the Russian group, the American group, and others from older Israeli settlements, the dismantling of Yamit was considered a disaster, as it could become a precedent that could be repeated in the West Bank. All their attempts to prevent the dismantling of Yamit failed. In the end they adopted a strategy to gain the maximum compensation possible by increasing their actions against the evacuation.[19] In their struggle against the government's decision, the settlers were represented by four groups;[20] each had a different strategy and attitude in dealing with the media and the Israeli government. The first were the farmers, who were the first to protest against the withdrawal, but gradually changed their strategy to opt for the maximum compensation possible and a good resettlement deal. The second group, organized out of frustration with the government

[18] Ian Black, "Middle East Extra: The children of the Six Day War," *The Guardian*, June 4, 1987.

[19] Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Collective Political Action and Media Strategy: The Case of Yamit," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 28 (1984): 363-381, 363. See also Anthony Oberschall, *The Establishment of Empirical Sociology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), and Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (UK: Longman Higher Education, 1978), 99.

[20] The classification of the settlers is compiled from Wolfsfeld, "Collective Political Action," 368-369, and "Sinai- Slow March from Yamit."

decision, considered it part of a business, and aimed specifically for the maximum compensation. The third group, consisting of three of the villages, was a quiet group that gave up peacefully and agreed to relocate in a new region within Israel. The fourth group was a coalition between religious and secular Israelis who rejected the whole idea of the evacuation. This ideologically motivated group was composed of members from outside the Yamit area, and was the largest group of the four. It was the group which protested the most and used violent tactics so that the media would depict a 'tragic trauma' that the government would be reluctant to repeat. But in the end, like the other groups, they accepted the decision. The Israeli government was able to go ahead with its decision to evacuate despite settler discontent. While there had been disagreement in the cabinet between the Israeli Ministers, "the agriculture minister, Mr. Simha Erlich, worked out an agreement to hand over compensation to the settlers worth more than $270m."[21]

*Purpose of demolition*

During the period of negotiations between the Egyptians and the Israelis, selling the settlements to the Egyptians was one item put on the table in which suggestions of prices were discussed.[22] Israel's final decision was to demolish the settlements and to deliver this as a *fait accompli* to Egypt. The reasons behind the demolition of the Yamit settlement complex could be grouped into three: strategic state security considerations, psychological considerations of the settlers, and the desire to gain international sympathy for the pains of peace. Overall, it seems that the first aspect of state policy was the decisive one. The Israeli government, and specifically Sharon, feared that the Egyptians would move to settle in areas near the borders. Israelis were confident they had made peace with the Egyptian government, but not that they had done so with ordinary Egyptians, whose presence in the Sinai area was therefore considered a threat. There was a fear that settlers could secretly go back to the settlements if they were not demolished so they wanted to get them eventually to accept the

[21] "Sinai - Slow march from Yamit."

[22] Israel asked for $125 million for the installations; Egypt agreed to pay only $57 million. However, it was expected that Egypt would finally compromise on $80-90 million. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *Israel and the Peace Process 1977-1982: In search of Legitimacy for Peace* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 320, originally cited from *Maariv*, April 30, 1982.

move.[23] A scorched earth approach was also adopted[24], that is, not toleave anything for the Egyptians. Another motive for this approach was to prevent settlers from seeing the "painful" scene of Egyptians residing in their previous homes. Israel also sought to portray itself as making a traumatic sacrifice to achieve peace.[25]

The Egyptian side, represented by Sadat, aimed at shifting its strategic alliance from the Soviet Union to the United States, as the Soviet Union decreased its supply of weapons. Sadat's major concern was to normalize relations with the U.S. superpower. By signing the peace treaty with Israel, Egypt had achieved a restricted sovereignty. It could not achieve the power to fully control the territory of Sinai. Strategically, restrictions imposed by the peace treaty limited Egyptian plans for the Sinai. Military activity was restricted and thus the Egyptian military could not fully control the area, as Egypt bound by the Camp David agreement to keep its forces within a range of 50 kilometers east of the Gulf of Suez. This in turn affected, and still affects, Egyptian sovereignty over the area. However, the territorial spaces could be used for other purposes; the Sharm el-Sheikh area, for example, became an important and thriving tourist site. Each evacuated territory had a different post-evacuation function, but these functions were mostly of a public, not a private, character. "Neviot, a small cooperative agricultural settlement of the Moshav type, has become home to Egyptian police personnel and their families. The evacuated Moshav settlement and desert retreat of Di Zahav provided the infrastructure for the expansion of the tourist Bedouin village of Dahab."[26]

The situation in Egypt following the Israeli-colonial contraction can be understood as neo-colonial in character because the area is subject to regulation by a peace treaty rather than fully under Egyptian sovereignty. Years after the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, its neo-colonial content clearly appears in the position of Egypt on the borders with Gaza after the developments in Gaza after the Disengagement Plan. Egypt's lack of ability to control the borders, and

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[23] Harold H. Saunders, *The Other Walls: The Arab-Israeli Peace Process in a Global Perspective* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University, 2003), 22-23.

[24] "Israel sees a loophole in Taba beach arbitration." *The Times*, September 30, 1988.

[25] There had been enormous coverage of the evacuation of Yamit and its destruction by the Israeli television.

[26] Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, (London and New York: Verso, 2007), 233.

the interference from Israel and the U.S. are obvious. The closure of the Rafah Gate by the Egyptian government and the destruction of the Rafah/Egypt and Rafah/Gaza tunnels, and recently the construction of the underground wall to destroy any access to the tunnels, all show the pressure on Egypt to implement Israeli and American objectives. This all shows the inability of Egypt to fully control its borders and territory.

The process of peacemaking and settlement evacuation in the Sinai Peninsula had a direct impact on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Gradually, both the West Bank and Gaza Strip were excluded from the discussion. It turned out that the 'precedent' of Yamit had a negative impact on both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This is clear in the settlement construction that followed. On September 5, 1982, a ministerial committee approved the establishment of five new settlements in the West Bank and one settlement in the Gaza Strip for the Yamit evacuees. The cabinet further decided to continue a vigorous program of Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories – the first move in what became a clear pattern of action following every new peace initiative.[27]

The Gush Emunim settler group took advantage of the story of Yamit to implement their plan to set up new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They felt that the Israeli government's emphasis on peace over settlements threatened their settlement programs in the West Bank. Their idea was to implement a broad scheme of annexation of territories and settlement building as a way of incorporating these lands into Israel. They aimed to construct settlements in strategic locations which would form an important and natural continuity with Israel. These construction activities were also accompanied by educating settlers about the ideological importance of what they call *Judea* and *Samaria* to the idea of *historic Israel*. The trauma image the media had created during the eviction of the settlers and the demolition of the settlements carried a clear message that this should not happen again. "Having seen that the IDF eviction of 17 Yamit *yishuvim* 'traumatized the nation,' steps had to be taken to create additional capabilities for possible future major evictions without having the IDF brutalize Israelis on television."[28]

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[27] Ziva Flamhaft, *Israel on the Road to Peace: Accepting the Unacceptable* (Oxford, UK: Westview Press, 1996), 38.

[28] "Sharon's Outpost Strategy," 3.

The Israeli government's rational political decision to give up the Sinai is quite distinct from what happened in the other territories occupied in 1967: a drive for settlement construction after the Camp David Accords, powered by the settlers' ideological motives. The Sinai was a territory which could be given up, and was eventually given up, to achieve a peace deal; in contrast, the other territories occupied in 1967 were gradually seen as being incorporated into the Israeli 'motherland' as part of the Israeli state-building project. The prospect of evicting settlers from the West Bank and Gaza was and is seen to be more complicated because the settlers are more aware and more politically organized, and could be mobilized against eviction proposals or against eviction itself. Also, in some areas, a generation of settlers has been born and raised in these settlements. The Gush Emunim settler movement founded many of the settlements in the West Bank, claiming it as part of historic Israel. In contrast, the Yamit settlers were driven by the search for a better quality of life as much as by ideological motives.

In assessing the benefits and losses of a peace treaty that included territorial evacuation, the Israelis made a decision based on the long-term interests, aims, and benefits of the Israeli government and state as a whole. General Dan Shomron (then the outgoing Israeli chief of staff) explained this: "Certainly, territory is important in wartime, he said. But if there is peace, territory is less important, and demilitarisation, arms control and advance warning systems are higher on the list."[29]

The Israeli government and the group of individuals who gave up the settlements and demolished them were from the Israeli right wing, showing that political concerns had superseded ideological ones. The evacuation demonstrated that Israel would do anything, even oppose its people – even Israeli settlers – if the plans of those settlers posed a security threat to the state. Yamit was expendable when a profound strategic advantage was to be gained by abandoning it, one that made it possible to achieve other strategic objectives.

One can conclude that, at one time, the survival and security of a state of Israel in the region – on any size territory – was more important than control over a specific piece of territory, even if that piece was larger

[29] John Bulloch, "US 'Land for Peace' deal splits Israel," *The Independent*, March 24, 1991.

than the total area of 1948 Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights combined. But later on, was Israel still able voluntarily to evacuate territory in order to achieve other goals? After Yamit, prospects of any other settlement evacuation had seemed for a long time to be diminishing; and yet in Gaza in 2005, clearly the answer was yes.

*The case of the Gaza Strip*

The case of colonial contraction from the Gaza Strip affects the core of the Israeli presence on the Palestinian land. The evacuation and demolition of the Israeli settlements in Gaza was a result of the implementation of Sharon's unilateral Disengagement Plan. The Israeli government realized the importance of evacuating Gaza and demolishing the settlements, with the involvement and backing of the Israeli High Court. The fact that this was a unilateral move, without a peace process from which anything appeared likely to be gained, sets a precedent regarding the future of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. This is because it reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the Israeli colonial state. For more than thirty years after 1967, all Israeli governments, supported by Zionist organizations worldwide, worked extensively to build and develop settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. However, in 2004-2005 the right-wing government changed this policy in Gaza, and proceeded to evacuate and demolish the settlements. This created, went against the grain of the Zionist ideological motive within Israeli society and made many question the path taken.

The Gaza Strip has an area of 365 km², 45 km long and 5-12 km in width. It is divided into five main districts: Jabalya, Gaza, Deir Al-Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah. The building of settlements in the Gaza Strip started in 1970 and continued till 2001. By 2004, there were 21 Israeli settlements with a population of 8,692 settlers. The biggest settlement was Neve Dekalim, built in 1983 and located with most of the other settlements in the area of Khan Younis. The second biggest settlement, Nisanit, was established a year later in 1984, and was located in the northern Gaza Strip in the district of Jabalya. Table 1 lists settlements in the Gaza Strip as of the end of 2004.

Table 1: Gaza Settlements Population

| | Settlement | Year Established | Population (end of 2004) | | Settlement | Year Established | Population (end of 2004) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kfar Darom | 1970 | 491 | 12 | Nisanit | 1984 | 1,064 |
| 2 | Netzarim | 1972 | 496 | 13 | Rafiah Yam | 1984 | 143 |
| 3 | Morag | 1972 | 221 | 14 | Katif | 1985 | 404 |
| 4 | Netzar Hazani | 1973 | 461 | 15 | Bedolah | 1986 | 219 |
| 5 | Ganei Tal | 1979 | 400 | 16 | Pe'at Sade | 1989 | 104 |
| 6 | Atzmona | 1979/82 | 646 | 17 | Dugit | 1990 | 79 |
| 7 | Gadid | 1982 | 351 | 18 | Tel Katifa | 1992 | 60 |
| 8 | Gan Or | 1983 | 351 | 19 | Shirat Hayam | 2000 | 40 |
| 9 | Kfar Yam | 1983 | 10 | 20 | Slav | 2001 | 50 |
| 10 | Neve Dekalim | 1983 | 2,671 | 21 | Kerem Atzmona | 2001 | 24 |
| 11 | Elei Sinai | 1983 | 407 | | **Total** | | **8,692** |

Source: Peace Now, www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peaceasp?pi= 62& docid=1369, mostly compiled from Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics for December 31, 2004. See The Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel) website, www1.cbs.gov.il.

The Israeli settlements built in Gaza were a clear example of the Israeli colonial spirit. There was a clear dissimilarity between the Palestinian community of Gaza and the Israeli settlers residing there. The relationship between Palestinians and settlers, and between

Palestinian built-up areas and Israeli settlements, was characterized by domination and separation. There was clear political, social, economic, and territorial control by Israeli settlers. Before evacuation, the settlers formed less than 1% of the population of Gaza with a population density of 665 settlers per km², yet occupied one third of the land in the Strip, and enjoyed the best of conditions and the best quality facilities. These included wide security strips of land for roads for settler use. The confiscated lands and checkpoints, which narrowed and reduced land available to Palestinians, fragmented the Gaza Strip and isolated main Palestinian population centres from each other. In contrast, the Palestinians were about 1.5 million, with more than 99% living in the worst of conditions, with the highest population density in the world;[30] and more than two thirds were refugees. The following is a list of the UNRWA registered refugees in camps in Gaza:

Table 2: Distribution of UNRWA registered refugees in Gaza.

| Refugee Camp | Population |
|---|---|
| Jabalia (1948/1949) | 192,258 |
| Rimal | 170,118 |
| Zeitun | 135,281 |
| Nuseirat | 123,838 |
| Deir El-Balah | 88,048 |
| Khan Younis | 179,199 |
| Rafah | 170,842 |
| **Total** | **1,059,584** |

SOURCE: UNRWA, "Total registered refugees per country and Area," accessed 30 June, 2008, www.unrwa.org/userfiles/rr_countryandarea.pdf.

Thus more than one million of the 1.5 million people are refugees. Since 1967, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank have been under Israeli military rule, with an Israeli military commander empowered to make and renew military rules. The continual issuance of new military laws

[30] UNRWA Gaza, http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=64.

gave rise to 1,000 military orders which damaged the economic and social structure of the daily life of the Palestinian people of Gaza.[31] The more than 70% of the population of Gaza under 25 years old were born into a region already under colonial domination, and they have seen the suffering their families and society have faced. This has affected them psychologically, so that Gaza has become a "society devoid of childhood".[32] With Palestinians' concentration on trying to overcome the consequences of their damaged everyday life, little possibility remained to strengthen Palestinian planning to improve economic and social conditions.

Furthermore, successive political events led to further deterioration in Palestinian daily life in Gaza. During the first Intifada in 1987, despite the social cohesiveness of the society which strengthened Palestinian unity and visions of the future, the economic situation started to deteriorate as trade with Israel fell and Gazan workers became increasingly unable to work inside Israel.[33] After the Oslo Accords, Israel held in its hands complete control of all Gaza entry-gates to the outside world. This made Gaza a big prison with little movement by Israeli exit permits. Colonial control of the Gaza Strip became tighter, and its spaces became more enclosed and divided by fences and military paths. In the Taba negotiations of 1993, the Israeli proposal for the Gaza Strip was to have the settlements grouped into three blocks under full Israeli control. This included all lands and bypass roads between the settlements, altogether forming one third of the Gaza Strip.[34] Israel implemented this as facts on the ground, and officially legalised it with the signing of the Oslo II agreement. By the time of the Camp David negotiations in 2000, the Israeli settlements in the Gaza

[31] Sara Roy, "Black Milk: The Desperate Lives of Women in the Gaza Strip." In *Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestine-Israeli Conflict* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 54-60, 55-56. Originally published in *The Women's Review of Books* (Special Summer Issue on "Writing Out of Crises") (July 1993): 13-15.

[32] Sara Roy, "Gaza: New Dynamics of Civic Disintegration," in *Failing Peace,* 61-75, 71. Originally published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22 (4) (Summer 1993): 20-31.

[33] Sara Roy, "The Political Economy of Despair: Changing Political and Economic Realities in the Gaza Strip," in *Failing Peace,* 40-53, 43-46. Originally published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20 (3) (Spring 1991): 58-69.

[34] Tanya Reinhart, *The Road Map To Nowhere: Israel/Palestine since 2003* (UK: Verso, 2006), 50. See also Sarah Roy, "Why Peace Failed: An Oslo Autopsy" in *Failing Peace*, 233-249, 238-239. Originally published in *Current History* (January 2002): 8-16.

Strip had expanded, and settler and military existence and control had increased. No agreement was reached at Camp David to halt this trend. Surveillance, segregation, and boundary construction between Palestinian areas increased the cantonization of Palestinian spaces and thus intensified the deterioration of the Palestinian ability to live in appropriate conditions. This diminished any quality of the occupation of space, and the economic and social status declined. Thus it became more and more difficult for Palestinians to control their own spaces.

The result was that Palestinian resistance intensified, especially in the second intifada, which started two months after the failure of the Camp David negotiations in July 2000. The Israeli spatial control of Palestinian areas enabled them to further block areas and roads, dividing them into smaller units that were surrounded by tanks or easily bombarded from the air. Israeli forces also restricted or cut off the supply of food, electricity, and fuel.[35] Palestinians have suffered loss of life (with leaders often especially targeted), injury, and imprisonment, as well as damage to infrastructure and buildings, and destruction of agriculture. The Palestinian resistance, on the other hand, has fired locally made rockets onto the surrounding Israeli populated areas. The continuation of rocket-firing provoked Israel to increase collective punishment by killing more Palestinians and demolishing more houses. Between 2000 and 2005, Israel increased the territory around the settlements in the Gaza Strip and their security zones. By the end of 2004, 1,710 Palestinian houses had been razed, and another 1,474 partially demolished. Consequently, 18,000 Palestinians became homeless, most of them already refugees and thus homeless for a second time.[36] By 2005, the well-being of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip was destroyed as they have suffered from severe urban, social, and economic de-development.[37]

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[35] Reinhart, *Road Map*, 53.

[36] Reinhart, *Road Map*, 54. See also Amnesty International, *House Demolition and Destruction of Land and Property*. Al index: MDE 15/033/2004, 2004.

[37] The concept of de-development is developed by Sara Roy. In her book, *The Gaza Strip: the Political Economy of De-development* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 4, de-development is … "the deliberate, systematic deconstruction of an indigenous economy by a dominant power. It is qualitatively different from underdevelopment, which by contrast allows for some form, albeit distorted, of economic development. De-development is an economic policy designed to ensure that there will be no economic base, even one that is malformed, to support an independent indigenous existence."

*The Disengagement Plan*

Because conditions became less favourable for Israelis within the Gaza Strip with the rise of the Palestinian resistance in Gaza and the high costs of protecting the settlers, the Israeli state increasingly turned to strategic political planning rather than relying simply on Zionist ideological motivation. A new strategic plan was announced in December 2003. In his speech, Sharon, then prime minister, proposed his own unilateral view of the future of the "peace process". Known for his military mentality, he was the architect and implementer of the new strategy, the Disengagement Plan. He viewed this step as a crucial one for Israel. The plan envisioned removing settler families from the Gaza Strip, and then withdrawing from the whole area. The decision to withdraw unilaterally came about because the settlements in Gaza had become a financial burden on the Israeli Government, especially because of the high cost of providing security to the settlers, but also because the settlements had not fulfilled the goals for which they were built. The demography of the Palestinian people in Gaza was also perceived as a threat since the settlers could not compete with the increasing density of the Palestinian population. The Unilateral Plan opted for a situation that not only was better politically, economically, and demographically, but also fulfilled other goals, decreasing the potential for violence, and relocating settlers to safer places since Palestinian resistance and the firing of rockets on settlements could not be stopped. Apparently Israel also needed to close the Southern Front so that it could focus on preparing for war on the Northern Front (the Lebanon war of 2006). "According to Sharon, the disengagement was meant to decrease the friction between the Palestinian population and the settlers and army personnel who were stationed in the area to protect the settlers."[38] Sharon held that there was no Palestinian partner with whom Israel could negotiate. Thus initiating the withdrawal unilaterally led to the freezing of the peace process. This had two implications. First, there was no declaration from any side, nor any recognition that the Israeli occupation of Gaza had ceased. In fact, the boundaries and border checkpoints, as well as all land, sea and air passages in and out of the Gaza Strip remained, and still remain, under Israeli control. As a result, Gaza became like a big prison. Second, Israel

[38] Yariv Tsfat and Jonathan Cohen, "The Influence of Presumed Media Influence on Democratic Legitimacy: The Case of Gaza Settlers," *Communication Research* 32 (2005): 794-821, 796.

could at any time go back into Gaza. There was no clear commitment that the land in Gaza was now definitively Palestinian; this meant that the Israelis still regarded the land as part of Israel, and the Palestinians as merely a group of people living on it.

The plan dealt with Palestinian areas in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank separately, meaning that different strategic policies were adopted for each area. While the plan aimed at gaining international acceptance and aid by directing attention towards evacuation of settlements in Gaza, it also aimed at gaining time, and at diverting the attention of the international community from building the wall, as well as strengthening the settler presence in the West Bank and Jerusalem by building more settlements.

Although the Disengagement Plan gave Sharon international acceptance and aid, internally he faced considerable criticism from within the Likud party. His critics viewed the Plan as contradicting the party line, and party members opposed it fiercely. To evacuate settlements, and especially in the absence of any peace process, was seen as setting a precedent, and many in the Likud Party regarded it as illegitimate. Many even accused him of making up the whole idea with another purpose in mind. "His opponents argued that the plan was a ploy to divert public attention from the criminal investigations in which he was embroiled."[39] He was therefore pressured by senior Likud politicians and settlers to take the plan to a referendum among 193,000 registered Likud Party members.[40] In May 2004, the majority of Likud members rejected it. Nevertheless, Sharon went on to present the plan to the Government for approval. Before the vote, he fired two ministers in order to secure acceptance for the plan. In June 2004 the plan was approved by the Knesset and was put into action in spite of its rejection by the Likud party, the public, and the settlers.[41]

Objections to the Disengagement Plan did not stop after Knesset ratification; it was challenged before the Supreme Court, and a legal battle followed. The Supreme Court had an active part in the

[39] Suzie Navot, "The Israeli Withdrawal from Gaza – a Constitutional Perspective," *European Public Law* 12 (1) (2006): 17-33, 17.

[40] Tsfat and Cohen, "Presumed Media Influence," 796.

[41] The Knesset ratified the plan in a vote by a majority of 67 against 45, with 7 abstentions.

process because every decision related to the Disengagement Plan was petitioned. Despite the political character of the plan, the High Court stood behind it and defended all its stages: "it confirmed and legitimized all of the decisions, and was a full and active partner to the Disengagement Plan, defending both its legality and its constitutionality at all stages."[42] Three major aspects were tackled by the Court. The first concerned the contradiction between the settlement evacuation and the Basic Guidelines of the Government. This was overcome by giving the Prime Minister the authority to make decisions according to the changing needs of state. It was up to Prime Minister Sharon to decide.

President Barak noted that despite the importance of the Guidelines, they do not bind the Prime Minister. Changing realities may compel changes in the goals and targets. 'Subordinating the Prime Minister's discretion to the Guidelines means neutralizing his ability to map out the Government's course in its functioning as the executive branch of the State, and in accordance with its changing needs.'[43]

The second aspect concerned the legal status of the lands to be evacuated. This was dealt with by considering the status of the lands of the whole of Gaza and the West Bank. These lands, according to the Supreme Court, had a legal status as lands held under a 'belligerent occupation', and that meant they were not subject to the rules of the State of Israel but rather to the rules of public international law. This gave the Disengagement Plan the legality to be accepted and executed. This legal point had never before been acknowledged by the Israeli state, for example with respect to building settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Settlements under international law are a violation of Fourth Geneva Convention and UN Resolutions. The authority of international law was brought to the scene only to legalise Israel's strategic plans. The Court thus took the position of legalising the Israeli state's politically motivated strategic planning despite its contradiction with Israeli ideological motivation.

The third aspect the Court considered was violation of what were perceived to be the "evacuees' basic rights". The Supreme Court ruled that although the Disengagement Plan "did violate" the "basic human

[42] Navot, "Israeli Withdrawal," 19.

[43] Ibid., 20.

rights" of the evacuees, this should not prevent execution of the plan. The logic was that since the land was considered under "belligerent occupation", the Israeli evacuees would receive compensation subject to the Evacuation-Compensation Law.[44] While the plan considered the evacuees' basic rights, there was no recognition at all of the rights of the indigenous population, who since 1967 had suffered losses in all aspects of their lives due to the existence of the settlements, the military occupation, and their ramifications in the years since 1967.

In the end, the Court decided that it was in the "Greater Good" that they approve the plan. The influence of the High Court decision was great, as it provided "broad Constitutional protection"[45] for the Disengagement Plan; in fact, it has been said that, "[t]he Disengagement Plan could not have been executed without the legal backing of the Supreme Court."[46] In this sense it also set a precedent for possible future such evacuations from territories it considered under "belligerent occupation" such as the West Bank and the Golan Heights. On this basis the High Court legitimized the Disengagement Plan in Israeli law. Yet this also revealed a contradictory role of the High Court, in that it judged that government policy overrides what it perceives as "human rights" of Israelis according to Israeli law, in land under "belligerent occupation". This role of the court fits within the colonial paradigm, since the human rights of the indigenous population in these areas are excluded altogether from the High Court's legal considerations.

The evacuation process in itself was much easier and took much less time than expected, and was completed in September 2005. All the settlements of the Gaza Strip, including 1200 houses, were evacuated and demolished. About 50-55,000 soldiers were involved in the evacuation process, arranged in six circles inside and outside Gaza. There was an unarmed group of soldiers who implemented the evacuation, a ring of armed soldiers, and outer circles surrounding the boundaries to deal with any emergency, especially settlers coming from outside

[44] Ibid., 22-24: "Summing up, the ruling affirms the claim that the Evacuation-Compensation Law violates the right to dignity and the right to property of the Israelis slated for evacuation. Nonetheless, against the background of the temporary nature of belligerent occupation and provided that the statutorily guaranteed compensation is granted (subject to certain changes introduced by the High Court) this violation of rights is constitutional."

[45] Ibid., 33.

[46] Ibid., 32.

Gaza to demonstrate against the evacuation.[47] The arrangements were therefore well planned and the evacuation process cost $1.7 billion.[48] The scenes of evacuating the settlers were covered by the media and were portrayed as traumatic in order to send a message internationally that Israel was paying a high price by evacuating the settlements.

When talk of evacuation from Gaza first began, as in the case of Sinai, the settlers were confident that it could never be implemented, and viewed it as a very unrealistic idea. When the settlers realized that the evacuation had become a reality, they were in a state of denial; they were pressured to choose how to react, and were pulled between their personal interest in accepting relocation and receiving compensation on the one hand, and their ideological beliefs on the other. The settlers all had to decide what was more important: acting in the group interest or in their own individual interest, dealing with the whole problem collectively or individually. The settlers were very confused, swinging between following their ideological beliefs, denying the whole process, considering the compensation they ought to get and the place to which they would be relocated, and wondering how to organize their protests. The contradiction was how to be loyal to the state, and at the same time to disregard what they had grown up with. In short, the settlers found themselves in the midst of a political problem, an ideological problem, and a psychological problem.

The quick evacuation process implied that although the settlers tried to oppose the evacuation, they ended up looking for a better quality of life. In a way, they knew that there was no way to stay in these areas forever. They could foresee the outcome of their strange existence in these areas, in light of the higher growth rate of the Palestinian population and the inability of their government to provide them with security. There was no other choice but to cooperate with disengagement.

The settlers were subject to the Compensation Law approved by the Knesset in February 2005. It was said that the compensation would amount to about $665 million: $1100 per square meter of built-up land,

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[47] *Al-Quds Daily Newspaper* August 14, 2005 (in Arabic).

[48] Tawfiq Al-Madini, *Al-Quds Daily newspaper*, August 31, 2005 (in Arabic). (The number mentioned is according to Government of Israel source).

and $700 per square meter of unbuilt land.[49] It was said that "Families who live[d] for more than 25 years [in Gaza] would get $(300,000-400,000) and temporary housing and other facilities until they decide where to live."[50] But until the day of the evacuation, there were no final plans or schedules for relocation and compensation. Two years later,

> ... there have been many heartbreaking reports about the evacuees' difficulties. The Gush Katif Committee claimed 49 percent of them are unemployed (the government's employment service, by contrast, reported 25 percent); that 500 families are experiencing a difficult economic situation; that there were ten cases of eating disorders and 12 cases of attempted or contemplated suicide...[51]

Among the evacuees, by two years after the evacuation, "no single family ha[d] moved into the permanent housing being prepared by the state."[52] The evacuees were therefore discontented and faced many difficulties.

*The aftermath of the Disengagement Plan*

As far as Sharon was concerned, the Disengagement Plan was a success because it enabled Israel to continue constructing settlements and building the wall in the West Bank and Jerusalem, and physically integrating these areas with Israel. The remaining lands of the West Bank were being further cantonized, in a way similar to Gaza before the Disengagement Plan. The plan, however, was not perceived in the same way by other Israeli officials, people, or settlers. This is because the plan had to confront the Zionist ideology and undo 30 years of Israeli Zionist practice in the Gaza Strip. It had to work against the will and beliefs of the settlers. The state could not sustain the situation it had spent decades working to achieve. It had to evacuate areas outside the Green Line and take nothing in return, and with no recognition that the occupation in Gaza had ended.[53] The plan and

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[49] *Al-Quds Daily Newspaper* August 13, 2005 (in Arabic), 15, 17.

[50] David Harris and Philips Fredson, "Painful separation, but…" *Al-Quds Daily Newspaper* August 14, 2005 (in Arabic).

[51] Gideon Levy, "Evacuation pampering," *Haaretz*, February 10, 2007.

[52] Hadar Horesh, "Gov't agency: Cost of disengaging from Gaza has climbed to NIS 20b." *Haaretz*, August 8, 2007.

[53] Avi Shavit, "A Matter of Opinion – Was the Disengagement a success?" *Haaretz magazine*

its implementation affected internal Israeli politics. Supporters of the Likud Party were divided, and the result was that a new party, Kadima, was formed involving supporters for Sharon from the Likud and other parties. In addition, the plan was a financial burden, as the total cost of the disengagement was much higher than expected.[54] Above all, violence continued to evolve after disengagement, the 'headache' of Gaza still remained, and rockets continued to be fired on Israeli areas even after the evacuation. Sharon, however, did not see the longer term consequences of the plan, as his political life ended after he had a stroke in 2006 and went into a coma, which he has been in ever since.

This is another case that shows that political/strategic factors superseded ideological considerations with regard to dealing with the colonized space. It also shows that, had the Zionist project been exclusively an ideological one, based on ideological attachment to the land, then it would have found other means to maintain hold of the Gaza Strip. But the fact that the withdrawal was founded on the changing political/strategic needs of the state shows that the main focus is on control rather than ideology.

The decolonization of the land in the Gaza Strip illustrates what can happen when colonial control of a territory becomes such a burden that it is more convenient to end this form of territorial control rather than face the downfall of the whole colonial project on that territory. From the Palestinian side, the disengagement was an Israeli need, and then to a certain extent a Palestinian attainment. The settlements in Gaza were evacuated and demolished; thus, the idea of the settlements being a *fait accomplit* or an immovable reality on the ground was no longer valid. The case of Gaza showed that things could be changed, even by the people who made these realities in the first place. The disengagement affected surrounding areas, as many Israelis began to leave settlements and towns adjacent to the Gaza Strip such as Sderot and Ashkelon, escaping the rockets being fired on these populated Israeli areas.

The advocates of the disengagement claimed it would improve our security situation. It is true that from the narrow military aspect the

July 7, 2006 (Friday: 8-13), 9.

[54] Horesh, "Cost of disengaging". At the beginning of 2007, the treasury estimated that the total cost of the disengagement would be NIS 7 billion, including compensation for business and infrastructure. However, it was said that the total cost will exceed NIS 12 billion.

present deployment is more convenient for the IDF, but our overall security situation has worsened in the wake of the disengagement. There is no saving in manpower or in money, as was promised. There is no calm and no stability. There is a serious blow to the civilian infrastructure of Sderot and Ashkelon. There is a process of population deserting those areas. [55]

The inability of the State of Israel to provide security for its citizens, or to control the resistance movement in Gaza, led to military re-occupation of several areas within the Gaza Strip after the evacuation. Two years later Israel decided to declare the Gaza Strip "hostile territory" in an attempt to absolve itself from the responsibility for the occupied population. This was an attempt to legitimize collective punishment of the civilian population of Gaza, as the Israeli cabinet decided to increase sanctions on the Gaza Strip. These sanctions included limiting the supply of fuel and electricity from Israel to Gaza, the transfer of goods through the crossings, and the movement of people to and from the Strip. The Israelis also stopped visits to prisoners, and increased monitoring of funds.[56]

The unilateral Disengagement Plan was a phase of an ongoing colonial project. There is no Israeli commitment to resolve the conflict; although the evacuation took place the colonial-military occupation is still there. The space on the ground has been evacuated, but Palestinian sovereignty has not been achieved. The form of control has changed from living on Gaza's land to control over Gazan territory. The Israeli contraction from Gaza was followed by a strict embargo on all basic human essentials, which severely affected the lives of the people of Gaza. Israel has control over boundaries, over transfer of goods, over sea and water, over the airspace, and over all access to the essentials of life. In the first year after the disengagement, "Gaza was cut off from the outside world 42% of the time."[57] Israel still holds military control over the Gaza Strip and can enter and leave whenever it wants.

The reasons for demolishing the Gaza settlements were similar to those behind the demolition of the settlements of Yamit. They can also

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[55] Shavit, "A Matter of Opinion," 1.

[56] Barak David, Shlomo Shamir, and Avi Issacharoff, "Cabinet declares Gaza 'hostile territory'," *Haaretz* September 20, 2007.

[57] Alina Korn, "The Ghettoization of the Palestinians," in *Thinking Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin (London, UK: Zed Books, 2008), 116-130, 117.

be grouped into three: (a)strategic state security considerations, (b) gaining international sympathy by emphasizing the 'trauma and pain' that Israeli settlers 'suffered' to advance the cause of peace,[58] and (c) the government's desire to limit the psychological effect on the settlers. The settlers eventually had to accept the evacuation. They could not think of secretly going back, and could not bear to see Palestinians residing in their previous homes. The lands of the evacuated settlements are located in different parts of Gaza and are different kinds of land. While the Palestinian Authority had several scenarios on how to re-use the evacuated spaces, political developments in Gaza led to the inability to use them. In the evacuated space of former Nisanit settlement, as an example, the basin built by Palestinians for a water reserve is full of sewage due to lack of infrastructure. Another example is Neve Dekalim, which was located between the Palestinian city of Khan Younis and the Mediterranean Sea. The Palestinian Al-Aqsa University opened a campus inside the partly damaged buildings of the former Khan Younis campus shortly after the Israeli evacuation.[59] However, during the War on Gaza the University was partly demolished.

*Political dynamics after the evacuation*

The continuous deterioration of the daily lives of the people of Gaza and the tight embargo on almost everything has left no space for a Palestinian revival strategy; thus strategic and spatial planning could not be applied. Colonial practices in Gaza and continuous embargoes on Gaza have led the people into a situation accurately described by Honaida Ghanim:

> Drawing the line between dieting and starvation becomes a political issue, making it crucial to understanding the delicate differences between dying and death. The distinctions between dying – a process – and death, which intervenes between dying and being dead – help us understand that the power used against the Palestinians is not about killing them, eliminating them or pushing them collectively into their graves. Rather, it is about managing them as biological subjects through localizing them in the luminal zone between life and death, between dieting and

[58] There had been enormous coverage of the evacuation of Gaza settlements and its destruction by the Israeli and other televisions.

[59] Decolonizing architecture website. www.decolonizing.ps/site.

starvation – not really dying but being one step before that, where 'a decision on life becomes a decision on death. Biopolitics can turn into Thanatopolitics'.[60]

Palestinians in Gaza theoretically do have control of space and time but are void of resources to use them for fulfilling their own perception and conception of spaces, since the priority is on simply staying alive. Thus the Israeli control has been transformed from a spatial existence on the Strip to control of the resources of Gaza.

When Hamas won the Palestinian elections in 2005, the Israeli and international response was to enforce an economic embargo on the Palestinian Authority and people. There were attempts to form a national unity government involving Fateh, Hamas, and the other political parties, but these failed, and internal conflict emerged between Fateh and Hamas. There were several attempts to reconcile both parties, but they did not last; the most significant was the Mecca agreement, and what followed was armed internal fighting which culminated in Fateh leaders fleeing from the Gaza Strip into the West Bank in summer of 2006. This has increased the division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with two different governments governing each area. Essentially, the differences over political programs became manifested openly under the pressures and effects of the sanctions over Palestinians and the siege over Gaza in particular. The international community, "at Israel's behest, has been making three demands of the Hamas government that supposedly justify the throttling of Gaza's economy. The conditions are now well known: recognizing Israel, renouncing violence, and abiding by previous agreements."[61] Israel saw that these sanctions, which include fuel, medicine, and food supply, are essential to keep the Palestinians of Gaza in poverty and despair which would prevent them from engaging in political resistance.[62] Despite this, and with the continuation of rocket firing, the new situation has increased the Israeli perception of

[60] Honaida Ghanim, "Thanatopolitics: The Case of the Colonial Occupation in Palestine," in *Thinking Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin (London: Zed Books, 2008), 65-81, 77. See G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 222.

[61] Jonathan Cook, *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's experiments in human despair* (London, U.K: Zed Books, 2008), 188.

[62] Reinhart, *Road Map*, 133.

threat. The inability of Israel to maintain colonial security made it opt for a new strategic action.

Fig. 6 The cost of Security.
Source: The Economist:
http://www.economist.com/world/middleeast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15213442


In December 2008 Israel took military action against Gaza. It waged an all-out war on Gaza as a hostile foreign entity. The need for such a war revealed that the disengagement plan did not fulfil its main aims of retarding violence and of controlling the Gaza Strip from behind the wall surrounding it. The war had a devastating impact on the Palestinians; more than 1400 people were killed while on the Israeli side 13 were killed. Thousands of buildings were demolished, including houses, schools, hospitals, health centres, agricultural lands and greenhouses, farms, and all kinds of infrastructure. In addition to the severe embargo on the people of Gaza, the war had further destroyed any remaining Palestinian life to reach a condition of living short of death.

Israel, despite inflicting all these causalities on the Palestinian side, did not achieve the goals of the war. The war could not stop the launching of rockets on Israeli areas. It was hoped by Israel that after this war, the people of Gaza would rise up against Hamas, but this did not happen. In addition, the kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was not found or released. "Winning militarily but losing politically"[63] is how Israel was described after the war. This was because of its international image, as a state waging war on people under siege, thus committing war crimes. Israeli diplomatic relations were also affected, as during the

[63] Richard Falk, "Winning and losing in Gaza," *The Nation*, February 9, 2009, available on http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090209/falk.

war Venezuela expelled the Israeli Ambassador,[64] Bolivia broke ties with Israel, the Turkish Prime Minister suggested expelling Israel from the United Nations, the Malaysian Parliament called on the UN to establish a special war crimes tribunal,[65] and there were demonstrations worldwide against the war. Israeli politicians and military generals who were involved in the war are now subject to arrest in European countries on charges of war crimes, filed by protest groups in those countries. This has limited the diplomatic movement of these people, including Tzipi Livni, Ehud Barak, Gabi Ashkenazi, and others. On the level of academic and cultural exchanges, in several places it has become practice not to host Israelis. And in September 2009, a UN mission headed by Richard Goldstone released a report accusing the Israel Defense Forces of war crimes and recommended bringing those responsible to justice.

To conclude the case of the Gaza Strip, it is important to emphasize that the Disengagement Plan fits within the colonial paradigm in which emphasis is on *control* rather than holding *territory.* The territorial evacuation from the Gaza Strip was a ground contraction process, which restructured colonial control over this area. In addition, the outcome of the evacuation from the Gaza Strip shows a contradiction. There are more Palestinians being killed in Gaza now than when the settlements were there, not fewer, as one would have expected.

**The Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip and colonial contraction**

Both cases, Sinai and Gaza, represent colonial contractions of one colonial project. The main strategic difference between these two contractions is that the evacuation of Yamit stemmed from a peace treaty with a neighbouring country, while the evacuation of Gaza was a unilateral move within an ongoing and unresolved conflict in a colonial project. In Sinai the colonial contraction came after a period of no more than 14 years of settling the area, and with a peace agreement that ended conflict between the two parties. In Gaza, the settlers were removed after spending possibly 30 years (meaning that a generation

[64] "Israel weighs expelling Venezuelan diplomats after Chavez dismisses envoys to Caracas," *Haaretz*, January 7, 2009 (Reuters), available on: www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=1053454.

[65] Falk, "Winning and losing."

of settlers were born and raised in the Gaza settlements), and without an end to the conflict. It must have been more self-defeating to evacuate the Gaza settlements without an end to the conflict, than the evacuation of settlements "half its age" and within a peace agreement.

While the evacuation from Sinai could be considered a de-colonization process as Israel no longer has direct control over these lands, the evacuation from the settlements of Gaza Strip is a colonial contraction within a phase of an ongoing colonial project in which control is restructured within the hands of the Israeli colonial state. This is represented by Israeli control of aspects of life within the Gaza Strip through the siege it has imposed, and the control it exercises over access to and from the Gaza Strip, as well as by military actions such as the War on Gaza in 2008/2009. The Gaza Strip after the Israeli colonial contraction in 2006 has provided a rare case, with some post-colonial characteristics, yet still very much under colonial control.

Both the evacuations of Sinai and of Gaza stemmed from the strategic need of the Israeli government to close a front. In Sinai, it was important to ensure security for the whole frontier with Egypt, which neutralized the largest Arab country bordering the state of Israel. In Gaza it stemmed from a failure to achieve secure lives for Israelis, though even after the evacuation from Gaza, this was not achieved. Israel had to opt for a new strategic military action and to launch a war on Gaza later, in December 2008, and kill and destroy in large parts of the Strip. In this war the rocket launches were actually intensified. On January 1, 2009, it was reported that "Hamas rockets have struck the large southern cities of Be'er Sheva and Ashdod, home of Israel's largest port, for the first time since the militant group broke its cease-fire with Israel on Dec. 19, [2008]".[66]

In both cases of decolonization in Sinai and Gaza, Sharon was involved. Despite his continuous role in building settlements since 1967, he was the one to implement both withdrawals. However, both were attempts to calm one front and to implement strategic military plans on another – basically the invasion of Lebanon. While the first war was launched in 1982 just one month after Sinai decolonization, the second

[66] "U.S. counter terror expert: Hamas has adopted Hezbollah tactics in Gaza," *Haaretz*, January 1, 2009, (Associated Press), available at: www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=1051632.

war on Lebanon was launched in summer 2006, a year after the Gaza evacuation in 2005. One of the intended effects was to portray Israel as a peace-making party while using this to cover its military actions which followed. It was also important for Israel to convey that its withdrawal from Gaza had been done out of strength, not weakness, and that Israel was still capable of making war.

After the 1973 war, Israel became more dependent on its superpower ally, the United States, which influenced it to end conflict with Egypt through a political process. The need to maintain this alliance meant that Israel had to give up the Sinai Peninsula. This went against the Zionist approach of settling in the colonized space, and against its view that the Sinai desert was part of the ideological identity of "returning" to the area. Consequently, the Israeli settlements established after 1967 had to be destroyed. In this sense, considerations other than Zioinist ideals implied backtracking to dismantle the Zionist settler existence in Sinai. Efforts at planning and control of space were redirected toward Palestinian lands in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; this was an attempt to compensate for the inability to deliver and maintain a permanent Zionist existence in the Sinai.

In the case of Israeli colonial contraction from the Gaza Strip, maintaining a continuous presence in the Gaza Strip amidst a much larger population prepared to resist, seems to have mandated giving up the aim of achieving a 'permanent' Zionist settler existence in Gaza Strip.

The problem was that Zionism, with its initial ideas of achieving a state on "a land without people for a people without land," held that the Palestinians did not exist, while on the ground in Gaza, those engaged in the Israeli existence on the land and in the strategic, political, and military actions and planning, had continuously to deal with the resistance of the Palestinians, who in fact did and do exist, there. If Palestinians did not exist, Zionists would not have to both exist and resist in the same place. Given that Palestinians do exist, and resisted the presence of settlers, these settlers had little choice but to reproach the Israeli army for not delivering the "obvious" calm that Zionism promised. In this context, one can re-read the Sharon Disengagement Plan, which in essence recognized the need to modify a principle

of Zionism. The new realization was that there are Palestinians on the colonized land and that not all land can be lived in, but all land colonized can be controlled by means other than directly living on it. Consequently, Sharon formed a new political party based on this modified version of Zionism – the Kadima Party, on whose platform he won the 2006 elections. Yet on the level of Zionist achievements, it still had to be proven that the rest of the territory in Palestine in the West Bank and East Jerusalem could still be Zionized and a "permanent lived Jewish existence" achieved. This explains the extensive Israeli efforts made to control all aspects of Palestinian life and impose Israeli settler existence in the West Bank, using other means of control such as the Separation Wall.

The evacuation from Yamit in 1982 led to an increase in settlement of the West Bank and the establishment of settlements in Gaza for the Yamit evacuees. The evacuation of settlers from the Gaza settlements led to an increase in settlement construction and continued construction of the Barrier in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Sharon's unilateral plan was a result of the failure of the military to produce Palestinian capitulation. The Separation Wall was another attempt to produce the same effect while simultaneously enabling the army to concentrate more force on any one location than before. Once the unilateral withdrawal was completed and the Palestinians were left in isolated concentrations throughout the occupied territory, the Israeli army would be released from having to sustain Israeli internal security and so be able to focus on other strategic priorities. After evacuating one area, the Israelis acted to offset the reduction in the settler population by stepping up building of settlements in other places.

Whether there might be a phase of settlement evacuation in the West Bank depends on the evolving strategic critical conditions that could overshadow the settling process. If there were a unilateral evacuation from the West Bank, the purpose would be to restructure control over the West Bank rather than maintain control over the whole of the territory. This is why completing the wall was essential in order to realize this new matrix of control, with access points for entering and exiting at any time. There is still a denial of Palestinian rights.

The dynamics of the two contraction processes are related. The

Sinai decolonization which led to a neo-colonial stage affected the dynamics of Gaza after Israeli contraction. Since Egypt is subject to the conditions of the peace agreement rather than its own political and strategic considerations, it does not have full control over the terms on which it might open relations with Gaza. In the Palestinian struggle for life's basics, Israel and the US could pressure Egypt to close its gates to Palestinians, including the supply of basic goods such as food and medicine. The indirect control by Israel and US has reached a stage where Egypt was pressured into building a wall beneath ground level. This was said to be necessary to prevent essential supplies and weapons from reaching Hamas members via underground tunnels through Rafah.

It is important to conclude that Israeli strategic interests and needs were the engine that shaped the dynamics of the evacuation processes. In the 1970s, the main Israeli strategic interest was to remove Egypt, a main Arab power, from the Arab-Israeli conflict, and then to launch war on Lebanon. The settler groups who left were compensated. In 2005 the strategic interest behind the Disengagement Plan was to keep Israeli forces needed in waging the war on the northern front, from being distracted by the need to protect settlers in Gaza. Consequently, the ideological project of settling the "Land of Israel" in the Sinai and Gaza was sidelined. This outcome was influenced by the military's assessment of the state's strategic interests at the time. Consequently, one notices that the government, and the individuals within it, were more powerful than the settler groups.

It is interesting to note that, of the governments and the group of individuals who were involved in Yamit as a whole, it was right wingers, known to be more ideologically bound and motivated by the Jewish idea of the "Land of Israel" who not only gave up the settlements but also demolished them. In fact, the Sinai case showed that Israel would do anything, even oppose its people, and even oppose the settlers themselves, if it faced a security threat on a state level. Both colonial contraction processes became conceivable only when a profound strategic advantage was foreseen that would enable achieving other strategic objectives.

As was shown in the two cases of the Egyptian Sinai and the Gaza Strip,

changes occurred in the Israeli colonial power. In both cases, different kinds of threats could and can alternate the synergy of the ideologically motivated approach, the actions to achieve it and the actual existence and settling on the colonized space. With regard to Zionism itself, it too is affected by unanticipated effects. It is unable to move away from its motivations and restrictions and actions to achieve a phase of permanency of a settler existence in the area. Instead Israel has found itself having to back-track from what it aims to achieve in terms of actual existence on the colonized space, to re-modify its goals and then to re-draw plans and strategies towards maintaining an existence. This dynamic of being unable to uphold the ideological motivation, the actions to achieve them, and the gradual permanency of existing on the space has resulted in a mesh in which the actual settling phase is pulled back as a process. Thus the outcomes of this process are stages of temporary settling rather than a permanent existence. In other words, a regressive condition in the Zionist project that could be repeated in other areas such as the WB were the circumstances of the colonial state, the indigenous people, and the international pressure to produce such a context.

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## Youssef Courbage:

## Gaza, an Ever Rebellious Demography?

Gaza was presented some decades ago as a case of atypical demography in the world, and it still retains many population characteristics that have not been fully explored. To explain this demography it is crucial to look at the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a conflict in which population matters are deeply embedded (Anson 1996; Goldsheider 1991). The peculiar nature of the Gazan demography raises innumerable questions linked to the political conditions of the strip (Roy 1995). Foremost among them is whether the high fertility rate is sustainable. A second question is what determines migration of the Palestinian population, either within historic Palestine – to other parts of Palestine including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or even Israel – or to other countries.

We can begin by looking at Gaza's demographics without considering its immediate geopolitical environment – Israel and the West Bank. This is feasible provided we first mention some considerations:

a. Gaza has been a case apart in the history of Palestine since 1948, when the Jewish state wiped out almost all of Palestine, causing Palestine almost to vanish from the international legal and political scene. On its fragments, two entities were established, one in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, that was soon incorporated into the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, and the second in the Gaza Strip, which was placed under Egyptian administration, but not annexed by Egypt. This strange status would last 19 years, until the war of June 1967, which saw Gaza and the West Bank "reunified" under the yoke of the Israeli army. In 1993, following the Oslo agreement, Gaza, together with Jericho, became the first liberated Palestinian area, with Israel agreeing to turn over administration and policing to the new Palestinian Authority.

b. More than five years ago, in September 2005, Gaza was cleared of Israeli settlers (Courbage 2006). Even before this date, the number of settlers in Gaza was limited; yet colonization of the land proceeded under a series of Israeli governments, both on the political right and on the left, taking up some 30% of an area of only 360 $km^2$ (41 km long and 12 km wide). The foremost (undeclared) objective of withdrawal from

Gaza was to boost colonization in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by supplying the existing settlements with more than 9,000 newcomers. The West Bank remains occupied more than ever. Military checkpoints are part of the ordinary landscape. Maybe a different status for Gaza was the pre-condition to implement the *bantustanization* scheme, after the South African model, so admired by Ariel Sharon? At any rate, this was also a strong argument for differentiation of Gaza from the rest of Palestine. In his speech on the Gaza pullout, Sharon insisted that the demographic disequilibrium – less than ten thousand Jewish settlers facing over a million Palestinians – forced Israel to forsake the settlements. Israel therefore paid only a limited price by leaving the strip, against a foreseen boom in the settlement of the West Bank and Jerusalem (550 thousand settlers, and according to forecasts barely concealed by Israel, to reach one million before 2020). "Freed" Gaza is nonetheless locked by land, sea and air, creating a Kafkaesque situation: life is much harder than in the West Bank, although the West Bank is militarily occupied and is in the process of gradually being annexed to Israeli settlements.

c. Gaza is Mediterranean, although deprived by Israel from enjoying the richness of the sea. The coastline of the West Bank is ironically the Dead Sea. Hence, there might be subtle differences in the mentalities of the two parts of Palestine. Regional differences in mentalities may impact attitudes and demographic behaviour.

d. The "native" population in Gaza is but a tiny minority. Refugees expelled by Israel between 1947 and 1949 and their descendants make up 74% of the population of Gaza, compared to 33% in the West Bank (Khawaja 2002). This profound difference of origins of the population might weigh on demographic conditions.

e. The elections of 2006 that sealed the defeat of Fatah to Hamas, and ongoing political developments since that event, may also influence the demography, although since these events are recent, it is perhaps too soon to tell. These rivalries culminated with the mini-civil war in June 2007 and the takeover of Gaza by Hamas. With the passing of time, the gap might become structural, with the risk of creating a larger political gap between the two Palestinian entities, in addition to the 40 km physical distance between them.

Nevertheless, other considerations encourage us not to detach the demographic study of Gaza from the rest of Palestine:

a. Gaza is hardly separable from the Palestinian context. The population of the strip does not come from elsewhere, but mainly from the south of Palestine, just as the refugees in the West Bank came mainly from the north. And the regions are quite close: the whole of historic Palestine is only 26,000 $km^2$, which can be travelled from north to south in less than three hours.

b. The occupying power may be tempted to accentuate differences between Gaza and the West bank, just as in the case of South Africa during apartheid, the white authorities did everything possible to highlight the differences and aggravate the rivalries among the Homelands (Bantustans). But that is all the more reason why we should not do so.

**Paucity of data**

The national data compiled by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in Ramallah have become the victim of events, precisely because the office is located in Ramallah. With the establishment of a dual authority in 2007, the study of the population of Gaza has deteriorated. The census of December 2007 was taken in the entire Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. But only the total population size of Gaza has been released: 1,416,542 inhabitants; we know nothing about recent demographic, socio-economic and cultural features. We must therefore rely on the 1997 census and the more recent survey, taken in 2006 (PCBS 2007). In addition civil registration: births and deaths, published by the Ministry of Health, are essential sources, although there are some inconsistencies between civil registration statistics and census and survey figures.

**A universal record of population growth, a tiny territory**

As of the middle of 2010, Gaza has, in its minuscule territory of 360 $km^2$, a huge population: 1,600,000 inhabitants, a third (35%) of the total population of 4.6 million in the occupied Palestinian territories. The population density, about 4 400 inhabitants per $km^2$, is extraordinary. Let us think a moment about this figure. When one considers such

countries as Indonesia (especially Java), Bangladesh or Egypt (at least the population density on Egypt's usable land), high population densities might be synonymous with misery. However, contrary to conventional wisdom, population density does not *ipso facto* mean poverty. Among the richest countries in the world are Monaco (16,235 inhabitants per $km^2$), with a high density of billionaires, but also Singapore (6,389), Hong Kong (6,700) and the Vatican (2,093), where inhabitants are not particularly poor. Hence, the correlation between population density and poverty is not obvious. Gaza's neighbours are also highly densely populated: Israel in its 1967 borders (340 inh./$km^2$) and the West Bank (480), but Gaza is much more so.

The huge population in this small land is primarily, but not only, the outcome of the exodus that preceded and followed the war of 1948. Nothing prepared the strip of less than 60,000 inhabitants in 1948 to absorb, in few weeks, some 200,000 refugees expelled from what was becoming the Jewish State. Setting out from the villages and towns of a large region from Jaffa to Beer Sabaa conquered by the Haganah in the wake of the war, these refugees could not imagine that they were to remain in Gaza for more than a few days or weeks.

**Gaza: a demographic "miracle"?**

The "miracle" for Gaza is to have sustained an incredibly high rate of population increase since 1948. Far from returning back to the 'indigenous' Gazan population of 1948, population size moved from a quarter of a million to 1.6 million – a more than sixfold increase – in only sixty years (1950-2010). The rate of increase (birth rate minus death rate plus immigration minus emigration), has been 3.1% per year on average. This is the same as in Israel, where it was fuelled by immigration, but much higher than in the West Bank, where the rate of increase has been 2.0%. Only Jordan, whose demographic changes have been largely based on the Palestinian population, had a higher 4.5% rate of increase (Fig. 1).

**Battle of numbers, war of cradles**

How do we account for these unusual demographics? Let us start with a frequent and well advertised explanation: the numbers of the Palestinian population in general and those of Gaza, are wrong. In 2005,

two years before the Palestinian census of 2007, Israeli researchers close to the Likud and American neocons of the American Enterprise Institute questioned the Palestinian demographic data in a widely publicized report (Zimmerman et al. 2006). They claimed that the figures had been manipulated and exaggerated for political motives. Instead of 1.41 million inhabitants in the Gaza strip at this date, the report said, the "true" figure was 1.08 million! 23% less. This "battle of numbers" is widely debated in Israel and Palestine, a confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis but also between rightists and leftists in Israel.

**Fertility, unbridled or political?**

If Gaza's population growth is exceptional, it is primarily due to fertility, itself exceptional (Khawaja 2003; Khawaja and Randall 2006; Khawaja et al. 2009). After the 1967 war, and until recent years, the crude birth rate and total fertility rate remained on a high plateau. Between 1960 and 1970 the birth rate was 53 per thousand in the Palestinian territories as a whole, and the total fertility rate was 8 children per woman. Only outward migration could slightly alter the level of fertility: during years when there was large temporary migration of Palestinian men to the Gulf, fertility was slightly lower due to the disruption of the marriage market.

Palestinian fertility has remained atypical, insensitive to critical factors such as the high degree of urbanization in the Gaza Strip, the high population density, active population dominated by secondary and service activities, where child labour is not an asset for the parents, contrary to the agricultural sector where children may participate in, thus giving a boost to fertility. In Gaza, fertility has always been higher than in the West Bank, in spite of the accumulation of inhibiting factors. Most important is the high level of school attendance and the eradication of illiteracy, which are the keys to the universal phenomenon of demographic transition and fertility reduction. High level education (preparatory, secondary, university) is more prevalent in Gaza than in the West Bank: enrolment rates of 59% against 57% for males, 57% against 52% for females. In proportions, there are less illiterates in Gaza and more university graduates. Finally the gender gap in higher education is lower in Gaza (-2%) than in the West Bank

(-6%) (Fig. 2). Though several indicators would predict a lower fertility rate in Gaza, the one exception is the female participation rate in the economically active population – usually negatively correlated with fertility – which has always been lower in Gaza than in the West Bank.

**Political factors**

The first intifada had fuelled an increase in the already quite high level of fertility. Fertility was then regarded by the Palestinian establishment and Yasser Arafat as one type of peaceful weapon to fight the occupation (Courbage 2005; Fargues 2000; Kanaaneh 2002). This was especially the case in Gaza, where the rise in fertility was more pronounced. A survey of the Gaza strip in 1989 showed that 43% of respondents considered the demographic factor as a key pillar in the struggle against occupation. In 1992 a medical doctor specializing in sterility problems said when interviewed by Agence France Presse: "I help my people to procreate and therefore not disappear under the waves of Jewish immigration. Palestinians and Israelis, we are fighting a demographic war to the finish" (AFP). Gazans took this motto even more seriously than West Bankers (Fig. 3).

Gaza has always been involved in the demographic battle of numbers or the war of cradles. Before the second intifada in 2000, the birth rate and fertility of Gaza already consistently distinguished themselves from those of the West Bank. This is shown in the crude birth rate recorded in the vital statistics in Israel, and in the fertility rates calculated from three Palestinian population surveys. According to Israeli statistics, there was a rise in the crude birth rate in Gaza from 45 to 56 per thousand between 1986 and 1991. It was later confirmed by of the rise in the Total Fertility Rate from 7.73 to 8.76 during the same period, according to Palestinian statistics drawn from surveys. Fertility increase was more marked in Gaza than in the West Bank. In addition, the increase in fertility has been more pronounced among more educated women – supposed to be the most politically conscious – than among the illiterate and less educated.

The first intifada left Gaza with a TFR of 7.4 children in 1994 (5.6 in the West Bank). The years of the Oslo accords, which were also those of increased colonization of Palestine, saw a modest decline; on the eve of the second intifada in September 2000 the TFR in Gaza was 6.8 children per woman.

**The fertility effects of the second intifada**

The second intifada shook things up in Gaza as in the whole of Israel-Palestine. In this hyper-pronatalistic context the demographic weapon changed hands. Israeli Jewish fertility, not Palestinian fertility, increased – a very rare occurrence in a country with high living standards: GDP per capita of more than 30,000 USD for Israeli Jews and levels of education higher than in Europe. Fertility of Israeli Jews, already high at 2.6 children per woman in 2000, grew to 2.9 in 2009 (Central Bureau of Statistics 2010) and is about to reach 3 children in 2010 according to the current trend, twice the average rate of Europe or of diaspora Jews. But more importantly, fertility is particularly high in areas of friction: politico-ideological settlements implanted in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where it is now close to 5 children per woman (Central Bureau of Statistics 2010). From the saturated areas of West Jerusalem (like Mea Shearim) where the ultra-Orthodox fertility rate is around 7.5 children (Friedlander 2002), streams of migrants fuel the settlement movement of the West Bank in and around Jerusalem.

Contrariwise, in Israel proper, the fertility of the 1948 Palestinians is falling: their birth rate dropped from 38 to 28 per thousand and the total fertility rate from 4.3 to 3.5 from 1990 to 2009. In a few years it is possible that Israeli Arabs will bear no more children than Israeli Jews. Hence, the second intifada dealt a severe blow to fertility in the West Bank and Gaza (Figs. 4 and 5). Palestinian demography has been reshuffled, but this time downward, unlike what happened during the first intifada. Between 1999 and 2006, fertility in the West Bank fell from 5.4 to 4.3, that is to say, it fell significantly below that of the Israeli settlers in "Judea – Samaria" and East Jerusalem. Statistics from the Ministry of Health show an even more marked decrease, with fertility rates of about 3.4 at the beginning of the decade. Rebellious Gaza has been even more affected, with fertility falling from 6.8 in 1999 to just 5.4 in 2006 – still a very high rate by world standards, even relative to Muslim or Arab countries and even compared to Palestinians in the West Bank. But this is a sharp fall since the first intifada.

Obviously, a fertility rate of 5.4 children per woman is still considerable, given the abject living conditions in Gaza. But not if one considers that children are almost the unique source of comfort, plus a strategic asset in the precarious balance of forces in Israel-Palestine. We can almost

paraphrase the Israeli filmmaker Amos Gitai in his film *Kadosh* on the ultra-Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem. One of his characters states that children are the best weapon to fight their enemies (in this case not the Palestinians, but the secular Jews).

But today, things are changing. Demographic rationality is sweeping Palestine and Gaza in particular, at the moment when it appears to be abandoning Israel.

**Mortality**

Fertility is not the only component of the growth of a population. To be exhaustive in describing population characteristics, we should mention mortality and international migration. "Normal" mortality, somehow surprisingly, is rather low in Gaza. Yet, during crisis situations, such as the second intifada and Israel's war against Gaza in December-January 2008-2009, mortality reached peaks higher than in the West Bank. Infant mortality reached 30.7 per thousand in 2002-2006, slightly higher than the West Bank's 25.5 per thousand. Life expectancy at birth is around 72 years, higher than in many Arab countries. The effectiveness of health care, and the role of NGOs and of UNRWA, are responsible for these remarkable achievements. But in addition, there is in this family-oriented context a love and desire to protect children, and this includes children of both sexes. In Gaza one does not find the excess mortality of girls that one does frequently find in *macho* societies where girls are less well treated than boys during their infancy.

**Migration**

We too often forget, given Israel's full lock on the borders of Gaza by land, sea and air, and the semi-full lock by the Egyptian side on Rafah, that Gaza once was also a land of emigration. After Gulf economies exploded with the oil boom in 1975 and until the decline in oil prices a decade later, 114,000 Gazans emigrated, most often without returning, thanks to the benevolence of the occupation authorities happy to get rid of these turbulent youths. The second intifada has also seen slight net emigration, but nothing comparable to that of the West Bank, where 100,000 departures were reported –with exaggeration – in the Israeli press. Actually, a recent survey has shown smaller figures: 32 000 emigrants and 6 000 returned emigrants in 2005-2009 (PCBS 2010).

## Outlook for the future

What future for Gaza? The optimistic scenario would be one where a real Arab-Israeli peace would be accompanied by the return of Palestinian refugees (or a substantial fraction of them) to their homes. For the moment, there is nothing in politics at the local level, nor at the level of the international community, that suggests that this will happen, that is, that the UN resolution of 1948 will be implemented. But if this optimistic scenario did come to pass, population pressure in Gaza would likely be relieved through migration. As long as migration is excluded, however, population will grow only under the combined effects of fertility and mortality.

As everywhere, but even more in this puzzling context, fertility trends in Gaza are hard to predict, since it is always difficult to conclusively predict the attitudinal and behavioural changes which guide human reproduction. However, in view of the fertility decline in Gaza in 1994-1999 before the second intifada, as well as in 1996-2006, one can surmise that the Gazans have renounced high fertility as a political tool. The resistance against blockade and occupation seems to be taking other forms – maybe more effective – such as the appeal to universal consciousness, international tribunals and so on.

Amira Haas, a journalist for the Israeli daily Haaretz and a renowned specialist on Gaza, reported in an interview in *Le Monde Diplomatique* a quote from a Gazan father of four, who said "All what concerns us is the care for subsistence, electricity, water, sewage. *You end up wondering why you brought children into this world* " (Haas 2008; emphasis added). This was just before the Israeli war of December 2008. How will fertility evolve after the disaster?

## Future fertility trends

Fig. 6 shows the evolution of population size in Gaza based on three different assumptions about trends in fertility, the main component of population growth. The highest projection is based on fertility remaining constant at its present level of 5 children per woman. Although unlikely in view of previous trends and after the disasters of 2008-2009, this prognosis is helpful to forecast the maximal envelope of Gaza population in the next forty years, 2010-2050. The

second projection makes the more likely assumption that fertility will decrease, to reach the replacement level of TFR of 2.1 in 2050 (the ideal size of two children per woman); this is the medium prognosis. The third projection is based on the assumption that fertility will fall more rapidly to 1.7 in 2050, the present level of Lebanon; this is the low prognosis.

A cohort-component population projection by age-group and sex is then done on the population as it stands in 2010 (the age-pyramid in green on Fig. 7).

**From 4 to 6 million inhabitants in 2050**

Consider the absurd case that fertility will remain forever at 5 children. To say that the population will explode in this case is an understatement. The 1.6 million of today will become 6 million in 2050, a multiplication by almost 4, an annual growth rate of 3.4%, resulting in a population density of 16,400 inhabitants per $km^2$. This is absolutely unthinkable. What would be the future if Gaza tends to adopt "modern" patterns of reproduction to reach the symbolic threshold of 2.1 children per woman in 2050? Even with such an optimistic view, the outcome might be disastrous: 4.1 million in 2050, a 2.6 fold increase, a growth rate of 2.4% per year, reaching a density of 11,400 inhabitants per $km^2$. This too would be unsustainable.

Let us go even further. Suppose that fertility reaches a western European level of 1.7 children (say, half the current level of Israeli Jews). In this case, there would be 3.9 million inhabitants in Gaza by 2050, with the stifling density of 10,800 inhabitants per $km^2$ (Fig. 8).

Among the most serious implications of high population growth is the youth bulge, especially if insufficient employment, or none, is provided by the national economy or by the state.

**Where to find jobs?**

High population growth will translate into a tense labour market. The number of new entrants, now estimated at 37,000 each year, will double to reach 76,000 in 2050 (Fig. 9). However, the likely aging of the population will lead an increasing number of Gazans to exit the labor

force, although in small numbers. Hence the number of net entrants annually will increase – but at a slower pace – from 34,000 presently to 54,000 in 2050. This is an impressive increase peculiar to Palestine and especially to Gaza. In Arab countries, annual numbers of net entrants have started to decline in many cases, or will start to do so soon. In the Gaza Strip there is much slack in the labour market now, with an unemployment rate of 39% in the second quarter of 2010. Every year new entrants add to the already high numbers of the unemployed or the underemployed, particularly among Gazans ages 20-24, who currently suffer 67% unemployment.

The low participation of women in the labour force should also be emphasized: women are only 8-10% of the economically active population, among the lowest in the world. Recent figures also show increasing gender inequity. Although women were already marginalized in the labour force, now they tend to be even more so. Whereas the number of employed women in the West Bank increased from 95,000 to 111,000 between the beginning and the middle of 2010, it decreased from 25,000 to 23,000 in Gaza. Out of 443,000 women in Gaza aged 15 years and over, only 23,000, or 5.2%, are employed, also among the lowest rates in the world. When jobs are rare and pressure on employment high, women tend to remain out of the labour force for decades.

**Summary and conclusion**

In conclusion, although there are many similarities between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, we have pointed to some demographic and socio-economic differences which might increase in the future:

- The demographic transition is much more advanced in the West Bank.
- The future demographic outlook in terms of population growth and densities is less gloomy in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip.
- Gazans are slightly more educated than West Bankers, but this does not translate into a better standard of living. Quite the opposite.
- Labour market conditions in terms of participation rate and unemployment are improving in the West Bank but becoming unbearable for the Gazans, especially for youth.

- Women's status in terms of accession to the labour market is much worse in Gaza than in the West Bank, especially for young females, with 7 persons out of 10 unemployed (twice the rate in the West Bank).

Usually, demographic trends have been among the few reasons for optimism in the Arab region. But for Gaza, unfortunately there are few glimpses of hope if things remain as they are. Only a drastic geographical redistribution might give the population some expectation of improvement. But where would Gazan emigrants go? Certainly not to an overcrowded Egypt. The Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia, assuming they regain their former glory, do not want emigrants from Gaza stamped (sometimes despite themselves) as Hamas partisans. There remains the migration to the West Bank – and even (why not?) to Israel. This, however, would require an end to the blockade, open borders, liberty of movement, and so forth – in other words, a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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## Asem Khalil:

# The 'Protection Gap' and the Palestinian Refugees of the Gaza Strip

The concept of a 'protection gap' is often used by scholars interested in studying the legal status of Palestinian refugees in host countries.[1] To say that such a gap exists for refugees in a host country means that international protection mechanisms are missing, and leaves refugees subject to domestic laws and policies.

In this paper, I will first show why this protection gap came into existence, then suggest different mechanisms for protecting Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from the effects of the Israeli occupation. I will further make suggestions with regard to keeping the distinction clear between West Bank and the Gaza Strip when dealing with refugee protection. This distinction paves the way for my central proposition in this paper, that Gaza poses a challenge to international law and to the current international system. UNRWA in particular is pushed towards assuming a protection mandate, which it was originally deprived from assuming. This shift toward an expanded UNRWA mandate is inevitable, but it is not for that reason devoid of risks.

### Protection Gap

Many facts, taken together, contributed to creating and widening this protection gap. First, UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 181 of 1947 contributed to the original forced displacement of Palestinians, by authorizing the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, despite the fact that the vast majority of residents of the region were Arab Palestinians. Second, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (and in particular article 1-D) has been interpreted in a way that excludes most Palestinian refugees from its protection.[2] Third, separate international

[1] For example, Akram (2002), BADIL (2005), and Suleiman (2006), whether they use this term or not.

[2] It is often the case that article 1/D of the Convention Related to the Status of Refugees of 1951 (Refugee Convention) is interpreted in a way that excludes Palestinians based on only the first paragraph of that article that states: "D. This Convention shall not apply to persons who are at present receiving from organs or agencies of the United Nations other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection or assistance." However, the second paragraph immediately states that: "When such protection or assistance has

agencies have been established for Palestinians (Rempel 2006, 5),[3] and this has consolidated the perception (or perhaps reality) that the Palestinian case is exceptional (Kagan 2009). The gap is widened further by the continuous refusal of Israel to re-admit Palestinian refugees into Israeli territory, beginning with when the state was newly established (Elsayed-Ali 2006, 13), and the international community's inability or unwillingness to impose UN resolutions, including the right of return, on Israel (Khalil 2009, 5).

**Protecting Refugees under Occupation**

Scholars interested in the legal status of Palestinian refugees distinguish, almost instinctively, between those who are in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the one hand, and all other refugees on the other. (A further distinction is drawn between those who are in the other three areas in which UNRWA operates – Lebanon, Jordan and Syria - and those who are in the rest of the world). The distinction is not drawn as a result of different historical roots of their displacement, nor is it the result of different prospects for their futures. Rather, it is the result of being subjected to completely different legal regimes.

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ceased for any reason, without the position of such persons being definitively settled in accordance with the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, these persons shall ipso facto be entitled to the benefits of this Convention." This means that it is wrong to exclude Palestinians from the protection of the Refugee Convention because 1) UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) is not practicing its mandate to protect Palestinian refugees because of states' lack of cooperation; and/or, 2) because the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has no mandate to protect Palestinian refugees; and/or 3) UNRWA is present only in five areas of operation, so the protection of the Refugee Convention to Palestinian refugees shall not be denied to Palestinian refugees outside those areas; and/or 4) even in those areas where UNRWA is present, the Refugee Convention shall apply to those Palestinians who are not registered at UNRWA (provided that the concerned states ratify the convention, of course). For more, see Khalil 2009, 7, 14.

[3] The UNCCP and UNRWA. The UNCCP was established by UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 194 of 11 December 1948, with a protection mandate for Palestinian refugees but then failed to exercise a significant role. UNRWA, on the other hand, was established by UNGA Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, becoming the only international 'face' of the plight of Palestinian refugees, while its protection function is virtually non-existent (Akram, Palestinian Refugees and Their Legal Status: Rights, Politics, and Implications for a Just Solution 2002, 43). Besides, most Palestinian refugees are present in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (besides the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the other two areas of operation of UNRWA), countries that did not ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention. For more about the 'protection gap', see Khalil 2009, 2-17.

The fact that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are deemed occupied territory means that they are subjected to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva convention, something Palestinian refugees present in other host countries cannot of course claim (unless in specific circumstances of armed conflicts, whether local or international). Besides, Israeli authorities – whenever it comes to counting the population and regulating their legal status – have not distinguished between those who are refugees and those who are not. Neither does the Palestinian Authority make such a distinction in its laws and policies. The result is that Palestinian refugees of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have a legal status which is specific to them, and constitutes an obstacle to any comparison with their counterparts in other host countries.

**Why Gaza is Special**

Less evident is the distinction one needs to draw between West Bank on the one side and Gaza Strip on the other. I argue that there is a need – at least conceptually and didactically, if not legally or politically – to keep in mind the distinction between the West Bank and Gaza Strip when it comes to legal protection and to assistance for refugees. At least two reasons inform this need.

*Different Legal Regimes*

On the one side, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under two completely different legal and political regimes from 1948 to 1967. The Israeli occupation unified them again in 1967; but this unity was not legal, administrative or political, but rather a result of applying parallel systems of military rules through declarations and decrees. In other words, Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were unified in their subjugation to an occupation that was long, discriminatory, racist and colonial. They were unified in their similar rightlessness.

Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were granted ID numbers by the authority in place (Israel, as an occupation authority), giving them the option – not the right – of residence in the 'areas' that 'fell' under Israeli control.[4] Those were not signs of entitlements to rights.

[4] Israel refers to the West Bank and Gaza Strip as "areas", refusing to admit their status as occupied territories, as admitted by the international community and the various UN resolutions. According to the Israeli official narrative, Israel controls these "areas" because they "fell" under its authority as a result of the war, and in the absence of another sovereign state.

They were rather grants given by the authority in place as benevolent acts, and as a result were subject to the prevailing mood of the Israeli military commander or officials, reflecting internal Israeli politics and expansionist Zionist policies that excluded Palestinians even from being recognized as a people entitled to rights in this land. This regime essentially continues today.

The above argument is relevant to keep in mind because it allows us to understand how Israel used the pre-1967 division and the subsequent maintenance of the legal separation between the two 'areas' when Israeli occupation took place. This division enabled Israel indeed to use military declarations and orders to widen the gap between Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the point that Military Order No.1650[5] codified the separation between Palestinians of Gaza and Palestinians by rendering Gazans (having an ID number issued by Israeli military commander for Gazans, different from the one issued for West Bank Palestinians and for those issued for Palestinians of East Jerusalem) foreigners for the purposes of the order and in need of legal documentation authorizing any stay in the West Bank. The military order consolidated a practice, dating from 1967, of increasing separation between the two areas under Israeli control, even under different military regimes and civil administrations during the first Intifada and Oslo Agreements.[6]

The new order subjects Palestinian residents of Gaza, whenever they are in the West Bank but cannot prove they have an Israeli-issued permit to be there, to the threat of 'deportation' back to Gaza. The word 'deportation' – with the new order deportation became the only remaining option to adjust the anomaly of lack of legal documentation – is a dangerous word used by some inattentively but that reflects the

[5] On April 13, 2010, Israeli military Order 'regarding Prevention of Infiltration' – Order no.1650 of 2009 – took effect, six months after being signed by the Israeli Commander of the Israeli Defense Forces in the 'Judea and Samaria Area'. The text is in Hebrew. An unofficial translation was made available by Hamoked at http://www.hamoked.org.il/items/112301_eng.pdf.

[6] The new military order fits within the same Israeli policy of separating the two areas (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank), thus dealing with Palestinians holding an ID issued by the military government of the Gaza Strip differently from those having an ID number issued by the military government in the West Bank. Of course such ID numbers are different from ID numbers provided to Palestinians of East Jerusalem. For more, see Khalil 2010.

idea of the Gaza Strip being a different 'country' from the West Bank.[7] Such deportation is still prohibited under international humanitarian law, because forced transfer of population is by definition arbitrary and does not respond to any urgent need to ensure the security of the population or to any immediate military needs of the occupation authority.

*Israeli Withdrawal in 2005*

There is another reason why I believe we need to keep the distinction between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in mind whenever legal protection of Palestinian refugees in Gaza Strip is invoked. That is the fact that in the Gaza Strip, since the unilateral Israeli withdrawal in 2005, several events have rendered the Gaza Strip *sui generis* and made legal protection even harder to realize – though in no way less urgent. These events are the post-2005 agreements related to border control, the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, the subsequent intensification of the Israeli siege, and Israel's declaration that Gaza is an "enemy entity".

Of course the status of the Gaza Strip under international law since 2005 was and is the subject of hot debate among specialists in international law. I believe, however, that this debate is tempered, now that we have seen clear evidence of Gaza's ongoing subjugation to the same occupation regime – although in a slightly different form. Such evidence comes from the Israeli invasion in 2008/2009, Israel's continuous control of the territorial borders of Gaza (air, water, and land), and the Israeli attacks on solidarity ships that did not acquire Israeli approval to enter the territorial waters of the Gaza Strip. Such events showed that withdrawal meant nothing in practice but the redeployment of Israeli forces, while maintaining the full control of borders, keeping all other elements necessary to the qualification of that territory as occupied territory.[8]

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[7] I am thankful for this insight offered by Cordula Droege, the ICRC legal advisor, who explained that we must distinguish between deportation (transfer of population to a third country) and forcible transfer of population that can be applied within the same 'country' (remarks in a roundtable organized by the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies, September 20, 2010). Under international law both deportation and forcible transfer of population are forbidden, but if the word 'deportation' is used to refer to transferring population from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip, it implies that the Gaza Strip is a 'third country', which in fact it is not. See report of the session at http://home.birzeit.edu/fmru/conferences/conferences.htm.

[8] Even when an agreement for the Rafah Crossing was reached in November 2005 (The

**Gaza as a Challenge**

The Gaza Strip poses a particular challenge to the international community because Israel fully controls its borders and restricts movement of goods and people across those borders, and at the same time there is no state authority able and willing to provide assistance and protection for Palestinian civilians. In such circumstances, Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, their protection and their need for assistance, are pushing UNRWA to reshape its mandate, towards more protection rather than only assistance and relief. This shift actually tends to consolidate UNRWA's past efforts, much earlier in history, and on more than one occasion[9], to add to the role defined in its mandate the responsibility for protection of refugees. Yet expanding UNRWA's mandate in this way renders it more fragile and vulnerable to attack; and such attacks oppose not just the expansion of UNRWA's role, but the existence of the organization itself, as well as its whole mandate and its role in keeping alive the issue of Palestinian refugees.

The position of UNRWA is rendered even more fragile since the global financial crisis. In fact, while depending on international funds, UNRWA is facing a serious risk because many countries are decreasing their funding due to the economic crisis, while others work to discredit the organization and argue for using international funds for refugee resettlement programs instead of financing UNRWA.[10]

Alarmed voices are much more often being heard. UNRWA's financial crisis will have a disastrous impact on Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip. The previous argument suggests that a weak UNRWA may lead to a humanitarian crisis much deeper and worse than the one we have now in the Gaza Strip, as well as worse than we might imagine, with consequences that go beyond the Palestinian refugees of the Gaza Strip.

In fact, UNRWA's role is recognized in avoiding a worse situation,

Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossings), the Palestinian Authority agreed that Israel would monitor the borders via closed-circuit television under the supervision of the EU BAM Rafah (an EU police mission for Rafah) (Abu Mukh 2006, 21). Such agreement was in practice suspended after Hamas took control of Gaza and the departure of the EU police force.

[9] See for example BADIL 2005, 42ff.

[10] The decline in aid was felt by refugees in host countries much earlier than that; in fact, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and Oslo process in general resulted in the "skewing of international funds away from the 'outside' refugees" (Sayigh 1995, 51).

and its role in responding to emergency needs is essential (Brynen 2009, 6). The best way to describe this approach can be summarized by a quote from Rex Brynen's speech on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of UNRWA: "happy 60th anniversary, UNRWA. I wish you were unnecessary — that issues of refugees and peace had long ago been resolved. Until they are, however, the Agency, its staff, and their very hard work remain invaluable" (Brynen 2010).

The point this approach stresses is not that UNRWA is not necessary, but rather that UNRWA is not enough. The alternative, however, will not be to replace UNRWA by UNHCR, but rather to enhance the protection role of UNRWA, or to extend the protection mandate of UNHCR to Palestinian refugees alongside (not instead of) existing agencies dealing with Palestinian refugees. Note, however, that while UNHCR seems to be attractive for Palestinians on some issues, it may be resisted and rejected for others.[11]

[11] As Kagan points out: "The attraction for Palestinians is that general refugee policy as advocated by UNHCR promotes three things that have been denied them: first, a clear recognition of the right to return, along with its complementary rights of property restitution; second, a clear goal of finding a durable solution, with particular emphasis on repatriation; third, a commitment to fundamental rights in exile until a durable solution can be found" (Kagan 2009, 434). Then he adds:

Yet it is important to recall that pro-Israel writers who are hostile to Palestinian aspirations are similarly questioning the wisdom of Palestinian exceptionalism because they believe that UNHCR involvement will help minimize the claims of Palestinian refugees. While general (i.e. non-Palestinian) refugee policy contains several attractions for Palestinians, it also contains some hidden features that might challenge longstanding Palestinian political orientations. Two examples illustrate this point. First, established norms of refugee law would condemn the militarization of refugee camps which has been a prominent feature of Palestinian armed conflict with Israel from the 1950s onwards. General refugee policy would thus back condemnation of groups like Hamas, and would call on host governments like Lebanon to disarm militant elements in refugee camps. Second, while it is true that refugee law generally backs the right of return and the right to property restitution.., UNHCR's approach to durable solutions is ultimately more pragmatic and flexible than many Palestinians might like. While UNHCR calls repatriation 'the solution of choice' for most refugees..., it cautions that 'there is no hierarchy of durable solutions' and that resettlement and local integration should be considered simultaneously ... What this means in practical terms is that UNHCR will look to local integration and third country resettlement when repatriation is impossible. UNHCR has indicated a similar flexible or ad hoc approach to compromises on property restitution... Thus, while UNHCR policy would back Palestinians on the abstract rights to return and restitution, in terms of implementation UNHCR might accept Israeli resistance as an immovable fact and turn pragmatically to other options in order to not leave refugees in limbo indefinitely. (Kagan 2009, 434; citations omitted).

## Conclusion

UNRWA, this paper concludes, is still a necessary agency. The assistance it provides for Palestinian refugees is essential to avoid worst case scenarios. What Palestinian refugees always needed, and still do, is protection. The fact that they are left outside international protection mechanisms for refugees, and the fact that it was left for host countries to determine the kind of legal status they enjoy has meant in practice leaving them alone without any kind of protection. This is what this paper has referred to as a 'protection gap'.

Of course the assistance UNRWA provides may be considered as a form of protection, but attacks on Palestinian civilians, and in particular on residents of refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Gaza, have shown that assistance is not enough and that there should be an agency responsible for their protection. This agency can be of the host state or of an international organization; it doesn't matter.

Palestinian refugees of the occupied Palestinian territories have had the distinctive character of residing within historical Palestine, under Israeli occupation, and being dealt with in the same way as other residents of that area. The Gaza Strip in particular is challenging the international community, in light of the lack of a sovereign state exercising state authority – while Israel continues to maintain control over its borders. Gaza is pushing UNRWA to assume a role which is not part of its original mandate. Such a role is inevitable, but is not devoid of risks for UNRWA as an agency, already fragile because of the pressure some countries exert on it, and because of its dependency on voluntary financial contributions of states.

More than six decades after displacement, Palestinian refugees need assistance and protection. Their right to return is yet to be realized, and statelessness is still a destabilizing factor in the region. International aid, even in a time of global financial crisis, needs to be maintained, not out of charity but out of responsibility (Saiz 2009, 288). Most importantly, in the Palestinian case it is partially the responsibility of the international community, which partitioned Palestine, has yet to establish a Palestinian state, and still has not enforced the many resolutions related to the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

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## Clemens Messerschmid:

## Water in Gaza – Problems & Prospects

"It is almost impossible to believe that the Gaza Strip was ever an oasis. But Gaza's fresh sweet groundwater has been nourishing inhabitants for over 3,000 years. It was always the first stop of conquerors leaving Egypt for the riches of Syria. Like the Pharaohs before him, Alexander the Great sought the cool wells of Gaza at the end of his trek across the Sinai desert. Wadi Gaza and Wadi Beit Hanoun, that used to run clear with fresh water, now stagnate like cesspits" (Zeitoun 2007b, 5).

It is often said that the Middle East is the driest area of the world (Fig. 1). This characterisation "naturalizes" the water crisis and it overlooks the large differences within the region. If we focus on actual withdrawals of fresh water we find Gaza and even the relatively wet West Bank at the very bottom of the scale – of course due to the severe restrictions Israel's ongoing occupation imposes on the water sectors and hence on resource development in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt).

### Gaza's crisis of water quality and quantity

Conditions in Gaza and the West Bank are almost the exact opposites of one another. While the West Bank is rich in groundwater, Gaza has hardly any appreciable recharge from rain. The West Bank enjoys a relative abundance of naturally available and renewable freshwater resources (some 750-800 million cubic meters per year (mcm/yr), abstracted from the aquifers emerging in the West Bank[1]); Gaza, in contrast, lies in a much drier climate zone. As the isohyetic map (Fig. 2) shows, the Gaza Strip covers the transition zone between semi-arid (>400mm of rain per year) and arid (<200mm/yr) climates.

In the West Bank access to the locally available groundwater is severely restricted by the occupation, while in contrast Gaza suffers from too much access and severe over-abstractions from the small shallow aquifer. And although groundwater in the West Bank is mostly of excellent quality, almost all water in Gaza is contaminated.

In consequence, and on the technical level, while the West Bank

[1] However, about 90% of this flow from wells and springs remains under Israel's exclusive control, imposed illegally by the occupation.

suffers from a quantitative supply crisis, Gaza is exposed to a severe environmental and water quality crisis. And while renewable groundwater is a finite resource of low supply elasticity, population has grown enormously over the past century, thus diminishing local in-situ water availability per capita at a dramatic pace.

**Water under the British Mandate and after**

"Specified flows"[2] in the Gaza district between 1920 and 1943 were approximately evenly distributed between Jews and non-Jews: Altogether, some 27mcm of well pumpage are recorded by British Mandate Authorities, of which 12 mcm can be attributed to Palestinians and 11mcm to Jews (the remaining 10%, or around 3mcm, can be attributed to "others" – other minorities, such as Druze or Tcherkessians – or cannot clearly be attributed to either Jews or Palestinians).

It should be noted that Gaza district then was more than three times larger than the Gaza Strip today. It reached beyond Isdod (Ashdod) in the North and almost to Al-Qubeibeh to the East (see British mandate maps - Figs. 3 & 4). Its size changed from 1196km$^2$ in 1931 to 1111km$^2$ in 1945 due to administrative reforms under the Mandate. Thus, if evenly distributed, only some 10mcm/yr of well pumpage would fall into the area of today's Gaza Strip. As map 2 shows, most of the wells in the district then were concentrated north of today's Gaza perimeter. According to census data gathered in 1922, 1931 and 1940, the population density in the district grew from 61.8 persons per km$^2$ to 79.1 and 100.3 persons per km$^2$. (Compare this to almost 5000 persons/km$^2$ today!).

[2] The 'specified flows' are British Mandate water measurements, quoted from Messerschmid (2008a, 15). These data were compiled according to three data registers which focus on the period 1920-1943:

- *Water Resources of Palestine* (1943), by the Government of Palestine (copied from the UK National Archives and set up as Excel files) listing some 2000 water sources over a period of 23 years; hereinafter referred to as G.S.I.H.Q. (1943).
- *Water Measurements Prior to 1944* (1947), by the Palestine Government, detailing mainly hydrological (surface) rather than hydrogeological (groundwater) data from rivers, springs, streams and wells. Some 2000 well entries on water level and salinity have been set up in Excel; hereinafter referred to as GoP (1947).
- *Geology and Water Resources in Palestine* (1947), written by G.S. Blake, the government geologist and listing another 277 wells and 230 springs with flows and other data of interest, hereinafter referred to as Blake (1947). Of these data points, 72 are saline and were excluded, and the rest compiled with G.S.I. H.Q. (1943).

The map in Fig. 4 shows the historical distribution of wells (and the lack of springs) in and around Gaza district.

A letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine in Jerusalem (10 Dec 1932) documents that wells supplying drinking water reached a pumpage of at least 50m$^3$/h (equal to 0.4mcm/yr) and one such well supplied 60% of Gaza city. The letter reports the plans to establish one additional hand-dug well (19m deep) and two boreholes (25m deep, 12" diameter) for Gaza City Water Supply. If each of these additional wells supplied only 30-40m$^3$/h, Gaza City's population would have been served with a bulk supply of some 90-105 litres per capita per day (l/c/d). (High Commissioner 1932, 1).[3]

It is thus evident that the absolute water stress and the natural water resource scarcity in the days before the Nakba was far less than today. Gaza district's population grew from some 72,000 in 1922 to 94,000 in 1931 and then to 151,000 in 1945 (Fig. 5).[4] The turn for the worse in Gaza came with the mass expulsion of Palestinians in 1948/49, when hundreds of thousands of refugees flooded the small strip. Suddenly and overnight, the water supply was barely enough to even satisfy biological minimum drinking needs (Fig. 6). As will be shown in the following, Palestinians never recovered from this blow.

Under Egyptian rule, thousands[5] of wells were drilled, most of them for agriculture.

**The transboundary Coastal Aquifer (today shared by Israel, Gaza & Egypt)**

The primary water resource in Gaza is groundwater. Surface flows occur only occasionally after heavy storms in Wadi Gaza – a portion of which is further blocked upstream by Israel. The groundwater-bearing strata in Gaza belong to the so-called Coastal Aquifer. This aquifer stretches along the Mediterranean coast from Mt. Carmel in the north into the Sinai in the South and is thus a classically shared transboundary

[3] The total pumpage from these wells is only 1.1 to 1.4 mcm/yr for an urban and peri-urban population of 17,000 and 35,000 respectively (High Commissioner 1932, 1).

[4] The margin of deviation in different population statistics is some 2,000 or <3%.

[5] There are 2600 registered agricultural wells (according to PWA 2010) – mostly from the Egyptian period – and another 2000 agricultural wells drilled in recent years without any registration or governmental supervision.

watercourse, as defined by customary international water law, such as the 1997 UN Convention on Transboundary Water Courses.[6] The main principle under this international law is called "equitable and reasonable share" and is based on a composite of several factors, such as *hydrological factors* (the size and distribution of the resource), *demographic factors* (size of respective populations) and the *use pattern* (past and current use), as well as factors from the wider realm of socio-economy like the *type of use* (for domestic, agricultural or industrial supply) and considerations *beyond the respective aquifer* in question (such as the dependency of a state on this source, or alternative water sources that a state may have), and of course 'vital human needs'.

The aquifer, as mentioned above, is mainly pumped by Israel (*75%*). In the years since Oslo II was signed in 1995/96 Israel's abstractions have been between 370 and 523mcm/yr with an arithmetic average of 437mcm/yr, while Gaza has an average abstraction rate around *154mcm* (*= 25.5% share*). A similarly strong contrast emerges if the sustainable yields in Israel and Gaza are compared: Gaza has a natural recharge of some *~60mcm/yr*. More importantly, and as stated before, this Coastal Aquifer constitutes the only water source of the Gaza Strip itself (especially under conditions of complete separation from the West Bank).

**Groundwater recharge, abstractions and quality**

The Coastal Aquifer (also called "Coastal Aquifer Basin" – CAB) is a shallow aquifer that consists mostly of sand and gravel. The aquifer is replenished by direct rainfall infiltrating into the sands. In addition, return flows from leaky supply networks, agricultural irrigation flows and domestic or industrial sewage play an increasing role in the overall water budget of the aquifer. Last, but not least, lateral subsurface groundwater inflows from neighbouring aquifers have an important impact on both the quantitative and qualitative conditions of its groundwater.

In Israel in most years, total pumpage (466mcm) lies slightly (9%) above total recharge (426mcm).

[6] The full name is "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, May 21, 1997, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and opened for signature in 1997" herein cited as (UN-GA 1997).

As Table 1 shows, almost 60% of recharge is from rain and about 30% comes from the Shafdan treatment plant, whose treated effluents are re-infiltrated in sand beds. The rest of the recharge mainly comes from irrigation return flows (7%) and from leakage in water reservoirs (4%), which are filled mostly by flood water.[7] A part of this flood water stems from the upper Wadi Gaza, which Israel intercepts and stores on its side of the border. Direct recharge through wells with water from the NWC and the Western Aquifer existed in the past (7.1 mcm in 97/98) but virtually ceased (0.002% now). Of the total pumpage, 46% goes to agriculture,[8] and the other half mostly to domestic supply.

UNEP (2009) reports rainfall recharge of 45 mcm/yr inside Gaza (equivalent to a rainfall-'*recharge coefficient*' of ~41.4%),[9] while pumpage is quoted there (UNEP 2009, 55) as 163mcm/yr for the year 2007.[10] PWA (2010, 19) reports over 4600 agricultural wells, 2000 of which were drilled without regulation or supervision in past years (PWA 2010, 11, 19). HWE (2010, 42)[11] estimates recharge at 138.8mcm/yr, with rainfall recharge at 35mcm/yr (Table 1) and abstractions at 176.6mcm/yr (Table 1), thus calculating an annual deficit of 38mcm/yr (deficit = 27% of recharge).[12]

In Gaza, recharge from rain, lateral groundwater inflow and anthropogenic return flows amounts to ~124 mcm/yr (Vengosh 2005,

[7] For the year 2006/07, the Hydrological Service of Israel (HSI 2008, 110) accounted for 17.05mcm of indirect recharge from reservoirs, of which 13.52 came from floods and storm runoff and a mere 3.53mcm from water pumped in the National Water Carrier (NWC).

[8] Two-thirds are fresh water from boreholes and the NWC, one-third is from treated effluents as in the pump schemes around Shafadan.

[9] (300mm/yr*362km$^2$*41.4%=45mcm/yr) The *recharge coefficient*, in other words, means that out of 100 litres of rain falling on a given area, 41 litres infiltrate into the ground and replenish the groundwater-bearing aquifer strata beneath the ground.

[10] Pumpage in 2007 was an estimated 163mcm/yr with 60-65% agriculture and 35-40% domestic and industrial. Quotation: (UNEP 2009, 55 – quoting CMWU 2008).

[11] Table 5-1: Water Balance for Hydrological Year 2008/09. NOTE: The HWE Groundwater Protection Plan (HWE 2010, 42) in its Table 5-1 (Water Balance for the Hydrological Year 2008/09) calculates a total municipal abstraction rate of 94.2mcm/yr. Yet, leakage from ailing networks is reported high – between 25% and 30%. If we apply a 25% rate of physical losses (24mcm), this results in a net supply of 71mcm/yr. A 30% loss rate (31mcm) would result in only 63mcm/yr of net supply.

[12] Notes on HWE-calculations with respect to 'Return Flows': For the inflowing water, Return Flows should refer to only to the actually consumed domestic water only, not to all produced water; For the outflowing amounts, network leakage should also be subsumed under Return Flows.

17), while total abstractions amount to more than 150mcm/yr – thus creating a total annual deficit of ~31mcm/yr (or 20% of the budget), which means that one fifth of all abstractions are not covered by the yield of the aquifer. An overview of the above components of the Water Balance of Gaza is shown in the schematic flow chart (Fig. 7).

It should be added that it is not only in Gaza that the aquifer is over-pumped. The largest depressions of groundwater tables are actually found in the vicinity of Rehovot (Fig. 8), near the main population centres in Israel, where the abstraction rates are especially high.

A schematic spatial overview of abstraction rates is shown in Fig. 9, with the amount pumped indicated by the length of each column for two rows each. Fig. 9 also shows that contrary to frequent but wrong allegations, Israel does not heavily pump around Gaza in order to intercept groundwater flow before it can enter the strip (among other reasons due to the aforementioned poor water quality in the South). Israel only abstracts ~25mcm/yr in the Southern CAB, but 345mcm/yr in the Central and Northern aquifer areas.[13] On average, Gaza, with ~176.6 mcm abstractions, enjoys a share of only one quarter (27%) of total abstractions from the aquifer (see Table 6).[14] It should be stressed here that high salinities in this aquifer are by no means a new phenomenon, as the comparison of historical and current salinities in Fig. 11 makes clear.[15] The map shows for the Central Gaza strip, for example, that moderately fresh to slightly brackish water conditions (200-350mg/l) have given way to strongly brackish and saline conditions (600-1000mg/l). South of Rafah and East of Deir Al-Balah, a highly saline plume is encroaching the strip from SE directions towards the coast (dark grey, >1000mg/l Chloride contents) – see Fig. 10. Surprisingly, the strongest deterioration of freshness has occurred in the heavily pumped Central Israeli Coastal Plain, where formerly fresh water (light grey - <200mg/l) is now increasingly brackish to saline (between 200 and 1000mg/l) - see Fig. 11.

It is important to note here that salinities – contrary to the widespread but mistaken narrative – encroach Gaza from *two* directions: From

[13] This refers to the year 2003/04; source: (HSI 2005, 33).

[14] This share refers to the sum of Israeli and Palestinian abstractions, not including additional abstractions from the Egyptian part of the aquifer in Sinai.

[15] British Mandate groundwater salinity map from 1934/35 and Hydrological Survey of Israel data map 2004/05.

the Coast, as seawater intrusions, due to groundwater levels dropping below sea level; but also, and even more so, from the southeast, in other words, from within Israel, where the Coastal Aquifer is naturally connected to saline and hypersaline older regional aquifers (of Eocene age, "Avedat formation" in Israeli nomenclature) – here as well due to the dropping water levels inside Gaza, and thus increasing hydraulic gradients towards Gaza.

The cross-section in Fig**.** 12 and the map of water levels in Fig. 13 both show schematically the flow connection with the saline "Avedat" aquifer/aquitard of Eocene age inside Israel.

**Sources of pollution and salinity**

The large deficit in the water balance leads to a steady drop in water levels and thus a steepening of hydraulic gradients, both towards the borders of Gaza (both the sea and the eastern border). When groundwater levels drop below sea level, seawater intrusions are enabled. More importantly, the dropping water levels also increase the natural inflows of saline groundwater from the east and southeast. Other sources of pollution, besides the salt water intrusions from the sea and from the southeast, are mainly due to human activities on the ground inside Gaza, such as waste water effluents, solid waste disposal and agricultural by-products like fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and the like. While the direct rainfall replenishment is of relatively fresh water quality, the other flows constitute a stress on the salinity and overall quality of the resource. In addition, surface pollution from unregulated solid waste deposition and agricultural use of pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides renders the infiltration rain water dirty, thus contaminating the unsaturated zone and ultimately – with a delay of several (up to ten) years – the groundwater resources themselves.

Probably the largest sources of pollution finally are large amounts of untreated or insufficiently treated waste water infiltrating into the

aquifer.[16] Mark Buttle, coordinator for the WaSH cluster,[17] concluded that the "main reason is sewage infiltrating into the ground, while agriculture plays [only] a part through fertilizers. Khan Yunis, for example, relies entirely on cesspits and isn't connected to sewers" (quoted in Irving 2010, 1). Yet groundwater pollution is not restricted to Khan Yunis but ubiquitous throughout the Strip. Mark Buttle adds that there also was "a localized pollution problem stemming from the storm water lagoon which had a lot of sewage flowing into it for a few years" (Irving 2010, 2). In other words, waste water not only enters the unprotected (unconfined) dune sand and gravel aquifers with ease, in most of the so-called waste water lagoons, percolation into the ground is actually systematically enhanced, by boreholes drilled into the bottom of the lagoon and right into the aquifer!

This deeply flawed design is a feature almost unique to the Gaza Strip and dates back for many decades in the older lagoons, but is also used in the ones built recently. It should be noted that of course, this highly problematic approach, despite being given little attention in common discussions of the water pollution crisis, has deeper political reasons directly linked to the occupation[18] and merits further explanation. A recent study by UNEP (2009, 32) concludes that water is now so saline in Gaza that it could be the end of agriculture there, or at least "a long-term reduction in agricultural activity."

[16] There are no exact calculations as to the size of the salt and pollutant contribution from waste water. However, model calculations for the chloride mass balance inside Israel suggest that the bulk of salts entering the aquifer come from the unsaturated zone, which means from the delayed arrival of surface pollutants at the water table. According to calculations by HSI (2006, 115/116) for the year 2006/07, of the 137,186 tons of chlorides entering the aquifer, 78% come through the unsaturated zone (with 10% from rain, 36% from irrigation and 32% from the spreading beds of the Shafdan effluents re-infiltration scheme). Only 22% (30,114 tons) are groundwater inflows from the east. And to the west, despite local seawater intrusion, the aquifer shows a slight net loss of 674 tons of chlorides into the sea. In other words, surface pollution by far outweighs subsurface entries of salty inflows (seawater and lateral groundwater from the east). In Gaza, the relative weight of subsurface salt entries is higher than in Israel, but it is still unlikely that they deliver more salt than the agricultural and waste water return flows (data from: HSI 2008, 115 ff.).

[17] WaSH - Water and Sanitation, Hygiene working group of Palestinian and International NGO's in the oPt.

[18] Most of these lagoons were constructed under the occupation and prior to Oslo.

**"Enhanced" pollution**

For decades Israel, despite its economic power and full sovereignty over its territory, has been dumping raw domestic and industrial sewage into the sea, rendering its streams highly polluted, even toxic; as a result Israel is considered the worst polluter of the Mediterranean. It was only a decade ago that Israel started to step up its efforts to treat domestic sewage, and it still has a long way to go. The first modern treatment plant for West Jerusalem was opened only in this millennium (2001) and East Jerusalem is not even under consideration for its own treatment plant. It should be remembered that an Australian athletic team participating in the Maccabean Games in 1997 fell into the shallow lower Yarqon River when a pedestrian bridge collapsed under them; this resulted in serious injuries, not from the fall or inability to swimming, but simply because they came into contact with the toxic liquids that make up the Yarqon River. Even off the coast, waters are so polluted that Israeli army divers have sued the government for compensation, because so many of them suffer from cancer and other potentially lethal diseases. Even the pride of Israel's waste water treatment system, Shafdan treatment plant near Tel Aviv, not many years ago was dumping the residual sludge into the sea. To this day, many streams in Israel carry untreated domestic and industrial sewage into the sea.

Not so in Gaza under tight direct occupation since 1967 and a total siege since 2007, Not one single modern and sufficiently sized treatment plant was erected there during decades of direct, full Israeli control. The few existing plants only partially treat the sewage and are hopelessly under-sized. Despite the fact that Gazans were given neither tools nor assistance in building their much-needed treatment facilities and often even were refused permits to construct, in Gaza Israel strictly enforces the ban on dumping sewage into the sea. No raw wastewater collection pipe or canal is allowed to channel the sewage directly to the shore; only unregulated runoff towards the sea can be observed (OCHA-CAP 2009, 18).[19]

This strict and discriminatory ban on marine sewage disposal is the reason why the so-called "waste water lagoons" remain the

[19] Some 50-80 million liters per day (~24mcm/yr) of raw or partially treated sewage has been released into the sea daily since January 2008 due to the crisis at the wastewater treatment plants.

main feature of Palestinian waste water disposal. Originally built to accelerate groundwater recharge with storm water, "the location and design of these ponds was intended to facilitate easy and quick recharge. However, whenever the sewage pumps fail, the infiltration ponds become convenient dumping grounds for raw sewage. The net effect is that raw sewage infiltrates into the groundwater" (UNEP 2009, 56). In order to enhance this active recharge, a special design was invented – perforating the bottom with boreholes dozens of meters deep that rapidly channel the waste water into the underground. Almost all lagoons in Gaza function in this scandalous way. Hence, nearly the entire freight of pollutants is actively "recharged" into the shallow unsaturated zone between the ground and the water table, sometimes even directly into the groundwater body. More importantly, now even new donor-facilitated wastewater lagoons are designed in this fashion.[20] It is ironic - we have grown so accustomed to this flawed approach that a lagoon where the infiltration boreholes have become clogged over the years, is labelled as "not functioning *properly*".[21]

**BOX 1: A silent tsunami** For decades the old waste water lagoon with 3 million cubic metres of sewage has been hanging steeply over the city of Beit Lahia (OCHA Aerial photograph, Fig. 14).

In 2006, Palestinian NGOs made urgent pleas to allow pumping materials required to bring the level of the lake down into the Strip. "With the pleas came a host of consultants to look at the lake. Invariably the consultants would drive out to the lake, look at its saturated sandy levees in astonishment and say, 'If this thing ever bursts it will be a disaster'. And then they, as I did, would drive away" (Zeitoun 2007b). In late 2006 a new lagoon was added, but at an unfavourable location and with a severe lack of building material. After strong rains, this new small lagoon burst on 27 March 2007,

[20] It could not be otherwise: if these lagoons had their bottom properly sealed against infiltration into the ground, an overflow of the vast structures would be a matter of months, if not weeks.

[21] NB: To avoid any misunderstanding, it should be emphasised that dumping raw sewage into the sea is indeed the second worst option of all. But for a densely crowded stretch of land like Gaza, completely sealed off from the outside and depending solely on its scarce unprotected groundwater resources, the "infiltration basins" lagoons are clearly the single worst option.

burying the Bedouin community Umm El-Nasser under its stinking floods. 250 homes were destroyed, and five people died in the floods of sewage, immediately termed "wastewater tsunami" by the press (Fig. 15).

At the same time, all sewage had now to be pumped into the old lagoon, thus threatening to create an even larger catastrophe. The international community came to rescue with an emergency plan: Two new lagoons were to be erected near the northern border of the strip in order to prevent the main lake form collapsing. The two lagoons (Figs. 16a, 16b) were termed "infiltration basins" and indeed with a daily pumping capacity of some 6,000m$^3$ and a total storage of only 250,000 m$^3$, these lagoons would be filled in another 40 days. In other words, in order to only contain the small side stream to the new lagoons, 17 such basins would be needed each year to prevent them from rapidly empty their contaminating load into the aquifer beneath (so far the freshest groundwater zone in Gaza, see Fig. 10).

Thus each lagoon was perforated at its bottom by a series of 'infiltration boreholes' several dozen meters deep that would swallow the daily inflow of sewage; in other words: An active and enhanced wastewater recharge to the aquifer. The problem is "solved": A silent tsunami of sewage keeps flowing ever since, out of our eyes and our minds – until new reports of diseases due to contaminated drinking water are making headlines…

**"Emergency" for decades**

I remember, in early 1997, one of the first meetings I attended was organised by the World Bank dealing with Gaza. The over-abstractions, pollution and seawater intrusion into the aquifer were characterised as an "emergency state of affairs" and it was stated dryly that under "normal circumstances" and in other countries, pumpage would have to stop immediately.

Thirteen years have passed – the problems, of course, being older than this time span – and not only has pumpage not been stopped, but thousands of private new wells were actually drilled and dug into the shallow aquifer.[22] A serious lack of even basic control over abstractions

[22] A period of extreme drilling activity started after the war in summer 2006. With the trauma

is the rule; we do not even know the approximate number of wells, let alone their annual abstraction rates.[23] Unsurprisingly, UNEP (2009) comes to the conclusion that an immediate halt of abstractions from the aquifer is imperative. So if the years before the Second Intifada were already marked by emergency conditions, how should the current state and latest developments be described? During the 1990s plans for future enhanced supply, upgraded and largely expanded waste water treatment, and other protection measures were drawn up. But by the year 2005, prior to the Israeli disengagement from the strip, 5 years of relentless Israeli counter-Intifada had left the strip in conditions much worse than ever before.

*The Intifada*

Israeli destruction of infrastructure is of course older than the most recent aggression in 2008/09: During the Second Intifada the hardest hit areas were Rafah and Beit Hanoun in the extreme south and north of Gaza. In Rafah, the Israeli military destroyed 36 km of water lines and 42 km of waste water lines during its invasions in May 2004.[24] An estimated 20% of the existing water infrastructure was damaged by the Israeli military invasions. At the time, an American employee of USAID stationed in Gaza estimated that over 1000 wells had been destroyed, damaged, blown up or bulldozed by the Israeli army.

And yet, even this situation is now remembered as the good old days – before Israel cut off Gaza from all supplies and from the rest of the world, following the 2006 elections and the ensuing power split between Gaza and the West Bank.

When the Israeli government pulled out its settlers and redeployed the army, it left behind a scorched landscape, a raided infrastructure

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of the power plants being bombed by Israel and the wells consequently stopped operating, a real frenzy of uncontrolled private drilling broke out. There are only very rough estimates of the number of private wells dug in the year before the total siege was imposed over Gaza; some assume that more than 5000 wells were drilled by everybody who had the funds to do so. Every relatively prosperous homeowner ran to dig his own well, equipped with a pump and diesel generator, to "secure" supply during the frequent power (and water) cuts. PWA (2010) estimates the number of unregistered agricultural wells at 2000.

[23] PWA (2010) can only indirectly derive agricultural consumption estimates by applying an average irrigation water duty to all irrigated fields.

[24] For example OCHA (2004) reports damage to 15km (out of the 20km) of sewage networks in Rafah after incursions in May 2004. For the almost monthly invasions in 2004, see also PHG (2005).

and a shattered water supply. At the same time, there was much hope. Grandiose promises were (once again) made by the international community. Billions of donor dollars were pledged in late 2005, none of which materialised. This is because Palestinians in Gaza had to be punished once again, this time for their fair and democratic elections in January 2006 that brought Hamas a landslide victory.

Israel started to identify Gaza as a 'hostile entity' – and this time was joined by the Western donor states and the Fatah-appointed government in Ramallah. In 2007, when Hamas took control over the Strip, a total siege and blockade was imposed by Israel, soon joined and actively supported by the donors and Abu Mazen's "legitimate government".

*The siege*

This siege has proven to be a most effective (and cruel) measure of strangulation. No spare parts, no construction materials and no equipment for operation and maintenance were allowed to enter this small, hermetically sealed patch of land. Any attempt to reconstruct after the past devastation, let alone expand and upgrade existing infrastructure, collapsed within weeks, with the last pipe, the last fitting and the last screw leaving the empty warehouses. Half a year into the siege, the strip was already devastated on a new level.

Half a year into the siege, *Haaretz* correspondent Amira Hass (2008) wrote:

**"40% of Gazans lack running water"**

Gaza Strip residents Monday moved from worrying about the electricity cuts of the previous 40 hours to worrying about a water shortage.

The municipality needs electricity to bring water to homes and the houses need it to pump water to the roof tanks. Hence 40 percent of Gaza Strip homes - 600,000 people - had no running water Monday, the Palestinian Water Authority said. Oxfam International said Monday that unless diesel and fuel supplies were resumed immediately, all the Strip's water pumps could stop working by Tuesday. The non-governmental organization also warned of the sewage system's collapse in the absence of diesel.

'*Without electric power we can manage somehow, without bread too*,'

says a resident of the Nasser neighbourhood in northern Gaza.

'*It's cold enough to prevent the food from going bad and we try to open the refrigerator as little as possible. The kids grumble but they can learn to live without the computer. But without water? We calculate each step,'* he says. '*We don't put on the gas heaters, because tomorrow might be colder. We don't cook for long. But to consider whether to go to the toilet? Whether to wash our face? That is insufferable.'* (Haas 2008)

By the end of 2007, almost a year before Operation "Cast Lead", OCHA reported, "In the same time, water supply is more dire than ever. Long-duration cuts in supply are the rule. Average consumption has dropped from 97 l/c/d before the second Intifada, to 57.8 l/c/d" (OCHA 2008).

International organisations started warning about an outbreak of epidemics, chronic diseases and acute health hazards like blue baby syndrome. Failing water and waste water services were identified as the number one public health hazard in Gaza.

*War: Operation Cast Lead*

The Israeli invasion, Operation "Cast Lead", further devastated the little that had remained (see Table 2 below):[25] The Goldstone report found that "there was a deliberate and systematic policy on the part of the Israeli armed forces to target ... water installations" (Goldstone 2009, 22,217).[26] It further concluded that "in the destruction of private residential houses, water wells, water tanks, agricultural land and greenhouses there was a specific purpose of denying them for their sustenance to the population of the Gaza Strip" (Goldstone 2009, 26, par.73). At the height of the Israeli military offensive up to one third of the Gaza population was left without access to clean water, some for ten or more days (El-Jazairi 2008, 14).

UNEP (2009, 83, Table 27) estimates that total environmental damage (water, waste water, solid waste and related agricultural sectors) amounts to US$ 44 million (Table 3).

In addition to the long term and war damage, OCHA-CAP (2009, 17)

[25] "Before the war, Gaza had 97% supply coverage at 80 litres per capita per day and 64 % sewage collection & treatment coverage" (UNEP 2009, 78).

[26] Quoted from UN-GA (2009), Clause n.54 and Conclusion n.1026 (Goldstone: 22,217)

described the general situation in Gaza: "CMWU needs 1,250 tons of cement to repair damaged water tanks alone. 10,000 people [*still remain*] without access to running water mains. Access to water for the rest of the population is restricted." Yet the siege on Gaza continues relentlessly.

In June OCHA (2010a, 11) reported that imports into Gaza, were 20% of those during the first half of 2007, before the siege. After the Israeli invasion (08/09), 70% of all industrial establishments were closed. Power cuts last up to 16 hours per day. Aid dependency now is 80%. UNRWA reported that by the beginning of 2010 the number of refugees that lived in abject poverty had risen to 300,000. This is a threefold increase from 100,000 in the year 2009. As Mark Buttle, WaSH coordinator in Gaza, explains, this "indicates people's coping mechanisms are coming to an end. For two or three years people have been getting by -- borrowing or selling the odd asset -- but I think there's an indication that people are fundamentally running out of coping mechanisms" (Irving 2010).

*The situation after the war*

A recent household survey conducted by PHG & UNICEF (2010) shows that although 98 per cent of Gaza's 1.5 million residents are connected to the water network, supply is intermittent. Only 48% of households have running water four or more days a week. Some places receive no running water (like Al Mawasi), or only partially (Khan Younis camp, 52% of households).[27] In other places (Rafah, Ash Shati' Camp) water runs just once a week. However, the majority of the population does not use the municipal water supply for drinking.

*Drinking water*

13.1% drink water from the networks, and 4.2% get desalinated water supplied by the CMWU through networks or communal filling stations. "The vast majority, 82.7 per cent, rely on unregulated private water vendors, either with tankers or jerry cans." The business of private vendors has grown into a full-fledged industry, "a whole parallel

[27] "In Al Mawasi no household has running water and in Khan Younis camp 52 per cent do not have running water. Al Maghazi camp is the only area where all households have running water the majority of the time, four to seven days a week. In some places like Rafah and Ash Shati' Camp it runs just once a week" (PHG 2010, 14).

drinking water system from the private sector. There are about 70 privately-run boreholes in Gaza and each one has its own private desalination plant and tanker trucks to deliver the water to people's homes" (Irving 2010, 1).

Water for drinking is a basic right of every human being. According to the World Health Organization WHO each person should have daily access to 100 litres of clean, affordable and reliable water supply (100 l/c/d). The Millennium Development Guideline that deals with ensuring sustainability in environmental matters "aims at halving by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation" (Millennium Goal 7, Target 10 – UN-MDG 2010, 58).

In areas like Gaza such well-sounding promises disgrace themselves – quality and quantity of supply are not on a slow rise, but dropping rapidly.

The aforementioned 57.8 l/c/d (OCHA 2008) were an average value for the year 2008, before the war. A recent household survey (PHG 2010, 15) revealed that a mere 6% of households can rely on networked municipal supply as their source of essential drinking water (Fig. 19). In the poorest areas, such as Khan Yunis, up to one third of households cannot even rely on municipal supply for purposes, other than drinking (see 'domestic supply'[28] sources – Fig. 20). Instead, they depend on unregulated and unmonitored private wells or on humanitarian aid for this basic commodity (PHG 2010, 17 – Fig. 20). Households that are not connected to any water network, have no other resort but to either dig for water themselves (in some regions the water level is only a few meters below ground level) or to purchase water from private tanker "trucks" (photo – Fig. 17**,** graph – Fig. 19); in some areas, they drink from agricultural wells.[29]

On average, a jerry can of 18 litres of water costs one NIS, or 56 NIS per cubic-metre, though this varies by area (photo – Fig. 18). (By comparison, a cubic metre of network water costs 0.5 to 1.5 NIS in Gaza,

[28] 'Domestic' water here is understood as water for daily household operations, other than drinking water, like laundry, cleaning, and so forth.

[29] GCI (2008) studied water quality in these private owned and operated tankers and found reasons for grave concern about the water quality – mainly due to mishandling in storage and transportation of the desalinated brackish water.

or 4 NIS in Ramallah.) “Such rates are unaffordable for poor households – spending up to one-third of their income on water” (Mark Buttle in: Irving 2010, 1). Like everywhere in the world, from Bogotá to Lagos, the poorest pay the highest water prices – or have to consume water unsuitable for drinking. Yet despite being unaffordable for many, even this water is not safe: “When produced it’s normally pure,” says Mark Buttle, adding that this unregulated system fails during handling and transport in private tankers that pump the water into the household tanks. “During a delivery run dozens of people might handle the pipe – it only takes one not to have washed their hands. 70 percent of samples show positive for bacteriological pollution” (Buttle, quoted in Irving 2010).

“Rising poverty forced many people to drink water from private and agricultural wells that are polluted from farming and wastewater seepage. In Al Mawasi, where there is no water network (and only 58% of households are able to buy water from vendors), 47% say agricultural wells are their primary source of drinking water” (PHG 2010, 14, 15).

Across Gaza, only 32% of households can afford to use drinking water for cooking. “Cooking heightens the concentration of nitrates and other salts even further. 44% of respondents said they take daily showers” (PHG 2010, 9).

### ***Water that makes people sick***

The over-abstractions and the pollution together create a lethal mix: Water-borne diseases have been designated public health hazard No. 1 in Gaza by the WHO and UN and international NGOs operating in the water sector.

A mere 7.5 % of the 129 municipal drinking water supply wells meet WHO standards of chloride content (Fig. 21). In the last ten years, the salt concentration has risen around 30%. The water in Gaza makes people sick (Box 2). The household survey (PHG 2010, 9) concludes that on average, due to poor water quality and hygiene practices, 20% of households had at least one child under the age of five who had been infected with severe diarrhoea in the four weeks prior to the survey; locally (Beit Hanoun) this ratio can rise up to 38%.

**Box 2: When water makes people sick: water and waste water problems**

COHRE, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions wrote in January 2008 that:

• Water-borne diseases resulting from the lack of clean drinking water included diarrhoea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, paratyphoid, and gastro enteritis.

• Water-borne infections resulting from poor sanitary conditions included trachoma, conjunctivitis, dysentery, gastro-enteritis and hookworm.

• Children are the most vulnerable. In October 2007, the WHO reported that compared to the previous year, the number of children aged three and under who were diagnosed as having diarrhoea at UNRWA health clinics in Gaza had increased by 20%.

• WHO regularly detects alarmingly high nitrate contents from sewage and agriculture, for example in October 2007, especially in the wells of Gaza city, Jabalia and Khan Younis.

COHRE reminds us of the fact that according to international law,

"an occupying power is obliged to ensure public health and hygiene … The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Israel, also recognizes the right of the child to the highest attainable standard of health and states that the provision of clean drinking water is necessary to combat disease.) The right to water and sanitation is also essential in order to safeguard people from potentially fatal diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera. The blockade and restrictions on monetary transfers are therefore leading to a violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law."

*Domestic water for cleaning, cooking and personal hygiene*

The reliance on networks or other sources depends largely on the area – and hence water quality – of households. On average, 86% generally rely on the network for domestic water (Fig. 20) but half are reluctant to use this water for cooking due to water quality concerns. In many

refugee camps, however, water quality (or availability) is too bad even for using water for domestic purposes. In Khan Younis refugee camp only 57% source their domestic water from the network; the rest depend on aid. In Jabalya only 13% are supplied by the network, 45% rely on aid, and the rest on private supply (vendors 29% and wells 13%). In areas with hardly any network, such as Al Mawasi, as few as 1.4% of households receive domestic water from the municipal network while 98.7% draw it from private wells (PHG 2010, 17).

Yet, as already mentioned, water quality has long dropped below drinking water standards and is steadily declining. After the war, UNEP (2009, 61, 62 – Table 16) sampled both private and municipal water wells, with a distressing result: Seven of the nine private wells tested, and all three municipal wells tested, failed to reach WHO standards (especially with respect to chlorides, in some locations).

*A vicious circle*

In order to prevent people from drinking water from unregulated agricultural wells, controlled networked water would have to be brought to their homes. This requires large-scale repairs and local expansion of slowly rotting networks. Yet the siege on Gaza prevents all such projects from being implemented. No pipes, not even raw materials for plastic pipes, are allowed in. Key water project materials short-listed by WaSH as priorities are: Water pipes, cement, steel bar, aggregates and any sort of fittings, as well as generators, mobile water pumps and pump motors. Oxfam staff member Mark Buttle said,

> [E]xample: we drew up a clear priority list of things we thought we'd need for winter 2009 and started negotiating for those in October. We only actually received items from that list in March, April and May 2010. … Big sewage and wastewater projects cannot progress without materials coming from Israel, and we're talking tens of thousands of tons of cement.[30] At Oxfam…big projects can't happen…organizations like Oxfam are now having to take an emergency approach to the wastewater situation. (Irving 2010)

Gaza had already run out of pipes in late 2007. Buttle remarked,

[30] Each month a handful of trucks are getting through at best, not the many thousands needed.

> At the moment there is one pipe factory in Gaza which is producing, but there are knotty problems for aid agencies about the legalities of buying pipes when you are unsure if the raw materials entered Gaza through the tunnels. It's a not a simple problem (Irving 2010).[31]

This is the way Western donor states, and even NGOs, comply with the total siege on Gaza. The siege on Gaza is not only imposed by an Israeli government known for its contempt for international law. It is supported and deepened by the actions (and inactivity) of Western democracies, NGOs and the rival Palestinian authority in Ramallah (Ravid 2010).

For ten years, Gaza has seen nothing but destruction in waves ever more accelerating and intensifying, while at the same time, supplies of even the most basic materials for repairs are denied entry. It is against this background that Mark Buttle described the 2008/09 Military invasion with its "deliberate and systematic policy… to target… water installations" (Goldstone 2009, 22, 217)[32] in seemingly euphemistic terms:

> But even this is only the tip of the iceberg. A lot of problems now (such as decrepit pipes) are not due to Israel's invasion in winter 2008-09 ("Operation Cast Lead"). They're down to the overall deterioration of things over time (Irving 2010).

The water and sanitation situation today, almost 20 months after the war, shall be illustrated by two examples: the chronic fuel shortage and the blocking of trucks entering the strip (WaSH 2010d, 1):

*a) Fuel*

Lack of fuel results in

- 12-18 hours of continuous power cut-off per day; In addition, the current low voltage is inadequate to run CMWU water facilities. Thus 170 wells and 40 sewage pump stations are affected, as well as 4 wastewater treatment plants and 5 water desalination units.

[31] In Gaza, 45% of all water leaks into the ground.

[32] Quoted from UN-GA (2009), Clause n.54 and Conclusion n.1026 (Goldstone 2009, 22, 217).

- severe impediments on water supply and production: 25 water wells without standby power generators only operate when power is available.
- a 43% drop in water production and the interruption of pressurized water in the network. Most affected are those living in elevated areas and in residential towers.
- 50% of Gazans having access to water once a week only (6-8 hours).
- a 50% drop of production in the desalination units supplying drinking water. Residents of southern and central Gaza now are forced to purchase drinking water from the private vendors or from agricultural wells (at up to 40NIS/$m^3$) causing a serious health risk.
- sewage pump stations operating 12 to 24 hours per day and overflowing into the infiltration lagoons. Pump station No. B7 – which usually pumps ~40% of all Gaza City wastewater – now is at risk of total collapse.
- rising wastewater levels: the North Gaza treatment plant was forced to use the emergency latch (to prevent another Umm Nasser sewage flood) relieving raw sewage into the sea. Bathing along the shoreline, one of the few recreational activities available in Gaza, constitutes a great health risk.

Under current conditions, no risk mitigating response is feasible – WaSH dryly states: "No real changes in fuel supply. At present, no specific support is given to CMWU except for UNRWA's one-time provision of 100$m^3$." (WaSH 2010d) A one-time delivery of 100$m^3$ of fuel in a month, entering a strip with 1.5 million inhabitants is worth reporting![33]

And on July 16, 2010, OCHA (2010b, 10) adds that "Industrial fuel imports for the Gaza power plant continued to decline for the seventh consecutive month to now only 3.6 million litres per month (Fig. 22) and thus reached the lowest levels recorded since December 2008." This represents "27 percent of the amount of fuel required to operate the plant at full capacity. The Gaza Power Plant was forced to completely shut down for five days, triggering power cuts of 12-16 hours per day." (OCHA 2010b).

[33] Distributed evenly, these 100$m^3$/month for Gaza are equivalent to 2 millilitres per person per day.

This situation continued for the fourth consecutive year and throughout the summer:[34]

*b) Trucks*

The fuel crisis as well as the general crisis in Gaza is of course the result of trucks with supplies being prevented from entering the strip due to the Israeli siege on Gaza. And thus Gaza is probably the only place in the world where the exact number of trucks crossing the border is counted meticulously and makes daily headlines.

During the first five months of 2010, overall construction material imports (humanitarian and commercial) were 388 trucks or 1% the amount prior to the blockade (then 7,400 per month).

Exports of flowers and strawberries (in the 12 months from April 2009 until April 2010) amounted to 118 trucks. This is 0.9% of their previous level. OCHA (2010c, 11) states that "the continued ban on exports has been one of the key reasons for the collapse of the private sector."

Water and sanitation here are not the exception: According to OCHA (2010d), the number of all trucks with humanitarian goods in the year 2010 (January to September) was close to zero: All in all, 233 trucks with humanitarian construction materials and only 19 trucks with hygiene and cleaning supplies entered Gaza, equivalent to 0.91 and 0.08 trucks per day on average, respectively. In the 3 months since the "easing" of the siege, from June to August 2010, only two humanitarian trucks for hygiene and cleaning supplies entered Gaza.

The WaSH Cluster specifically counts the trucks for Water, Sanitation and Health. Table 4 shows that in June, July and August 2010, and since Israel announced the "easing" of the siege in June 2010, a total of 64.5 trucks with emergency WaSH materials could enter the strip (44.5, excluding chlorine deliveries). In 2010, 20 WaSH trucks per month on average entered Gaza, or 10.6 trucks excluding chlorine supplies.

*Three generations…*

In July, OCHA (2010a, 8) reports: "Karni Crossing was built and equipped to handle *over 750 truckloads* a day. However, it remains limited to

[34] 8-12 hours daily power cuts; 40% of population get water once a week (6-8 hrs) - without power, the water cannot be pumped to the roof water tanks (WASH 2010b, 1).

only *one conveyor* belt used for the transfer of grains and construction gravel - the main elements of the crossing remain closed ('security concerns'). In Karni, UNRWA, for example, could transfer only 30 truckloads of gravel per week (in average 4.2 trucks per day) through this one conveyer belt. At this pace, it would take approximately 15 years to bring in the 24,000 truckloads of aggregate needed to carry out 26 frozen UNRWA projects, and about *75 years* to bring in the aggregates needed to implement the whole UNRWA reconstruction plan for Gaza."

*Controlled Items - The Easing of the Siege*

Following the attack on the international Gaza aid flotilla, in which 9 unarmed civilians were killed by Israeli troops, world attention once again turned to Gaza. Israel was under pressure and promised in June 2010 to ease restrictions on the entry of goods. But there was not very much pressure, as all sides hastened to agree that they do not seek a fundamental change in policy.

The so-called "easing" consisted of a shift "from a list of permitted items to a list of banned items" (issued on 5 July 2010) such as military and dual use items which remain prohibited or restricted.

Dual-use items are specified in two separate lists, one list of 15 categories of *general items*, including fertilizers, glass fibre-based raw materials, drilling equipment, vessels and water disinfectants, and another list of 19 types of *construction materials* (to be limited to projects under international supervision), including cement, aggregates (gravel), prepared concrete, concrete blocks, steel elements, asphalt, sealing materials, and construction vehicles, and so on (OCHA 2010b, 8).

*JUNE*

"The announced 'easing' of the blockade (crossing Kerem Shalom)… however, is not reflected in the number of trucks carrying WASH materials. The WASH sector is currently awaiting entry of materials for 37 emergency projects, worth over 85 million USD. UNDP reports that the construction of water tanks is on hold due to unavailability of construction material" (WaSH 2010e, 2).

*JULY*

As reported by OCHA's *Humanitarian Monitor*,

> Imports of construction materials remain restricted. Under the new measures, such materials are considered 'dual use' items, and are only allowed for projects approved by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and supervised by international organizations. As a result, no change is expected in the private sector's ability to address housing needs, which have increased since the imposition of the blockade, and exacerbated by the destruction of homes during the 'Cast Lead' offensive.
>
> This month [July 2010], Israeli authorities approved a total of 31 new construction projects, including eleven to be administered by the UN. These include eight new schools, and classroom additions at two existing schools, and two health clinics. However, the approved projects are only a small part of what is needed: the value of the approved UN projects (USD 15 million) is only 1.4 percent of the total value of the proposed programme of work for the UN in Gaza (USD 1.05 billion). (OCHA 2010a, 7, 8)

The new Israeli policy, it turns out, is not so new after all. The "easing" in principle should not be confused with real changes on the ground – real trucks passing the land entry points to Gaza.

> So far, approvals have only been given in principle, and follow-up negotiations are required for approval of the detailed list of items, and to establish the entry schedule. (8)

Nearly 22% of the items would be considered as 'dual use' while there seems to be unclear guidance on the remaining 10% items including the materials for 'water production' and chemicals for water treatment (WaSH 2010c, 3).

A detailed operational guideline with categorisation of the controlled and dual use items is immediately required for facilitating entry of essential materials to address the urgent humanitarian WASH needs in Gaza." (WaSH 2010c, 3). However, as Mark Buttle points out,

> **"**When there is no publicized list of what is allowed in and what isn't, one has to ask, how can you possibly monitor a change in it? Projects never actually get any written response from COGAT, to say: 'we have now agreed that this can enter'. There are quite clearly two levels of authorization, a political 'yes' and a security 'yes'...Even if we can get a very clear political "yes" from COGAT,[35] the security clearance from Shin Bet delays it several months, easily. (Irving 2010)

*AUGUST*

"*Although the vast majority of the WASH materials awaiting entry into Gaza in warehouses around Kerem Shalom or Ashdod are clearly not mentioned on the restricted list, access is still limited.*" (WaSH 2010e, 2) Three months later, a first balance can be drawn, and it is devastating. While water is counted by the litre, fuel imports indispensable for operating WaSH facilities are counted by the millilitres:

"*Fortunately fuel supplies have increased for the past two months (July, August 2010)*", rejoices the WaSH cluster meeting of 19 August 2010, "*with together 488 $m^3$ of fuel entering for UNRWA and CMWU*" (WaSH 2010e, 1). For a population of 1.5 million over 60 days, the amount under this 'fortunate increase' is equivalent to an average of about 5 millilitres per person daily.

"limited evidence for improved access…"

The most important emergency supplies are still being left to rot in the warehouses outside Gaza (in Ashkelon, Kerem Shalom, …).*" Although, over two thirds of the WaSH items that remain in warehouses are not listed as controlled items (in need of a special permit) and should therefore present no entry problem, only 16%*[36] *entered since 20th June, while an additional 28% received an informal approval"* (WaSH 2010b, 2).

**Gradually, carefully and discreetly**

The *Haaretz* article *"*Abbas to Obama: I'm against lifting the Gaza naval

[35] COGAT - the Israeli government organization which controls the entry of materials to Gaza.

[36] This is less than 11% of the entire stock in warehouses, which in turn is only a fraction of all supplies short-listed.

blockade" reported in 2010 that "Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is opposed to lifting the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip… Senior Israeli officials and European diplomats say there is agreement that policy on the blockade should be altered, but this should be done carefully and discretely." The article added, "One of the points that Abbas raised is that the naval blockade imposed by Israel on the Strip should not be lifted at this stage. … Egypt … also opposes the lifting of the naval blockade. … Abbas told Obama that actions easing the blockage should be done with care and undertaken gradually" (Ravid 2010).

As requested by Abu Mazen, the Israeli easing is being done with utmost care, discreetly and very gradually, indeed…

**Myths and Solutions**

Box 3 discusses common misconceptions about the water situation in Gaza.

**Box 3: Common misunderstandings about the water scarcity in Gaza**

**1. … It's the climate** – obviously, with annual rainfall between 200 and 400 mm Gaza belongs to the semiarid climate zone. It should not be overlooked however that in former times Gaza was esteemed for its high-quality water resources and regarded as an oasis. The climate did not change over the last thousand years, but the number of inhabitants began to explode with the mass expulsions from Israel in 1948.

**2. … It's Israel**, **by intercepting the ground water flow in the shared Coastal aquifer around Gaza** The fact is, however: One of the few things, one cannot accuse Israel of, is that it had drilled and was pumping wells particularly in the areas upstream and around Gaza. The bulk of well withdrawals from the shared Coastal aquifer takes place way further north, in the densely populated centre of the coastal plain around Tel Aviv (between Rehovot and Netanya). But according to international law, Israel as the upstream riparian in the shared groundwater flow system is clearly responsible for an "equitable and reasonable" allocation of resources. It would therefore have to supply Gaza with considerably more water.

**3. … It's the over-abstractions, which lead to sea water intrusion** - however most of Gaza's current salt input stems from natural lateral ground water inflow from Israel amounting to 37mcm/yr and with the bulk of it being contaminated by a very high natural salt content. The salt input through seawater intrusion in the areas where the water level has dropped below sea level due to long-term over-pumping is of course very worrying; but it pales compared to the risen salt inflows from the SE (see map). This fact usually is ignored. Also in Israel the Coastal aquifer is drastically over-pumped and the salt front already reaches more than one kilometre deep into the hinterland. However, in Israel, the effect of this mismanagement is less dramatic since Israel still is bestowed with sufficient hinterland and thus can relocate its degrading wells into fresher areas.

**4… It's the overpopulation - Gaza simply cannot be self-sufficient** - this of course is true and cannot be over-emphasized: With 1.4mio population on 310km$^2$ land (without the Israeli cordon sanitaire) Gaza is one of the most densely populated spots on Earth, as if the total Arab population was crowded in the UAE or the world's population in Libya... However: Who would for example demand of an equally "over-populated" area such as Manhattan / New York that it supplies itself "self-sufficiently" and only from within its own city perimeter! Even Beer Sheva, with its climate comparable to Gaza and providing of much more hinterland and catchment area is supplied from Israel's rainy north. In the meantime Israel has actually developed over-capacities in the south, which for technical reasons it cannot pump to the north. Therefore Gaza will have to be supplied from within Israel in the short and in the long run.

**5… Gaza can only be helped by large scale sea water desalination** - however, this 'solution' is misleading, not only because it is entirely un-ecological and unaffordable for Gaza's impoverished population. A cubic meter of normal drinking water from Mekorot in Israel costs 2, 86 NIS (incl. VAT) pumped as bulk supply to the entrance of Gaza. The cheapest desalinated sea water is to be had only for approximately 4 NIS. And in Gaza the pure raw water production within the plant (Az-Zuweida) at present costs over 6 NIS per cubic meter - if there was any electricity, spare parts and raw material available... The net pumping costs at the shallow wells in Gaza (transport also not included here) amount to merely

0,5 NIS/$m^3$. For several years now, Israel advertises desalination as the new wonder drug for the chronic water conflict - obviously out of its interest not to share any of its existing fresh water use with the Palestinian co-riparians. Unfortunately, for pragmatic-political reasons more and more donor states start advocating this unfair and wasteful option, because they consider the simple alternative as politically not "enforceable" or "unrealistic": to pressure Israel to at least partly sell some of its surplus in the south to Gaza.

It has been shown that the state of water emergency in Gaza has its origin not only in the natural climatic scarcity of water, but also in the political situation (the ongoing occupation and the siege on Gaza) that leaves no room for alternatives. Last but not least, all problems are deepened and accelerated by the fact of the extremely dense population of the Strip. So the question arises: Is there any hope of resolving Gaza's water problems? If yes, how can these problems be addressed? To answer such questions, we must take the political climate into consideration. Without an end to the total siege and without getting rid of the occupation, a permanent solution is not possible. But what are the technical aspects of such an answer?

*Waste water reuse, water transfer from the West Bank, and desalination: Will they work?*

*Usually, three suggestions are made on the technical level. First, waste water can be treated properly and then reused as an additional resource. Second, fresh water can be transferred from the West Bank to the Strip on a large scale. And finally, seawater can be desalinated. Let us discuss each of these three approaches.*

*1. Waste water treatment.*

This is not only a chance to gain additional usable water; it is also imperative to prevent further contamination and degradation of the aquifer. But are we speaking of large quantities? If the actual net consumption of water lies below 60 l/c/d this results in a total consumption of <30 mcm/yr. If 75% of this water were captured by sewage networks, we already would have to consider this a success. Israel currently takes pride in the large amount of effluents it reuses – not for drinking purposes but for irrigation; but the total amount of

reused water in Israel is around 360mcm/yr, some 16% of the total, and around 40% of municipal consumption.[37] Applied to Gaza, even if we unrealistically assume the same economic and administrational potential as in Israel, this would result in less than 9 mcm/yr (6% of total current abstractions). It therefore appears obvious that waste water reuse

a) cannot solve the drinking water crisis (due to the poor quality of effluents)

b) cannot, and will never be able to, constitute a major component of overall supplies

c) can only be an optimization of, and an addition to, existing agricultural supplies

*2. Fresh water transfer from the West Bank.*

This option has been studied and discussed in depth, albeit mainly before the second Intifada: The current disconnection of the two territories and the prospects for the near future make such discussions somewhat utopian for the time being. However, what if the two areas of the occupied territories became one integral political unit? Would it not be a good idea to channel some of the relatively abundant water in the West Bank to the dry Gaza Strip? Has not Israel successfully transferred water from the Upper Jordan River to the Negev?[38] The answer is no. The West Bank as a whole enjoys a relative abundance of water, over 600mm of annual rain in most of the main population centres in the highlands. However, the southern West Bank naturally is the driest place of all the highlands and most areas are rather semi-arid (400mm/yr of rainfall). More importantly, and due to the political climate, the southern West Bank around Hebron is by far the most water-deprived area (except for Al-Ghor). Since Oslo, a handful of new

[37] Currently, around 730mcm of fresh blue water from wells, springs and Lake Tiberias are produced annually, in addition to some 140 mcm of desalinated seawater. Israel wants to step up its desalination to some 700mcm/yr in the future, thus doubling its already wasteful domestic and municipal consumption.

[38] This is not the place to discuss the "desert bloom" myth in depth. It is enough to state that the large scale basin transfer of illegally appropriated Jordan river water is far from being a success story, economically, ecologically and in terms of sustainable water management – not even to speak of the political dimension.

wells have been drilled in the Eastern Aquifer. These wells thus lie on the far side of the mountain ridge from Gaza and pump from very deep water levels (between +200m and sea level).[39] The total yield of these few wells is so low that water production per capita has been in a steady decline since Oslo. Moreover, in the decades since 1967, Israel did not allow the Palestinians to drill even a single new additional well under their own control in the entire Western basin.[40] Therefore, only a *political* solution granting Palestinian water rights in the West Bank aquifers will permit even discussing this *technical* option. Even then, Hebron has no surplus to share with other regions, and transmission costs would be astronomically high.[41]

*3. Seawater desalination.*

There seems to be a consensus among most experts as to the most favourable long-term solution that would overcome the chronic malaise:

- In its conclusions the 'Groundwater Protection Plan for the Coastal Aquifer of Gaza' recommends Element #9: "RO Seawater Desalination Plants" (HWE 2010, 121).[42]
- "CMWU emphasised that the key for resolution to Gaza water problems lies in sea-water desalination and that phased production would help in ensuring supply of clean, safe drinking water to Gazan population without burdening the aquifers" (WaSH 2010e, 2).
- UNEP (2009) recommends: "Alternative sources of water should be developed and used to allow the coastal aquifer to rest. The only method that can produce water in adequate quantities is seawater desalination." (UNEP 2010, 71) – see Table 5.

One billion dollars, almost two thirds of the costs for the UNEP's suggested long-term action and rehabilitation plan, is the cost of

[39] The water has to be pumped up a thousand meters to cross the Hebron mountains.

[40] There are only four small and old wells (Fawwar wells n.1c and n.3, Samu' n.1 and Rihiyeh well) with a combined pumpage as low as 1 – 1.3mcm/yr.

[41] This concerns both the initial investments costs for infrastructure in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars and the permanent operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, especially for the enormous pumping heads.

[42] RO = Reverse Osmosis desalination technology.

desalination plants alone (see Table 5); sums that an impoverished strip of land such Gaza can hardly afford…

In past years, seawater desalination plants have slowly become a major option in the technical discourse about increased supplies for Gaza. Especially since the summer war in 2006, when Israel bombed the power plants of Gaza and left the Strip for weeks without operating wells, there has been a change of opinion among the general public and those in the water sector. More and more, one hears that "only seawater desalination plants would make us independent from Israel." This, however, is a stark misunderstanding. To the contrary, desalination plants with their sophisticated and sensitive technology are far more vulnerable and dependent on steady, reliable supplies of spare parts and raw materials (chemicals) for their operation. While the currently operating simple old mechanical pumps can be repaired locally and – in the worst case – be kept running with 'spit and wire', high-tech installations such as modern large-scale reverse osmosis desalination plants would make the Gazan water sector utterly dependent on uninterrupted inflows not only of sophisticated tools, spare parts and other supplies, but also of expertise. More importantly, desalination plants have a huge hunger for energy. Each desalination plant currently built in Israel is complemented by a new power plant only to supply the energy its operation demands. The Ashkelon plant has energy needs on the order of a whole city of 50,000 inhabitants![43] It should be obvious that this option leaves Palestinians even more dependent on uninterrupted energy supplies or fuel imports than ever before![44] It should also be mentioned here that desalination for Gaza is also Israel's preferred option and Israel in the past has tried to blackmail Gaza precisely under this option (see Box 3, Desalination blackmail).

Finally, it goes without saying that large-scale desalination of seawater is such an expensive venue that it is prohibitive for almost all nations

[43] It is precisely for this energy demand that "Israel, in contrast [to the European Union], has no plans to reduce greenhouse gases. The best it can do - according to the Environmental Protection Ministry - is to reduce the growth rate of such gases in the coming decades. Expected growth according to a business-as usual scenario (without taking action to reduce gases) is 63 percent in two decades (Rinat 2008).

[44] Israel has no qualms with energy supplies – the Tamar and Leviathan offshore gas fields off the coast of Haifa belong to the largest findings worldwide last year! It should also not be a surprise that the current desal-hype in Israel is driven by "the even narrower interests of private-sector companies [*like the gas station and petroleum chains of Paz and Delek!*] that stand to make windfall profits from rapidly expanded desalination" (Bromberg 2008).

on earth, except for the energy rich states (without alternatives) in the Gulf – and recently, Israel. But even in Israel, the high real costs of this technology are painfully felt, and provoke debate about the cost of publicly supplied water.

**BOX 4: Desalination blackmail**

Before 2006, Gaza wanted to buy water from Israel and Israel signalled consent to supply water to the Strip. However, Israel wanted Gaza to pay the full cost of desalinated water from the Ashkelon plant although the water from the plant is fed into the National Water Carrier and thus mixed with ordinary blue water, which is very low cost. It should be noted that Israel is supplying its own Israeli customers at the regular price of blue water, regardless whether this water is blue water or desalinated seawater. The Palestinian side still did not call off the deal but wanted assurances that it would indeed receive desalinated water for this high price. In other words, the Palestinian negotiators wanted to make sure that Gaza would not be *subsidizing* the Israeli water sector. Palestinians therefore demanded exact water quality data to differentiate between natural water and desalinated water, which is poor in essential minerals. At this point, Israel refused to cooperate because this would have exposed the fact that, indeed, one day blue water is pumped and another day desalinated water. The deal was called off since it is hardly defensible that the impoverished Gaza Strip should subsidize the Israeli desalination adventures and their politically motivated lack of transparency about the source of the water it sells.

Hence none of the three alleged technical options offers a viable and realistic alternative for filling Gaza's need for a larger, sustainable water supply.

*i.* *Wastewater reuse* can only add an increment to irrigation supplies.

*ii.* *Transfer* of fresh water from the Southern West Bank – a utopia at the current state of segregation - would require sufficient reserves under Palestinian control and even then comes at prohibitive costs.

*iii.* *Seawater desalination* would leave Gaza more dependent on power supply from Israel than ever, again at prohibitive

economic[45] and environmental costs and at a painful political price (see below).

**The political dimension of the shared resource**

One aspect of the technical options has not been discussed – which is the political dimension of all these approaches. It has become a bad habit in the highly funded and donor-driven water sector since Oslo, that technical solutions are continually suggested at the expense of the political rights of Palestinians. All the above solutions have in common that they not only try to circumvent Israel's responsibility as the occupying power under international law to guarantee sufficient water supply to the population under its control, but also deal with Gaza as if it were a viable independent state, owner of its own resources and a fully satisfied riparian to the shared Coastal aquifer. This however, is not the case.

As was detailed above, the coastal fresh water yield that Palestinians control in the Gaza strip is only a small fraction (5-7%) of its current abstractions. In addition, the Gaza Strip has only a 12% share of the total freshwater yield of the basin (Table 6).

However, under international law, Gaza as a riparian to the CAB legally has the right to a much larger share of this common resource of about 280 mcm of freshwater per year![46] It should be prohibited to undertake any action that would undermine the Palestinian standing in future negotiations. To the contrary – all current interim approaches should bear in mind the ultimate interest in securing all Palestinian water rights. All interim actions should not only promote and strengthen the starting position for water negotiations, but also strive to improve the Palestinian position.

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[45] The Az-Zuweidah plant (in Deir Al-Balah), financed by Austria in 2003, is the only existing seawater desalination plant in the strip, with a nominal capacity of 1000$m^3$/day. Currently, however, it works a maximum of 8 hours per day, which raises the net production costs to around US$ 2.5/$m^3$. If amortisation costs of US$ 1/$m^3$ are added, the water price shoots up to some 10NIS/$m^3$.

[46] The exact amount of legal "equitable and reasonable share" is not defined unequivocally in the general guidelines of the 1997 UN Convention on Transboundary Water Courses. To some extent, and unfortunately, given the balance of power, it remains a matter of negotiation and agreement in future peace talks. From a political point of view, it is therefore even more important to raise the stakes and the bargaining power *before* such negotiations by promoting public discussion and international understanding of Palestinians' just water rights.

It is clear that Israel tries to use every opportunity to create facts on the ground and undermine the Palestinian negotiating position. Artificially restricting oneself to a purely technical discussion of remedies to the water crisis is in itself a political approach – one that strengthens the status quo and directly undermines the chance for fundamental change in the political map. Most western government donor agencies prefer to consider technical solutions for a purely political problem.[47] All political approaches are dismissed as unrealistic, utopian, counterproductive, if not aggressive and even extremist.

In general, the weaker side in a conflict cannot afford to ignore the political dimension of the problems; it has to broaden and intensify the general call for justice and for enforcement of rights. Conversely, the stronger side has the wind at its back. It can afford to call for so-called 'practical', opportunistic and pragmatic solutions, since they all tend to strengthen or cement the status quo.

"As in most cases of power asymmetry, politically motivated positions that are based on maintaining the (unfair) *status quo*, are considered natural and technical in nature, while even very technical positions contesting and challenging the *status quo* will end up being discarded as politically aggressive, extremist and – of course – politically unrealistic." (Messerschmid 2007, 361)

Desalination for Israel is an ideal tool to obscure the consequences of the occupation and its own long-standing hydro-apartheid. The sea is – at least theoretically – a practically infinite resource. In the new Israeli discourse, Palestinians "no longer need their water rights" on the existing renewable blue water resources. Israel thus constantly alters the discourse on water rights by putting out yet another "generous offer" to desalinate for the Palestinians and deliver this water to the West Bank (and/or to Gaza). Investing billions[48] in large-

[47] Compare the recent "success" of the quartet envoy Tony Blair, to facilitate "more open borders" to the strip – thus facilitating the import of such ground-breaking supplies as "towels and matraces."

[48] "In Israel […] the desalting industry is expected to grow 140 percent over the next decade, with a capital investment of $56 billion by 2015" (according to L. Brezosky, quoted in: Sanders 2009) – If we assume 750mcm of additional annual water from desalination in Israel, the US$ 56 billion breaks down to an investment of US$75 for each additional cubic-metre annually. This is roughly one hundred times the capital investment cost of developing conventional groundwater.

scale desalination plants not only constitutes an unbearable burden on Gaza's virtually nonexistent economy – it reduces Gaza's prospects to successfully negotiate a larger share in the coastal aquifer's freshwater potential.[49]

**The only answer to the crisis: Equitable share = transfer from Israel**

As has already been mentioned, the demand for an equitable and reasonable share in transboundary water resources stands at the centre of Palestinian water interests and negotiating positions. It is enshrined in the UN Watercourses Convention[50] as well as under customary international law.[51] Many different options of reallocating shared water resources between Israel and the Palestinians are imaginable. But in most such options, Israel would have to deliver water to the Strip from within Israel. This water could come directly from physical water resources within the Coastal aquifer or from other sources, such as other aquifers, the national Water Carrier, surface water, the Jordan River, marginal[52] water or even the sea. But in any case it would have to be allocated as a "fresh water apportionment" from the shared fresh resources. The issue of cost is a matter for negotiation. One of the many realistic options for negotiation would be for Israel to keep its exclusive abstractions from the Upper Jordan river, but compensate Palestinians downstream with their "equitable and reasonable share" – whether in the West Bank, or in Gaza or divided between the two. A similar approach could be followed for each shared aquifer and for other shared surface water or marginal resources. In every such

[49] No exact figures on such share are available. In fact, there is an almost complete absence of any discourse quantifying such vital amounts. As a very rough first approximation, such demands could lie somewhere between 100 and 150mcm/yr, a three- to five-fold growth in available freshwater resources for Gaza. Any such discussion of Gaza's share will have to be embedded in the overall equations of sharing water between Israel and all Palestinian territories, including all shared resources, the Mountain aquifer and the Jordan River.

[50] "The UN Watercourses Convention calls for 'equitable and reasonable' utilisation of transboundary resources. Finland, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, have all signed up to this, while Slovenia, France and the UK are considering doing so. (8+3)" Zeitoun (2008).

[51] This means that these provisions are applicable whether states have ratified the treaty or not.

[52] The term "marginal water" in Israel usually is associated with the non-conventional water resources, such as brackish water (usually desalinated at much lower costs than sea water), collected storm-water, treated waste water effluents, etc.

scenario, Gaza – physically, not politically! – would become a large-scale recipient of water from Israel, but not as a favour or as a purely commercial client, but in fulfilment of its political water rights.

The important practical implication of such an overall approach would be that every water deal with Israel (even if purely commercial) would become an important milestone and practical step towards a historic deal over water rights. Once Israel is established as the side supplying Gaza, this will start to work towards, not away from, a resolution that secures Gaza's "equitable and reasonable share." Once Israel has factored Gaza supplies into its own engineering and managerial equations of water supply and infrastructure, such a deal becomes an asset, rather than an obstacle to a just solution – provided (!) Palestinians don't get tired in the meantime of insisting on their water rights and promoting international understanding and support for such an endeavour. Practically, an established and functioning supply line, network and supply mechanism acts as an incentive to continue along this path and "only" to negotiate over the political terms and legal implications of such supply.

It is worth mentioning that currently Israel has a water surplus in the South, due not only to the new desalination plant in Ashkelon but also to the existing large-scale supply infrastructure of the National Water Carrier that reaches from the upper Jordan River until down to Mizpeh Ramon in the midst of the Negev. As a matter of fact, Israel's water engineers have long regretted the shortsighted design of this carrier, planned in the 1950s and opened in 1964 – which at the time was only envisaged as pumping water from north to south. For many years, Israel has preferred to pump water from the allegedly "dry" Negev towards the thirstiest region in the central coastal plain, where most of its population resides and where use of local water resources has been overstretched for many decades. In other words, there is currently a water surplus in the South, right at the doorstep to the Gaza Strip. Hence it is financially by far the most feasible option to channel this surplus to Gaza. Mekorot bulk water supply in Israel (and in the West Bank) comes at 2.863 NIS/$m^3$ (including the Value Added Tax or VAT – WBWD: 2010).[53] Inside Gaza, municipalities have consumer end

[53] 2.468 NIS/$m^3$ excluding VAT, according to the West Bank Water Department Water Bills from Mekorot-Water Co. Ltd. through the Civil Administration (Bet El 2010) – (WBWD 2010).

prices for piped network supply between 0.5 and 2 NIS/$m^3$. This is a considerable difference in price. However, it is still much cheaper than the current practice of purchasing "desalinated" brackish water from private flying water tankers at a cost of 1 NIS per 'gallon',[54] 50NIS/$m^3$ (see Fig. 18).

For the time being, or for the interim period, it would also be much cheaper to have international donors pay the difference in price between Mekorot and local network water prices. This has the additional political advantage that donors would be encouraged to support a long-term solution under which it is mainly the price of this water that is negotiated, rather than promoting the unfeasible options of Gazan desalination or West Bank water transfer.

Among many Palestinian water professionals, as well as in the rather embryonic public discourse on this matter, frequently used arguments against the proposed supply from within Israel are as follows:

**"Why should we depend on Israel?"**

It is of course true that Gaza would be dependent on Israeli supply, as much as the West Bank already is, (see Fig. 23), in both water and electrical power supply.[55] There is also no doubt that currently, the supplied villages in the West Bank cannot rely on Israeli delivery during every summer. This, however, is technically mainly due to the fact that they share the same (finite) network with settlers, and settler consumption doubles each summer (compared to the winter months), thus drying out the villages down the line. The deal with Gaza, technically, would be of a different nature – where Gaza would directly tap into the above-mentioned surplus of water in the south.

**"Surely we cannot depend on Israel and make ourselves hostage to Israeli collective punishment at will?"**

True as well, collective punishment of villages in the West Bank by reducing water supply has happened in the past (during the second Intifada), does happen and is likely to continue in the future, although

[54] Not the Anglo-Saxon volumetric unit, but the Arabic word for a canister of about 20 litres.

[55] The West Bank, under the Palestinian Authority, already IS the single largest customer for water as well as for electricity, and so also the single most important customer and source of income of these institutions.

as the exception rather than the rule.[56]

However, it should not be underestimated: If an internationally brokered (sponsored) interim agreement with Israel could be struck to secure a certain amount of regular water supply – and as long as Palestinians do not violate this agreement by not paying their bills – it will not be all that easy for Israel to one-sidedly cancel or violate this interim economic arrangement for such a vital and basic resource as drinking water!

Another argument goes like this:

**"Gaza has to become independent from Israel. Gaza should be self-sufficient in water supply."**

Most of the proponents fail to answer how exactly Gaza WILL become independent from Israel – other than desalinating or importing from the West Bank. From a technical, hydrological, economic and developmental point of view, such a standpoint looks rather delusional than realistic. To state it as clearly as possible: *Gaza is not self-sufficient in water supply, cannot be, and will never be!* It is as simple as that. Gaza cannot, and will never, supply itself with sufficient clean water, by itself. Gaza is the most crowded and deeply impoverished place on earth where water is a desperately scarce per-capita resource.

To illustrate this situation, a surprising metaphor should be introduced here:

Gaza is New York, Gaza is Manhattan!

Not only does Gaza resemble Manhattan in size. More importantly, almost any densely populated city on the planet depends on outside supplies. To tell Gazans to become self-sufficient in water supply is like telling the average New Yorker in Manhattan, "Go and drill in Central Park, build rainwater harvesting cisterns under the Empire State Building or otherwise desalinate all the rest of the water you need."

New York City brings its water from far away, the Catskill/Delaware and the Croton watersheds (see Fig. 24). Their approximate distance is 125

[56] Official statistics on overall supply to the West Bank show an almost steady increase in annual amounts during the past decade and a half, and also during the worst years of the Intifada.

miles (200km) – similar to the distance as the crow flies from the Gaza Strip to Lake Huleh.

**Tables**

**Table 1: CAB Water budget for Gaza and Israel (inflows and outflows)**

| **Item** | **Israel** | **Gaza [3]** | **SUM** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recharge from rain [1] | 247 [5] | 35 | **282** |
| **Artificial recharge** | | | |
| *Artificial recharge from wells* | *0.01* [5] | *54.2* [3] | ***231*** |
| *Artificial recharge from reservoirs* | *17* [5] | | |
| *Artificial recharge, treated sewage* | *129* [5] | | |
| *Agricultural return flows* | *31* [5] | | |
| Lateral (vertical) groundwater inflow | - | 36.4 | **36** |
| Seawater intrusions | 3 [5] | 20 | **23** |
| **Total Recharge** | **426** | **146** | **572** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Municipal supply | 243 [5] | 94.2 [7] | **337** |
| Agricultural supply | 200 [5] | 80.4 | **280** |
| Gross outflows to Sea | *23* [6] | 2 [4] | **25** |
| **Pumpage/outflows** | **466** [2] | **176.6** | **643** |
| Over-abstractions (mcm/yr) | 39 | 31 | **70** |
| Over-abstractions (%) | 9% | 21% | **30%** |

NOTE: All Israeli figures (except long-term average rainfall recharge) refer to the year 2006/07 (HSI 2008).

SOURCES: Refers to the years 1971-2007; average since Oslo (1995-2007): 437mcm/yr; Gaza values for 2008/09 are from HWE (2010); CAMP (2000); Vengosh et al. (2005, 4); assumed and A. Ya'qoubi – oral communication; (HSI 2008, 107-110); calc. after HSI (2008, 107-110); and PWA (2010, 8, 10).

**Table 2 Damage to the water and sanitation network**

| **Items damaged during Operation 'Cast Lead'** | **Itemized amounts** |
|---|---|
| Wells (damaged or destroyed) | 11 |
| Reservoirs | 4 |
| Water pipes | 19.3 km |
| Sewage pipes | 2.4 km |
| Waste water network & pump stations (locations) | 4 |
| Electrical network (many) | - |
| Household water connections | 6,090 (840 households) |
| House roof tanks | 37,700 (5,200 households) |
| Other water tanks | 2,355 |
| **Population lacking sufficient supply** | **Number of persons** |
| One month after cease-fire | 150,000 |
| Three months after cease-fire | 30,000 |
| 18 months after cease-fire | 3,000 [1] |

SOURCES: UNEP (2009, 78) and FAO (2009), quoted after: (UNEP 2009, 81, 86).

OCHA-CAP (2009, 17) reports 30km of damaged water network and 6,000 households with destroyed house roof tanks.[57]

The costs only for a short term emergency water supply,[58] 2 litres water in drinking water quality per day (at US$ 20/$m^3$) and 100 litres in domestic water quality (US$ 2/$m^3$), sums to US$ 3 million.

[57] EWASH fact sheet No. 1.

[58] 150,000 people for one month and 40,000 people over 200 days (UNEP 2009, 79, Box 4).

**Table 3 Environmental costs of damage directly linked to the escalation of hostilities in December 2008 and January 2009**

| Damage and Repair Costs | Cost | Subtotal |
|---|---|---|
| Damage to water & sanitation networks (T24) | 6.17 | 10 |
| Sewage damage to groundwater (T25) | 3.83 | |
| Crops loss, land contamination (T26) | 11.72 | 34 |
| Rubble clean-up | 17.50 | |
| Restore solid waste system | 4.80 | |
| **S U M** | **44 million USD** | |

SOURCE: UNEP (2009, 83, Table 27)

**Table 4 Itemized list of trucks with emergency and priority WaSH materials entering Gaza in summer 2010**

| Month | Chlorine Trucks | Other trucks of WaSH materials (itemized) | SUM WaSH-trucks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dec | **11** | **7** gravel<br>+ **3.5** plastic pipes and fittings | **21.5** |
| Jan | **12** | **1** equipment and fittings for infiltration basin and pump station (PWA)<br>+ **3** pipes and fittings (ICRC) | **16** |
| Feb | **9** | none | **9** |
| Mar | **15** | **2.5** gravel (UNRWA) | **17.5** |
| Apr | **8** | **6** nine generators and spare parts<br>+ **3.5** water containers<br>+ **0.5** forklift | **36.5** |
| May | **9** | **25** trucks with utility vehicles for CMWU (after 3 years of negotiation) | **14** |
| June | **7** | **25** Plastic pipes<br>+ **4** water tankers (UNICEF) | **36** |
| July | **7** | **1** PVC pipes and computers<br>+ **1** with six UNICEF desalination generators<br>+ **1** truck with test kits and hygiene material | **10** |
| August | **6** | **7** ICRC material for Rafah treatment plant<br>+ **2** high capacity storm drainage pumps for PHA (half year negotiations)<br>+ **0.5** operational maintenance spare parts<br>+ **1** mechanical and electrical repair and refurbishment<br>+ **1** water treatment chemicals for CMWU & UNICEF<br>+ **1** remaining chemicals for desalination at Rafah & Bani Suhila wells (since 2009) | **18.5** |

Source: Compiled from WaSH Cluster oPt Monthly Situation Reports (Nos.19-26), that is, WaSH (2010b, 2010c, 2010d).

**Table 5 Long-term action plan (20 years) for the environmental sector and respective costs**

| # | Damaged Sector | Action | Investment + operation and maintenance costs | Sub-total [million USD] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Coastal Aquifer** | Seawater Desalination plants (build & *operate*) | 400 + *600* | **1000** |
| 2 | **Groundwater pollution** | Clean-up / stop sewage ponds | 10 | **502** |
| | | Clean-up / restore infiltration ponds | 2 | |
| | | Efficient irrigation systems | - | |
| | | New sewage treatment plants (build & *operate*) | 265 + *200* | |
| | | Temporary wastewater offshore disposal | 25 | |
| 3 | **Land degradation** | Decommission landfills | 20 | **83** |
| | | New solid waste facilities (build & *operate*) | 23 + *40* | |
| 4 | **Wadi Gaza** | Clean up, rehabilitate | 5 | **5** |
| 5 | **Governance in decline** | New EQA building | 10 | **47** |
| | | Training staff | 1 | |
| | | Groundwater monitoring (build & *operate*) | 5 + *20* | |
| | | Marine monitoring (build & *operate*) | 1 + *10* | |
| | **S U M** | | **1,637 million USD** | |

SOURCE: UNEP (2009, 84: Table 28).

**Table 6 Recharge figures for the Coastal aquifer (Gaza and Israel)**

| | Gaza Strip *[mcm/yr]* | Israel *[mcm/yr]* | CAB *[mcm/yr]* | Gaza share *[%]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Freshwater recharge from rain | 35 | 246.5 | 281.5 | 12% |
| Total recharge (sweet and brackish) | 124 | 442.7 | 566.7 | 22% |

SOURCE: (Table 1)

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## Jean-Baptiste Humbert:

## Archaeology and Heritage in Gaza

We shall first describe archeological activities carried out in the Gaza Strip since 1995, and then reflect on the more general and sometimes problematic concept of cultural heritage.

### The administrative phase

Following the Madrid negotiations and after the conclusion of the Oslo accords, the French ministry of foreign affairs, beginning in 1994, asked the French consulate general in Jerusalem to work out Franco-Palestinian agreements in various fields. The French consulate then asked the French Biblical and Field training in Jerusalem (École biblique et archéologique de Jérusalem) to organize cooperative ventures with the brand new Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the field of archaeology.

Other European countries were very interested in archaeological cooperation in Palestine. It seemed then that there were a variety of urgent needs. At the outset, one had to help an administration in the course of establishing itself. At this point, an association was created, rapidly and almost spontaneously, bringing together the Young European Archaeologists of Jerusalem. Its first (and only!) meeting took place in the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, when forty or so participants elected a president, the Assyriologist Marcel Sigrist, then director of the École Biblique and well connected in English-speaking quarters. The participants proposed numerous projects which did not always take into account social and administrative realities pertaining to the unfolding political entity. More than half the projects concerned Jericho, whose proximity to Jerusalem offered logistical advantages. Jericho also had the exceptional site of Hisham's Palace, making it possible to participate in the symbolic valorization of an Omayyad and Arab monument, which honored Palestine.

It was also evident that half of the Young Archaeologists were relatively young researchers who had been attracted by Israel, but had failed to find the hoped-for permanent commitment there. Palestine seemed like very promising territory. Yet almost none of the projects were followed up. During this pioneering time, the PNA took months to

develop the administrative organs needed for the functioning of a state. An Antiquities Department was created quite rapidly, a mere department in the ministry of tourism, as in Jordan. Many people would have preferred to work within the framework of the universities rather than of tourism. Those responsible for this department had good reason to believe that foreign participation, both rapid and massive, in various archaeological sectors, would have drowned and stifled the responsible empowerment of new Palestinian actors.

The École Biblique opted to work in the Gaza Strip because of its wish not to interfere in the projects of the Young Archaeologists, who were only planning to work in the West Bank. An accord was signed by French Consul General Jean de Gliniasty and Palestinian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Elias Freij to set up a Franco-Palestinian mission of archaeological cooperation in Gaza. The French consulate called on the École Biblique to move forward in this cooperation by establishing its modalities and interventions. The French ministry had promised to underwrite the mission on two specific conditions. One was that the financing would only concern archaeological digs, as a result of which, during their ten years of activities, all actors in the Franco-Palestinian cooperation project worked on a virtually voluntary basis. The second condition was that the interventions should help first and foremost in training local personnel in the skills needed in archaeological exploration and in all the operations leading to the scientific publication of results. A complementary training program was promised, by way of training programs in France for Palestinian students and participants who showed professional promise. A budget was submitted to the French ministry, which turned the file over to its consultative commission for exploration abroad, which in turn offered 10 000 € in 1995 and 7 000 € for the following years.

An agreement was signed between Mr. Abdallah Hijazi, deputy minister for Gaza of the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, and the director of the École Biblique, to open a site (which also served for field training) and inaugurate the various digs, give expert advice on demand, offer advice and support the separate work of the antiquities department. Mohammad Mo'ain Sadeq, Director of Antiquities in Gaza, was appointed co-director of the cooperation mission on the Palestinian side, and Jean-Baptiste Humbert (author of the present

article) on the French side. Mr. Sadeq chose the site of Blakhiyah for the site-school. Situated in the middle of the city of Gaza, next to Shati (Beach) refugee camp, it had recently been dug up to install a large collector for waste water. The site/school was thus opened in June 1995 to save what could be saved.

**The activities of the local antiquities service**

Despite the ongoing building boom and limited budgets, archaeology in Gaza had moved along vigorously before 2001. The local antiquities department had been rather dynamic in what was, it must be recognized, the limited framework of rescue operations. The Roman cemetery of Mukheitim was dug up, exposing a hundred tombs rich in furnishings. In the same sector, an ecclesiastical site paved with mosaics was subject to intensive rescue. The little Byzantine sanctuary of Abassan al-Kebir, partly discovered by the Egyptians before 1967, was cleaned out, totally exposed, and then covered. A Byzantine chapel was dug up at Abu Barakeh (in Deir al-Balah) and the Palestinian antiquities workers, trained at the Arles museum, restored its mosaics. At Tell Ruqeish, preliminary tests were carried out on residential constructions.

The Gaza antiquities team invested its principal energies and means in the Byzantine site of Umm al-Amer situated within the municipality of Nusayrat. For several years, an entirely Palestinian team, large and well managed, undertook to expose a site which had been uncovered by Israeli antiquities personnel, whose activities were interrupted in 1994 by the establishment of the PNA. The results of this work have been spectacular, and the site was chosen by the Gaza government in 2010 for complete restoration intended for pedagogical purposes, most notably teaching respect for archaeological sites and encouraging young people to become conscious of their history.

**The Franco-Palestinian mission was a cooperative one**

The mission had started on a fragile basis: the budget was severely limited, and our aims were not necessarily those of the Palestinian partners. Exploratory UNESCO missions on the visible sites of the West Bank and Gaza had estimated at several million euros the cost of each restoration in situ. The Gaza antiquities department thus hoped for

massive and spectacular interventions. UNESCO's initiatives were, however, independent of those of the French cooperation mission. UNESCO projects included projected cost estimates, and were then offered to powerful international institutions. The two parties had to adapt to this reality and modify the mode of intervention, based on both the commitments defined by the French government and the expectation of the department of antiquities: additional training of personnel through a common activity coupled with the hope of further discoveries and scientific advances.

The rescue of a very important archaeological site will serve to illustrate the modalities of our cooperation. Mr. Sadeq had shown that a major site turned out to be Anthedon in ancient Palestine, mentioned by several historical sources. Its advantage was that it enjoyed full visibility in the heart of the large modern city of Gaza, in a popular neighborhood. The mission thus concentrated all its resources on the site-school of Blakhiah-Anthedon. The first five-year plan, 1995-1999, exposed the displacement, beginning in the 8th century BC, of economic activities of the old tell (under the city of Gaza) towards the coast, destroyed by the neo-Babylonian conquest of the early 6th century BC. Phoenician and Greek sea trade brought about the reconstruction of the port, with intensive Mediterranean exchanges, towards the end of the 6th century. The second five-year plan was launched in 2003. A preventive dig by the Gaza antiquities department had gotten in the way of a low-cost housing construction project inland from the coast, and this led to the abandonment of the project. The work had, however, found ruins from the late 3rd century BC. A long project carried out by the French cooperation mission then exposed an aristocratic neighborhood remarkably preserved under the sand, followed by a monumental construction – walls and town gate; and finally a series of large Roman houses buried under the advancing dune. The plan was interrupted in 2005 because of political instability.

Logistical support was provided to two sites operated by Gaza antiquities. Local archaeologists had opened a large Byzantine ecclesiastic complex on the site of Muhkeitim, next to Jabalia refugee camp. Work was carried out in the framework of the cooperation mission financed by the French government. Five hundred square meters of mosaics were restored in 1999 under the guidance of the Arles museum and Provence antiquities services, then restored once

again in 2005 by the same organism, after a tank had crossed the site, damaging the pavements.

In 2003 the antiquities department requested that the cooperation mission work on the Byzantine site of Umm al-Amr, in order to make tests needed to interpret the vestiges covering one hectare, to draw their plan, and to ask the Arles museum to restore the pavement. The scientific publication regarding these two sites was based on Franco-Palestinian cooperation, with the Palestinian ministry as the lead partner. In 1998, the cooperation mission had demonstrated the urgency of saving Tell Sakan near the end of Wadi Ghazzeh. Plans for a new neighborhood or town were uncontrollably crossing a large surface of archaeological remains. An immediate intervention was necessary in order to arrest the building planned for the site. The mission then obtained the participation in 1999 of the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS, Paris) intended to carry out tests at Tell Sakan under the joint direction of Mr. Sadeq and P. de Miroschidji (CNRS). The presence of 1500 year-old archaeological treasures was confirmed by work carried out in 2000. Other international missions participated from time to time. A British team (Louise Clark, London University) carried out a short exploration at Muarraqah on an Egyptian New Empire installation. Peter Fisher of the University of Stockholm undertook stratigraphic studies at Late Bronze levels in Tell al-Ajjul.

**To whom does Gaza's heritage belong? What are its elements?**

Although on the whole these efforts must be judged as positive, they are only a fraction of what needs to be done. A variety of factors are responsible for this. The first is the lack of funds and the very weak mobilization of international research. The media have devoted themselves to presenting a negative picture of Gaza, with strictly political motivations. The economic, social and political embargo in place since 2007 has interrupted social and cultural projects which were absolutely necessary. The result today is a significant one, since cultural dimensions are nearly wiped out, and sometimes interpreted as derivations of the western world, or at the very least exogenous forces. The cultural heritage of Gaza is present, available but lacking form. Its roots are deep, complex and obliterated. For this reason, it is important to ponder the idea of the Gazan patrimony.

What did we Europeans come to do in Gaza? We came for the single purpose of accompanying a recently established Antiquities Department which was confronting, from the outset, a heavy burden, that of raising Gaza, in the realm of archaeology and history, to an international level in the Mediterranean context. Once again, this cooperation did bear fruit, unexpected fruit even, in terms of its importance and quality. While these goals were achieved, the process was interrupted by futile Western policies in the Middle East. Our goal was not, however, always well understood. It was claimed that we had come to search for our own roots, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, in the Orient. We had to convince our interlocutors that it was perhaps the opposite, because the civilizations of the Orient, so ancient and so strong, preceded us by thousands of years. We came to bear witness to our debt and our respect for the Orient.

Who are the Gazans? Where do they come from? If the question is asked of Gaza refugees, more than half the population, they will answer: from Jaffa or Majdal. Nothing historical is suggested. In fact, these are two major archaeological sites: Yafa and Askalan. The locals are from Gaza, which was once the capital of a powerful principality. In the 4th-3rd century BC, when Jerusalem was vegetating in its own ruins, Gaza was rich with international commerce, and became the equivalent of Alexandria by adopting the models of the Greek aristocracy. Significant culture and Greek lifestyle led to a radical rejection on the part of the mountain people who made their choices in a very violent manner, in the form of Maccabean resistance against the Seleucid Greeks. On the one hand, this long history has been appropriated as constitutive of the Israeli nation, which claims the monopoly on, as well as the control of, archaeology. On the other hand, for the Palestinians, in the strict circle of cultural heritage, the link to antiquity seems to be broken.

The fashion of roots is alive today, for reasons of identity, which are active everywhere. Gazans can today choose their ancestors: Canaanites or Philistines. There is surely a direct connection to the Canaanites. Archaeology offers proof with the Bronze Age sites of the greatest importance: Tell Skan, Tell Ajjul, Tell Zurob. Ancient Gaza actually goes beyond its modern limits, encompassing the sites of Tell Hesy, Tell Shariyah, Tell Far'ah, Tell Jammah, all of which are major ones. Students from Gaza have told me that they are proud to be Philistines,

without denying possible Greek roots. The problem is, of course, that the prestigious Arab roots are weakened. The best accepted thesis is descent from neither Canaanites nor Greeks, but from Arabs. From which Arabs? Nomads, Muslims? The two approaches tend to be combined, although these are two different ancestries. The nomadic sources are generally rejected because they are considered less noble, in favor of an exclusive Hijazi (commercial oases) or Yemenite (Southern Arabian kingdoms) origin. One then has to explain the fact that in the 12th-11th century BC, while a number of Mediterraneans arrived in Gaza, they did not expel native Gazans. They were accepted and they intermingled. The Gazan origin was stronger and absorbed the newcomers. The immigrants adopted the local Semitic pantheon, and the few fragments of known inscriptions are engraved on a local Phoenician monument which is just as Semitic. The basis of the Gazan population has been Canaanite since the Middle Bronze period (20th century BC) as is the rest of Palestine. This base was then enriched by a Mediterranean contribution. Gaza is a port, whose inhabitants always frequented foreigners arriving from the sea. The Philistine episode is only a passage and Tell Harubeh, lying under the old city of Gaza, is the potential source of an archaeological and historical illustration, a veritable key to the identity of coastal Palestine. Harubeh, the capital of the Philistines and a major Tell, is probably the largest in historical Palestine, with its 500 meters in diameter. People in Gaza should take an interest in this.

On the other hand, the descent from nomads is not devoid of accuracy. The opposition between nomads and sedentary peoples is traditional and radical. Gaza Bedouins are from elsewhere. But Gaza was always a contact point for Naqab and southern Transjordanian nomads, especially for reasons of trade, and because these regions were strategic areas, successively, for Egyptians and Asians. Open to the west, Gaza was the window of the Arab world on the Mediterranean, which remained Arab, but subject to Greek, Hellenistic, and then Roman influence. The corridor between the sea and Arabia is the contact point, via Petra, for the oases of northern Arabia and thus on the road to the Arab endpoint on the Indian Ocean. The Arab peninsular road had a strong impact on all of the south of Palestine, particularly Gaza. Greek and Latin historians named “Arabs” the populations of the regions bordered by arid zones, based on the word Arab used by

the sedentary folk to describe the people of tents. The historians of antiquity ignored, but perhaps suspected, the existence of the cities and developed civilizations of southern Arabia. Therefore, the nomads are not simply nomads. The cultures of Arabia, as exceptional as they may have been, had achieved a high degree of civilization, and a very open one at that The south of Palestine and Arabia have always been closely linked.

The Greek historian Polybius speaks of the "king of the Arabs" with whom one needs to be at peace in order to pass through to Egypt. In a variety of conflicts, the "Arabs" assisted the Gazans. One can speak of intermarriage between them over thousands of years. The heritage of Gaza is Canaanite with Arab and Greek intermixtures. Later, the Muslim contribution was to give it the strong and specific character it possesses today.

**A polymorphous heritage**

The most general definition of the idea of heritage is that which is foundational in history, in histories, and in the natural cultural attributes of a people. It is valid for a family and for a society, and it is valid for a people. There is undeniably a national heritage, and it is essential in the process of identity formation. Gaza, like the rest of Palestine, is going though a serious identity crisis. It has survived others. Once a crisis is overcome, it takes a longer or shorter time to reshape one's identity and reformulate one's heritage. Heritage is always polymorphous as it is constantly evolving. Its reformulation cleans, forgets, excludes; it empties to make room for acquisitions. Heritage is not a readied patrimony, it is a complex elaboration of that which the process of identity formation needs.

Archaeology in Gaza seems unnecessary at first sight. It seems as foreign as the shade cast by the trees of the garden next door. Nonetheless archaeology plunges into the deepest roots of contemporary society. Its goal is to describe ancient societies more than to collect precious objects as displayed in museums. Beyond what humans have created and built, it displays the genius of those who preceded us over long stages, but in a specified territory which confers upon it its own genius. Heritage is the chair upon which one sits in order to speak. Patrimony accepts admixtures, while remaining tied to a specific territory. The

notion of world heritage as promoted nowadays by UNESCO tends to weaken its density and its usefulness. The process of globalization, which aspires to become the good conscience and the conservatory of a universal vocation, results in a cultural dilution of regions. On the other hand, it may provoke regionalist reactions and encourage particularism. World heritage makes no sense in Gaza when local heritage becomes fragile. The proposition of placing certain sites in Gaza on the world heritage list has created a great deal of sympathy locally, more for its potential for international recognition than for the weight of history it reflects.

What is, today, the content of Gazan archaeological heritage ? It lies in fragments without continuity, like a puzzle that needs to be reconstituted, pieces destroyed or thrown away, sold or stolen. Did it emerge from local history and from a territory that was built up over a long time and transmitted by the fathers? But Gaza is bipolar. There are the people originally from Gaza and the refugees. For the latter, belonging to a territory is marked by an interruption: their heritage lies elsewhere and is inaccessible. With lost space, time is suspended. The territory has been borrowed: the past has no import because it serves no purpose. The construction of an identity is carried out essentially on the basis of history in the making, that which is lived through successive crises. It is written in a place called elsewhere. Its structure is social, political and ideological, in the noble sense of the term. Justification for heritage is ordered by the short- and medium term future. Patrimonial heritage has been voided of content. It has been condensed in a new foundational element, the Nakba, and that which preceded it has been emptied. The interruption is filled in by the resistance effort.

In this way, the creation anew of a framework for life replaces heritage. If the past is lost, only the future remains open. Heritage, that which is rooted in a ‘before’, is of no use, it is an intellectual luxury for peacetime. At the margins of a heritage which is now virtual, identity is declining, reformulated in its religious, cultural and political dimensions.

What can be the content of native Gazans’ heritage, given that they are still in their territory? Archaeology provokes interest, without eliciting more than surprise and curiosity regarding the value in money

of discoveries. The Antiquities Department is part of a ministry, the object of press communiqués and sometimes of pedagogical forays under the aegis of NGOs or European missions. Archaeology is a foreign discipline, a western luxury, an esthetic practice, often perceived as a vaguely neo-colonialist interference.

A too distant past is uninhabitable. There is nothing "Arab" there. Islam is so dense, so dynamic that for many people Islam and Arab are synonymous. Pre-Islamic cultures are conceived as exogenous, traces left behind by successive controlling forces coming from elsewhere. Iron, Greek, Roman, Byzantine cultures are only accepted at the edges of Palestinian heritage. If there is a credible and efficacious past it is usually steeped in the Muslim world, since religions possess the truth of history, of the moment and of time.

Archaeological heritage? But archaeology is often bothersome. In the process of rapid urban development, of territorial use and the progressive disappearance of the countryside, the protection of archaeological sites imposes constraints. Such protection is unwelcome. It is lived as being contrary to the needed development of municipalities, the obverse of modernity, especially when a site which is highly interesting from the historical point of view is less than spectacular. The future, yes, and archaeology, yes, at least when it is not bothersome.

**Conclusion**

One should not, however, be pessimistic, balanced as we are between impotence and impatience. One is sometimes tempted to surrender to them when the road is cut by a concrete wall. Efforts being undertaken by certain forces to cause Palestinian society to implode limit the normal movements of popular culture. Speaking of the notion of heritage, one says culture. Culture is that which remains of a society which thinks and acts. The conflict in which the Palestinians are caught up brings about a specific culture of conflict. Culture is not the luxury of a country at peace. It seeks out its sources today in Palestine in the reaction to the tensions of the conflict. It is essentially a response to the political, social and psychological deficit. Because of the conditions of its elaboration, it is modern. It is to be found, therefore, in the forms of contemporary expression. Literature, especially poetry, and cinema,

reframe a social re-reading and seek the keys to events. Painting takes off in unexpected fashion because of its possibilities of psychic expression. It is not descriptive but often political, finding its inspiration almost exclusively in the traditional imaginary. It demonstrates the attachment of society to a present which is simultaneously formulated as a timeless, unformulated past. It is one of the spaces where the notion of heritage best expresses itself. Palestine now has some musical and choral groups that still only affect the elite. One must take into account the Arab sensibility, which is in general foreign to classical or romantic styles. On the other hand, popular music is gaining in quality and in diversity, without undergoing the diluting impact of a large and commercially oriented Anglo-American repertory.

All of these achievements are of good quality, and form part of new artistic and aesthetic fields. They guarantee a place for Palestine in the cultural effervescence related to globalization, precisely because of the crisis and the country's enclosure. The influences coming from the west are limited by an oriental, popular, strong tradition. It undeniably accompanies a political culture of solidarity and diversity.

The process is underway. It needs to gain the force required to tie Palestinian popular culture with that which is academic and cultivated. Numerous institutions have been created over the past fifteen years in the areas of saving and protecting the countryside and architecture of towns and villages. The universities educate their students who will pass this sensibility on to the population as a whole. Faculties are opening up more and more to the teaching of history and archaeology. Students educated in the west return with technical skills which they disseminate throughout the country.

Architecture will inevitably impose itself as a national treasure. Today, archaeology is no longer just a contributor of museum pieces, but rather the scientific consideration of places and disused objects. It has joined the present. One day the archaeology of villages destroyed in 1948 will be explored. Archaeology must from now on be seen as the memory of human industry. The interaction between past and present is the key to heritage.

## Bashir Al-Zoughbi and Raed Bader:

## Conference Proceedings

The Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies at Birzeit University organized an international academic conference entitled 'Gaza – Palestine – Out of the Margins' on 1-2 October 2010. This is a summary of the major arguments of the speakers.

The Gaza Strip is unique both geographically and demographically, being a densely populated narrow coastal strip, a majority of whose residents are Palestinian refugees living in camps. The Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are still recognized as occupied territories under customary international law and thus are an area to which the Fourth Geneva Convention continues to apply. It was the aim of this conference to spell out that Gaza must be brought out of the liminal state in which it exists as a result of the blockade, the siege and the political separation. Indeed, Gaza has recently won the sympathy of world public opinion and enjoyed widespread expressions of international solidarity, in particular after the Israeli assault of 2008-2009.

### Against All Odds

In the keynote address, **Mr. Filippo Grandi**, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, described the impact of the closure of Gaza's borders and the consequent suffering, pointing out that over sixty percent of Gazans live below the poverty line, some forty percent are unemployed, and eighty percent rely on food handouts. He described UNRWA's investment in refugees in ways that enable them to develop their potential in spite of the constraints imposed by exile and conflict, such as its primary education programme. He emphasized the international community's responsibility for refugees, who, as humans without the protection of a state, require the protection of international law and legal norms. He also stressed two core issues. The first is the need for reconciliation among Palestinians; the second is the need to include the resolution of the refugee question in any final peace settlement.

### Impact of External Actors

In the next session, 'Practices of occupation', Dr. **Maha Samman Mansour** talked about 'Israeli colonial contraction: The cases of the

Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip'. She first examined the conditions in which Israeli colonial contraction took place, highlighting differences between Israeli actions in the Sinai in the 1970s and in Gaza recently, with respect to both their form and the duration of colonial contraction. Withdrawal from the Sinai resulted from a peace treaty with Egypt preceded by a costly war in 1973, while in contrast the dismantling of settlements in Gaza was a unilateral move within an ongoing and unresolved conflict within a colonial project. She singled out three primary reasons for evacuating and demolishing the Yamit and Gaza settlements: strategic state security, psychological considerations regarding the settlers, and the desire for international sympathy for the sacrifice Israel was making to achieve peace. Regarding the Gazan case of unilateral colonial contraction, she said that Israel disengaged in large part because it was becoming too costly to provide security to the settlers, in the midst of a growing Palestinian population prepared to resist Israeli occupation of the land.

**Dr. Helga Tawil-Souri's** research concerned 'The Hi-Tech Enclosure of Gaza'. Her key question was how to use the concept and practice of enclosure in comparative terms, and how this practice, discourse and concept function. In this regard she analyzed the role of the Israeli state regime/apparatus in relation to other spatial 'players' or 'forces', and issues such as globalization, migration, neo-liberalism, as well as legal, economic, and demographic changes at the expense of Palestinians and specifically Gazans. She added that digitally, enclosure takes place thanks to the privatization of knowledge and information, while digital enclosure raises the issues of asymmetrical access to information resources, databases, and processing power. She gave several examples of the digital enclosure of Gaza, including among others telecommunications, internet and television.

At the end of the session, **Professor Julie Peteet** talked about 'A Fortress Country and a Gated Enclave: Locating the Palestinian Margin' where she noted that placing Gaza on the margins of Palestine implies the existence of a center. She discussed events that affected Gaza over past years, from continued occupation, through the siege, the military assaults, and most recently the attack on the flotilla. She then proceeded to analyze the connection between Israel's security technologies and the separation. Finally, she examined the ways these

interconnected policies have resulted in Israel's construing itself as a gated or fortressed country. Walls and fences indicate the unwillingness to settle grievances while inflicting punishment and managing mobility through containment and incarceration.

The war and siege on Gaza is, Dr. Peteet pointed out, not simply about the creation of a disciplinary enclave, but also about subjugation through body regulation and punishment, evidenced by arbitrary regulations on the entrance and exit of goods and products. At this point the concept of abandonment becomes relevant, and needs to be triangulated with those of control and discipline. When Israel disengagee from Gaza and then tightened the siege, this made Gaza 'a zone of abandonment'. The spaces of abandonment include, among others, refugee camps, asylums, leprosy colonies and prisons. Refugee camps are thus transit points between former citizenship and national reconstitution through resettlement or repatriation. She concluded that closure, siege and enclavization mark the will to fragment Palestine, and signal an era in which there no longer remain either centers or margins.

**International Law and Outlaws**

In the third Session entitled 'International Law and Outlaws', **Dr. Yasser Amouri** gave an overview of the 'Legal dimensions of the Goldstone report,' focused on the legality or illegality of actions carried out by Israeli forces during the Israeli military attack in 2008-2009. Most of the Goldstone report's findings were that grave breaches occurred, and amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Dr. Amouri described the attacks, as documented in the Goldstone report, against basic civilian life in Gaza, including destruction of the industrial infrastructure and means of food production by an air strike on the flour mill on January 9, 2009. In addition, Israeli forces attacked water facilities, sewage treatment plants and housing. The Goldstone report asserted that the attacks were contrary to the rules of customary international humanitarian law, that is, indiscriminate attacks, and that Israeli forces did not distinguish between civilians and combatants, or between civilian objects and military objectives. Finally, the report affirmed the disproportionate nature of the attacks.

**Dr. Asem Khalil's** research focused on "The 'Protection Gap' and the Palestinian Refugees of Gaza Strip". He emphasized the conceptual and

didactical, rather than the legal or political, need to note the distinction between the West Bank and Gaza Strip when it comes to legal protection and assistance for refugees. He demonstrated how Israel used the pre-1967 geographical division to widen the gap between Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip through its system of military orders and declarations, giving the specific example of Military Order No 1650 issued in 2010. The other issue is related to possible legal and political consequences of Israeli withdrawal in 2005 and the Hamas takeover of Gaza Strip in 2007. He concluded that the situation in the Gaza Strip is particularly challenging to the international community, and the need of Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip for protection and assistance is pushing UNRWA to reshape its mandate to include providing such protection.

**A Land Diminished**

In her keynote address on the second day, **Dr. Sara Roy** talked about 'A Land Diminished: Reflections on Gaza's Landscape.' She described how the people of Gaza struggle today, facing a situation far more devastating than before: an inability to visualize a future for their children that departs from the damaging reality they must currently endure. She made it clear that the injustice of the occupation, and the inability of Palestinians to defend themselves against it, had affected her deeply. She further examined the two themes she consistently encounters regarding Gaza.

The first theme was Israel's wish to rid itself of any responsibility for the territory, while maintaining absolute control; the second was Israel's desire to give up settlements in Gaza for full and internationally (i.e, American) sanctioned control of the West Bank, thereby precluding the creation of a Palestinian state. She said that Israel has achieved these ends. Unlike the West Bank, which has effectively been subdued by Israeli policies of land expropriation, settler expansion, territorial cantonization, and other forms of military control, she said, Gaza has continued to resist defiantly. In her concluding thoughts, she questioned why, in the continued absence of a political resolution to the conflict, occupation must be the default position. Why must Gaza be pauperized and the West Bank cantonized and annexed, and Palestinians treated as a humanitarian problem rather than as a people with political and national rights entitled to self-determination?

**The Human Geography of Gaza**

In the fifth session, entitled 'The human geography of Gaza', **Dr. Youssef Courbage** spoke on 'Gaza, an ever rebellious demography.' He showed that Gaza has a very atypical demography which should not only be described, but also explained, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, since demography is deeply embedded in this conflict. Advancing his argument, he emphasized that Gaza is hardly separable from the Palestinian context, as the population of the Strip does not come from elsewhere, but mainly from the south of Palestine, while the refugees in the West Bank came mainly from the north. He added that having a huge population in this small area is primarily, but not solely, the outcome of the exodus that preceded and followed the war of 1948.

He further indicated that Palestinian fertility patterns remained atypical. Ordinarily fertility should be declining in a region such as the Gaza Strip that is almost entirely urban, with high population density, and an economy focused not on agriculture but on secondary and service activities. Between 1999 and 2006, fertility in the West Bank decreased from 5.4 to 4.3 children per woman, that is to say, to a level significantly lower than that of the Israeli settlers in the occupied territory. Rebellious Gaza, as he describes it, experienced an even larger fall in fertility, from 6.8 in 1999 to 5.4 in 2006. He concluded that the optimistic scenario for Gaza's future is a real Arab-Israeli peace accompanied by the return of Palestinian refugees (or a substantial fraction of them) to their homes.

Mr**. Clemens Messerschmid** talked about 'Bitter Water – Reality and Illusions in Water Policy for Gaza'. He started by comparing conditions in the West Bank, which is rich in groundwater of excellent quality but largely under Israeli control, with conditions in Gaza, which has hardly any appreciable recharge from rain and a water supply that is almost entirely contaminated. The coastal aquifer constitutes the only source of water directly available to the Gaza Strip itself, given its total, forced separation from the West Bank. Decreasing water levels increase the natural inflows of saline groundwater and the largest source of pollution resides in the large amounts of untreated or insufficiently treated wastewater infiltrating into the aquifer. The 1967 occupation, compounded by the total siege in place since 2007, has prevented the

building of a single modern and sufficiently sized wastewater treatment plant, so pollution has increased. In exploring solutions, he said that local and international experts urge wastewater treatment, transfers from the West Bank aquifer, and most of all, desalination. In reality, he said, wastewater treatment will only meet a very small percentage of needs; transfer from the West Bank is politically and physically unrealistic (Israel will prevent it; the Hebron area itself faces a water shortage); and desalination, a hugely expensive project, subjects Gaza to constant Israeli blackmail through the threat to destroy plants or to withhold the energy, inputs, or expertise needed to run them. The only solution, he concluded, is one whereby legal pressure and economic incentives bring about equitable water sharing by way of transfers from Israel.

At the end of the session, **Dr. Niveen Abu Rmeileh**, on behalf of the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University, presented a paper on 'Quality of life, distress, suffering and human insecurity – It's the siege more than the war'. The major objective of the collective research was to investigate the main consequences of the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip in terms of injury, disability, destruction of homes, and displacement, and the consequences of these violations for the quality of life, measured by asking affected inhabitants to response to questions about health and distress. She provided an in-depth analysis of the effects of war in the form of displacement, destruction and damage to real property. The large majority of reported food aid came from UNRWA (69%), followed by international organizations (18%). The study evaluated the extent of the attack's negative effect on the quality of life of adults in the general population, and the resultant lingering high levels of reported distress, human insecurity, and social suffering. The siege, she concluded, remains the main obstacle to improvement of the living conditions and quality of life of the population, and is a priority for action.

**Archaeological treasures**

In the sixth session entitled 'Archaeological Treasures', **Jean Baptiste Humbert,** from the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique de Jerusalem, talked about recent Hellenistic discoveries in Gaza City. He said it was important to talk about Gaza's archaeology and the effects of

its cultural heritage when talking about the actual situation in Gaza. Before talking about archaeological discoveries, he described the difficulties archaeologists face within the political context, especially after the rise of the Hamas *de facto* government in Gaza. He doubted the existence of a current strategy or even an understanding of the concept of cultural heritage. Excavation in Gaza faced particular difficulties after the closure of the Department of Antiquities in Gaza, which had supervised the excavation until 2006.

He showed slides of recent discoveries showing that Gaza was active commercially as early as the eighth century BC. These discoveries contradict the literature that claims Gaza and other cities on the Mediterranean basin were irrelevant at that time. He further highlighted the importance of Gaza, comparing it to Pompeii in the same period, with similar sorts of archaeological discoveries (baths, mosaics, houses, walls, columns, streets, and aristocratic neighborhoods). He argued that the people of Gaza were the ones who built these structures and hosted the Greeks. Among the pitchers and jars discovered there are ones of their own making and for domestic use, with inscriptions in a Semitic language, and not Greek, strongly suggesting that they were, in fact, made in Gaza.

**Political Fragmentation**

In the seventh session entitled 'Palestinian political agency in Gaza', **Dr. Helga Baumgarten** talked about 'Democratic transformation in Gaza? A first balance sheet of the Hamas government, 2006-2010.' Her key inquiry regarded the fate of Palestinian voters' great hopes for democratic transformation after the elections of 2006. Under present conditions in the occupied territories, she argued, democratic transformation cannot be achieved due to the non-enjoyment of full sovereignty. She then carefully examined developments in Gaza spanning the post-electoral period: the first Haniyeh (Hamas) government of 2006, the National Unity government of February 2007, and finally the so-called "dismissed" government since June 2007.

**Khalil Shikaki**, on the other hand, said in his intervention 'Between separation and unification – is reconciliation viable?' that the end of the political separation of Gaza from the rest of the Palestinian territories is not the solution to marginalization of Gaza. True, marginalization

has been deepened because of the separation, but he said separation is not the only cause. He emphasized that there are other factors of marginalization which Gaza is witnessing, including high population density, and Gaza's military entity. Moreover, he argues that the five main parties influencing the situation today are Hamas, Fatah, Egypt, Israel and the United States. He further added that settling the Palestinian internal crisis is linked with a settlement of the issue of the Iranian nuclear program, or with initiating a peace process between Israel and Syria. He concluded by stating that the matter is also interlinked with the growing prominence of the pro-reconciliation groups on both the Fatah and the Hamas side.

**Sociological Change**

In the eighth session entitled 'Real life in Gaza', **Dr. Khaled Safi** presented his paper, "Five years of life under siege: continuity and transformations of social and cultural rights." He highlighted social and cultural changes in the Gaza Strip under siege as a result of two external factors: the occupation and the siege imposed on the Strip, factors that in turn generated a dual lifestyle and a return of the extended family pattern. The internal factors include endeavors to Islamize society and politicize religious appearance, as well as the divisions in households, families, and clans as a result of conflicting political affiliations. Dr. Safi further observed changes in women's economic, but not social, situation, which shows that these changes are forced by harsh living conditions. He also pondered changes in those political elites who came from refugee and poor households. He went on to discuss the cultural changes manifested in transforming a cultural elite into a religious one, and the spread of a culture of migration among youth due to degradation of economic conditions and personal freedoms and rights.

**Dr. Abaher Sakka** offered his "Sociological analysis of the Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip." The purpose of his talk was to present a sociological reading of Palestinian society in Gaza and the birth of Palestinian nationalism and the mechanisms for preparing fertile ground for the birth of the Palestinian entity. In his paper Dr. Sakka presented the particularity of the legal status of Gaza Strip, especially while it was under Egyptian rule until 1967. With the Israeli occupation,

the Strip had been transformed into an example of the most severe type of colonialism, as it pushed both the social and the economic sectors out of balance. In the second section of the paper, he talked about the reproduction of social conservatism through the mechanisms of production of institutionalized colonial speech and through internal mechanisms, concluding that Palestinian nationalism is fragile like any other nationalism, and hyperbolizing the scene of the Egyptian influence on the Strip, and many other conclusions.

**Ms. Dalal Bajes and Mr. Hasan Obaid** presented jointly on "Gaza between the victim's role and effectiveness in the Palestinian situation: public diplomacy as a model." The definition of the victim was influenced by social scientists from various fields, and hence this concept developed into a broader one, that of colonialism, which competes with the victim's role to attract the sympathy of the modern world. This competition propelled the resistance to take up the issue of what labels and terminologies would best win hearts and minds. They argued that public diplomacy is an excellent option for the Palestinian people who yearn to convey a true image to the world. They also noted that the Freedom Flotilla represented a kind of public diplomacy, and was successful in getting media coverage, so that the world saw pictures that it otherwise might not have seen. Finally, the speakers discussed the role of civil society institutions in Palestinian public diplomacy, because according to them, civil society are far from the official policies of the state.

Mr. **Hamdi Shaqqoura** presented on "The rule of law and accountability as the basis for peace," on the continuing escalation of crimes committed by the Israeli occupation and the violation of human rights norms, most notably the recent aggression and the siege. He then tackled the internal division which led to the violation of human rights in both the West Bank and Gaza, which in turn led to unprecedented degradation in the national situation. Mr. Shaqqoura worried that the restoration of normal life and reconstruction of Gaza are not possible due to the ongoing blockade, which affects education, travel and other various aspects of life. He concluded that ending the degradation is possible only with the intervention of the international community to protect Palestinian civilians.

**Did we Forget Gaza?**

Dr. Raed Bader concluded the program by questioning , 'If Gaza is a forgotten place in Palestine?' He noted that the conference title was not intended to convey that the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies at Birzeit University sought any kind of provocation whatsoever, but , as intended, the title did raise several questions from the audience and did make clear the need to redefine the concepts used throughout the two-day conference, including legal, political, social and other concepts. He also pointed out that, though conference sessions focused mainly on Gaza, they also directly or indirectly discussed the issue of Palestinian refugees living in refugee camps. Finally, Dr. Bader said that the eagerness for knowledge and information on Gaza shows that Gaza is not marginalized.

## Mehrene Larudee:

## Concluding Remarks

We may think of speakers at the conference "Gaza – Palestine: Out of the Margins" as having called attention to three ways in which Gaza, and Palestine as a whole, have been pushed to the margins. The first and most central is *physical marginalization*, broadly defined to include not only boundaries, barriers, and rules requiring permits for people to cross those boundaries and barriers, but also the requirement for permits to build anything in the West Bank's Area C; Israel's restrictions on Palestinian exports and imports; and myriad other stringent rules about where Palestinians may reside, what they may produce, how much water they are permitted to abstract from the West Bank aquifers, and so on. Physical marginalization also refers to the impact of contaminated drinking water on the physical health of Gazans, and on the variety of crops Gaza can grow. It includes destruction of the economy, through demolition and strangulation, to the point that well over a third of Gazans are deprived of regular employment and income.

The second kind of marginalization is *marginalization from consciousness*. For part of the world's population, especially those in the richest countries who have no direct ethnic or religious link with the region, Palestinians are at best on the margins of their thoughts, at worst are condemned as "terrorists". This marginalization of Palestinians comes in part from massive disinformation about Palestine disseminated by the most widely available news sources or talk shows, in part because of lack of easy access to competing news sources like Al Jazeera, or the unfounded conviction that such sources are untrustworthy. We are talking, of course, about North America, and to some extent also Europe – those areas whose governments play the biggest roles in maintaining the status quo and protecting the Israeli government from the full consequences of its actions.

The third is *marginalization from conscience*: the creation and perpetuation of a status quo in which numerous and repeated violations of Palestinians' human rights go uninvestigated, unprosecuted, and unpunished. Even those who are dimly aware of the injustices often do nothing to remedy them, convincing themselves that the situation is too complex, or too morally ambiguous, for them to take action, or

as UNRWA Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi put it in his overall keynote address, perhaps simply regarding the situation as a "lost cause". Grandi also said some people harbor an image of Gaza as a "forlorn and dangerous place" that leads them to think of it as "a place beyond salvation" and one that therefore does not merit our urgent action.

Keynote speaker Sara Roy echoed this theme, citing the fears of her Gazan friends about the "deepening unwillingness" to repair Gaza, and the tendency to regard it as "unworthy of redress and rehabilitation." This is what is meant by marginalization from conscience: consignment of Gaza, and to some extent also of Palestine, to a mental holding pen in which righting wrongs and repairing damage are postponed for the indefinite future. Marginalization in conscience has gone hand in hand with marginalization in law. As Asem Khalil's presentation points out, practices have evolved that leave ambiguity about who is responsible for enforcing the rights of refugees, and how. As a result of all these factors, for at least part of the world, conscience about Palestine dwells in a no-man's-land, a kind of black hole. Even if people are dimly aware that there is something wrong in the conditions Palestinians face, they hang back from doing anything to demand that these conditions be remedied.

And yet, on the other hand, much of the non-European, non-North-American world is acutely aware of Palestine's situation and deeply sympathetic to and supportive of Palestinian rights. For a very large part of the world's population, perhaps roughly coincident with Al Jazeera's viewing audience, Gaza and the whole of Palestine are in the very center of both consciousness and conscience. They are seen as the quintessential example of the practices of colonization and subjugation. If anything, the conscience of this part of the world's population is acutely and painfully aware of injustices there, and of these injustices as evidence of who wields power in the world, and how they wield it. Each year all but a handful of UN member countries vote for the annual UN General Assembly resolution condemning the occupation and the settlements, and yet the occupation continues and the settlements grow. Al Jazeera has played an enormous and welcome role in keeping the world informed; but until recently it has, for example, been almost entirely excluded from the United States, except for a few tiny regions

and some expensive special satellite packages, and except for online access, of which relatively few take advantage. Yet this can change, and is changing: during the Egyptian uprising, hits on its web site rose twenty-five-fold, with 60% of the increased traffic coming from the U.S (Hennessy-Fiske 2011). Even the U.S. Secretary of State called Al Jazeera "real news", comparing it favorably with what passes for news in the U.S.

*Marginalization: why? how?*

*Why* is Gaza in the margins? Why is Palestine in the margins? What has been the intent behind which, and method by which, all three forms of marginalization have been promoted? Speakers addressed this question to a limited extent, but much more could be said on these topics. Again, we begin with physical marginalization. Speakers explained how, along various dimensions, marginalization has been a deliberate, planned process. Sara Roy described the "systematic incapacitation of Gaza's economy" by Israel; Helga Tawil-Souri told us how, at the time the Oslo Agreement transferred much of the responsibility for telecommunications to the West Bank, limitations imposed by Israel made it impossible to build a truly independent Palestinian network, by forbidding the West Bank from importing the necessary equipment; instead, it continued to be necessary to route transmissions through equipment outside the borders of the West Bank and Gaza, and outside of Palestinian control.

Maha Samman reaches back into history for another answer to the question of "why?" as she explored the only two circumstances under which Israel ever decided to evacuate any Jewish settlements from territory it had occupied. Evacuation of settlements in the Sinai and, much later, evacuation of the settlements in the Gaza Strip, she says, were both strategic choices designed to consolidate gains in other places. The loss of settlements was part of a larger plan to achieve an overall net gain – from the Israeli standpoint, a kind of retreat from marginalization in marginal regions in order to advance marginalization of Palestinians in central regions.

Clemens Messerschmid offers a complex view of the marginalization of water supplies to both Gaza and the West Bank. In Gaza, the limited quantity of water is an important issue, but the hazardous quality

is equally so, with contaminants mostly far exceeding World Health Organization standards. While Messerschmid disputes prevailing accounts of exactly what causes the problems, he even more adamantly disputes the most touted prescriptions for solving these problems. He argues, for example, that desalination is not a preferable solution, and certainly not one that will increase Gaza's self-sufficiency or independence; it will only replace dependence on water with dependence on electrical power supply. Instead, he argues, the root cause is inequitable sharing of West Bank water, and the solution is to transport water to Gaza from other locations such as Lake Huleh, and to comply with existing international conventions on sharing of international watercourses.

Julie Peteet takes a somewhat different view: that in a certain sense Gaza is not marginal, despite the fact that it is often seen that way. Among other things, she observes, citing Naomi Klein, that Gaza offers to the military goods and services industry in Israel – which makes up a rather large portion of the economy – a testing ground for security technologies. These include checkpoints, walls, and ID cards with biometric information, to name only a few, all of which allows Israeli firms to market themselves as experts in combating "terrorism". It is in this sense, at least, that she says Gaza is quite central, and not marginal at all. But we might look at this in another way: the testing of weapons and of methods of subjugation and control on Palestinians is one explanation for physical marginalization: Palestinians are physically mistreated – marginalized – in part in order to fulfill their central role as inputs into Israel's military goods and services industry.

The presentation by Dr. Yasser Amouri, though not included in this volume, crucially summarized the content of the Goldstone report (the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict), reminding us, for example, of the destruction of 1500 factories and some agricultural production operations. Quite simply, Israel destroyed several of the few remaining major food-producing enterprises in operation in Gaza, both industrial and agricultural. An entire chicken/egg farm was systematically crushed – both the animals and the coops in which they were housed. When we consider the causes of this marginalization of Gaza by wiping out much of its productive capacity, and by implication its secure access to nutritious

food, we are reminded of Dov Weisglass's statement almost a year before Operation Cast Lead that Gazans would be "put on a diet".

The marginalization of the Gazan economy also has included cutting the 20-nautical-mile offshore fishing grounds to an absurd 3-nautical-mile limit, and so reducing to almost nothing the fish protein that Gazans can supply for themselves. Enforcement of this limit by the Israeli navy is violent and sometimes deadly, as documented on the web site fishingunderfire.org. Marginalization of the economy has also meant a siege that has allowed bread but not flour, clothes but not fabric, to enter the Gazan economy, with the result that Gaza has been prevented from restarting its industry.

As Youssef Courbage notes, Gaza has long been exceptional in its very high fertility rate, higher than the West Bank, which he suggests is in part politically driven by Gaza's marginalization. A fertility rate that was close to eight children per woman rose to nearly nine with the First Intifada, and was still about seven by the year 2000. During the Second Intifada, in contrast, fertility in Gaza fell just as it did in the West Bank, and yet projections based on a continuing moderate decline in fertility in Gaza still imply very high population density in the coming decades, unless there is considerable emigration. The marginalization of Gaza must therefore end, because the population of Gaza cannot continue to be indefinitely bottled up inside it.

*Out of the margins of consciousness*

Of course, the IALIIS conference could not directly end the physical marginalization of Gaza, or for that matter of Palestine as a whole, but it did help to combat marginalization from consciousness. It is a constant struggle to keep Palestinians in the public mind, because a wide swath of the major media, at least in the United States, shy away from these topics and particularly from interviewing Palestinians, or even those who support their rights. And these topics rarely are raised in election campaigns, even in countries like the US that give large grants in military aid to Israel each year.

The process of marginalizing Palestinians from consciousness has been largely quite deliberate and conscious. Journalists and TV cameramen have been shot at in the West Bank and Gaza, and sometimes killed,

as was Fadel Shana, Reuters cameraman shot dead in Gaza April 16, 2008, by Israeli soldiers, despite wearing a flak jacket marked "Press" and getting out of a car marked "TV" and operating a TV camera on a tripod. British cameraman James Miller was an earlier casualty of the same practices. In Operation Cast Lead, foreign journalists were excluded altogether from Gaza and reduced to viewing the action from the Israeli side of the border. Yet even this backfired – Palestinians and some few foreigners already inside Gaza were able to use cameras, including cell-phone cameras, to capture some of the worst attacks, and these told the world a story of white phosphorus, and of attacks on UNRWA schools and on a UN warehouse.

Strictly speaking, it is not so much that Palestinians, and Gazans in particular, are completely ignored as that they are often portrayed in one context: as criminals, not as victims, and certainly not as ordinary people with the full range of human thoughts and emotions. The U.S.-based organization If Americans Knew has carefully documented how deaths of Palestinian children are reported differently, and much less prominently or fully, than deaths of Israeli children in U.S. newspapers.

This includes using anti-Palestinian media watch organizations, such as the misnamed honestreporting.com or CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America) to intimidate any news or information program that dares to show Palestinians in a positive light. For example, when a young Jewish American woman, Anna Baltzer, and prominent Palestinian political figure Mustafa Barghouti appeared together on Jon Stewart's The Daily Show in October 2009, Stewart was apparently flooded with hostile messages from these groups; defenders of Palestinian human rights did counter with numerous messages of praise for the remarkably mild comments that the two of them made on the program. Even so, such episodes have a chilling effect on other journalists.

Through all these means, Palestinians in Gaza, and in the whole of Palestine, are pushed to the margins both physically and in our consciousness, and it is a constant battle to pull them out of the margins. Indeed, the political division between the West Bank and Gaza has also tended to marginalize Gaza even among Palestinians, even within the whole of Palestine. This conference was meant in part

also to overcome the marginalization of Gaza within a Palestine that is itself marginalized.

We are grateful to those who have produced books and videos in English that keep Gaza, and Palestine as a whole, in the public mind of the English-speaking world. For Gaza, two key books in English are Sara Roy's *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (2001; somewhat dated now) and Amira Hass's *Drinking the Sea at Gaza* (2000). A third is political scientist Norman Finkelstein's recent book *'This Time We Went Too Far* (2009)*',* offering a meticulous dissection and rebuttal of Israel's claims regarding its own motives in attacking Gaza, and the justification for its actions in international law. And in January 2011 a new edition of *The Goldstone Report* was published, with analysis and excerpts from testimony of victims.

There are excellent video resources on Gaza as well. James Longley's extraordinary film, now about nine years old – *The Gaza Strip* – is still remarkably relevant. Very recently, UNRWA is producing and posting a series of short videos, *Peace Starts Here*, that give glimpses of Gazans living their lives and trying to move forward despite enormous setbacks.

*Out of the margins of conscience*

Ending the physical marginalization of Gaza, and of Palestine as a whole, requires, among other things, ending their marginalization in consciousness and conscience among the majority populations of North America and Europe – not only among the rest of the world.

Paradoxically, hope lies partly in a kind of dialectical process, one that in a way is rooted in Gandhian philosophy and strategy. Each time large-scale grave wrongs are done to Palestinians, the most shocking aspects of them become international news; the ignorant begin to shed their ignorance, and those who have stood immobilized by conflicting sentiments begin to act on their consciences. This happened in a relatively small way in 2002-2003 with so-called Operation Defensive Shield – the Israeli incursion into the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public buildings and infrastructure, and the imposition of drastic curfews for months at a time. It happened in a much bigger way during Operation Cast Lead, December 27, 2008-January 18, 2009, the Israeli attack that catapulted Gaza into public awareness even in North America and Europe, because it was so profoundly one-sided

and disproportionate, and because all over the United States and elsewhere, groups publicly protested and called the world's attention to it. Local protests across the United States sometimes made the front pages of local newspapers, even when they did not make national news. New groups opposed to the Israeli occupation formed; existing groups saw their email lists balloon by tens of thousands of members, and many people were jarred out of their former tendency to merely stand and watch.

A second event was the release in fall 2009 of the UN's Goldstone Commission report, which renewed awareness of the brutality of the attack on Gaza. The debate over it occupied the public mind for several months, and a key interview with Judge Goldstone on Bill Moyers' weekly show spread awareness of the issue.

Third, the flotilla of May 2010 seeking to break the siege of Gaza caught the world's attention, and then the Israeli attack on the Mavi Marmara, the biggest ship in the flotilla, killing nine, provoked outrage and pushed yet more people into awareness of the Palestinian situation.

In some ways it is marginalization from conscience that is the most difficult to fight. When we look at events that long preceded Operation Cast Lead, it is startling to realize how many efforts have been made to promote investigation of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, particularly those by Israel, and how relatively little forward motion there has been. For example, the June 28, 2006 Israeli missile attack on the main electrical power generating plant, which destroyed much of its capacity, caused B'tselem (the Israeli Center for Information on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories) to write,

> The effects of the attack are apparent in all areas of life. As a result of the lack of electricity, the level of medical services provided by clinics and hospitals has declined significantly; most of the urban population receive only two or three hours of water a day; the sewage system is on the verge of collapse; many inhabitants' mobility has been severely restricted as a result of non-functioning elevators; and the lack of refrigeration has exposed many to the danger of food-poisoning. Small businesses reliant on a regular power supply have been badly affected. The hardship involved in living without a steady

flow of electricity is exacerbated by the deep economic crisis afflicting the Gaza Strip.[1]

B'Tselem pointed out that attacking a civilian facility is a crime under international humanitarian law, and called for the Israeli government to pay to restore the power plant to full capacity and take other measures designed to make amends for its action. These would have included restoring a provision in Israeli law that would have allowed persons and institutions damaged as a consequence of the bombing to sue the state for compensation; opening a criminal investigation against those who decided on the bombing and carried it out; and adopting a government resolution declaring that the IDF is forbidden from attacking civilians and civilian objects. Yet none of these was done; and this inaction in the face of clear violations of international law has been repeated over and over again.

The fact that the Goldstone report was actually produced was a milestone in bringing Gaza out of the margins of conscience. But so was the Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice in 2004 that the security barrier was illegally being built inside the West Bank, on Palestinian territory – and that decision has yet to be reflected in action. Indeed, even decisions by Israel's High Court that a particular section of the Wall should be moved are sometimes interminably delayed in implementation.

The conscience rebels when national leaders express indignation at acts by the Gaddafi regime in Libya, demanding international sanctions, investigation, and prosecutions – and yet these leaders seem oblivious to the fact that Israeli acts virtually identical in character took place during Operation Cast Lead – parallels that cry out for parallel action.

Ultimately, what Palestinians want is a normal life, with all the rights and freedoms they are guaranteed under international law, and recognition not of their "plight" but of their contribution to enriching international life with their writings, intellectual endeavors, music, dance, productive innovations, economic activities, and all the embellishments of a full and active life. They look forward to a life in which the rich heritage of remarkable archaeological finds that Jean-Baptiste Humbert describes in his contribution to this volume are able

[1] "Act of Vengeance: Israel's Bombing of the Gaza Power Plant and its Effects," http://www.btselem.org/english/publications/summaries/200609_act_of_vengeance.asp

to opened up to the public without fear of damage from tank treads or a shortage of funds or will to properly protect and display them. They envision a future in which conversation about Gaza, and about Palestine as a whole, is about their intellectual, industrial, agricultural, educational and cultural achievements, their sports victories, and their flourishing tourist industry, not about their misery, their oppression, and the uncertainty of their future. We hope this conference, and the publication of this volume, have brought that time one day closer.

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## Annex I: Authors' Bios

**Raed Bader** is Assistant Professor of history at the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies. His interests center on the history of colonialism, slavery and anti-colonialism, and he has projects within the Institute's Forced Migration and Refugee Unit.

**Youssef Courbage** holds a degree in Demography and Urban Planning. He is a Senior Researcher at the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques (INED), Paris, and has published extensively in the field of comparative demography, with a particular focus on the Middle East.

**Filippo Grandi** is Commissioner-General of UNRWA. He holds a degree in modern history and has long been engaged in refugee work. After a stint with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) he joined UNRWA in 2005 and was elevated to his present post in January 2010.

**Khalil Hindi**, President of Birzeit University, a Professor of Engineering Management and Management Science with numerous publications in his field. He previously taught at the American University of Beirut.

**Jean-Baptiste Humbert** holds degrees in archaeology and cognate fields. He belongs to the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem, having performed a plethora of archaeological digs, including the Gazan sites of Blakhiyah (Shati Camp), Abassan al-Kabir (Khan Yunis), Mkheitim (Jabalia) and Nuseirat.

**Asem Khalil** is Assistant Professor of Law at Birzeit, and Director of the Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies. His research focuses on constitutional and international human rights law.

**Mehrene Larudee** is a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Birzeit University for 2010-2011, under the Fulbright program of academic and cultural exchange between the United States and other countries. She earned her PhD in Economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1995, specializing in international and development economics.

**Maha Samman Mansour** is an Urban Planner and has a PhD in Political Geography. She has worked as a research assistant at the University of Exeter, and a consultant for UNESCO, and is the recipient of the 2004 British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Research Award.

**Clemens Messerschmid** has a graduate degree in applied geology, engineering and hydrogeology, specializing in groundwater resources. He is an expert/advocate in the hydropolitics of water resource control and distribution, and has published and lectured on the technical background and prospects of the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict.

**Julie Peteet** is Professor of Anthropology and Director of Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Louisville, USA. Her research books and articles have focused on Palestinian displacement and refugee camps in Lebanon and spatio-temporal dimensions of separation and closure in Palestine.

**Sara Roy** is Senior Research Scholar at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Trained as a political economist, she has done research in the Gaza Strip since 1985, publishing fundamental works on its economic, social and political development.

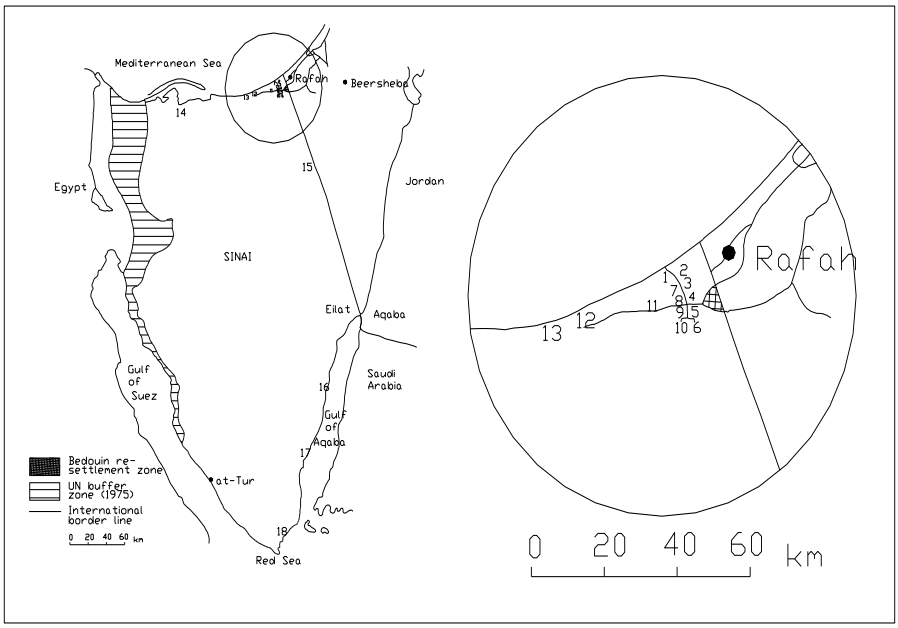
**Helga Tawil-Souri** teaches media studies at New York University. Her scholarship is on globalization, media technologies, cultural expressions and their relationship to economic and political change in the Middle East. She serves on the editorial board of the Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication.

**Basheer AL Zoughbi** has pursued his postgraduate studies in four different European Union universities; as a corollary obtaining an LL.M degree, M.A in Human Rights, M.A in International Relations Management and a graduate certificate in Peace studies.

## Annex II: Figures of Maha Samman Mansour's article

### Figure 1 Israeli Settlements in Sinai[1]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1- Yamit | 6- Ogda | 11- Dikla | 16- Neviot |
| 2- Talmei Yosef | 7- Sufa (Saccot) | 12- Haruvit | 17- Di- Zahav |
| 3- Pri'el | 8- Holit | 13- Sinai | 18- Ophira |
| 4- Merkaz Avshalom | 9- Sadot | 14- Yam | |
| 5- Netiv Ha'asara | 10- Nir Avraham | 15- Kadesch Barnea | |




[1] Map redrawn from Ann Lesch, "Israeli Settlements," 31-32.

## Figure 2 Table of Sinai Settlements.

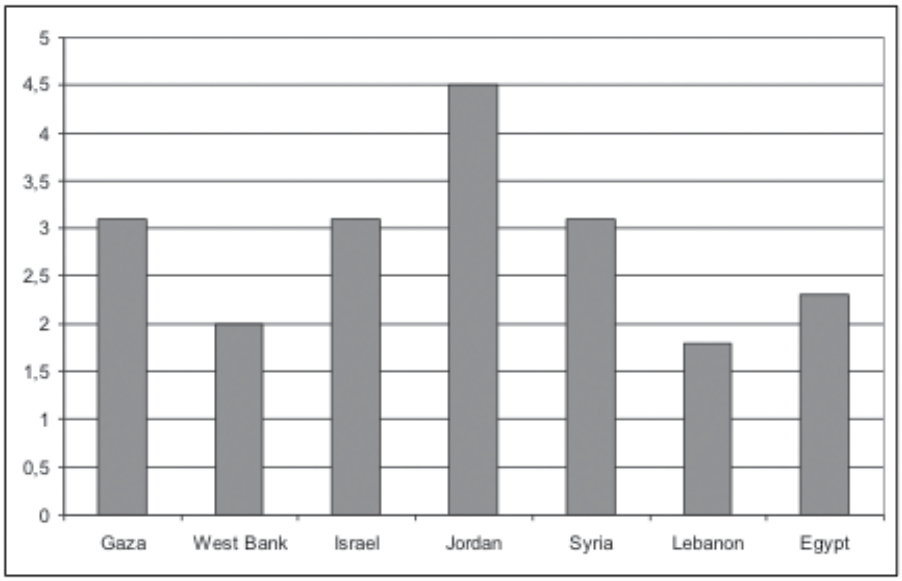
| | Name | Date Founded | Location | Type | Original landowners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Yamit | 1973; first settlers in 1975 | Pithat Rafiah: on coast 7km. south of Rafah town | Urban Settlement; plan was for 1500 units (6000 people) by 1980 | Bedouin lands: most evicted 1971-73 |
| 2 | Talmei Yosef | 1977 | Pithat Rafiah: near Yamit | Moshav; Farmers' Union (Haihud Hahaklai) | Bedouin lands, including almond groves |
| 3 | Pri'el | 1977 | Pithat Rafiah | Moshav | Bedouin Lands |
| 4 | Merkaz Avshalom | 1977 | Pithat Rafiah, junction of Gaza - Sinai highway | Rural center | Adjoins area where the Bedouin were settled |
| 5 | Netiv Ha'asara | 1973 | Pithat Rafiah: 7km. South of Rafiah, on south side of highway | Moshav | Bedouin lands, including a school and cement houses (demolished) |
| 6 | Ogda | 1975 | Pithat Rafiah: 1km. South of Netiv Ha'asara | Moshav | Bedouin lands |
| 7 | Sufa (Succot) | 1974 | Pithat Rafiah: between Yamit and main highway (First kibbutz in Pithat Rafiah) | Nahal until Jan. 1977, then Labour kibbutz. | Bedouin lands; almond and peach groves uprooted in 1974-75 |
| 8 | Holit | 1977 | Pithat rafiah: on highway east of Sufa, north of Sadot | Nahal; later became a Moshav | Bedouin lands |
| 9 | Sadot | June 1971 | Pithat Rafiah: just west of Netiv Ha'asara | Labour Moshav (first Moshav in Pithat Rafiah) | Bedouin lands |
| 10 | Nir Avraham | 1977 | Pithat Rafiah: 1km. south of Sadot; adjoins Ogda | Moshav | Bedouin lands |
| 11 | Dikla | Feb. 1969 | Pithat Rafiah: 11km. South of Rafiah, on coastal side of highway | Nahal until March 1971, then Herut Moshav | Site of a former Egyptian desert development company |
| 12 | Haruvit | Dec. 1975 | Sinai coast: 18 km. southwest of Dikla | Herut Nahal | |
| 13 | Sinai | 1968 | Sinai coast: 12km. southwest Harvuit; (site moved from southwest of El-Arish in 1974) | Nahal became civilian Moshav in 1977 on completion of construction of permanent site | Part expropriated from El-Arish former site was an Egyptian government plantation |
| 14 | Yam | Oct. 1967 | Sinai coast: Lake Bardawil, 70 km. south-west of El Arish, near Bir al-Abed | Nahal till May 1973, then Labour kibbutz | Egyptian fishing site |
| 15 | Kadesh Barnea | Planned in 1977 | Sinai: Oasis near the 1967 border | Naha | Bedouin Oasis |
| 16 | Neviot | Feb. 1971 | Gulf of Aqaba: coast road, 60 km. south of Eilat | Moshav | Nuweibeh Oasis |
| 17 | Di-Zahav | Sep. 1971 | Gulf of Aqaba: coast road, 60 km. south of Neviot | Moshav | Ghahab, at mouth of Wadi Nasib |
| 18 | Ophira | 1970 | Gulf of Aqaba: Sharm al-Sheikh | Urban Settlement | |

SOURCE: Lesch, “Israeli Settlements,” 37-38. Table is rewritten to reflect a past existence.

**Annex III: Figures of Youssef Courbage's article**

**Figure 1 The long-term rate of population growth (%) in Gaza and neighbouring countries 1950-2010**

Y axis: Rate of increase (percent)

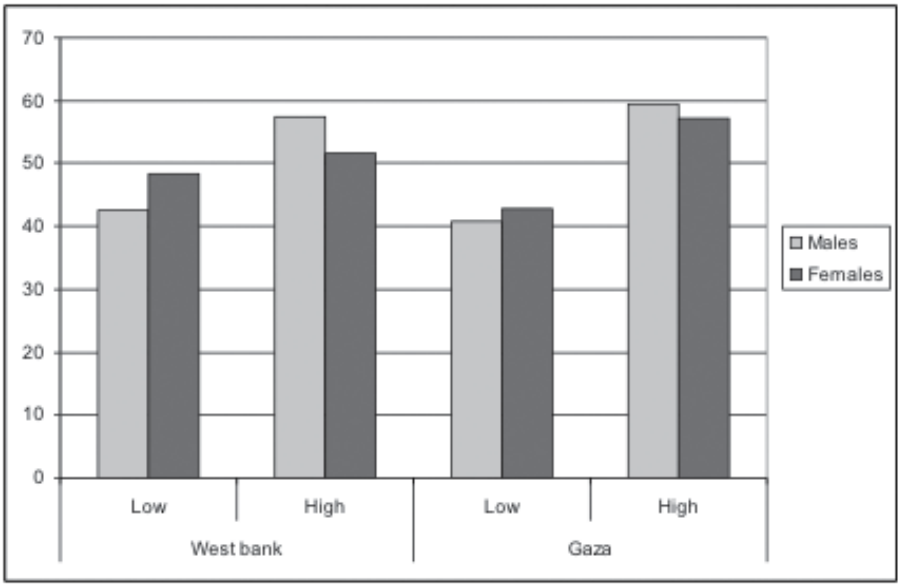



SOURCE: Author's calculation using data from PCBS; UNPD 2009; PRB 2010.

**Figure 2 Higher levels of education in Gaza than in the West Bank, lower gender gap, 2006**

Y axis: Low = Percent of group that has at most an elementary school education

High = Percent of group that has more than an elementary school education

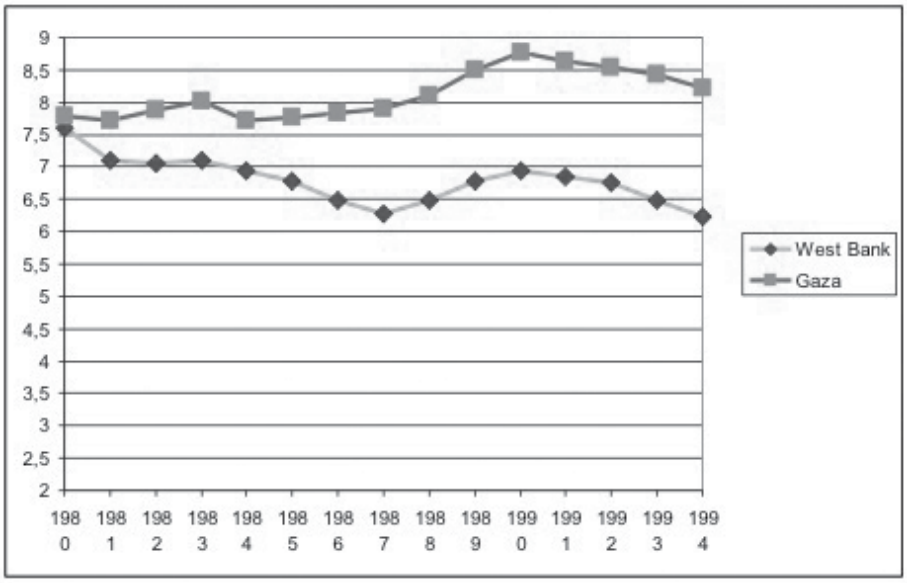



SOURCE: Author's calculation using data from PCBS (2007), 45-46, Tables 2.6, 2.7.

**Figure 3 A higher intifada effect on fertility in Gaza than in the West Bank?**

Y-axis: Total fertility rate (children per woman)

X axis: Year

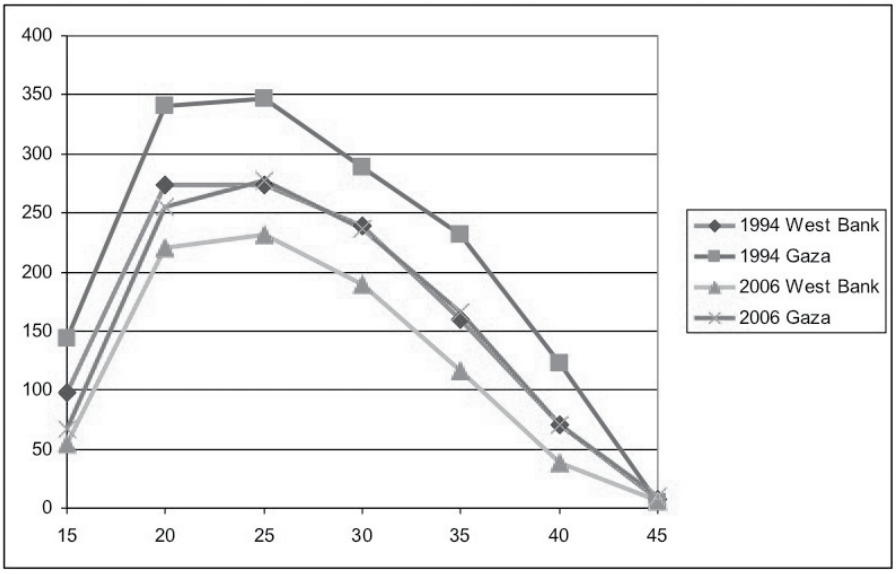



Source: PCBS

**Figure 4 Age specific fertility rates in Gaza and the West Bank, 1994 and 2006**

Y axis: Age specific fertility rate (births per thousand women in age group)

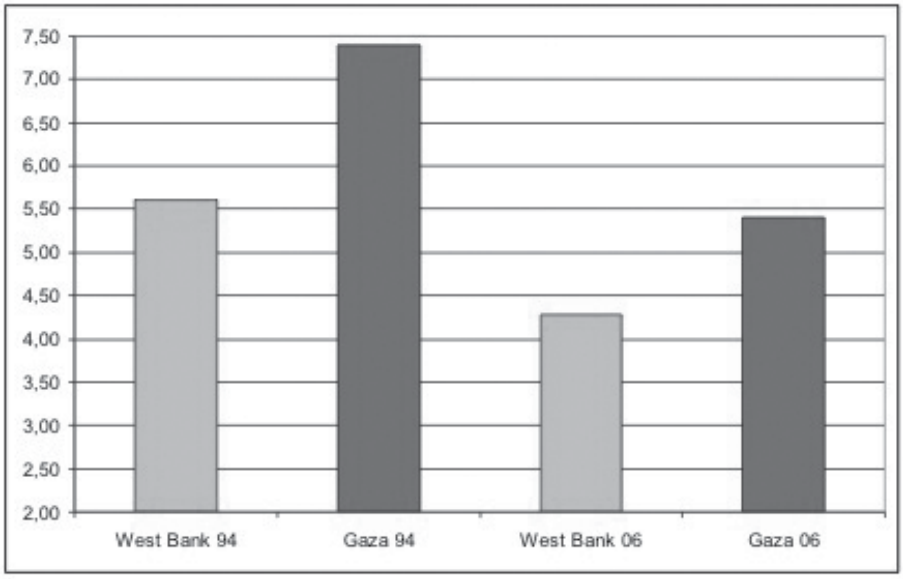
X axis: Age




Source: PCBS 2007, Table 3.5, page 59

**Figure 5 Total Fertility Rate in Gaza and the West Bank, 1994 and 2006**

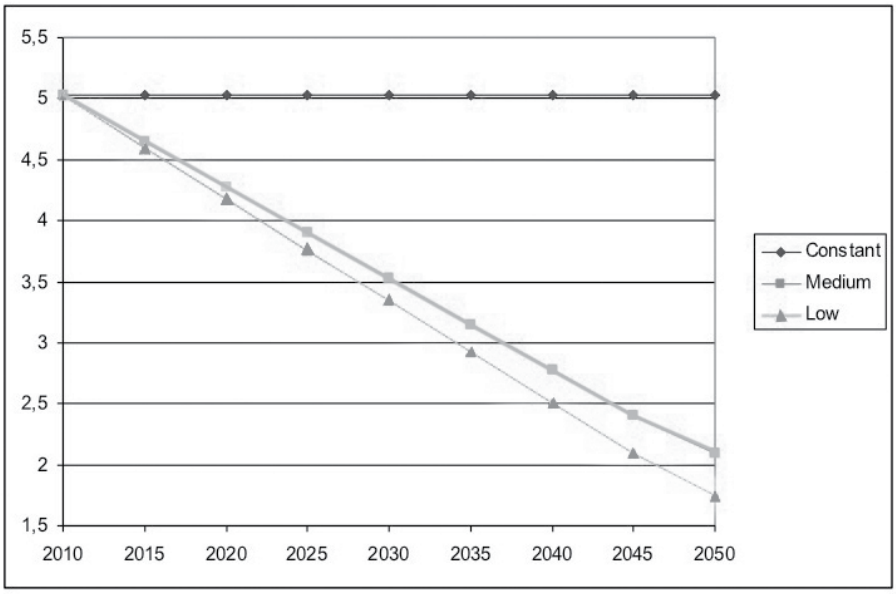
Y axis: Total fertility rate




Source: PCBS

**Figure 6 Three different assumptions about fertility trends in Gaza, 2010-2050**

Y axis: Total Fertility Rate

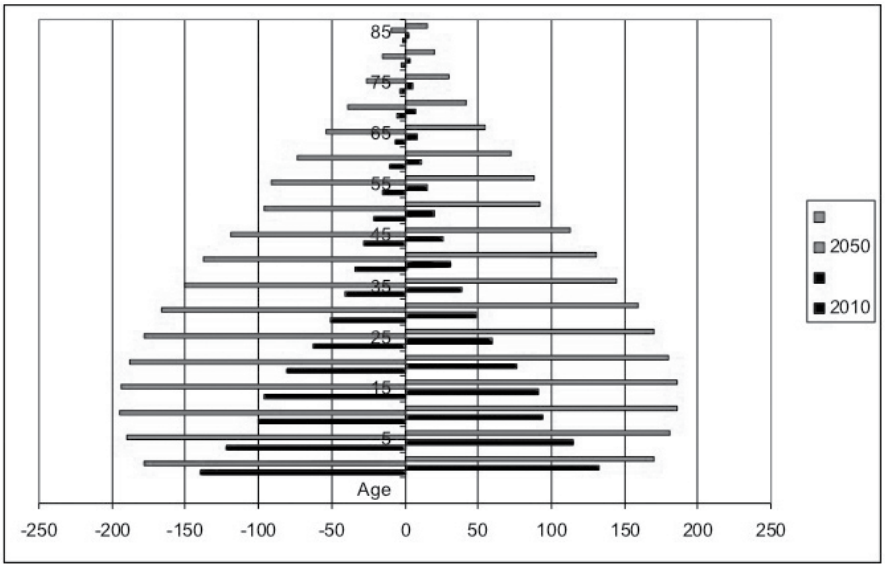



Source: PCBS

**Figure 7 The population age and sex structure in Gaza, 2010 and 2050, based on Figure 6 medium assumption.**

Y axis: Age

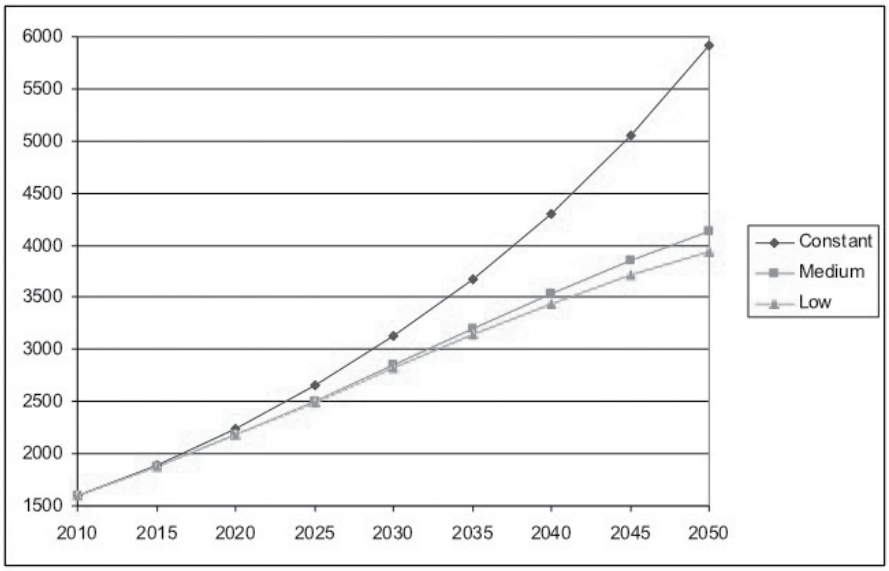
X axis: Thousands of persons: Males (right), Females (left)




Source: PCBS

**Figure 8 The ineluctability of high population growth in Gaza 2010-2050**

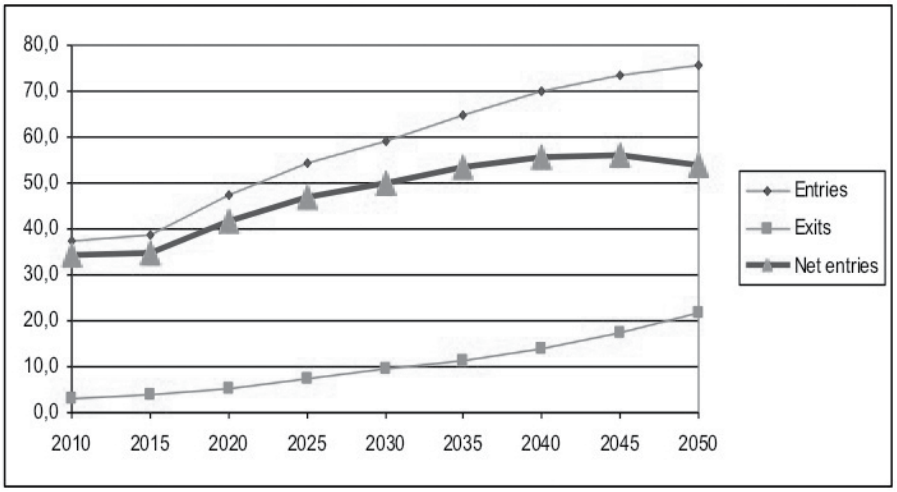
Y axis: Population (thousands)




SOURCE: Author's calculation; see Figure 6 for definitions of Constant, Medium, and Low assumptions.

**Figure 9 The labour market in Gaza: entries, exits, net entries**

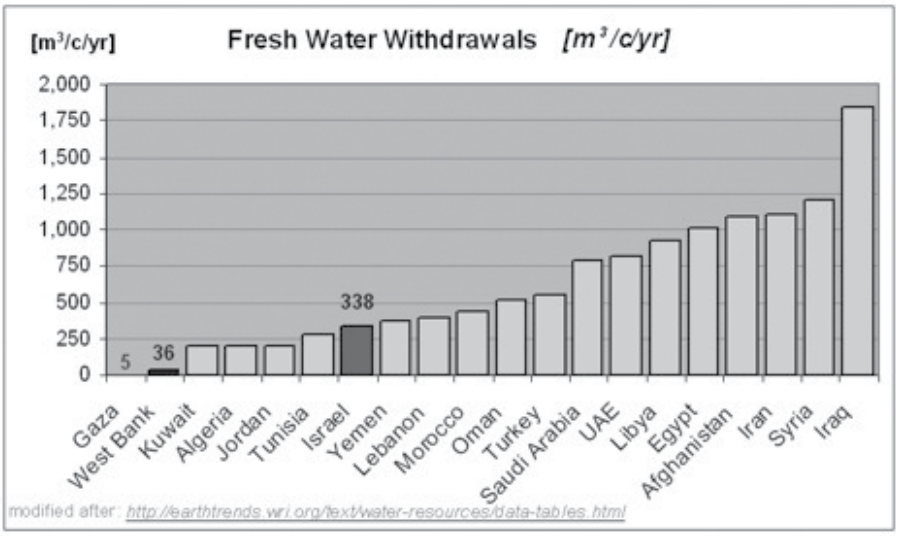
Y axis: Thousands of persons




Source: PCBS

**Annex IV: Figures of Clemens Messerschmid**

**Figure 1 The driest place on earth…** [1]




Per-capita freshwater withdrawals in the MENA region.

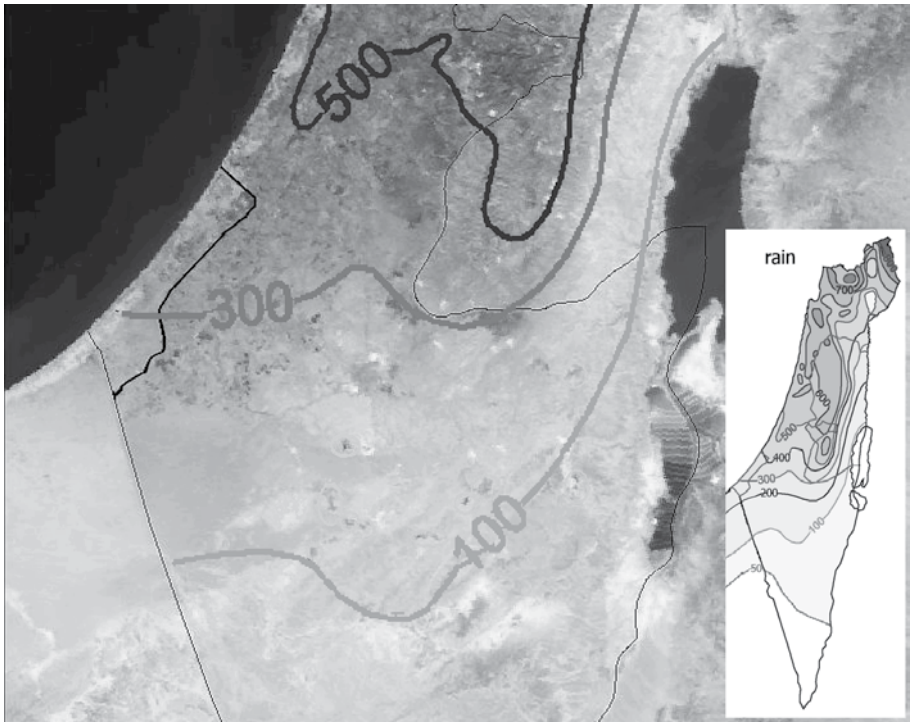
*Note: Brackish water use in Gaza not included*

SOURCE: modified after: <http://earthtrends.wri.org > with data for the oPt: PWA (2009).

[1] Figures for the West Bank & Gaza Strip are added to the original "earthtrends" graph (after PWA 2009) – excluding brackish water production.

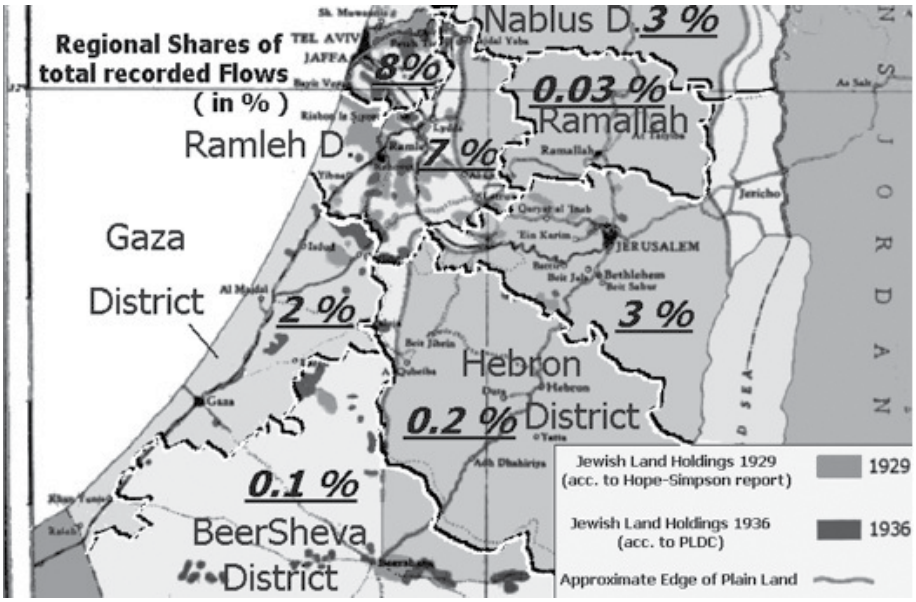
**Figure 2 Isohyets in Palestine/Israel**

SOURCE: EXACT (1998, 4), Vengosh et al (2005, 13) [1]




[1] Compiled from several sources: For Israel/Palestine: modified based on EXACT (1998, 4). For Gaza: Vengosh et al. (2005, 13 and Fig. 1A – page 2).

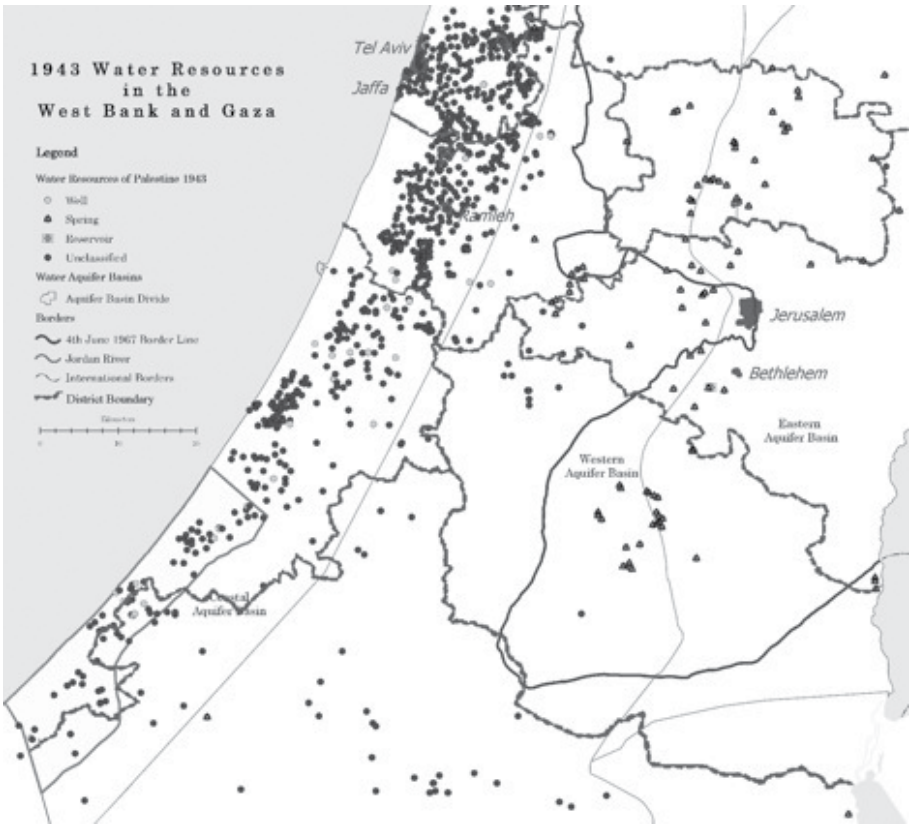
**Figure 3 Total recorded flows by district in 1943 & Jewish Land holdings in 1929, 1936.**




*(2%percent of 1168mcm are equivalent to ~ 27mcm/yr) –*

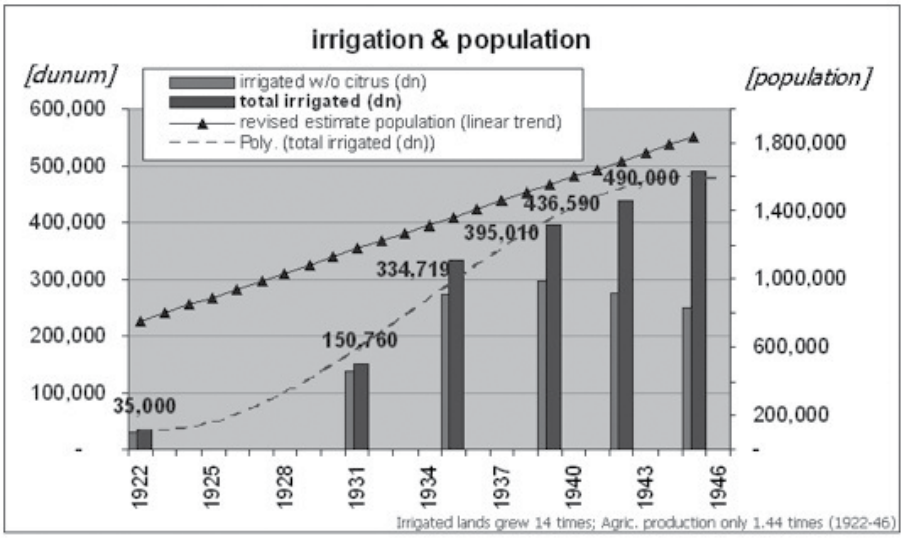
Source: Messerschmid (2008a, 10)

**Figure 4 Well distribution in Palestine (1943).**



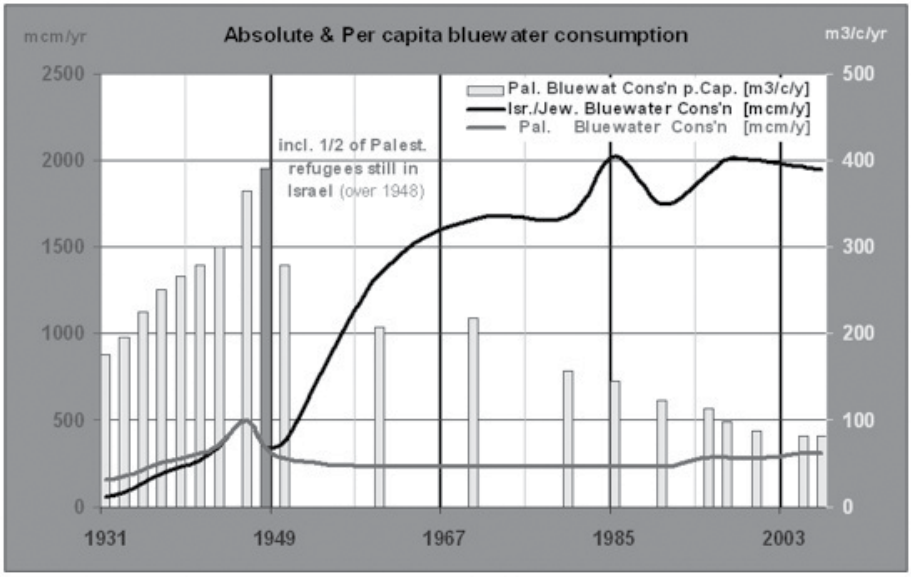

SOURCE: Messerschmid (2008b, 9, Annex III).

**Figure 5 Growth of irrigation & population (linear trend) under the British Mandate**




SOURCE: Based on Messerschmid (2008a, 13, Annex VIII).

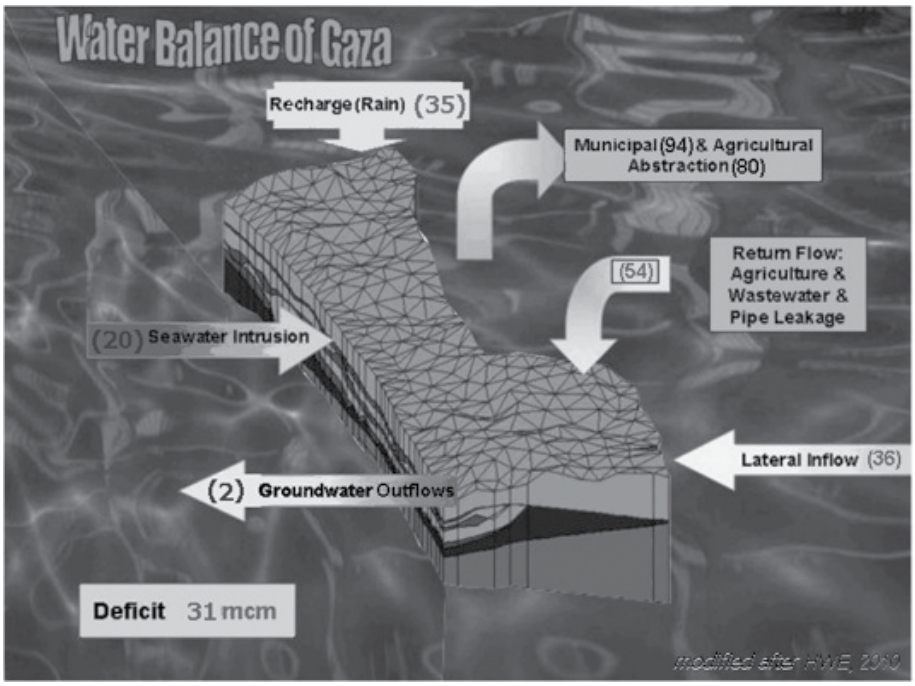
**Figure 6 Overall Palestinian and Israeli (Jewish) blue-water consumption and Palestinian per-capita consumption (domestic & agricultural) in columns**




SOURCE: Messerschmid (2010, 4)

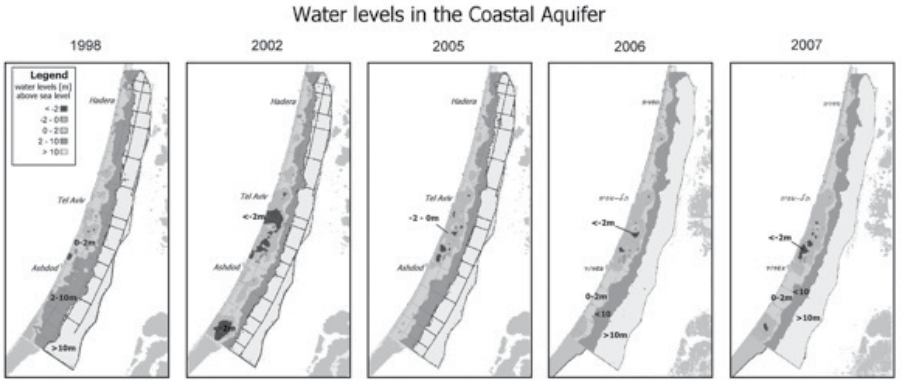
Note: Palestinian consumption before 1948 refers to all Palestinians; after 1949 it refers to the oPt. Israeli/Jewish consumption refers to Jews before 1948, and to all Israeli citizens after 1949.

**Figure 7 Gaza water balance**



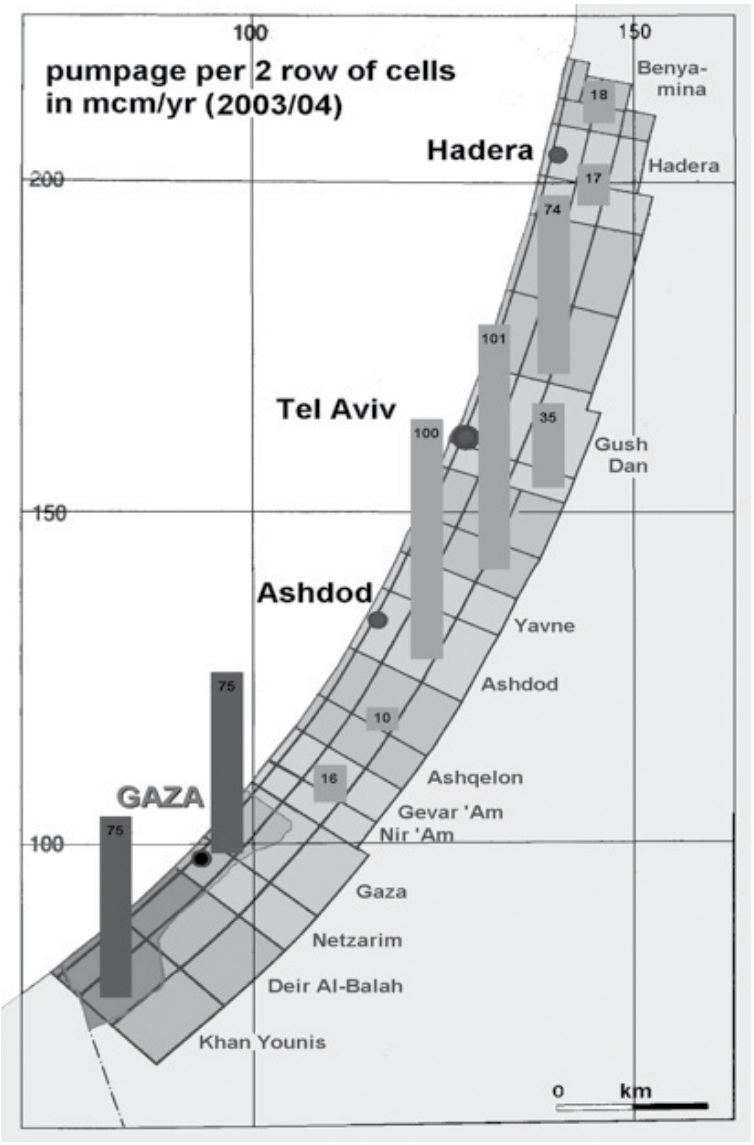

SOURCE: Vengosh et al (2005, 4); HWE (2010, 42); PWA (2010, 8, 10) and CAMP (2000). Data from PWA, 2000; modified with data according to Vengosh (2005, 4); HWE, (2010, 42), PWA (2010, 8,10).

**Figure 8 Water level fluctuations in the Israeli part of the Coastal Aquifer (below sea level in red)**




SOURCE: (HSI 2006, 79, 2008, 69)

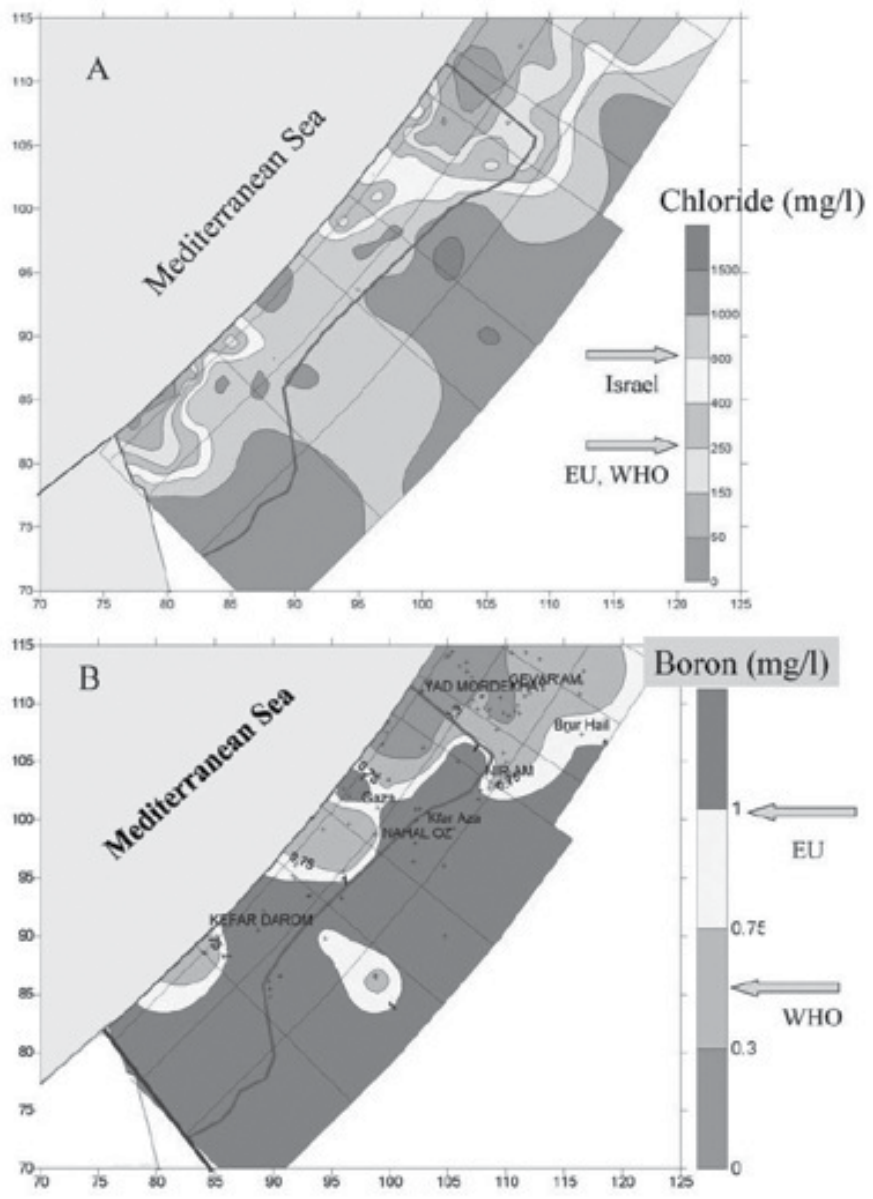
**Figure 9 CAB pumpage (per two rows of cells) in Gaza & Israel**




SOURCE: HSI (2005, 96).

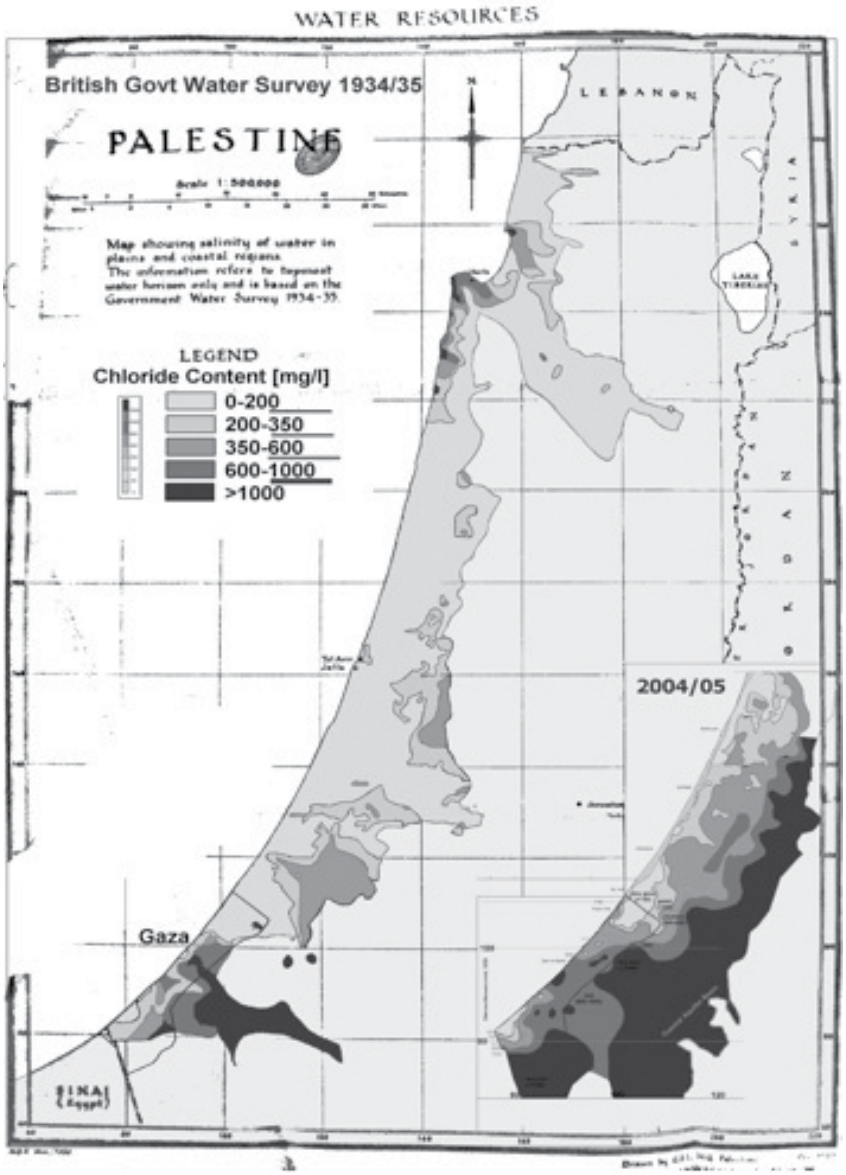
Note: The amounts shown in the bars refer each to two West-East rows of cells on the ground (and in the map). The Israeli management system of the Coastal Aquifer Basin (CAB) subdivides the entire area into rows of cells running West to East and columns running North to South (HIS 2008, 61) – altogether 16 rows of 4 cells each, in total 64 cells.

**Figure 10 Chloride and boron levels in and around Gaza**




SOURCE: Vengosh et al. (2005, 3).

**Figure 11 Coastal aquifer salinity – 1934/35 and 70 years later, 2004/05**




Source: Messerschmid et al. (2009, 9, 21, 22, AnnexIII), modified after: G.S.I. H.Q. (1934, 128) & HSI (2006, by-map - Chloride levels).[2]

[2] 3G.S.I. H.Q. (1943, 128) and HSI (2006, by-maps: Cl-level map 'Mapat Rikuz Chlorid' (hebr.). See also Messerschmid et al. (2009, 9, 21, 22 – Chloride map).

**Figure 12 Cross section through the Gaza strip (Coastal and adjacent aquifers)**

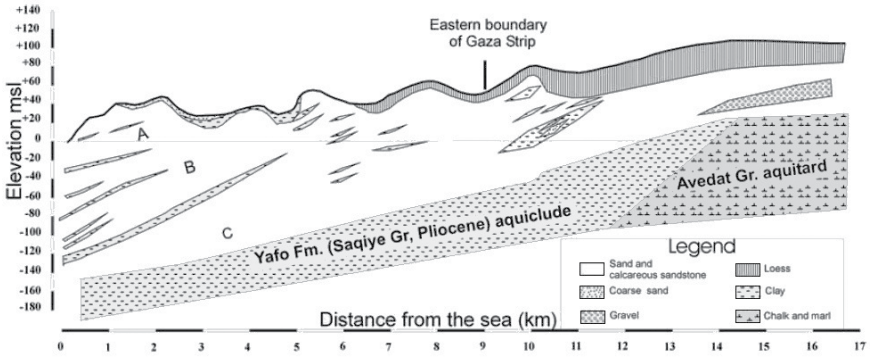
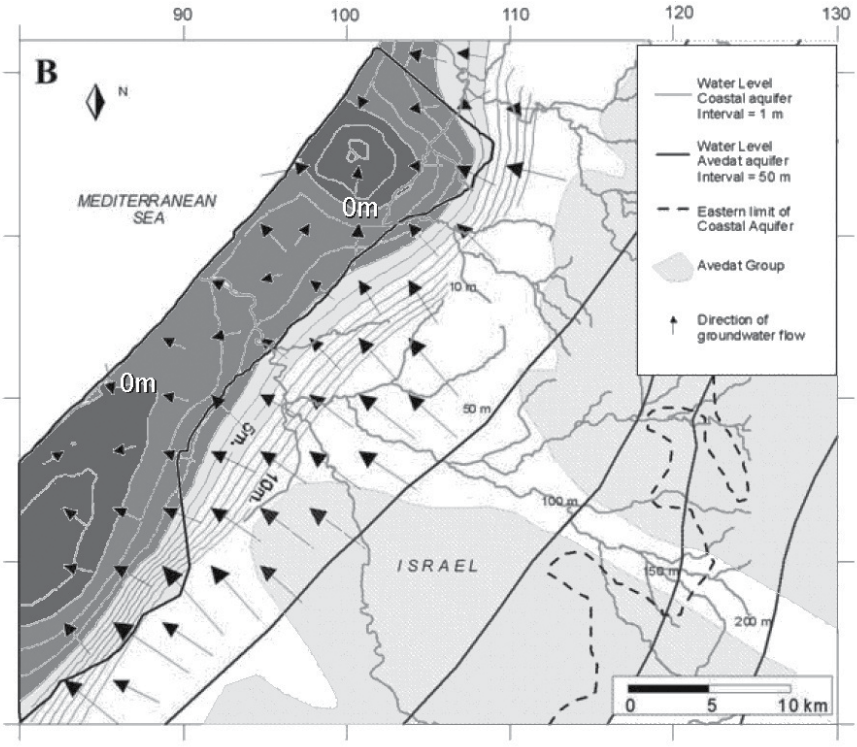
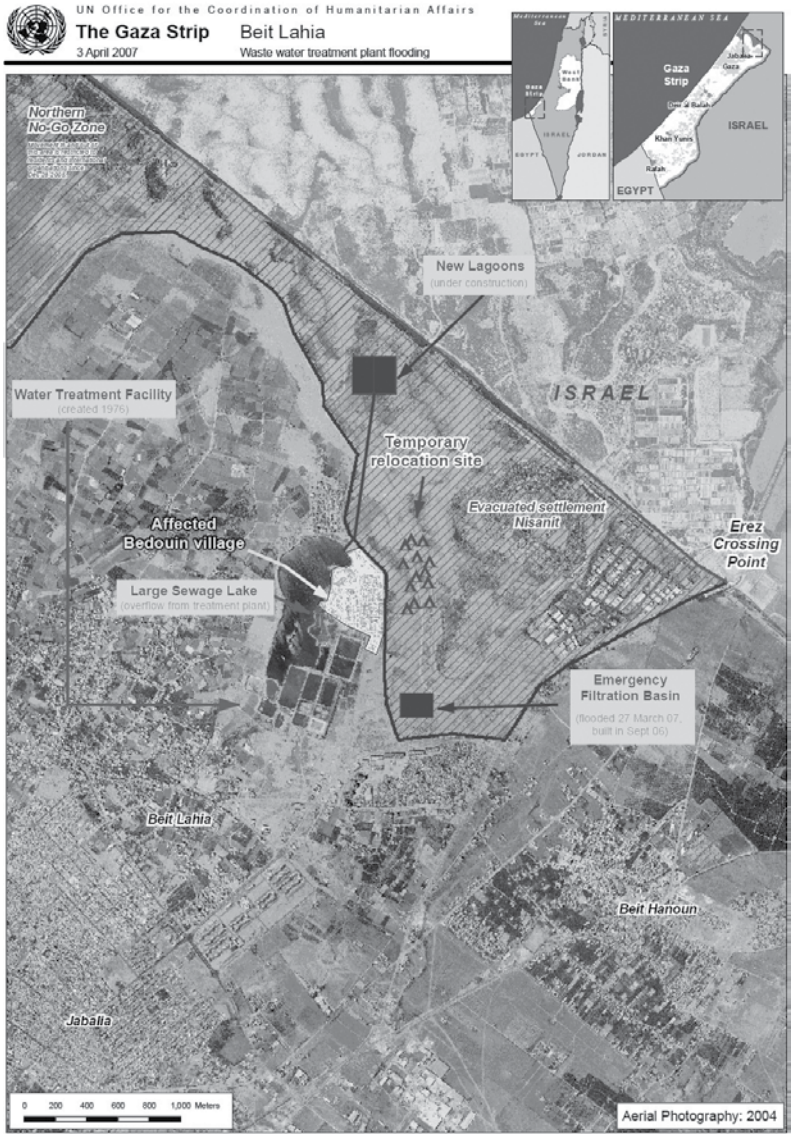


**Figure 13 Water levels in the S Coastal aquifer – contact with saline 'Avedat group**




SOURCE: Vengosh et al. (2005, 2).

**Figure 14 Map of N Gaza strip – Beit Lahiya waste water lagoon**




Source: OCHA (2007b)

Old Beit Lahiya Sewage Lake (3mcm, 3km long, 25m deep), Old emergency lagoon (constructed in Sep ’06, collapsed 31 Mar ’07) (centre)flooded Bedouin community Umm El-Nasser (light grey in the middle),relocated two new “infiltration basins” (‘new lagoons’) 1.5 km North, built in summer 2007.

**Figure 15 Um El-Nasser 27 March 2007**

Source: Messerschmid (2008c, 48).

**Figure 16a,b New wastewater lagoons in Gaza SOURCE: Bardawil (2007, 6, 12).**


SOURCE: Bardawil (2007, 6, 12).

*Note: The presentation states:*

*Aim: "Resume a normal operation of the wastewater system"*

*Methods: "Constructing a disposal pipeline to the identified infiltration area"*

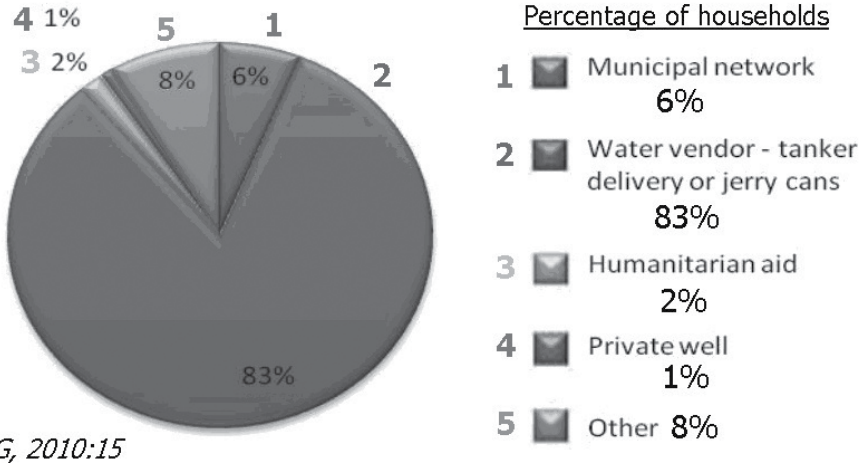
**Figure 17 One horsepower water tanker - Gaza style, 2007**

(Photo – Laura Brav, Médécins sans Frontières) Source: Messerschmid (2008c, 48).

**Figure 18 The alternative: Israeli mineral water or "gallon" with desalinated groundwater (Gaza, October 2007)**


SOURCE: Photo by author (Gaza, 2007).

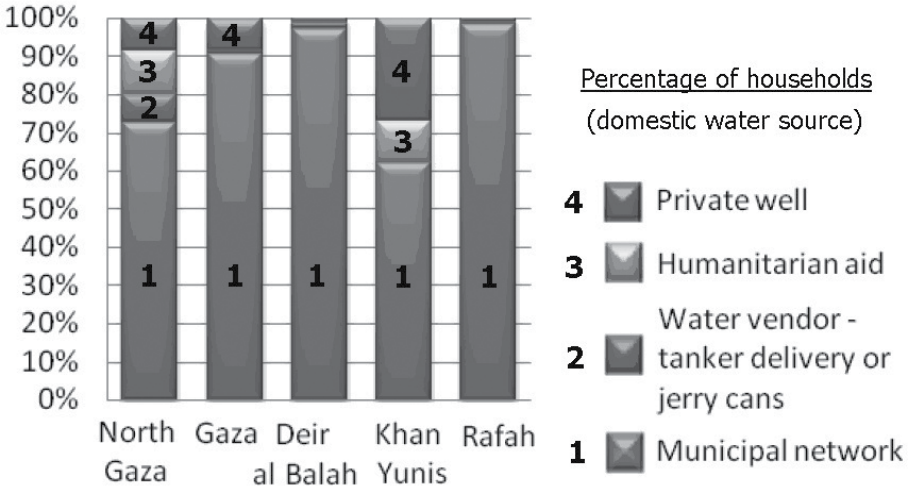
**Figure 19 Primary source of drinking water**




*PHG, 2010:15*

SOURCE: PHG (2010, 15).

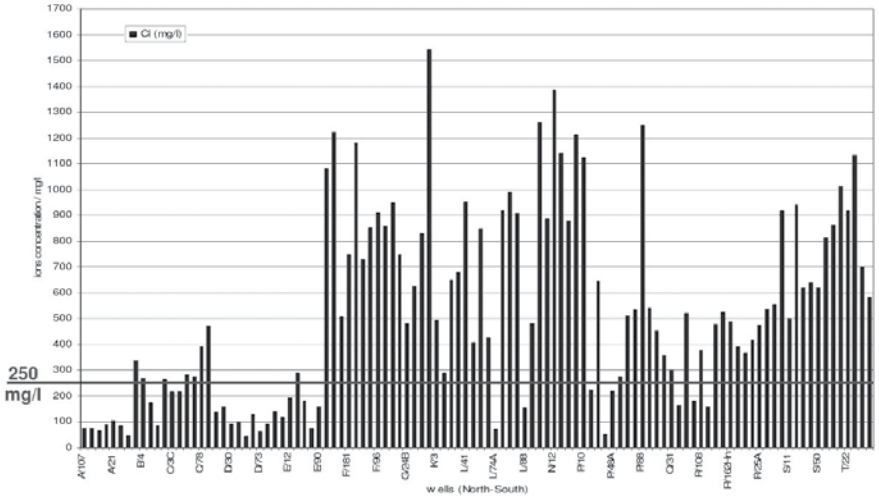
**Figure 20 Primary source of domestic water**




*PHG, 2010:17*

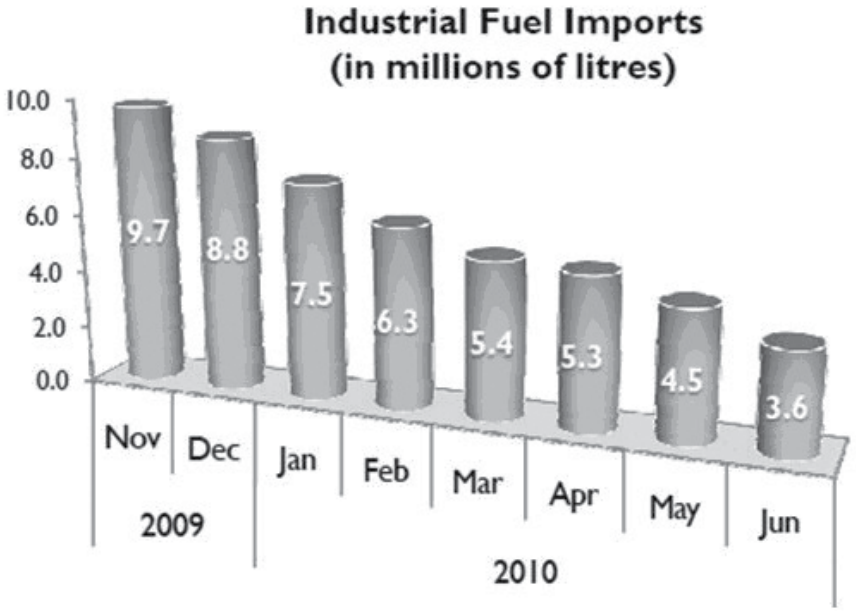
SOURCE: PHG (2010, 17).

**Figure 21 Chloride content in municipal wells of Gaza** *(above WHO level of 250mg/l)*



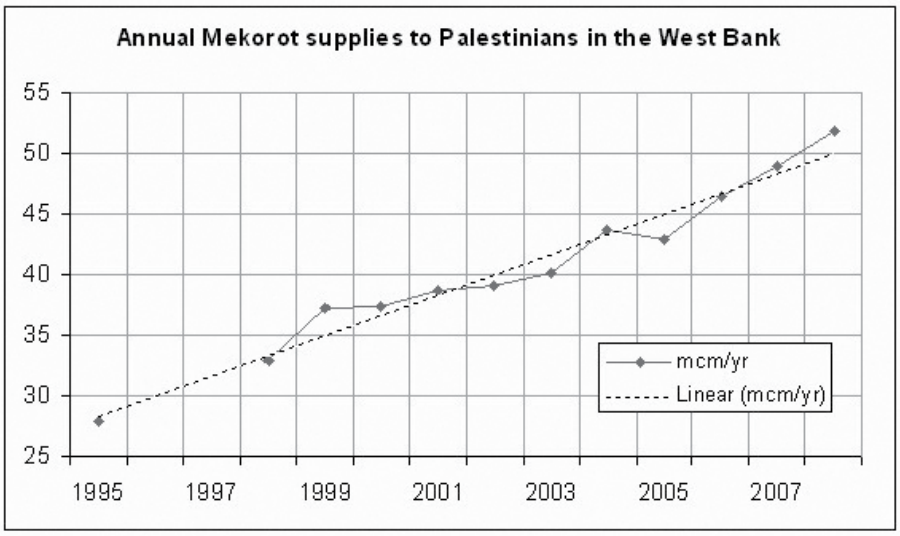

SOURCE: Yaqubi (2006, 6).

**Figure 22 Industrial fuel imports**




SOURCE: OCHA (2010b, 11).

**Figure 23 Annual Mekorot supplies to Palestinians in the West Bank (mcm/yr)**




SOURCE: Excel-file with data after: IWA (2009, 35).

**Figure 24 Gaza – Manhattan (200km distance to Lake Huleh)**


SOURCE: modified after: DEP (2009, 19, Figure 2.1)