

# Life Behind the Wall

## Voices of Women from the Seam Zone

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“ I constantly worried when I became pregnant, because I didn't have access to a good hospital. I screamed and shouted when we got to the checkpoint, pretending I was in pain so that the soldiers wouldn't stop the car. I was so desperate to get to a hospital in time that I was willing to do anything to avoid being sent back at the checkpoint. ”

Nisrin S., East Jerusalem

### Quick Facts:

- Some 85% of the Barrier's route runs inside the West Bank<sup>1</sup>.
- Around 11,000 Palestinians living in 32 communities located between the Barrier and the Green Line depend on granting of permits or special arrangements to live in their own homes<sup>2</sup>.
- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) established that the sections of the Barrier which run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, together with the associated gate and permit regime, violate Israeli's obligations under international law<sup>3</sup>.

**Background:** Much has been written about the legal and political implications of the construction of a Wall inside Palestinian territory. Less is known about the impact the Wall has on the daily lives of women caged in the Seam Zone. This initial qualitative investigation sheds some light on the common problems and restrictions suffered by Palestinian women living in this area.

**Method:** In-depth qualitative interviews with 15 women were conducted utilizing a purposeful selection process to include a range of locations and experiences. Transcripts were examined for recurring themes.

**Findings:** Most women reported overcrowded housing conditions, economic hardships, and social isolation rendering traditional ways of life almost impossible. Access to education was restricted. Almost all noted severe hardships in accessing healthcare for themselves, their children and the elderly. Some maintained that this led to neglect and delay in seeking medical attention, with some narrating personal experiences of seemingly imminent death as a result. Many women reported difficulty in accessing pre and post-natal services. Almost all women noted feelings of severe distress and loneliness.

**Interpretation:** This initial investigation attests to a dire humanitarian situation of a particularly vulnerable group, raising serious concerns about the impact of constructing the Wall inside Palestinian territory.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_barrier\\_factsheet\\_july\\_2013\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_barrier_factsheet_july_2013_english.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_barrier\\_factsheet\\_july\\_2013\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_barrier_factsheet_july_2013_english.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/131/1671.pdf>

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