



UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE IMPACT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING IN AND AROUND EAST JERUSALEM

**United Nations Office at Geneva
15 and 16 April 2004**

FINAL DOCUMENT

1. The United Nations International Meeting on the Impact of the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, was held on 15 and 16 April 2004, at the United Nations Office at Geneva, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Participants in the Meeting included eminent personalities, internationally renowned experts, including Israelis and Palestinians, representatives of United Nations Members and Observers, parliamentarians, representatives of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, the academic community, representatives of civil society organizations, as well as the media.
2. The Meeting was held at a time, when, despite a broad opposition by the world community, the Government of Israel continued to build the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In light of this situation, the Committee was of the view that the far-reaching humanitarian, economic and political implications of the construction of the wall warranted further attention of all actors of the international community.
3. In the course of the Meeting, the participants underlined the complexity of the project, which included not just one prominent element but an elaborate regime combining physical structures, such as concrete walls, barbed wire fences, ditches, other obstacles, as well as patrol roads, hi-tech surveillance equipment as well as administrative and practical measures, including the establishment of closed zones. Speakers have expressed their dismay at the scope of the project, its devastating immediate and longer-term effects on the Palestinian population and the destructive consequences for the political process. They also discussed the Palestinian and Israeli reactions, as well as the response of the international community.
4. The participants in the Meeting welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution ES-10/13 and highlighted its demand that Israel stopped and reversed the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, in departure from the Armistice Line of 1949 and in contradiction to relevant provisions of international law. Noting that Israel has not adhered to this demand and continued the construction of the wall, many speakers expressed their appreciation of the important report of the Secretary-General submitted in November 2003 in accordance with the resolution. They further stressed the importance of the General Assembly resolution ES-10/14 requesting an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. The participants expressed confidence that the Court would issue, in due course, an advisory opinion that uphold international law. They called upon the international community, but in particular the occupying Power, to adhere to the upcoming advisory opinion of the Court and to take all the necessary steps to restore international legitimacy.

5. The political consequences of the construction of the wall were at the centre of the discussion. The participants were of the opinion that the construction had multiple negative effects on the political situation. The wall was viewed as a direct and dangerous challenge to the internationally-recognized 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line (Green Line); it violated the letter and the spirit of the Road Map; and it predetermined the outcome of any future permanent status negotiations by creating new facts on the ground. Many speakers saw in it a *de facto* annexation of the Palestinian land. The participants agreed that, if not stopped and reversed immediately, the construction of the wall would destroy the chances for the establishment of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State, thereby making the two-State solution physically impossible to implement and further endangering prospects for peace and security in the region.

6. The participants expressed deep concern over the dangerous current and potential humanitarian consequences of the construction of the wall, noting that it would bring further dispossession for a significant number of Palestinians. With this project, the occupying Power has added further constraints to the already severely limited freedom of movement in the West Bank, increasing the suffering of thousands of Palestinian families affected by it. Some participants noted with concern that the construction might also lead to a forced displacement of Palestinians in their own land. Combined with the tight regime of closures and curfews, the wall seriously impeded international community's emergency aid and humanitarian relief work.

7. The participants also noted that by destroying, confiscating and putting off limits Palestinian agricultural lands and water sources in the process of the wall construction, Israel dealt another devastating blow to the Palestinian economy, which was on the verge of collapse after three years of destruction and restrictions imposed by the occupying Power. It was observed that the construction had also caused considerable economic disruption by severing the long-established economic links between and within Palestinian communities, as well as between the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. The wall has greatly limited the Palestinians' access to healthcare, education, employment and food. The participants expressed their alarm at the fact that the continuation of this project might bring to a halt most of the Palestinian economic activity, further delay the achievement of economic viability by the Palestinians and increase their dependence on donor assistance.

8. The participants further noted that the protracted and complete lack of dialogue between the parties necessitated an active involvement of the international community. They expressed concern over the increasingly unilateralist approach favoured by the Israeli Government and emphasized that such positions should be rejected by the international community. They urged the Quartet to reinstate its role as the main international broker and facilitator of the political process and to reassert its commitment to the strict adherence to international law. They called on the Quartet to work closely with the parties and other international and regional actors to save and implement the Road Map in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515. The participants agreed that the setting up of an effective international monitoring and implementation mechanism was essential for any progress on the ground.

9. The participants reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to all the aspects of the question of Palestine, until it is resolved in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized.

10. The participants also expressed gratitude to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the Committee and the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

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