

Occupied Palestine: Slow Genocide Policy

Since 2002, the Ariel Sharon government in Israel has ignored more than six United Nations Security Council resolutions, including the formal adoption of the "Road Map," the plan drawn up by the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations Secretary General, and adopted by both the Palestinian National Authority and the Sharon government. These resolutions called on Israel to cease its policy of "closure" of the Palestinian territories, to withdraw military forces, and to cease civilian casualties.

Using the Orwellian phrase shared by George W. Bush, Sharon has dismissed the millions of Palestinian people, saying that Israel "does not have a partner" with whom to discuss peace. Most of the world has stood by, callously, while numerous international organizations have documented the slow genocide that has been conducted against the Palestinian people, especially its children.

This compilation from recent documentary reports was prepared by EIR's Michele Steinberg, as a supplement to our coverage of the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation conference.

"Disengagement, the Palestinian Economy, and the Settlements," *Report of the World Bank, June 23, 2004*

"The Palestinian Economy Today—Few Prospects

"Between September 2000 and late 2002, the Palestinian economy experienced one of the deepest recessions in modern history. The decline in real per capita GDP reached almost 40% by the end of 2002, exceeding the scale of economic losses suffered by the U.S. in the Great Depression, or Argentina during the recent financial collapse. Unemployment increased from 10% of the workforce to an average of 41% during 2002, and the number of poor rose from 20% to over 50% of the population. In Gaza, unemployment exceeded 46% of the workforce, and the poverty level rose to 68%. . . .

"The precipitator of this economic crisis has been 'closure,' a multi-faceted system of restriction on the movement of goods and people designed to protect Israelis in Israel itself and in the settlements. . . ."

"Poverty & Destruction in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Fact Sheet," *Palestine Monitor, 2003*

"Twenty-four months of Israeli military aggression and closure has had severe negative effects on the Palestinian economy and has left Palestinian society in crisis. Due to the unstable situation there is currently no private investment

and donor countries are hesitant to invest in the Palestinian economy and community unless there is some progress in the peace process. The most serious damage to the economic situation and the general welfare of the population stems from the military closure and siege.

"Closure and Siege

"In early October 2000, Israel imposed the most severe restrictions on movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since the beginning of the occupation in 1967. . . . The Israeli Army controls all movement of people and goods within the Occupied Territories, between them and East Jerusalem and Israel through a dense network of military checkpoints and roadblocks. The travel and movement restrictions imposed on people and transportation has paralyzed the Palestinian economy. . . .

"Unemployment has risen to 65%. Since September 2000, approximately 80,000 Palestinians have lost their jobs in Israel, while another 60,000 jobs have been lost inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories due to a decrease in demand and businesses forced to dismiss workers;

"Almost half of Palestinian households live on 50% of what their income was before the current Intifada began. . . .

"In the first 15 months of the current Intifada, physical damage from the conflict amounted to \$305 million. Damage caused by closure and siege during the same time is estimated at \$2.4 billion;

"60% of Palestinian exports have been lost and government spending is halved; before the Intifada the PA spent over \$100 million a month, now it puts little more than \$50 million a month into the economy; . . .

"Direct and indirect losses for the entire economy have been estimated at somewhere between \$3.5 and \$10 billion. A loss of \$3.5 billion means that the Palestinians have lost their Gross Domestic Product for an entire year (prior to September 2000, the Palestinian Authority GDP was almost \$4 billion);

"Poverty. . . .

"75% of the Palestinian population living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories lives under the poverty line (\$2 per person); . . .

"Alarming development:

"September 2000: 600,000, or 20%, of about 3 million Palestinians lived in poverty;

"End of 2002: 1.5 million, or 50%, of the population lived in poverty;

"By May 2002, following the Israeli large-scale invasion: 84.6% of households in Gaza and 57.8% of households in the West Bank live below the poverty line. . . .

"Disproportionate effect of poverty on children: Due to the fact that a large proportion of the Palestinian population are children (53% of the Palestinian population is below 18 years) more than two-thirds of Palestinian children live in poverty. . . .

"Malnutrition and Anemia:

“30% of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, 21% from acute malnutrition;

“45% of children under five and 48% of women of childbearing age suffer from moderate to mild anemia.

“More than 30% of Palestinians depend upon food handouts from NGOs and 50% of all Palestinians require external food assistance to help meet their minimum daily caloric intake.”

“Amnesty International Report for 2003,” Palestinian Media Center website, May 27, 2004

“Killings and attacks by the Israeli army:

“Around 600 Palestinians, most of them unarmed and including more than 100 children, were killed by the Israeli army in random and reckless shooting, shelling, and bombings or as a result of excessive use of force. Some 90 Palestinians were killed in extrajudicial executions, including more than 50 uninvolved bystanders, of whom nine were children. Others were killed in armed clashes with Israeli soldiers.

“On 25 June, 19-year-old Nivin Abu Rujaila was killed when an Israeli army helicopter gunship fired a missile that struck the taxi she was travelling in. The taxi driver, Akram 'Ali Farhan, was also killed. The target of the strike was travelling in another car. . . .

“Most Israeli soldiers and security force members continued to enjoy impunity. Investigations, prosecutions and convictions for human right violations were rare. According to the Israeli army, since the beginning of the Intifada (uprising) in September 2000, 61 soldiers had been indicted. Of these, 17 were found guilty of violence, two of improper use of weapons, and 22 of looting or damage to property. In the overwhelming majority of the thousands of cases of unlawful killings and other grave human rights violations committed by Israeli soldiers since the intifada began, no investigations were known to have been carried out.”

“Let Them Suffocate,” the Arab Association for Human Rights, May 14, 2004

“Executive Summary

“This report examines in detail the behavior of the Israeli police in the enforcement of house demolitions in the Arab village of al-Bea'neh in the Upper Galilee on Feb. 25, 2004. The Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) based in Nazareth recognizes that house demolitions inside the state of Israel are a government policy directed almost entirely against the country's Palestinian Arab citizens, who are both deprived of land on which to build homes and face grossly unfair obstacles to gaining permits to build on land they do own. . . .

“The HRA harshly criticizes Israel's policy of systematically denying the Palestinian Arab minority citizens, which make up approximately 20% of the whole population, their basic human rights to an adequate standard of housing and living and the right to integrity of the private sphere. In partic-

ular, the HRA condemns the manner in which these demolition operations are carried out.

“The purpose of this report is not to consider the justice of the claims of the five families in al-Bea'neh who lost their homes. Rather it is to focus on the continuing brutal mistreatment of Israeli citizens belonging to the Palestinian Arab minority by the country's security forces. One of the major confrontation lines between the police and the Palestinian Arab minority is over the enforcement of house demolitions. It is clear from the testimonies contained in this report that the police continue to regard the Palestinian Arab population as 'enemies' who can be handled only through the excessive use of violence. . . .

“The testimonies collected by the HRA fieldworkers in the week following the demolitions also show that police besieged a kindergarten, trapping several dozen small children in the building while they fired tear gas indiscriminately in the area. Several of the children had panic attacks and problems breathing because of the large quantities of gas being fired close to the kindergarten. The kindergarten principal, Fatmah Saleh Bakri, who tried to remonstrate with the police and warned them that the children were suffocating inside, was told, 'Let them suffocate.' When she continued to plead with the officers, a policeman pointed his gun directly at her face. . . .”

“Report of the Food Security Assessment West Bank and Gaza Strip,” the Food and Agriculture Organization of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, 2003

“The assessment concluded that though food is generally available, access is limited due to physical (curfews, closures) and economic reasons (high unemployment, depletion of resources, exhaustion of coping strategies and strained social support networks). . . .

“With rising poverty and unemployment, the food security situation has considerably deteriorated over the past three years, with four out of ten Palestinians' food insecure. Food insecurity is a reality for 1.4 million people (40 percent of the population) and a near constant worry for an additional 1.1 million people (30 percent) who are under threat of becoming food insecure should current conditions persist. People's physical access to food and farmers' physical access to the inputs and assets to produce food have been severely affected by restrictions on the movement of people and goods and the damages to personal property. The massive loss of jobs, earnings, assets, and incomes sharply reduced economic access to food with real per capita income decreasing by half since 1999 and resulting in six out of ten people falling below the US\$2.10 per day poverty line. The exhaustion of coping strategies and the inability of the social safety net to adequately protect have resulted in reductions in the quantity and quality of food consumed. These are all factors that place the Palestinian population at-risk of being food insecure.”