

AL-WALAJA: THE REALITY OF GEOPOLITICAL ISOLATION

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Abstract:

Since the displacement of Al-Walaja's residents from their original home in Jerusalem during the war of 1948, about 100 out of 1600 villagers resettled on the adjacent hill. After the war of 1967, the Israeli government redrew Jerusalem's boundaries, seizing a significant part of the village. The remaining Palestinian residents of Al-Walaja were subject to a prolonged process of restrictions limiting urban and demographic expansion. Until the Interim Agreement "Oslo II" in 1995, the village was classified into two areas: 3% "Area B" and 97.4 % "Area C". Residents are allowed to develop and reside without prior military permission only within area "B." Therefore, those in area "C," which is fully controlled by the Israeli authorities, face constant threat of displacement. Moreover, Israel denies their right to live in the area that was seized in 1967. In 2006, the Israeli Civil Administration informed residents about the construction of the Separation Wall, which cuts the village off from its surrounding vicinity. As a result, they have suffered from land confiscations and house demolitions specifically within area "C." This strategic plan aims at isolating the village as much as possible to annex the vacated land and expand the surrounding settlements "Gilo," "Har Gilo," and "Giva'at Yael." This study analyzes the consequences of the ongoing restrictions on the village and Israeli pretexts behind this plan.

Key words: canton, segregation wall, settlement, the Greater Jerusalem, ethnic separation.

Introduction

Al-Walaja is a small village located 9 km southwest of Jerusalem and 4 km northwest of Bethlehem district. It has a population of approximately 2.400 residents. The residents are mostly refugees, having been displaced from their original homes in 1948. (UNRWA-OTCHA, 2017) The villagers who had moved to the hill on the opposite side of Jerusalem created a new Walaja and rebuilt its society, only to experience worsened consequences later. (Hanafi, 2008)

These consequences are the main reason for the Israeli applied geopolitical strategy that has divided the village into several parts since the war of 1948. First, the Armistice Line of 1949 or the “Green Line”¹ divided it entirely into two parts, seizing 75% of its land to become within the Israeli boundary. (Oxfam, 2004) Next, in 1967, the Israeli authorities took the unilateral step to redraw the boundaries of Jerusalem. This seized additional lands from the surrounding areas. (Matar and Omar Yousef, 2015) Al-Walaja was significantly affected by this measure, which divided the remaining part behind the “Green Line” into another two parts. The larger part was confiscated in favor of the Jerusalem boundaries, leaving only 13% to the villagers.²

Third, in 1995, by signing the Second Oslo Peace Accord between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the village went through another division. The remaining part of the village was divided into two parts based on the geopolitical classification,³ leaving 3% as area “B,” a residential area available for Palestinians only to expand, preventing them from building or developing in area “C.”(ARIJ, 2010)

Until now, the geopolitical situation is not reflected by the drawn boundaries. They are not meant to be permanent, but demarcate an unclear reality in the entire area. The building of surrounding illegal settlements and the Separation

¹-“The Green Line is a term used to delineate the demarcation line between Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Syria from the period following Israel’s 1948 War until the 1967 Six Day War when Israel captured the West Bank, and East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. It is reportedly named for the green pen used by officers negotiating the armistice in 1949 to delineate the borders between the countries.

Today, the Green Line refers to the “pre June 1967” line in which Israeli territory does not include the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Golan, as compared to the “post 1967” line which includes all of those areas. It is the boundary that is most often the basis of land-for-peace proposals in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.” <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/the-green-line>

²- Al-Walaja, <https://marthiomombergblog.com/tag/al-walaja/>

³-According to Oslo Accords, “the Interim Agreements have divided the lands of the West Bank into three classifications: areas A, B, and C. The Israeli military withdrew from lands classified as area A, and complete autonomy over administrative and security issues was assumed by the Palestinian Authority. Area A, according to the Oslo II agreement, covered the main cities of the West Bank, except for Hebron which had a special agreement. The city of Hebron was divided into areas of different control called H1 and H2. Area H1 is defined as area A and area H2, which houses 400 colonists, remains under Israeli control.

In areas B, the Palestinians have full control over civil affairs while Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. These areas comprise most of the Palestinian towns and villages. Areas C, covering almost 74.3% of the West Bank, are under Israeli control. Area C covers the area, which falls outside areas A and B. In this area, the Palestinian Authority provides civil services; however, Israel retains full control over land, security, people, and natural resources. The majority of Palestinian agricultural land lies in these areas.” <http://poica.org/pal-in-century/>

Wall gives an indication as to the authorities' plan -- to erode the village from all directions.⁴

For instance, Gilo is a large Jewish settlement established in 1971. It now has approximately 31,600 settlers. The nearby but smaller Har Gilo, established in 1972, has approximately 1,500 settlers. (State of Palestine-PLO, 2017) There is a strategic plan to connect them,⁵ and include Giva't Yael, a settlement built in 2004 which is also seizing land from Al-Walaja. (JCW, 2013) To serve this expansion policy, many houses have been demolished, about 45 since 1987. Meanwhile, the remaining residents who reside in the area within Jerusalem boundaries are under constant threat of explicit eviction.⁶

1.1. The Israeli geopolitical strategy over Al-Walaja village

After 1967, the Israeli government has pursued an aggressive policy of land grabbing in favor of the settlements, military bases and bypass roads in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Opt). (Amnesty International, 1999) Al-Walaja lost a significant amount of its lands as a result of this policy. An estimated 137 dunums (3.2 percent of the total area of the village) were taken for the construction of the Israeli settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo, including Giv'at Yael later. (Saleh, 2012)

This situation continued in 1981, when Israel issued orders to annex part of the village into Jerusalem municipality to make it Israeli land. Meanwhile, it didn't provide the residents with services and other civil rights. (Y.W.C.A., 2015) Israel exploits the "Absentees Property Law,"⁷ which has been applied to East

⁴-+972 "WATCH: Separation wall engulfs village of Al-Walaja," <https://972mag.com/watch-separation-wall-engulfs-village-of-al-walaja/87636/>

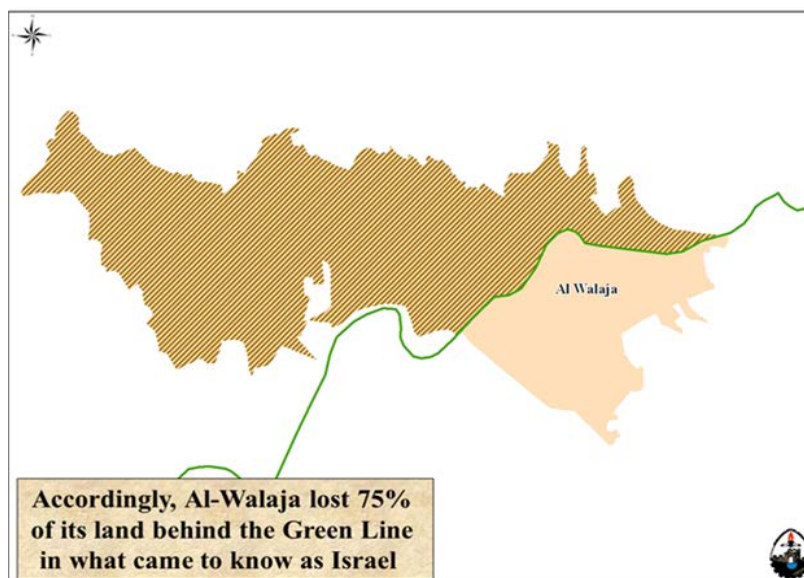
⁵-B'tselem "The [Green] Line is long gone": Gilo to be expanded, creating annexable bloc that includes Cremisan Valley and extends to Har Gilo, https://www.btselem.org/jerusalem/20150105_expansion_of_gilo_settlement

⁶- "إخطارات بهدم 14 منزلاً جنوب القدس" <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/alguds/2017/8/2/>

⁷- "1950 Absentees' Properties Law authorized the government to transfer property from so-called absentee Palestinian Arabs to Jewish ownership by virtue of a government payment to the Israeli Custodian of Absentee Property. The Israeli government thus claimed that the property had been acquired legally (i.e., by payment) rather than through confiscation. An absentee is defined as any person, citizen, or resident of an enemy state or of Palestine who was present in an enemy country, or an area of Israel held by enemy forces, at any time between 29 November 1947 and the date of cancellation of the state of emergency.

Under the law, the Custodian can also acquire control of property by declaring the property to be absentee. The Custodian was permitted to not only lease or hold on to property under his custodianship, but to sell it to a Development Authority established subsequently by the government. Dividends from the sale of the property (less administrative and legal expenses) were to be held by the Custodian in fund until such time as the state of emergency, under which the law was declared operational, came to an end. As regards Absentees' property,

Jerusalem since its annexation to Israel in 1967. This law has serious implications for the issue of property ownership in East Jerusalem. It encroaches on the property rights of those whose properties were transferred to Israeli ownership. (NRC, 2013) The village, has been suffering from the systematic expropriation of privately-owned land that was abandoned because of military measures forcing the villagers to leave their properties for a long time. In some cases, even though the residents are still residing in the village, their properties are automatically confiscated under this law to become state properties due to prolonged abandonment.⁸

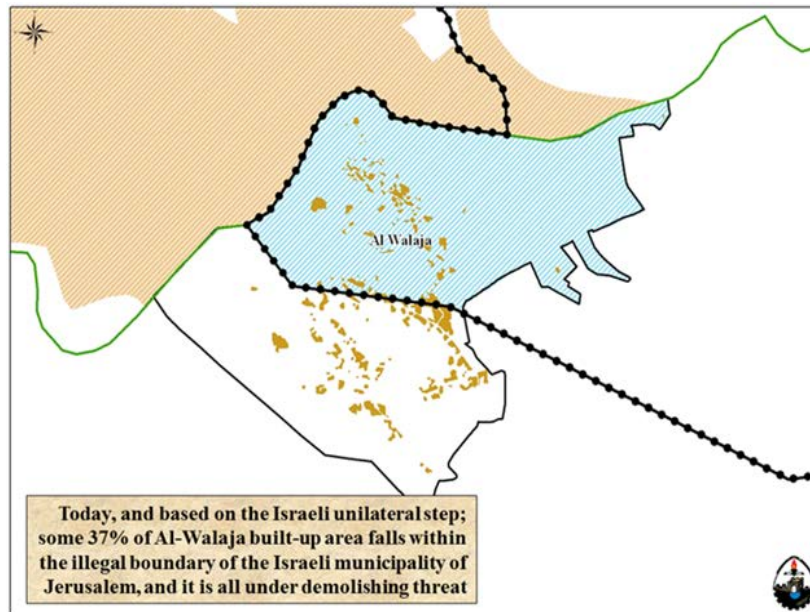


This map shows how the village was divided up into two parts after 1948 war. Courtesy: Arij Institute.

This situation became even more complicated, when the geopolitical classification of the Second Oslo Accord imposed strict military regulations on the villagers. This classification gave Israel full authorization to halt development in area "C." The villagers who were already residing there are now obliged to ask the Israeli Civil Administration Office - a military apparatus that controls the Palestinian civil affairs in the Occupied Territories- for permits to conduct any kind of development activities. (ARIJ, 2010)

the state of emergency is still in existence." More info on: (Land Ownership in Palestine/Israel 1920-2000) <http://www.badil.org/en/component/k2/item/1055-land-ownership-in-palestine.html>

⁸- "Israel grabs more Palestinian village lands," <http://sunnionline.us/english/2017/11/18/8159/>



This map shows the geopolitical reality after 1967 war. The blue-colored built-up area is under the threat of displacement. Arij Institute.

In 2004, the Israeli authorities announced the construction of a new outpost (Givat Yael) to be built on Al-Walaja’s land. (Aronson, 2009) Therefore, about 13,000 housing units will be built to absorb 50,000 Jewish settlers (Rempel, 2000). On the ground, this project is completing the circle of Israeli settlements around Jerusalem, which disconnects the Palestinian geographic vicinity and engulfs Bethlehem from all sides; starting from Har Homa in the north-east, to Gilo and Har Gilo in the north, up to Giva’t Ya’el settlement. This is being constructed in the north-west, and ending with the Gush Etzion settlement, south of the governorate. (UN-OCHA, 2009)

In Feb 2006, the Israeli army issued a new military order (06/25/T) to seize 93.8 dunums from the village and Beit Jala City.⁹ The order had identified the reason for confiscation as military purposes. However, later it was proven to be for the construction of a new “Har Gilo crossing.” This crossing aims to control the movement of Al-Walaja residents between their village and limit accessibility to Bethlehem and beyond. (ARIJ, 2010) Now, the villagers only have this sole

⁹-POICA, “For Security & Military Purposes” Expropriation of five Dunums in al-Walajeh village lands Northwest of Bethlehem Governorate,” <http://poica.org/2016/02/for-security-military-purposesexpropriation-of-five-dunums-in-al-walajeh-village-lands-northwest-of-bethlehem-governorate/>

crossing to move in and out of their village, which is under the Israeli army's control.¹⁰

A big percentage of Al-Walaja's land is agricultural, characterized by forests, open fertile spaces and terraces.¹¹ It's an asset for Israeli geographic continuity among the settlements due to its strategic location close to Jerusalem boundaries. To control it, besides expanding the nearby settlements, the Israeli authority is constructing a national park occupying enormous distances from the northern side.¹²

This park is called "Refaim Metropolitan Park," to be constructed on the village's land, within pre-1949 borders extending into 1967 borders. The project began on July 7, 2013, and had been ratified by the Israeli Ministry of Interior and Jerusalem municipality. By the end of its construction, it will have occupied 5.700 dunums, of and about 1850 dunums of privately-owned lands beyond the "Green Line."¹³

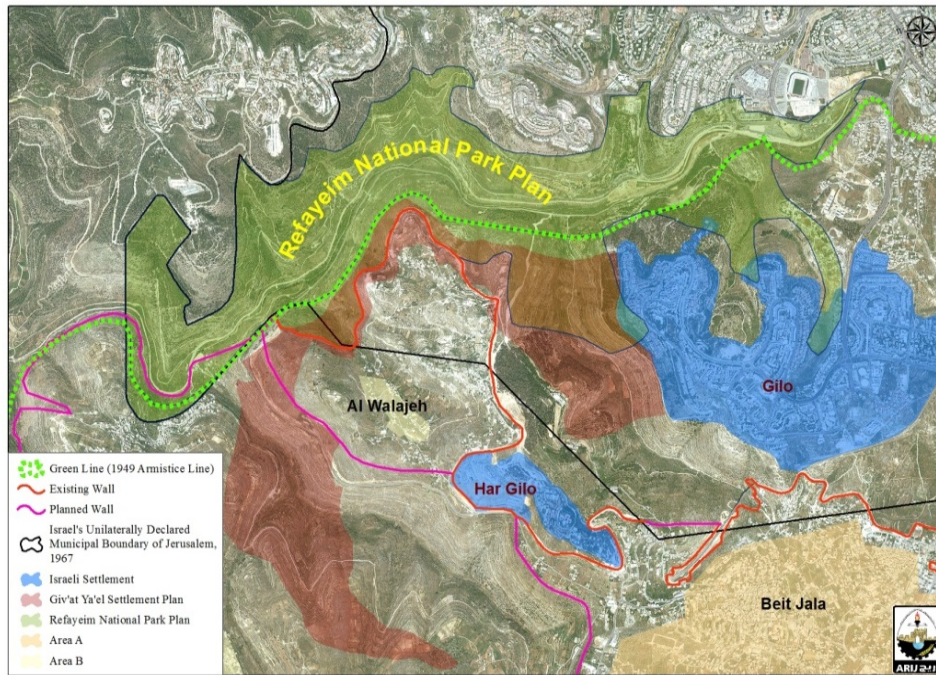
This park is specifically used to promote tourism into both Israel and Gilo. It sharpens the Israeli claim that "the land where Gilo is built as an Israeli territory." Through this claim, Israel continues to secure its dominance over the area. (Goldin, 2010)

¹⁰- "Bethlehem: Rebuilding Homes in Al Walaja," <https://palsolidarity.org/2007/07/bethlehem-rebuilding-homes-in-al-walaja/>

¹¹- "Palestinian Villagers Tilled Their Land So Well, Israel Is Now Confiscating It From Them," <http://www.haaretz.com/misc/haaretzcomsmartphoneapp/.premium-1.704255>

¹²- POICA, "The town of al-Walaja is trapped by the segregation wall and is under the spot of future colonial plans," <http://poica.org/2014/09/the-town-of-al-walaja-is-trapped-by-the-segregation-wall-and-is-under-the-spot-of-future-colonial-plans/>

¹³- "For Security & Military Purposes" Expropriation of five Dunums in al-Walajeh village lands Northwest of Bethlehem Governorate," <http://poica.org/2016/02/for-security-military-purposesexpropriation-of-five-dunums-in-al-walajeh-village-lands-northwest-of-bethlehem-governorate/>



This topography shows “Refaim Park” -the green-colored area- and Giv’at Ya’el settlement –the red-colored area-surround Al-Walaja, including the tiny area “B” where the villagers are allowed to develop which totally encircled by area “C.”

In addition, the village is affected from all directions by the Separation Wall. It has incrementally been built or relocated from time to time, depending on the Israeli security needs. (Y.W.C.A., 2015) Previously, the route of this wall was drawn up passing through the center of the village, dividing it into two parts.¹⁴ After the residents appealed to the Israeli high court, the wall was relocated to encircle the village with a tunnel leading out of it. (MAP, 2014)

The following table clarifies different components of the occupation that play a role in shaping the fluctuating geopolitical situation in Al-Walaja:

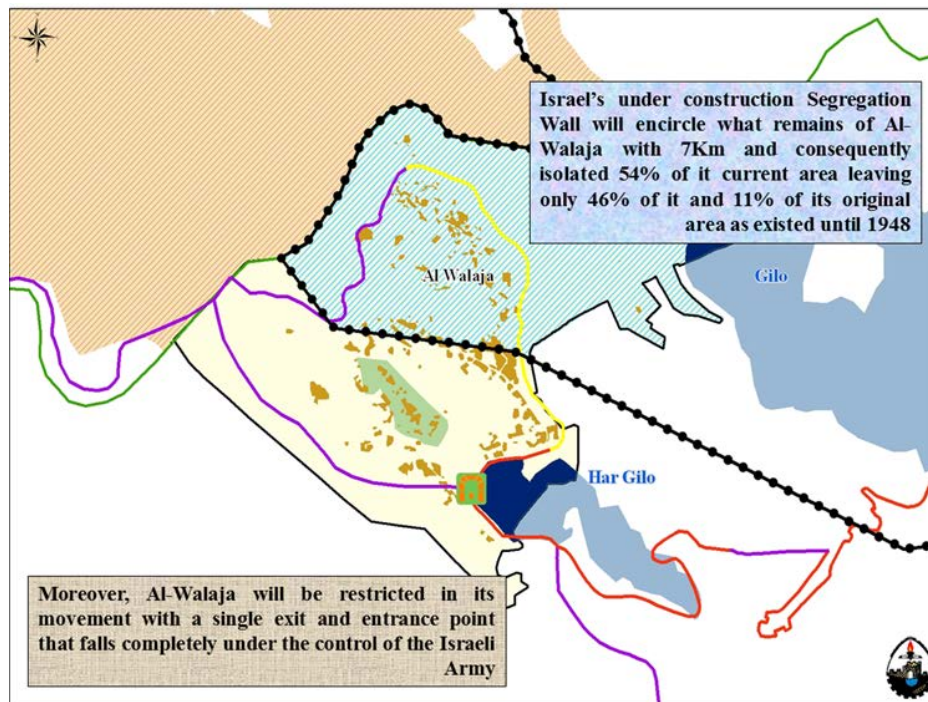
Type	Area (Dunums)	Percentage
Village boundary (1944)	4.415.78	-
Area A	-	-
Area B	115.69	2.62 %
Area C	4.300.09	97.38 %
Palestinian built-up	282.63	6.40 %
Palestinian population	2.015.00	-
Israeli Settlement	335.83	7.61 %
Number of Israeli settlers	30.331.00	-
Israeli closed military area	-	-
Israeli military base	-	-

¹⁴ -“Palestinians face being walled in by Israeli security barrier,” <http://apjp.org/-palestinians-face-being-walle/>

Israeli controlled roads (km)	2.50	-
Separation barrier (km)	7.06	-
Separation barrier (km)	8.41	-

*Source: Ministry of Local Government- Palestine, 2016.

Israel continues to expand these military policies of annexation, although the International Court of Justice (ICJ) announced on 9 July 2004 that “Israel’s construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories was illegal and called for its immediate dismantling.” (J. Araujo, 2004)



This map clarifies the only main entrance –the green-colored square- that the villagers use to head into their village, back and forth, which is linked up with the wall that surrounds Har Gilo. Area “B” –the green-colored- where the villagers are allowed to develop which totally encircled by area “C,” including the routes of the wall. Arij Institute.

1.2. The consequences of the unstable geopolitical situation in Al-Walaja

The policy fluctuations impacting the residents of Al-Walaja have caused numerous problems including displacement and limited freedom of movement. (UNRWA, 2011) Following the Land Swap between Israel and Jordan, as agreed upon in Jordanian-Israeli Armistice Agreement 1949,¹⁵ villagers located outside

¹⁵-“Between February and July 1949, General Armistice Agreements (GAAs) were signed between the state of Israel and four Arab states: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Iraq, which had participated in the war with an expeditionary force, did not conclude an agreement since it did not have a common border with Israel; its forces just left the arena. All negotiations were mediated on behalf of the United Nations (UN) by Ralph Bunche, whose achievement earned him the 1949 Nobel Peace Prize. These agreements put an end to the Arab–Israel War of 1948. Based on this agreement with the Jordanian side, the Green Line was modified leading to

the “Green Line” haven’t had accessibility to their land without the required permits in almost 70 years. Heartrendingly, they can see their former land from the hilltop where they reside now. (EAPPI, 2009)

Although the village has historically been part of Jerusalem, the vast majority of the residents are unable to get into Jerusalem or to their land behind the wall due to their status as West Bank ID holders.¹⁶ It’s not allowed for the residents of the entire Occupied Territories to get into the state of Israel without permits. (HRW, 2010)

As a result of this measure, the villagers face difficulties accessing specific destinations punctually. They have to wait for a longer time to get the entry permits from the Israeli civil administration office. There are economic barriers, too - the farmers cannot get into their agricultural fields behind the wall at all the necessary times to take care of the crops, which are their main source of livelihood.¹⁷

In this regard, Mr. Ala’a Daras, the mayor of Al-Walaja addressed, “Farmers painstakingly picked their olive trees this season. They faced harassment, like being kicked out by the soldiers, with limited time to pick. So, they couldn’t manage this comfortably,” he added, “We also have a problem regarding the gate wall. The Israeli Civil Administration doesn’t provide the farmers with info about which gate exactly they can pass through. We have (Beir Own) gate that Israelis refused to let farmers pass through. They don’t know which gate is available, though.”

Furthermore, their movement is restricted, due to the highway system that Israel erected to link Jewish settlements with the mainland Jerusalem. Consequently, bypassing Palestinian towns has been an Israeli strategy of dominance to keep controlling the territories and solidifying its claims in the future. (Aronson, 2004)

exchange of fertile land in the Bethlehem area.” <http://www.ipcri.org/index.php/publications/historical-documents/172-jordanian-israeli-armistice-agreement-1949>

¹⁶-“Palestinian Villagers Tilled Their Land So Well, Israel Is Now Confiscating It From Them,” <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.704255>

¹⁷-“Al-Walaja village faces “slow death” as Israel takes its land,” <http://www.windowintopalestine.com/2014/03/al-walaja-village-faces-slow-death-as.html>

Area “C” itself is divided into two parts; a part administered by the Civil Administration Office in Gush Etzion settlement, south of Bethlehem. The other part is located within 1967 or Jerusalem boundaries as clarified on the map above, which is administered by the Jerusalem municipality.

In spite of the fact that the part of area “C” within 1967 boundaries isn’t blocked, traveling there freely isn’t allowed for West Bank ID holders without permits. Therefore, the residents have been arrested several times “because of their illegal presence at their homes within this area,” as Israeli army claims. (EAPPI, 2013)

Mr. Daras asserted that, “The Israeli soldiers sometimes raid the village to see whether there are strangers inside this area, to check out their IDs. They have arrested some people who haven’t had Israeli IDs.” He continued, “We made a complaint at the Israeli police station for explanation that this area is outside the separation fence. Why can’t Palestinian ID bearers get into it? They claimed that this part of the village is under Jerusalem jurisdiction and Palestinians aren’t allowed to get into without permits.”

Moreover, the local council that works on planning issues and defending the villagers’ rights at the Israeli courts, encounters difficulties in the coordination process with the Israeli side, specifically in regards to area “C.” This area has complicated administrative procedures, because it is administered by both the Jerusalem Municipality and the Civil Administration in Gush Etzion. (Saleh, 2012)

“According to the Israeli claim, the presence of the houses within area C lack in legal and structural planning. We had offered plans to develop the area. But, they were rejected by the Civil Administration in Gush Etzion, claiming that it only negotiates over the area that geographically belongs to Gush Etzion settlement. So, we cope with two authorities administering this divided and tiny area. Eventually, it turned out to be they’re working on the same goals,” explained Mr. Daras.

Given to the natural beauty in Al-Walaja, it appeals to the Israeli authorities to keep it in its grip.¹⁸ For instance, at the center of this area, there is a remarkable spring called “Ein Hania,” a very beautiful landscape and rich aquifer. There are also two big pools located nearby, which are considered archaeological remnants. The spring is also considered a sacred site for Greek Orthodox Christians.^{19 20}

Therefore, Israel is conducting construction and excavation operations, denying the villagers’ accessibility to take care of this monument.²¹ It’s a vital source not only for tourists, but also for the villagers themselves. Shepherds have gotten used to watering their cattle, drinking from it, and hanging out there.²²

In a new measure, to guarantee its dominance over the area, the Israeli Authority recently announced that it tends to relocate “Ein Yael” checkpoint that erected on the road between Jerusalem and Har Gilo settlement west of the city into Palestinian owned lands. Thus, big pieces of land will be annexed to the surrounding settlements. (POICA, 2017)

The separation wall and fence hasn’t left any way for the residents to leave except through the main entrance. Even accessibility from Cremisan valley was blocked by the route of this barrier. Although the villagers petitioned against the route, the Supreme Court rejected their requests to reroute a section of the West Bank Separation Wall straddling the Jerusalem municipal border.²³

The Cremisan valley extends along the line between the Occupied West Bank and Jerusalem. It links Beit Jala to Al-Walaja and the 1967 borders. Historically, the name “Cremisan,” comes from the Monastery was built by the “Silesian Order” in the 19th century to support the presence of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. In the 1950s, the Silesian Sisters Convent was built in Cremisan,

¹⁸-“Israel releases latest plan for Wall around Bethlehem-area village of al Walaja,” <http://www.ikkevold.no/2012/08/israel-releases-latest-plan-for-wall-around-bethlehem-area-village-of-al-walaja/>

¹⁹- BADIL, <http://www.badil.org/en/publication/press-releases/86-2017/4826-pr-en-151117-55.html>

²⁰-“Palestinian Villagers Tilled Their Land So Well, Israel Is Now Confiscating It From Them,” <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.704255>

²¹- “الإحتلال يحرم قرية الولجة من نبعها ومدرجاتها التاريخية” <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/alquds/2017/11/16>

²²- “Palestinian Villagers to Be Cut Off From Spring if Israeli Defense Ministry Proposal Adopted,” <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.760328>

²³-“Israel rejects Palestinian petition to redirect Wall in Cremisan valley,” <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/details.php?id=r7lukha4154ydk0qdoi2z>

which is an agricultural valley separating the Convent from Jerusalem municipal borders. (St. Yves, 2015)

The villagers are denied the right of planning, building, and developing the surrounding of area B entirely. Technically, the systematic demolition operations and settlement expansion interpret this policy.²⁴ For example, the mayor of Al-Walaja addressed how the infrastructure is targeted in his village, too, “We paved this road funded by international sources, to end up being threatened by the Israeli Civil Administration Officer who tends to come over with his bulldozer to remove the pavement, as we did it without his permission.”

Regarding house demolition, according to local sources, 70 houses in Al-Walaja have been demolished since 1948, and in February 2017, the Israeli authority issued 14 demolition orders.²⁵ Recently, there are 45 homes slated for imminent demolition orders. (UNRWA, 2011)

The Israeli military measures violate the right to education and health care, because the Occupation Authority doesn't permit building schools, cultural and medical centers where it's not allowable without going through an excruciating process to get the permit for Palestinians. In many cases, the military court has rejected the requests. For instance, when villagers initiated building a school to accommodate the increasing number of the pupils, they did so during a foggy night in order to hide their building activity from the Israeli surveillance.

“Indeed, what we had expected happened - the Israeli army raided the village later to tear the school down to find out that the flag of the UN is fluttering on the roof,” said a resident in the village. He continued, “We had intentionally put the flag up to prove that this school is under the international protection, and we won the case after the intervention of the UN to prevent the demolition.”

Based on the aforementioned facts, the Israeli Authority violates international law in Al-Walaja in order to create an area where Palestinian residents won't have the ability to live or travel outside the delineated area as clarified on the

²⁴ - B'TSELEM: “Separation Barrier strangles al-Walajah,”
https://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier/20101114_al_walajah_separation_barrier

²⁵ - “Villagers urge action against Israeli orders to demolish 14 homes in Al-Walaja village,”
<http://english.pnn.ps/2017/08/03/villagers-urge-action-against-israeli-orders-to-demolish-14-homes-in-al-walaja-village/>

map. Hence, the “Greater Jerusalem” project will be completed by this Israeli expansion under security pretexts. For example, article 2 (4) of UN Charter, stipulates, “Illegal to take land by force and claim sovereignty.” (UN Charter, 1945) And also, article 49 (6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates, “The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”²⁶

Conclusion

The ongoing land seizure operations by the Israeli military authority leaves the villagers of Al-Walaja affected socially, psychologically and economically.

The unstable geopolitical status quo is incrementally evolving. Israel considers the ongoing expansion activities around the village a natural growth within Jerusalem’s legitimate boundaries. Accordingly, the village doesn’t have open space to travel or grow, except the crossing allocated to facilitate the movement of villagers. This crossing or gate is also restricted - whenever there is an emergency, it will be shut down by the military.

Al-Walaja case is an indicative of the reality of how the “Greater Jerusalem” project is being built from the south, by creating geographic continuity between Jerusalem and the surrounding settlements from all directions. The project disregards the ramifications of seizing extensive privately-owned Palestinian lands, and demolishing housing units because of their location within areas considered vital. Needless to mention, that the economic consequences are severe, as these lands are arable and sources of income.

The Israeli authority uses the natural terraces cultivated by the farmers of Al-Walaja- as one of the main reasons for expelling them from their land. The construction of the wall and its associated regime created facts on the ground that could become permanent. In which case, Al-Walaja would be de facto land annexation, which is considered a flagrant violation of international law. That’s why the fence isn’t concrete as in other areas of the West Bank; it’s metal and was temporary, which increases the villagers’ grave concern towards what the Israeli occupation is going to carry out in the near future regarding the still unknown Jerusalem boundaries.

²⁶ - (ICRC) “Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949.” <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/380-600056>

Overall, the residents of Al-Walaja village are being incessantly harassed by the military rules imposed on them. They are being slowly evicted from area C, in a barren landscape distinguished from Jewish settlers who reside in well-planned and luxurious settlements. While, the Palestinian native residents live in a tiny area and lack basic services, especially the right to residential plans.

If these services are provided, it is only under military surveillance which restricts the freedom of the Palestinians to live independently. As a result, conditions are worsening, which forces the population to move out and seek a better life. This gives justifications to the Israeli Authority to confiscate the uninhabited land, which is considered a war crime according to the Fourth Geneva Convention and the ICC statute that call for prohibiting the forcible deportation of the local population in occupied territory from their localities.

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