



A Palestinian family in the Jordan Valley. They are unable to graze their animals because the land has been designated as a closed Israeli military zone. © Simon Rawles

ON THE BRINK

Israeli settlements and their impact on Palestinians in the Jordan Valley

The Jordan Valley, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, has the potential to be the breadbasket of any future Palestinian state. However, the persistent expansion of Israeli settlements and other restrictions on Palestinian development have made life extremely difficult for Palestinian communities. New plans to increase the land, water, and infrastructure available to Israeli settlements will further aggravate this already serious situation. Unless the international community takes action to reverse Israeli government policies and practices, the prospects for the future establishment of a viable Palestinian state, living side by side with Israel in peace and security, look dangerously remote.

SUMMARY

The Jordan Valley, located in the eastern part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), makes up 30 per cent of the West Bank (see Map 1 on page 7). Requisitions and expropriations of Palestinian land by the Israeli authorities continue to destroy the livelihoods of Palestinians living in the area and, unless action is taken, there are strong indications that the situation will only get worse. The Israeli government recently announced proposals and policies for the expansion of settlements, which, if implemented, will further threaten the living conditions and human rights of Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley, undermining efforts to bring peace and prosperity to the OPT and Israel.

UNEQUAL ACCESS

Only 6 per cent of the land in the Jordan Valley is currently available for Palestinian use and development.¹ While the Israeli settlements there have developed modernised agribusinesses that produce crops for high-value export to the European Union (EU) and international markets, Palestinian farmers – most of whom are smallholders – face restrictions that severely hamper their ability to sell their produce locally, regionally, or internationally.

Development is further constrained because Palestinian families and businesses, and even EU donors and aid agencies, find it nearly impossible to gain permits to build homes, toilets, wells, animal pens, or other vital infrastructure for local communities. Less than 1 per cent of 'Area C' (the 60 per cent of the West Bank under exclusive Israeli control where nearly all of the Jordan Valley is located) has been planned for Palestinian development² by the Israeli Civil Administration,³ and 94 per cent of permits have been rejected in recent years.⁴ Essential structures built without development plans and hard-to-obtain permits are frequently demolished in contravention of international law.

It is estimated that if Israeli restrictions on Palestinian development were removed, an additional 50 sq/km of the Jordan Valley could be cultivated, potentially adding \$1bn a year to the Palestinian economy, or 9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).⁵

UNFAIR ADVANTAGES

Successive Israeli governments have stated that the Jordan Valley is essential to Israel's security,⁶ and continue to encourage the development of civilian (mostly agricultural) settlements that are illegal under international law.⁷ Today, 37 settlements in the region are home to 9,500 Israelis, with the settlement authorities (or 'Regional Councils') currently controlling 86 per cent of the land.⁸

Settlements are supported by substantial Israeli government subsidies and incentives (e.g. for housing, education, water, and transport). Israeli settlers also receive favourable access to transport linkages and to national and international markets. One Israeli economist has estimated that the Government of Israel spends \$24,650 per settler each year on various subsidies and grants to Israeli settlements across the OPT.⁹ Between 2000

and 2006, the average grant per capita to Israeli settlers in the West Bank was approximately 57 per cent higher than the average expenditure per capita for Israeli citizens inside Israel.¹⁰

In contrast, Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley receive no subsidies from either the Palestinian Authority (PA) or the Israeli Government. Instead, they and their small-scale farming and herding businesses face additional costs due to Israeli-imposed restrictions on travel and the transportation of goods in and out of the Jordan Valley. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) has estimated that additional transportation costs incurred by transporting Palestinian farm produce via routes that avoid the most problematic Israeli checkpoints amount to \$1.9m annually.¹¹ As well as increased transport costs, Palestinian farmers have to pay for water that is brought in by tankers, making their produce much more expensive and therefore less competitive than that of Israeli settler farmers.

Palestinians across the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) also face systematic and discriminatory policies that restrict their freedom of movement, their access to land, water, and markets, and their ability to build infrastructure to support their livelihoods. In addition, many Palestinians, left with few alternative ways to earn a living, work on settlement farms and are denied their labour rights.

The development challenges and the denial of human rights faced by Palestinian farmers have been compounded, until recently, by a lack of donor investment in the Jordan Valley and other parts of West Bank 'Area C'. As the EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report states: 'The Palestinian state-building project is in effect partly limited to the fragmented and isolated "islands" of Areas A and B [where the PA is able to operate], in the "ocean" of contiguous Area C.'¹²

The cumulative effects of Israeli government restrictions and a lack of donor and Palestinian investment mean that the poverty levels of Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley are almost double those in the rest of the West Bank.¹³ Combined with persistent human rights abuses, this is forcing many Palestinians to leave their homes in search of jobs, security, and essential services.

DETERIORATING PROSPECTS

Unless action is taken now, there are strong indications that the situation will deteriorate further. Recent years have seen a significant rise in construction of Israeli settlements, violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, and demolition of Palestinian buildings and other structures such as cisterns, solar panels and animal pens. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a speech in January 2012 that the Government of Israel would sign 'a permanent agreement [with the Palestinians] only if it includes Israel's remaining in the Jordan Valley...'.¹⁴ Eight months earlier, the government announced that the amount of agricultural land allocated to Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley was to be more than doubled.¹⁵ In March 2012, the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, approved a budget allocating \$2m for additional settlements in the Jordan Valley and Binyamin District.¹⁶ These decisions represent part of an alarming negative trend whereby land, resources, and livelihoods in the Jordan Valley are being systematically denied to Palestinian communities in order to expand settlements.¹⁷

The sheer number and scope of the restrictions on Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley and elsewhere in the West Bank suggest that they are part of a systematic policy to push Palestinians off their land, while increasing Israeli government control. Unless urgent action is taken to reverse this trend and to end existing discriminatory policies, what little land and resources are available to Palestinians will be further reduced, displacing more Palestinians in search of a viable future. And as the EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report states: 'The window for a two-state solution is rapidly closing ... Area C comprises crucial natural resources and land for the future demographic and economic growth of a viable Palestinian state.'¹⁸

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

As Israel's largest trading partner and the biggest donor to the Palestinians, the EU should:

- **Move beyond statements and take urgent action to press the Government of Israel to end the construction of settlements** and comply with its responsibilities under international law, in line with the 2004 Advisory Opinion given by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legal consequences of the construction of the Wall in the OPT, which the EU has endorsed.
- **Take immediate steps to ensure the implementation of the May 2012 EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions¹⁹ and the recommendations of the recent EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission reports on Area C and East Jerusalem.** This includes putting pressure on the Government of Israel to transfer planning authority relating to Palestinian villages and towns in the Jordan Valley and across Area C to Palestinian control and taking firm, collective diplomatic action at the highest level to push for an end to the unlawful demolition of Palestinian civilian infrastructure.
- **Press for conditions that will allow for the full implementation of the EU–Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Association Agreement,** which provides real opportunities for Palestinian produce to access European markets, including urgently pushing for an end to Israeli restrictions on the movement and transport of goods.

The international community, donors, and Palestinian and international NGOs should:

- **Support the drafting of a comprehensive Palestinian National Development Plan,** which includes a strong strategy for the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C in consultation with the Palestinian people, and ensure that all strategies and projects are in line with national plans.
- In the absence of an Israeli planning regime which seeks to alleviate poverty amongst the Palestinian population, **initiate and support development projects in the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C,** including building new schools, community centres, clinics, municipal buildings, roads, irrigation, and other infrastructure projects. These bodies must monitor implementation closely and, backed by diplomatic and political support, move ahead with projects even if they have not been approved by

the Israeli Civil Administration (unless Israeli refusal is based on genuine security concerns that are legitimate under international law), in line with the draft recommendations of the EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report on Area C.²⁰

The Palestinian Authority should:

- **Produce and implement a more comprehensive and consultative National Development Plan** that identifies priority needs across the entire OPT, including the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C.
- **Support Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley to preserve their livelihoods and stay on their land** through prioritising provision of water, fodder, and shelter in the event of demolitions, and providing sustainable support to Palestinian farmers and herders.
- In the absence of an Israeli planning regime that supports Palestinian development, **agree and adopt a robust common position with regard to Israeli permits in order to support Palestinian development projects in the Jordan Valley** and other parts of Area C, even if they have not been approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (unless Israeli refusal is based on genuine security concerns that are legitimate under international law).

The Government of Israel should:

- **Immediately halt the construction of settlements** in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), and withdraw from all existing settlement infrastructure in line with the recommendations of the 2004 ICJ Advisory Opinion.
- **Reverse policies and practices that are illegal under international law and that harm the livelihoods of Palestinian civilians.** This will include handing over planning authorities for Palestinian villages and towns in the Jordan Valley and across Area C to Palestinian control; immediately ceasing the confiscation of Palestinian land and resources; ending restrictions of Palestinian access and movement; and halting the demolition of civilian infrastructure.
- **Ensure the protection of the Palestinian population**, including through the application of the rule of law without discrimination or exception in relation to violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property and livelihoods.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Israeli government's expansion of settlements and demolition of Palestinian civilian infrastructure, which violate international law, together with the raft of longstanding discriminatory laws and policies, have had a major impact on Palestinian communities living in the Jordan Valley, locking them into poverty and involving widespread human rights violations. New plans to more than double the size of settlements in the Jordan Valley (see next section) threaten to destroy Palestinian livelihoods that are already on the brink.

The Oslo Accords, signed in 1993 and 1995 (the latter agreement known as 'Oslo II'), were intended to temporarily divide the West Bank into three administrative zones, areas A, B, C. 'Area A' is designated under full civil and security Palestinian Authority (PA) control, and consists mostly of the main towns, including Ramallah and Jericho. In 'Area B', the PA has control over civilian services such as planning, but only joint security control with the Israeli military. 'Area C', the largest administrative area of the West Bank, is under the full civil and military control of the Israeli government.²²

The focus of this report is the Jordan Valley. However, the report also references the term 'Area C' since more than 90 per cent of the Jordan Valley is classified as Area C and the issues described below are examples of the wider Israeli government policies and practices that determine the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians across much of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Disaggregated data is also not always available for the Jordan Valley. However, wherever possible, exact information for the Jordan Valley is provided.

The second section of this report discusses Israeli government control over two assets vital for Palestinian agricultural livelihoods – land and water. It then describes how Israeli policies have resulted in the demolition of Palestinian homes and infrastructure, displacing many families to other areas of the West Bank. It considers the consequences of violence by Israeli settlers and of restrictions on the free movement of people and goods, and examines exploitative labour conditions on settler farms. The final section outlines recommendations for the Government of Israel, the PA, and international policymakers. Oxfam welcomes the recent unprecedented statements made by the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on 14 May 2012 ('Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process'); however, these must be urgently translated into firm action.

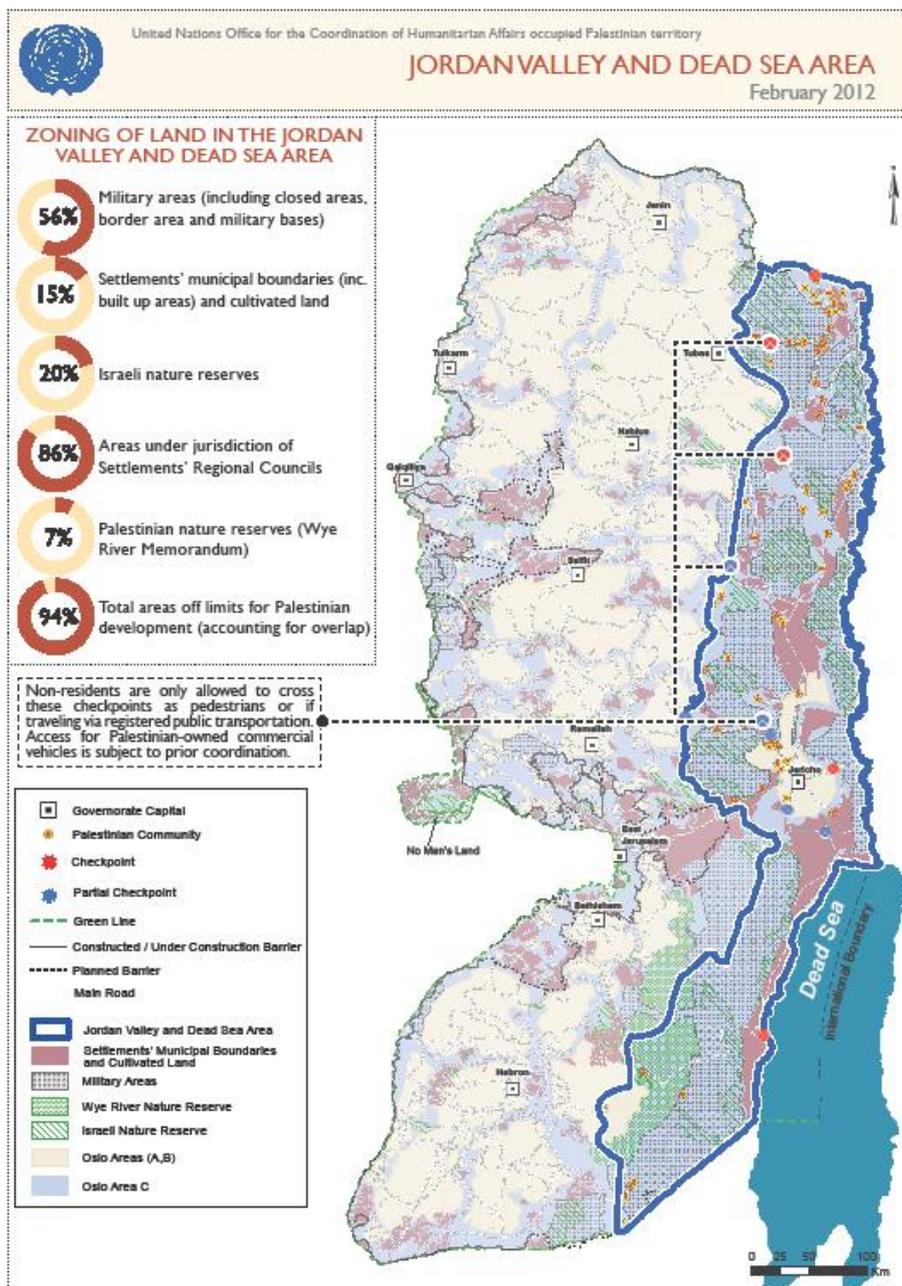
Oxfam has worked in the Jordan Valley for more than 20 years and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) for more than 50 years. It has witnessed the daily impact that settlement expansion, building restrictions, and demolitions have had on Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley and across Area C. Oxfam recognises the need for a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict and condemns violence by all sides. This report draws on that wealth of experience; it is based on secondary literature and

'Social and economic developments in Area C are of critical importance for the viability of a future Palestinian state, as Area C is its main land reserve. The EU calls upon Israel to meet its obligations regarding the living conditions of the Palestinian population in Area C, including by accelerated approval of Palestinian master plans, halting forced transfer of population and demolition of Palestinian housing and infrastructure, simplifying administrative procedures to obtain building permits, ensuring access to water and addressing humanitarian needs.'

EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, 14 May 2012²¹

interviews with civil society organisations (CSOs) working in Israel and the West Bank, government officials, and Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley, as well as Israeli government documents. While Oxfam did interview some settlers, many requests for interviews were declined. In addition, letters dated 1 May 2012 were sent to four Israeli ministries requesting additional information and in order to verify figures used. As of 22 June, Oxfam had not received a response.

Map 1: Land Available to Palestinians for their Use and Development in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley



Source: Map provided by OCHA, February 2012

2. THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OVER RESOURCES

UNEQUAL ACCESS TO LAND

While the Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley have a relatively small population, 86 per cent²³ of the land falls under the jurisdiction of the settlements' Regional Councils.²⁴ As settlements have expanded, the opportunities for economic development among Palestinian communities have shrunk.

Since 1967, successive Israeli governments have used various means to expropriate Palestinian land in the Jordan Valley (and across the OPT). The means of confiscation have included requisitioning or seizing land for military purposes, taking what is deemed 'absentee property',²⁵ expropriating land for public use such as nature reserves, confiscating land that has been 'uncultivated' for three years, and registering land as 'State Land'.²⁶ This loss of land, as well as the ongoing confiscation of agricultural and other equipment, has serious consequences for the livelihoods of Palestinian farmers. Bedouin herders, for instance, have seen their herd sizes drastically reduced as grazing areas have been confiscated (see Box 1). Yet, under international law, as an occupying power, the Government of Israel may not utilise the resources of an occupied territory for the benefit of its own civilian population, and is strictly limited to actions required by military necessity.²⁷

Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of the Israeli public are not aware that the Jordan Valley is part of the Occupied Territory.²⁸ The fact that the Israeli public wrongly believes that the Jordan Valley belongs to the State of Israel and is mostly occupied by Israeli citizens helps to explain its ongoing acceptance of the Government of Israel's positions on the region.²⁹

Requisitions, expropriation and re-allocation of land in the Jordan Valley have accelerated in recent years. In **May 2011**, the Government of Israel sought to increase the allocation of land available for cultivation to Jordan Valley civilian settlements by 130 per cent, and their water allocation by 20 percent.³⁰ 'Approving the programme [of expansion] will change the face of the Jordan Valley beyond recognition and attract returning sons and families from outside to come to the region. Although a political cloud still hangs over the region, this is the way to attract residents,' asserts David Alhayani,³¹ the head of a Jordan Valley Regional Council, which governs a number of Israeli settlements in the area.

While this programme involves the expropriation of land which is already unavailable to Palestinians for their use and development (because it has been designated as a nature reserve or military zone), it will create more 'facts on the ground', further entrenching the denial of this land for Palestinian farmers to cultivate.

'The agriculture in the Jordan Valley is wonderful. Sixty per cent of the production of dates in Israel comes from the Jordan Valley, and 40 per cent of the export of dates in the world comes from the Valley. Developing and promoting the Jordan Valley and its agriculture is our national task.'

David Alhayani, Head of the Jordan Valley Regional [Israeli settlements] Council, 4 May 2012

Box 1: Khan Al Ahmar – A community under threat



The village of Khan Al Ahmar is one of 20 Bedouin communities facing imminent threat of displacement. Access to the village has been cut off on all sides by the surrounding settlement and a main highway running from Jerusalem through the Jordan Valley, facilitating travel and tourism from Israel to the Dead Sea. © Simon Rawles/Oxfam

Khan Al Ahmar is a Palestinian Bedouin village that lies 10km east of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. The 100 Jahalin Bedouins who live in tents and shacks are refugees whose families were displaced from the Negev desert in 1948 or in the 1950s.

In 1975, the Israeli military confiscated the Bedouins' tractors and part of the land they were using. The settlement of Kfar Adumim, now home to some 2,500 Israelis, was later built on this land. The establishment of the Israeli settlement also cut the community of Khan Al Ahmar off from areas where it used to graze its livestock (on 18 sq/km of land in an area known as Wadi Qelt), leaving it with access to only 600 sq/metres.

Eid Abu Hamis, a member of this Palestinian community, explained how land confiscations by the Israeli authorities have affected people's livelihoods. The village has stopped growing wheat, chickpeas, barley, and lentils, and villagers have been forced to sell many of their animals. Now, they have only 40 sheep and goats, and just one camel. They have closed their stall in the market of the Old City in East Jerusalem and do not sell in Bethlehem anymore as they can no longer afford the transportation costs.

UNEQUAL ACCESS TO WATER

While the Jordan Valley contains a third of the West Bank's underground water resources, an inequitable division of water under the Oslo Interim Agreement (also known as 'Oslo II') meant that Israelis were allocated four times more water from the shared mountain aquifer than Palestinians.³² This unequal access to water keeps Israeli settlement farms well irrigated and lush, while Palestinian farmers and communities are largely dependent on tankered water, which they have to pay for.

'I am not a politician, but we are here because the Government of Israel decided.'

David Alhayani, Head of the Jordan Valley Regional [Israeli settlements] Council, 4 May 2012

Tankered water is up to five times more expensive than water from a regular supply, mainly due to transport costs.³³ In addition, restrictions on granting

permits mean that water cisterns used by Palestinian farmers to collect rainwater are frequently demolished by the Israeli authorities, further limiting their ability to grow crops. The high cost of tankered water further erodes Palestinian farmers' and herders' profits, and reduces their ability to pay for essentials such as food, health care, and education for their children.

The Jordan River used to be the main source of water in the Jordan Valley but it has been diverted by the Israeli authorities, as well as by Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. This has meant that 'since 1953 when the UN reported the flow of the Jordan River through the Jordan Valley was 1,250 MCM [million cubic metres], it has been reduced to a trickle of highly saline water heavily contaminated by sewage'.³⁴ As a result, areas that are not irrigated are prone to desertification and environmental degradation (see Box 2).

According to the Israeli NGO, B'Tselem, 69 per cent of water extractions in the West Bank by the Israeli national water company, Mekorot, come from Israeli wells developed in the Jordan Valley. These wells primarily serve the Israeli settlements and their water-intensive agricultural production.³⁵ In 1967, there were 209 active Palestinian wells in the Jordan Valley; today there are just 89.³⁶ This is mainly due to Israeli restrictions on Palestinian well and water resource development.³⁷ Israelis pump up to three times more water from wells in the Jordan Valley than Palestinians do,³⁸ and Palestinians are prohibited from obtaining permits to drill new wells.³⁹

Box 2: Turning off the taps in Al Auja



A Palestinian farmer harvests barley. Without adequate access to water Palestinian farmers are mostly planting rain fed grains. © Simon Rawles/Oxfam

Al Auja is a Palestinian agricultural community in the Jordan Valley. Suleiman Romanieen, head of the Al Auja Local Council, says: 'Al Auja is almost a desert now, but it used to be one of the richest places for water resources. For the past five to six years, it hasn't rained here and all the wells are dry. Before, it was only dry in summer, but now there is no water all year round. We cannot even access the spring as Israelis have closed the area.'

Just 20 years ago, Al Auja was a flourishing agricultural area that provided fresh

fruits and vegetables to markets beyond the West Bank. As three Israeli settlements started to expand around the community's land, Palestinian farmers found that their main source of water, the Al Auja spring (which used to have a discharge of up to 9m cubic metres of water a year) was starting to run dry.

As well as discriminatory policies restricting access to land and water, Palestinian farmers also have restricted access to agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and farm equipment. For example, Palestinians are forbidden from using potassium nitrate,⁴⁰ which improves the quality of fruits. In contrast, Israeli settlers are freely able to transport fertilisers into the Jordan Valley. Alternative fertiliser formulations are not only more expensive, but have a negative long-term impact on the environment and on soil fertility.⁴¹ According to the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, the overall productivity loss in the Jordan Valley due to these measures is around 30 per cent.⁴²

UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

The lack of access to land, water, and agricultural inputs means that Palestinian agricultural activity in the Jordan Valley has been prevented from reaching its full potential and thus remains primarily small-scale and largely unprofitable.⁴³ This has severe consequences for poverty and social development, as Palestinian livelihoods have become increasingly unviable. The EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission Report on Area C states: 'Palestinian development of the land and resources in Area C has been recognised by members of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee [donor group] and the [Middle East] Quartet as fundamental to sustainable economic growth and Palestinian state-building.'⁴⁴

The unequal access to productive resources means that the Palestinian supply chain is unreliable, and farmers and herders are rendered dependent on Israeli companies for many agricultural products. A lack of alternatives gives Israeli companies a monopoly of the market, enabling them to dictate prices and quality. While the prices of inputs available are often high, local sales prices for produce have fallen, which means that Palestinian farmers are unable to compete with the heavily subsidised and modernised Israeli settlement farmers. Suleiman Romanieen, head of the Local Council in the Palestinian community of Al Auja, told Oxfam: 'For those who live from agriculture, everything is expensive: water, seeds, fertilisers. We pay a lot but sell our produce for a low price. Farming is no longer profitable.'⁴⁵

Significant donor investment in the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C is urgently needed if they are to attain their full development potential and deliver sustainable growth for Palestinians across the OPT. But this would need to go hand in hand with a reversal of existing Israeli government policies, and the creation of a strong Palestinian national development plan that is based on consultation with local communities.

There are various models that could be emulated in order to develop the Jordan Valley. One such model is the agricultural development achieved on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, where agricultural land is irrigated to support up to 150,000 people.⁴⁷

'Our non-stop efforts to develop the area known as Area C and every inch of our country aims mainly to benefit from our resources... We will not be deterred by unfair classifications and names... This is our land and it is our natural right to develop this area and to serve our people living here.'

Salaam Fayaad, Palestinian Prime Minister, 2 April, 2012⁴⁶

3. LIVELIHOODS ON THE BRINK

Current Israeli policies and practices in the Jordan Valley and across Area C violate human rights and undermine the presence and development of Palestinian communities. Demolitions, forced displacement, and exposure to settler violence are all part of the daily reality faced by Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley and elsewhere in the OPT. This, as well as the systematic confiscation of land and resources, as detailed above, has left many Palestinians in Area C with one of two choices: either move to some other parts of the West Bank, with or without their families, or take up employment on settler farms, frequently under exploitative labour conditions.

DISPLACEMENT DUE TO SETTLEMENT EXPANSION

In late 2011, it was widely reported that the Government of Israel planned to forcibly relocate 2,300 Palestinians living in Area C to a site close to a municipal rubbish dump.⁴⁸ At the beginning of 2012, demolition, 'stop-work', and some confiscation notices were served to 20 Palestinian communities. The impending demolitions are believed to be related to the planned expansion of the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim,⁴⁹ (part of whose municipal area lies within the Jordan Valley area).⁵⁰ Some 4,000 Israeli settlement units are due to be built on the Palestinian communities' land.⁵¹

The impact of displacement on Palestinian communities is immense and often has a disproportionate impact on women and children, who lose the security of their homes and access to services such as schools. Without access to the land and water resources that many depend on for their livelihoods, Palestinian Bedouin communities living in the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C risk being forced into unemployment and poverty as well as having to abandon their traditional way of life.

DISPLACEMENT DUE TO DEMOLITIONS

Restrictions on zoning, planning, and construction, imposed by the Israeli authorities in order to support and protect settlements, prevent Palestinian communities from developing vital infrastructure and accessing basic services such as water, electricity, schools, and health clinics. Less than 1 per cent of Area C has been planned for Palestinian development by the Israeli Civil Administration, and 94 per cent of construction permits have been rejected in recent years.⁵³

This has led to widespread demolitions of Palestinian civilian structures built without permits – everything from rainwater cisterns to latrines.⁵⁴ In 2011, there

'The EU will continue to provide financial assistance for Palestinian development in Area C and expects such investment to be protected for future use. The EU will engage with the Government of Israel to work out improved mechanisms for the implementation of the donor funded projects for the benefit of the Palestinian population in Area C.'

EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, 14 May 2012⁵²

were over 200 demolitions of Palestinian structures in the Jordan Valley, including homes (see Box 3), resulting in the displacement of 430 people.⁵⁵ As of the middle of June 2012, 330 Palestinian structures had been demolished in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem). This amounts to a 60 per cent increase compared to the monthly average of 2010.⁵⁶ UN OCHA report that more than 60 per cent of Palestinian-owned structures demolished were located close to or inside areas allocated to settlements.⁵⁷

'According to Israeli authorities, demolitions are carried out because structures lack the required building permits. In reality, it is almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain permits. The zoning and planning regime enforced by Israel in Area C and East Jerusalem restricts Palestinian growth and development, while providing preferential treatment for unlawful Israeli settlements.'

UN OCHA (2012) 'Demolitions and Forced Displacement in the Occupied West Bank'

Box 3: Building from the rubble



A Palestinian family sifts through the remnants of their home, which was demolished four times by the government of Israel in one year. Each time it was demolished they rebuilt using simple materials consisting mostly of plastic and metal. © Simon Rawles/Oxfam

Al Fariysiya, a Palestinian herder community in the northern Jordan Valley, is a community under threat. On 19 July 2010, the Israeli military demolished 26 residential tents, leaving 107 people, including 52 children, homeless.⁵⁸ They also demolished 22 animal pens, seven ovens, eight kitchens, ten bathrooms, and a shed used to store agricultural equipment. Four water tanks and large quantities of wheat and fodder for animal and human consumption were also destroyed.

Ali Zohdi, a herder from Al Fariysiya, explained the difficulties faced by the villagers, while the nearby Israeli settlement of Rotem thrives. 'Every time the army comes and demolishes the houses and animal pens here we rebuild, but they come and demolish again. Our life is the goats and the sheep, and without this source of income we lose our life.'⁵⁹ On 13 March 2012, the Israeli military demolished an additional 11 structures, including five residential tents.⁶⁰

Recent legal opinions suggest that the current Israeli permit regime in Area C violates international law.⁶¹ It is also a serious obstacle to humanitarian and development initiatives that are funded by international donors and seek to alleviate poverty among the Palestinian population. During 2011 and the first six months of 2012, at least 62 structures funded by European donors were demolished in Area C, including some in the Jordan Valley. These included water cisterns, animal shelters, and agricultural and residential structures. At least another 110 structures funded by European donors are under threat of demolition, having received demolition or 'stop work' orders from Israeli authorities.⁶²

Demolitions have contributed towards the displacement of at least 536 people, more than half of whom are children in the first six months of 2012. This is an 87 per cent increase compared to 2010.⁶³

In accordance with the EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report on Area C, European governments should urgently press the Government of Israel to transfer planning authorities relating to Palestinian villages and towns in Area C to Palestinian control. European governments should also take firm, collective diplomatic action at the highest level to push for an end to demolitions of Palestinian civilian infrastructure, illegal under IHL.

SETTLER VIOLENCE

The presence of illegal settlements in the OPT is a source of extreme tension that often leads to violence. While the number of incidents in the Jordan Valley is currently relatively low, Palestinians living in the vicinity of settlements located throughout the West Bank have been subjected to increasing numbers of violent attacks committed by Israeli settlers. In 2011, three Palestinians were killed and 183 injured, and approximately 10,000 Palestinian-owned trees were destroyed. B'Tselem and other Israeli human rights organisations have recorded other acts of violence against Palestinian civilians, including stone throwing, blocking roads, torching fields, and other damage to property. In total, according to UN OCHA, 379 incidents were recorded in 2011 – a 32 per cent increase on the previous year and at least 144 per cent up compared with 2009.⁶⁴ These incidents do not include acts of violence perpetrated by Israeli soldiers.⁶⁵ Settlers have also experienced serious violence from Palestinians, with eight deaths and 37 injuries of settlers in 2011.⁶⁶

Acts of settler violence are carried out with almost total impunity. The Israeli human rights organisation Yesh Din recently reported that 91 per cent of cases of settler violence registered with the Israeli police by Palestinians were closed without indictment; 84 per cent of these were closed due to investigatory failures.⁶⁷

Oxfam is deeply concerned by, and condemns, all acts of violence against civilians, whoever the perpetrators. It is essential that the EU monitors incidents of violence by settlers and Palestinians in the Jordan Valley and elsewhere in the OPT, by moving beyond the words expressed by its Foreign Affairs Council in May 2012, which included the following statement: 'The EU expresses deep concern regarding settler extremism and incitement by settlers in the West Bank. The EU condemns continuous settler violence and deliberate provocations against Palestinian civilians. It calls on the Government of Israel to bring the perpetrators to justice and to comply with its obligations under international law.'⁶⁸

RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS

According to the UN, there are currently more than 500 internal checkpoints and other physical impediments to Palestinian movement inside the West Bank. These exist primarily to protect Israeli settlers and to facilitate their movement.⁶⁹ As a result, Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley are essentially closed off from the rest of the OPT, affecting their rights and livelihoods.

ACCESS TO MARKETS IN THE OPT

Palestinians in the Jordan Valley are mainly dependent on the income they get from selling their produce in local markets. Their ability to earn enough money to live on is directly affected by the restrictions on movement of goods and people across the OPT.

The Jordan Valley is one of the most restricted areas of the West Bank in terms of access. It is almost entirely cut off from many Palestinian cities due to checkpoints, roadblocks, and dozens of kilometres of trenches and earth walls.⁷⁰ In addition to military zones, large nature reserves limit Palestinians' access to their farming land. Together, these have created huge barriers to the free movement of Palestinian farmers. Palestinian vehicular access to the Jordan Valley is limited to five routes, four of which are controlled by permanently manned military checkpoints. Of these, three checkpoints (Tayasir, Yitav, and Hamra) prohibit Palestinians from entering the Jordan Valley in their own vehicles without a special registration.⁷¹ The fourth checkpoint (Ma'ale Efraim) was built for Israeli citizens. Most Palestinians are either prevented from crossing this checkpoint or must cross on foot or on licensed public transport.

To avoid these checkpoints, Palestinians often have to take much longer routes to access markets, buy goods, or visit relatives.⁷² UN OCHA estimates that additional transportation costs incurred by farmers transporting their produce via routes that circumvent the most difficult checkpoints⁷³ amount to \$1.9m annually.⁷⁴

Box 4: Selling cheese in Al Maleh



A Palestinian woman prepares cheese in the Jordan Valley. Without permission to build electrical networks or proper storage facilities, cheese producers must sell their products quickly before they spoil. © Simon Rawles/Oxfam

Restrictions on movement and access in Al Maleh, a Palestinian community in the northern Jordan Valley, mean that Bedouin communities are finding it increasingly difficult to get their goods to market.

As Abu Shukri, a Bedouin herder, told Oxfam: 'Our animals provide meat and dairy products, but we cannot sell them outside. Merchants come from nearby villages and buy at the prices they want because there is no competition. We are selling our cheese at half the price of other villages in the West Bank. We are not making any profits.'⁷⁵

The establishment of Israeli settler-only roads and military zones means that many Palestinian farmers throughout the Jordan Valley are not able to access their farms. Tractors and other equipment are often confiscated, while herders are prevented from grazing their animals, which are often impounded for straying into a military zone. Palestinian herders must also buy wheat or barley to feed their herds, because they do not have access to their pastures.⁷⁶ These significant additional costs incurred due to restrictions on access and movement are stifling production and driving many Palestinian households further into poverty.

While Palestinian farmers face major physical and other obstacles in getting their produce into local markets, Israeli goods are flooding the Palestinian market. Palestinian sources estimate that the value of goods produced in settlements across the West Bank, and sold on the Palestinian market, is around \$500m annually.⁷⁷

ACCESS TO MARKETS OUTSIDE THE OPT

The Government of Israel imposes further restrictions on Palestinian goods being transported into or out of the OPT. There are six commercial crossings between the West Bank and Israel where goods must be unloaded from the Palestinian vehicle, checked extensively, then re-loaded onto an Israeli vehicle on the other side (often referred to as the 'back-to-back' system).

According to UN OCHA, delays caused by inspection procedures at checkpoints in the West Bank cost an estimated \$321,423 annually.⁷⁸ In contrast, Israeli settlers' access to Israeli and international markets is facilitated by special roads and a significant number of Israeli government subsidies, including free access to air and sea ports. This allows settlers to capture both local and external markets, and gives them a significant competitive advantage over Palestinian farmers.

In order to access global markets, Palestinian traders must either ship their produce out of Israeli ports or via Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv (the preferred option for accessing EU, North American, or East Asian markets), or through Jordan (the preferred option for accessing Arab Gulf markets). Again, excessive time delays, increased transport, labour, and equipment costs, security checks, lack of access to proper storage facilities, and damage inflicted during loading and unloading reduce the competitiveness of Palestinian agricultural produce. This also introduces high levels of unpredictability in terms of quality and delivery times, preventing Palestinian farmers from reliably meeting buyers' requirements that would enable them to penetrate global markets.⁷⁹

In order to overcome these difficulties, the EU should continue to press for real opportunities for Palestinian producers to access European markets, including urgently pushing for an end to Israeli government restrictions on the movement and transport of goods. As the EU Representative to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, John Gatt-Rutter, said recently: 'Israel has a major responsibility for ensuring access and movement and facilitating Palestinian trade.'⁸⁰

EXPLOITATION OF LABOUR

The raft of legislative restrictions and practices described above, which restrict Palestinian economic development and livelihoods, also limit alternative employment opportunities. This leaves many Palestinians with little option but to seek employment on Israeli settlement farms, which in some cases have been built on land expropriated from them. Some Palestinian farmers have become, in effect, tenant workers on what used to be their own land.

The Israeli settlement economy, on the other hand, benefits from the exploitation of Palestinian labour, including child labour.⁸¹ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, some 9,500 Palestinians are employed in agricultural settlements, 1,800 of whom work in settlements in the Jordan Valley (92 per cent are male and 8 per cent are female). Israeli sources put this figure much higher.⁸² As documented by the Israeli NGO Kav LaOved, among others, these workers often face discrimination and violations of their rights.⁸³

While the minimum wage in Israel is currently \$6.00 per hour, Palestinians working on Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley are paid only an average of \$2.00–\$4.80 per hour.⁸⁴ None of the Palestinian workers interviewed by Oxfam received the benefits that Israeli workers are entitled to by law, including holidays, overtime pay, transportation costs, health insurance, sick pay, or payments from a provident fund.

The PA has recently taken measures to discourage Palestinians from working on settlements because, it says, they are helping to strengthen the Israeli economy rather than the Palestinian economy. However, it has provided few viable alternatives, because Israeli-imposed restrictions in the Jordan Valley have limited opportunities for investment and development.

It is therefore essential that the PA plays a strong role in ensuring the future development of the Jordan Valley by putting employment opportunities for Palestinians at the heart of its strategic national plans.

Box 5: Palestinian workers on settlement farms



A settlement farm in the Jordan Valley. With subsidies for land, water, and other inputs, settlement farms produce a range of agricultural products including milk, poultry, dates, and fresh produce. © Simon Rawles/Oxfam

Six days a week, Mariam,⁸⁵ a Palestinian worker, wakes up before sunrise and walks from her village to a junction on the main road, where a van is waiting to take her and other workers to an Israeli settlement farm.

There, she works eight hours a day picking grapes, dates, or tomatoes. She earns between \$15 and \$34 a day, depending on the season. However, she has to pay a daily fee ranging from \$4 to \$12 to the Palestinian sub-contractor who manages her work permit and arranges her transportation.

Although Mariam has worked for her employers for 16 years, she has never received any form of health care or pension plan. 'I have to work, I need to make a living,' she says. 'There are just women in my family. We don't have our own land. I bear the responsibility of caring for my mother and younger sisters.'

She says she believes that Israeli settlements pose a threat to her future and her community, but that she has no other choice of work.

4. CONCLUSION: ENVISIONING A VIABLE FUTURE

In order to unlock the development potential of the Jordan Valley and enable Palestinians to escape poverty, the international community must press the Government of Israel to end the policies that significantly harm Palestinian livelihoods. This requires urgent and sustained action.

It is estimated that if Israeli restrictions were removed, an additional 50 sq/km in the Jordan Valley could be cultivated, allowing high-value, export-oriented products such as vegetables, flowers, and herbs to be grown. This could add \$1bn a year to the Palestinian economy, or 9 per cent of GDP,⁸⁶ significantly reducing Palestinian dependence on international development aid.⁸⁷

Palestinian development will also require substantial international (including private) investment in industry, as well as in rural livelihoods and the tourism sector. The enormous potential provided by the Dead Sea, already a great source of revenue for the Israeli economy, could attract thousands of tourists and provide minerals to develop a Palestinian cosmetics industry if the Jordan Valley was returned to Palestinian administration. The Palestinian agricultural sector should also be developed to increase Palestinian farmers' share of both local and export markets.

While recognising the challenges, it is vital that concrete steps are taken now to promote Palestinian development. In light of the restrictive permit and planning policies put in place by the Israeli authorities, which hinder poverty alleviation, donors should move ahead and support development projects in the Jordan Valley and elsewhere in Area C, even if they have not been explicitly approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (unless Israeli refusal is based on genuine security concerns that are legitimate under international law). Donors should ensure that this is supported by collective diplomatic action at the highest level to protect Palestinian communities and prevent the demolition of Palestinian civilian infrastructure, illegal under IHL.

The PA could also do more. That should include a government-funded campaign encouraging consumer support for Palestinian produce. However, in order to be more competitive on the export market, quality needs to be enhanced, costs need to be reduced, and production should be diversified and increased to maintain a steady supply for buyers. Investments are needed in branding, marketing, and the establishment of trade contacts – particularly with new markets in the Arab world and Europe, where trade agreements provide an advantage.

While the PA currently only has full jurisdiction over Area A and partial jurisdiction over Area B, the creation of a new national development plan which includes Area C (where nearly all of the Jordan Valley is located) and other marginalised parts of the OPT will allow Palestinians to prepare for a future Palestinian State alongside Israel. This should be an inclusive process, taking

account of the priorities of local communities in planning their futures. This re-imagining would help develop a shared vision of what Palestinians want the Jordan Valley to look like.

The new development plan should build on the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Agriculture's existing strategy (2010–13), which recognises the need to promote farmers' livelihoods in order to keep them on their land. But it must also ensure that the environment is conserved and protected against deterioration, including reclamation of land and rehabilitation and improvement of water supply systems.

This report has described how restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities on Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley are limiting opportunities for economic growth and pushing the Palestinians living there into greater poverty. The broad-ranging nature and sheer number of these restrictions suggest that they are part of a systematic policy to push Palestinians off their land, while increasing Israeli control over the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C. It is vital that the Israeli government and Palestinian authorities, with the support of the international community, act now to ensure that the vision of two states living side by side in peace, security, and prosperity can be realised.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The EU should:

- **Move beyond statements and take urgent action to press the Government of Israel to end the construction of illegal settlements** and comply with its responsibilities under international law, in line with the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Wall in the OPT, which the EU has endorsed;
- **Take immediate steps to ensure the implementation** of the May 2012 EU Foreign Affairs Council conclusions,⁸⁸ and the recommendations of the recent EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission reports on Area C and East Jerusalem, including:
 - Pressing the Government of Israel to transfer planning authorities relating to Palestinian villages and towns in the Jordan Valley and across Area C to Palestinian control;
 - Publicly, collectively, and systematically voicing objections at the highest level and taking action to prevent involuntary population movements, displacements, and evictions, as well as the demolition of civilian infrastructure, and supporting the Palestinian population in doing the same;
 - Issuing an annual report on the situation in Area C (including the Jordan Valley) on the same basis as the EU annual report on East Jerusalem, including measuring progress in accordance with the EU IHL guidelines, and submitting recommendations for joint action;
 - Ensuring that there is an EU presence, including at Israeli courts, when there is a risk of demolitions or evictions of Palestinian families;
 - Ensuring that there is EU intervention when Palestinians are arrested or intimidated by Israeli authorities for peaceful cultural, social, or political activities;
- **Put in place measures that will allow for the full implementation of the EU–PLO Association Agreement**, which provides real opportunities for Palestinian produce to access European markets, including pushing for an end to Israeli restrictions on the movement and transport of goods.

The international community, donors, and Palestinian and international NGOs should:

- **Support the drafting of a comprehensive Palestinian National Development Plan**, which includes a strong strategy for the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C, in consultation with the Palestinian people, and ensures that all strategies and projects are in line with national plans;
- **Systematically include a civilian protection component** within their programmes (e.g. ensuring legal aid and budget for planning and zoning);
- **Initiate and support development projects in the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C**, including building new schools, community centres, clinics, municipal buildings, roads, irrigation, and other infrastructure projects.

They should also monitor implementation closely and, backed by diplomatic and political support, move ahead with projects even if they have not been approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (unless Israeli refusal is based on genuine security concerns that are legitimate under international law), in line with the draft recommendations of the EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report on Area C;

- **Support Palestinians to stay on their land in the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C** through prioritising provision of water, fodder, and shelter in the event of demolitions, and providing sustainable livelihoods opportunities to Palestinian farmers and herders (e.g. providing micro-finance, reclaiming land, and rehabilitating and improving water supply systems, etc.).

The Palestinian Authority should:

- **Produce and implement a more comprehensive and consultative National Development Plan that identifies priority needs** across the entire OPT, including the Jordan Valley and other parts of Area C;
- **Support Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley (and other parts of Area C) to preserve their livelihoods** by:
 - Supporting farmers to stay on their land through prioritising provision of water, fodder, and shelter in the event of demolitions, etc.;
 - Reviewing heavy taxation laws on agricultural income (set to be implemented in 2013);
 - Promoting Palestinian produce among consumers to increase its share in local markets, and support local producers to improve quality, branding, and marketing to increase export sales;
- **Agree and adopt a common position** (i.e. within the Prime Minister's office, line ministries, and local authorities) with regard to the Israeli permit regime in order to work with the international community to initiate and support development projects in Area C, even if they have not been approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (unless Israeli refusal is based on genuine security concerns that are legitimate under international law), in line with the draft recommendations of the EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report on Area C.

The Government of Israel should:

- **Immediately halt the construction of illegal settlements** in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) in line with the recommendations of the 2004 ICJ Advisory Opinion. It should:
 - End existing incentives to settlements;
 - Withdraw from all existing settlement infrastructure;
 - Cancel legislative and regulatory acts related to the settlements;
 - Make reparations for damages caused by the settlements;
- **End policies and practices that are illegal under international law and harm the livelihoods of Palestinian civilians.** It should:
 - Immediately cease the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, including housing, water infrastructure, and agricultural assets;
 - End the confiscation of Palestinian natural resources, particularly land, agricultural assets, and water, which are essential to sustainable

livelihoods, and provide remedy for past confiscations in line with the ICJ Advisory Opinion;

- Rescind Military Order 418 and hand over responsibility for planning and permits to Palestinians;⁸⁹
- End excessive delays for the transport of produce and improve access to external markets for agricultural produce, in line with past agreements with the PA, such as the Paris Protocols;
- **Ensure the protection of the Palestinian population**, including through the application of the rule of law in relation to violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property and livelihoods, without discrimination or exception.

NOTES

- ¹ Save The Children UK (2009) 'Fact Sheet: Jordan Valley', October 2009, p.1. See also AIX Group, 'Economic Development of the Jordan Valley' (March 2009).
- ² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) (2011) 'Humanitarian Fact Sheet on Area C of the West Bank', July 2011; and UN OCHA, March 2012.
- ³ The Israeli Civil Administration was established by the Government of Israel in 1981, in order to carry out practical bureaucratic functions within the territories occupied in 1967 (which includes the Jordan Valley). The Civil Administration is a part of a larger entity known as Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), which is a unit in the Defence Ministry of Israel.
- ⁴ Figures for demolition orders and demolitions for Palestinian communities are official statistics provided by the Israeli Ministry of Defense to the Israeli Knesset, later published by Peace Now, Area C: Palestinian Construction and Demolition Stats – February 2008. Available at: <<http://www.peacenow.org.il>>. See also OCHA (2009) 'Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied By Israel in Area C of the West Bank'. http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/special_focus_area_c_demolitions_december_2009.pdf
- ⁵ I. Gal et al. (2010), cited in the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ) (2011) 'The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Occupied Palestinian Territory', September 2011; and World Bank (2010) 'The Underpinnings of the Future Palestinian State: Sustainable Growth and Institutions: Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee', September 2010.
- ⁶ In May 2011, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated, in an address to the US Congress, 'that he favours a military, as opposed to civilian, presence in the Jordan Valley'. See *Washington Post* (2011) 'Transcript: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress', 24 May 2011. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/israeli-prime-minister-binyamin-netanyahus-address-to-congress/2011/05/24/AFWY5bAH_story.html
- ⁷ See International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention)*, 12 August 1949, Article 49; and Theodor Meron (1967) 'Legal Opinion on Civilian Settlement in the Occupied Territories', Israeli State Archives, 153.8/7921/3A.
- ⁸ UN OCHA (2012) 'Humanitarian Fact Sheet on the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea Area', February 2012.
- ⁹ S. Hever (2010) *The Political Economy of Israel's Occupation: Repression Beyond Exploitation*, London: Pluto Press.
- ¹⁰ B'Tselem (2012) 'Encouragement of Migration to Settlements', 1 January 2012.
- ¹¹ Figures quoted at NIS 7.2m; this was equal to approximately \$1.9m at the time of writing. UN OCHA (2011) 'Special Focus: West Bank Movement and Access Update'.
- ¹² EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report (2011) 'Area C and Palestinian State-Building', July 2011, p.9.
- ¹³ The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics notes that 26.4 per cent of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley live below the poverty line, with 16.4 per cent living in deep poverty, as compared with West Bank averages of 18.3 per cent and 8.8 per cent respectively. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Jericho and Al Aghwar Governorate Statistical Year Book, October 2011.
- ¹⁴ Benjamin Netanyahu cited in H. Keinon (2012) 'PM: Israeli presence necessary in Jordan Valley', *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 January.
- ¹⁵ In May 2011, the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development announced plans to increase the cultivated lands of Jordan Valley settlements by 130 per cent (80 dunams; one duman = 1,000 sq metres) and increase their water allocation by 20 per cent (51,000 cubic metres per plot/per settler, as opposed to the previous 42,000 cubic metres). While this plan has yet to be enacted, it has not been rescinded and therefore Palestinian livelihoods are still facing a significant threat.
- ¹⁶ *Ha'aretz* (2012) 'Knesset Finance Committee okays huge payout to West Bank settlements', 21 March 2012. The exact figure was NIS 7.6m for the Jordan Valley and Binyamin district. At the time of conversion (May 2012), this was worth approximately \$2m.
- ¹⁷ As Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman commented on 29 February 2012: 'It would be impossible to ensure the security of the State of Israel without an Israeli presence in the Jordan Valley... [The communities/settlements] will remain in place and we will work to strengthen them.' See E. Benari (2012) 'Lieberman: There's no security without the Jordan Valley', Israel National News website, 1 March 2012. <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/153309>
- ¹⁸ EU Heads of Diplomatic Mission report (2011) op. cit., p.1.
- ¹⁹ Council of the European Union (2012) 'Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process', 3166th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 14 May 2012. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130195.pdf
- ²⁰ This recommendation has not yet been formally endorsed by the EU Heads of Missions.
- ²¹ Council of the European Union (2012) 'Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process', op. cit.
- ²² Although limited responsibility for education and other civilian sectors was given to the PA.
- ²³ UN OCHA (2012) 'Humanitarian Fact Sheet on the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea', op. cit.
- ²⁴ These are Israeli local government entities which represent settlements in the area. Each Regional Council governs a number of settlements.
- ²⁵ The Government of Israel made it harder for Palestinians to register land ownership (and nearly impossible for refugees), which allows the State to become the 'Custodian of Absentee Property'.

- ²⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council (2011) 'Housing, Land and Property in the West Bank, Area C, Training Manual'.
- ²⁷ Hague Regulations (1907) Article 55.
- ²⁸ Association of Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) (2011) 'Survey: Israeli Opinion: The Jordan Valley', June 2011. <http://www.acri.org.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/ACRI-Jordan-Valley-Survey-ENG.pdf>, accessed 23 May 2012.
- ²⁹ The Jordan Valley is the main route between Northern and Southern Israel, as well as a popular Israeli tourist destination (it includes the Dead Sea and Masada). Settlements span the length of the Jordan Valley. Visually, it looks no different from the rest of Israel, with Israeli signposting, shops, and coffee stops along the way. This gives the average Israeli the impression that the Jordan Valley is as much a part of Israel as the Negev.
- ³⁰ Legally speaking 'requisition', 'confiscation' and 'allocation' of land are different issues. 'Requisition' is usually temporary and does not change the ownership of the land; 'confiscation' involves a change of ownership; and (re)allocation refers to a change in land-use. Although the example given relates to the 're-allocation' rather than the legal 'requisition' or 'confiscation' as such, the long term nature of the 'reallocation' of land for settlements amounts to de fact 'confiscation' (i.e. change of ownership).
- ³¹ Head of the Jordan Valley Regional [Israeli settlements] Council, 4 May 2012
- ³² The Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, (also known as Oslo II) Article 40. This was intended to be an interim arrangement for no more than 5 years pending 'Final Status' negotiations.
- ³³ UN OCHA (2012) 'How Dispossession Happens: The Humanitarian Impact of the Takeover of Palestinian Water Springs by Israeli Settlers', March 2012.
- ³⁴ Chas T. Main, Inc. (1953) 'The Unified Development Of The Water Resources Of The Jordan Valley Region Prepared At The Request Of The United Nations Under Direction Of Tennessee Valley Authority.' Boston, Mass., Charlotte, N.C.
- ³⁵ B'Tselem (2011) 'Dispossession and Exploitation: Israel's Policy in the Jordan Valley and Northern Dead Sea', May 2011.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ No new Palestinian agricultural wells have been built in the West Bank since 1967. Approval has been denied by the Joint (Israeli-Palestinian) Water Committee responsible for approving water resource and infrastructure development in the West Bank, on which Israel wields veto power. The Joint Water Committee has recently agreed to the rehabilitation of some 50 Palestinian wells in the Jordan Valley that were active prior to 1967, pending the submission of detailed plans by the Palestinian Water Authority.
- ³⁸ B'Tselem (2011) 'Dispossession and Exploitation', op cit.
- ³⁹ Although water wells fall under the 'Joint Water Committee', which is a coordination body involving both Israeli authorities and the PA.
- ⁴⁰ A product that is normally used to grow mainly fruit, but which could also be used to make bombs.
- ⁴¹ Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ) (2011) op. cit.
- ⁴² Oxfam interview with Abed El-Jafer, Deputy Director of the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Agriculture, Jordan Valley Area, Jericho, 18 January 2012.
- ⁴³ B'Tselem (2011) 'Dispossession and Exploitation', op. cit.
- ⁴⁴ Heads of EU Diplomatic Mission report (2011) 'Area C and Palestinian State Building', July 2011, p.3.
- ⁴⁵ Oxfam interview with Suleiman Romanieen, head of the Local Council, Al Auja, 14 December 2012.
- ⁴⁶ Palestinian News and Info Agency (WAFA) (2012) 'Fayyad inaugurates first water dam in Palestine', 16 April 2012. See also: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/154815>
- ⁴⁷ AIXGROUP (2009) 'Economic Dimensions of A Two State Solution Between Israel and Palestine'.
- ⁴⁸ UN OCHA (2011) 'Bedouin Relocation: Threat of Displacement in the Jerusalem Periphery', September 2011.
- ⁴⁹ In the early 1990s, 200 Palestinian families were relocated from the Jerusalem periphery to enable the Ma'ale Adumim settlement to be built; 85 per cent reported abandoning their traditional livelihoods.
- ⁵⁰ Ma'ale Adumim is considered to be strategically important in securing the main transport links to the Jordan Valley. See, for example: <http://www.jcpa.org/text/security/dayan.pdf> or <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
- ⁵¹ B'Tselem (2011) 'Expulsion of Bedouin Communities from the Ma'ale Adumim Area to a Site near the Abu Dis Waste Disposal Site'.
- ⁵² Council of the European Union (2012) 'Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process', op. cit.
- ⁵³ UN OCHA (2011) 'Humanitarian Fact Sheet on Area C of the West Bank', op. cit.; and Factsheet for the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting. Information provided by UN OCHA, March 2012. Figures for demolition orders and demolitions for Palestinian communities are official statistics provided by the Israeli Ministry of Defense to the Israeli Knesset, later published by Peace Now, Area C: Palestinian Construction and Demolition Stats – February 2008. Available at: <http://www.peacenow.org.il>, op. cit.
- ⁵⁴ In 2011 alone, 560 Palestinian-owned structures, including 200 residential structures and 46 rainwater collection cisterns and pools, were demolished by the Israeli authorities in Area C of the West Bank, many of these in the Jordan Valley. UN OCHA, Humanitarian Fact Sheet on Area C of the West Bank, July 2011
- ⁵⁵ UN OCHA (2012) 'Humanitarian Factsheet on the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea Area'.
- ⁵⁶ Information provided by the Displacement Working Group, a multi-agency coordination body that collects data related to demolitions across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in order to help coordinate aid responses.
- ⁵⁷ UN OCHA (2012) 'The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies', January 2012.
- ⁵⁸ Information provided the Displacement Working Group. See also: http://ecamnesty.blogspot.co.il/2010_07_01_archive.html

- ⁵⁹ Oxfam interview with Ali Zohdi, herder from Al Fariysiya, May 24 2012.
- ⁶⁰ Update from Displacement Working Group members, March 2012.
- ⁶¹ T. Boutruche and M. Sassòli (2011) 'Expert Opinion on International Humanitarian Law Requiring of the Occupying Power to Transfer Back Planning Authority to Protected Persons Regarding Area C of the West Bank', 1 February 2011. <http://rhr.org.il/heb/wp-content/uploads/62394311-Expert-Opinion-FINAL-1-February-2011.pdf>
- ⁶² According to data received from Displacement Working Group members, April 2012.
- ⁶³ Data provided by Displacement Working Group members, June 2012.
- ⁶⁴ UN OCHA (2011) 'Israeli Settler Violence in the West Bank Fact Sheet', November 2011. According to the Palestine Centre, 2011 saw a 39 per cent increase in violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers compared with 2010 and a 315 per cent increase compared with five years previously. <http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/32678>
- ⁶⁵ See reports by Israeli human rights groups or Breaking the Silence for more information on violence by soldiers: <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/testimonies/publications>. See also OCHA Protection of Civilians Database for more information and figures: <http://www.ochaopt.org/poc.aspx?id=1010002>
- ⁶⁶ UN OCHA (2011) 'Israeli Settler Violence in the West Bank Fact Sheet', op. cit. See also reports by Israeli human rights organisations such as B'Tselem: http://www.btselem.org/settler_violence
- ⁶⁷ Yesh Din (2012) 'Law Enforcement upon Israeli Civilians in the West Bank,' Yesh Din Monitoring 2005–2011, 27 March 2012.
- ⁶⁸ Council of the European Union (2012) 'Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process', op. cit. (Conclusion no. 7).
- ⁶⁹ UN OCHA (2012) 'The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies', op. cit.
- ⁷⁰ This includes access to markets in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.
- ⁷¹ Cars must be registered by residents of the Jordan Valley in order to use the roads. Residents attempting to enter while driving a vehicle registered in the Jordan Valley but not in their own names are often denied passage. Non-residents are only allowed to cross these checkpoints as pedestrians or if travelling via registered public transportation. Other vehicles can be allowed on an exceptional basis after performing a 'prior coordination' procedure with the Israeli authorities. UN OCHA (2011) 'Special Focus: West Bank Movement and Access Update'.
- ⁷² From the south of the city of Jericho, using the main highways (Route 1 and then Road 90).
- ⁷³ For example, using Route 1.
- ⁷⁴ UN OCHA (2011) 'Special Focus: West Bank Movement and Access Update'.
- ⁷⁵ Oxfam interview with Abu Shukri, Al Maleh area, 12 March 2012.
- ⁷⁶ Oxfam (2011) 'Household Economic Approach, Occupied Palestinian Territory: West Bank 'Area C' Herders' Livelihoods Baselines', October 2011.
- ⁷⁷ See Reuters (2010) 'Q&A – Palestinians boycott Israeli settler goods', 27 May 2010; and Haaretz (2010) 'Abbas backs Palestinian boycott campaign of Israeli goods made in settlements,' 22 May 2010. This includes goods produced in industrial settlements.
- ⁷⁸ The figure provided by UN OCHA for the total cost is NIS 1.2m; the agency also gives a figure of NIS 3,600 per day. The value in US dollars reflects the value at the time of conversion. UN OCHA (2011) 'Special Focus: West Bank Movement and Access Update.'
- ⁷⁹ For example, the King Hussein Bridge/Allenby crossing is the main crossing point for Palestinian goods to Jordan. No Palestinian customs presence is allowed at the bridge. The crossing uses the back-to-back system, containers are prohibited from crossing to the Jordanian side, and the maximum pallet height for stacking goods is 1.8 metres. The security scanner in use at the crossing cannot handle large shipments, forcing many traders to transport through Israeli ports instead, which incurs much higher costs. The absence of proper storage or cooling facilities at the crossing means that goods can be damaged due to the long delays, which limits the types of produce that can be exported.
- ⁸⁰ EU Neighbourhood Info Centre (2012) 'New EU-funded programme to maximise Palestinian exports', 27 February 2012. http://www.enpi-info.eu/main.php?id=28167&id_type=1
- ⁸¹ See reports by Kav LaOved (Worker's Hotline); for example: http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/media-view_engadec.html?id=2327
- ⁸² Ma'an Development Center (2011) 'Exploited Palestinian Labor in Israeli Agricultural Settlements in the Jordan Valley'. The Israeli NGO Kav LaOved, using data from the Israeli Civil Administration in 2008, puts the figure much higher, claiming that there are 20,000 Palestinian permit holders working in settlements and, along with the Palestinian Labour Union, estimates that an additional 10,000 workers are employed without permits, most of whom work in agricultural settlements in the Jordan Valley during harvest season. Kav LaOved (2010) 'Palestinian Workers in Israeli West Bank Settlements 2009'; and Oxfam interview with Abed Al Halim Dari, Kav LaOved Field Manager in charge of Palestinian workers, 21 January 2012. For more information on this, see, for example: <http://www.similarsites.com/goto/kavlaoved.org.il>
- ⁸³ See: http://www.kavlaoved.org.il/publication_eng.html
- ⁸⁴ Ma'an Development Center (2011) 'Exploited Palestinian Labor in Israeli Agricultural Settlements in the Jordan Valley'. The average hourly wage figure given in the report is NIS 10. Conditions differ from settlement to settlement, so labourers tend to earn between NIS 50 and NIS 100 per day.
- ⁸⁵ At her request, the name of this settlement worker has been changed. Oxfam has also withheld the name of her village and the settlements she works on to protect her identity, as she was concerned about losing her job.
- ⁸⁶ I. Gal et al. (2010), cited in the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ) (2011) 'The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Occupied Palestinian Territory', September 2010; and World Bank (2010) 'The Underpinnings of the Future Palestinian State: Sustainable Growth and Institutions: Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee', September 2010.
- ⁸⁷ External Budget support to the PA in 2011 was \$789m: <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2012/052412.pdf>

⁸⁸ For the full EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions, see:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130248.pdf

⁸⁹ The applicable legal planning framework in Area C (Jordanian Planning Law nr. 79/1966) has been fundamentally modified by the Israeli Military Order 418, which has practically excluded Palestinians from the planning process (for example, through the abolition of the Local and District Planning Committees). See Articles 14, 19, and 23 of the Jordanian Planning Law, which define the requirements.

© Oxfam International July 2012

This paper was written by Lara El-Jazairi, Fionna Smyth and Marwa El-Ansary. Oxfam acknowledges the assistance of Willow Heske, Lisa Monaghan, Eitan Reich, Rebecca Wynn, Shir Hever and Oxfam's Israeli and Palestinian partner organisations in its production. It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. E-mail policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk.

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78077-125-0 in July 2012. Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations networked together in 92 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty:

Oxfam America (www.oxfamamerica.org)
Oxfam Australia (www.oxfam.org.au)
Oxfam-in-Belgium (www.oxfamsol.be)
Oxfam Canada (www.oxfam.ca)
Oxfam France (www.oxfamfrance.org)
Oxfam Germany (www.oxfam.de)
Oxfam GB (www.oxfam.org.uk)
Oxfam Hong Kong (www.oxfam.org.hk)
Oxfam India (www.oxfamindia.org)
Intermon Oxfam (Spain) (www.intermonoxfam.org)
Oxfam Ireland (www.oxfamireland.org)
Oxfam Italy (www.oxfamitalia.org)
Oxfam Japan (www.oxfam.jp)
Oxfam Mexico (www.oxfammexico.org)
Oxfam NewZealand (www.oxfam.org.nz)
Oxfam Novib(Netherlands) (www.oxfamnovib.nl)
Oxfam Québec (www.oxfam.qc.ca)

Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org.

www.oxfam.org



OXFAM