

ARTICLE

SAVE EMAIL PRINT REPRINTS



Palestinians struggle to build in West Bank



Tom Perry
RAMALLAH
Wed Dec 9, 2009 10:52am EST

Factboxes

[Where does the Middle East peace process stand?](#)

Wed, Dec 9 2009

[Jewish settlers told freeze temporary but still resist](#)

Wed, Dec 9 2009

MOST POPULAR

MOST SHARED

1. [U.S. discovers \\$1 trillion Afghan mineral deposits: report](#)
12:13am EDT
2. [Common blood pressure drugs may raise cancer risk](#)
13 Jun 2010
3. [RPT-WRAPUP 2-Obama leadership on BP spill faces testing week](#)
4:02am EDT
4. [Japan ready for Cameroon and not-so-perfect Eto'o](#)
13 Jun 2010
5. [Kyrgyz ethnic clashes spread, Russia sends troops](#) | VIDEO
13 Jun 2010
6. [Jobs key to housing recovery](#)
12:02am EDT
7. [Obama leadership on BP spill faces testing week](#)

West Bank (Reuters) - In the occupied West Bank, a bedouin community whose school is made out of car tires and mud faces the same problem as a developer planning a whole new Palestinian town: building controls imposed by Israel.

WORLD

As Israel enforces a partial, temporary freeze on building in its West Bank settlements, Palestinians and their government are struggling to develop their communities in large areas of the territory that fall under full Israeli jurisdiction.

Under interim peace agreements with the Palestinians, Israel exercises civil and military control in

Login or register

Latest from My Topics

0 Saved Items

Israel occupied the west bank in a 1967 war.

8. [Germans rip Australia apart in opener](#)
13 Jun 2010
9. [Obama steps up push for added economic stimulus](#)
13 Jun 2010
10. [Microsoft christens motion-gaming "Kinect"](#)
4:33am EDT

The Jahalin bedouin are Area C residents who gave up seeking permission to build long ago but want their children to read. They erected the makeshift school with the help of an Italian NGO this year, their community representative said.

"Many of our students are illiterate due to the difficulty of getting to school," said Mohammed Qarashan, spokesman for a community that decades ago settled on land which he said they rent from two Palestinian villages.

"We never apply for any permissions because we know in advance none are given."

On the grounds that it was an unlicensed building, Israel issued a demolition order against the school, said Shlomo Lecker, an Israeli lawyer who represents the local bedouin.

He secured a court injunction against the order. But in the meantime, Israeli settlers living on a nearby hill had launched their own petition to demand it be knocked down, together with the shacks where the Jahalin live, he said.

Compounding the threats, the community sits on land Israel has set aside to widen a highway used by both Palestinians and Israelis. The Palestinians had been ready to relocate their camp but the Israeli authorities had not agreed to a permit that would allow them to reassemble it elsewhere, Lecker said.

"They demanded demolition without any guarantee that they could rebuild," he said.

Reuters made repeated requests for comment from the official body which oversees Israel's activities in the West Bank but at the time of publication it had not provided a response.

OFF-LIMITS

Under the interim agreements, Israeli control of Area C should have ended 18 months after it was established in 1995, said Hassan Asfour, a former Palestinian negotiator.

"Israel uses it to choke the Palestinian Authority and to restrict regional expansion and building. While allowing the settlers to build settlements and have natural growth, it chokes Palestinian natural growth and expansion," he said.

The arrangements which resulted from the 1993 Oslo Accords are a far cry from the independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which Palestinians hoped to have established by now.

Israel says that is the fault of Palestinians for not ending violence and threats against the Jewish state.

Sixteen years on from Oslo and one violent uprising later, the Palestinian Authority continues to exercise civil and internal security over islands of territory amounting to just 17 percent of the West Bank.

Palestinians do not need Israeli permission to build there. In the remaining 23 percent, or "Area B," the Palestinians have civil control while Israel is responsible for security.

Since the beginning of 2009, 180 Palestinian-owned structures have been demolished in Area C due to lack of building permits, says the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The last demolition was in July. The Israeli-controlled zone remains "to a large extent, off-limits for Palestinian use and development," the U.N. body said in a November report.

The government led by U.S.-backed Prime Minister Salam Fayyad feels the restrictions as much as ordinary Palestinians. Many of the large projects it is planning, including an airport and

industrial zones, are designated for Area C.

While Israel has eased movement restrictions across the West Bank, contributing to economic growth, it continues to block most Palestinian development projects in the area, said Public Works and Housing Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh.

"What we are doing is preparing the ground, hoping that this situation will change," he told Reuters.

Earlier this year, Tony Blair, envoy for the international Quartet of Middle East mediators, called for a new planning system in the area so the Palestinians could develop their land.

Seeking to combat the system, the Palestinian government is encouraging farming in the area, Shtayyeh said. "If Israel is stopping us from building an airport, it does not stop us from cultivating the land."

BUILDING ON THE HILLTOPS

In Israel's West Bank settlements, the 10-month construction moratorium announced in November allows settlers to press on with the building of some 3,000 homes already authorized.

Public buildings are exempt, as are West Bank settlements that fall within Israel's Jerusalem municipality, which extends deep into the territory. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said building will resume at the end of the 10-month period.

Nonetheless, settlers are protesting, and were rallying in Jerusalem on Wednesday to demonstrate their will to build on.

Palestinian developer Bashar Masri says Palestinians must try to limit future settlement expansion by building more themselves. He is about to start work on the construction of a new town called Rawabi in the hills outside Ramallah.

The \$300 million project is on terrain which falls under Palestinian jurisdiction. But the land upon which he needs to build an access road to the site does not. He says he has been awaiting Israeli approval for the road for two years.

"I want to see the road under Palestinian jurisdiction," said Masri, whose development will sit atop a group of hills across the valley from an Israeli settlement.

The town will initially be home to 25,000 but meet only a fraction of the growing Palestinian demand for housing. "The cities are already highly populated. That leaves very limited areas that you can really develop," he said.

"Area C is a huge problem."

(Editing by [Samia Nakhoul](#))

WORLD

After reading this article, people also read:



Fayyad irks Abbas allies with statehood speech

Mar 12, 2010

Ads by Google

[What's This?](#)

Why is Brazil Hot

What the Banks are not saying What the Banks are investing in
www.greenwood-management.com

Money Banking

Find Providers of Banking. Your Business Solution Business.com
www.business.com

Stock Charts

Free Stock & Market Charts with Advanced Charting Capabilities
www.signals.com

MORE FROM REUTERS



Obama leadership on BP spill faces testing week

WASHINGTON/LONDON (Reuters) - Barack Obama's leadership of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill faces key tests this week as the U.S. president gives his first national address on the disaster and meets top BP executives for the first time. | [Video](#)

[Jobs key to housing recovery](#)

[U.S. discovers \\$1 trillion Afghan mineral deposits: report](#)

[Israel sets up own inquiry into Gaza ship raid](#)

[Honda China strike could spur broader worker demands](#)

[China's AgBank seeks record \\$23 billion IPO](#)

[» More Top News](#)

[Stocks look to Europe and U.S. economy](#)

[Jobs key to housing recovery](#)

[China's AgBank seeks record \\$23 billion IPO](#)

[Spirit Airlines pilots strike grounds flights](#)

[BP unlikely to cancel dividend, but mulls several ideas: source](#)

BUSINESS

[Ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan kills 117 | VIDEO](#)

[Yemen says thwarts al Qaeda plot in oil province](#)

[Kazakh uranium drive sheds Soviet nuclear legacy](#)

[Both Koreas to address U.N. over ship sinking](#)

[China evictions slam door on elites, workers alike](#)

WORLD

REUTERS

© Copyright 2010 Thomson Reuters

Editorial Editions:

REUTERS

[Contact Us](#)

[Advertise With Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Journalism Handbook](#)

[Archive](#)

[Site Index](#)

[Video Index](#)

[Reader Feedback](#)

[Analyst Research](#)

[Mobile](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[RSS](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[Widgets](#)

[Your View](#)

[Labs](#)

THOMSON REUTERS

[Copyright](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Professional Products](#)

[Professional Products](#)

[Support](#)

[Financial Products](#)

[About Thomson Reuters](#)

[Careers](#)

ONLINE PRODUCTS

[Acquisitions Monthly](#)

[Buyouts](#)

[Venture Capital Journal](#)

[International Financing Review](#)

[Project Finance International](#)

[PEhub.com](#)

[PE Week](#)

[FindLaw](#)

Thomson Reuters is the world's largest international multimedia news agency, providing investing news, world news, business news, technology news, headline news, small business news, news alerts, personal finance, stock market, and mutual funds information available on Reuters.com, video, mobile, and interactive television platforms. Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an [Editorial Handbook](#) which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.

NYSE and AMEX quotes delayed by at least 20 minutes. Nasdaq delayed by at least 15 minutes. For a complete list of exchanges and delays, [please click here](#).