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Item 6: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination

THE APARTHEID WALL IN PALESTINE

Israel's presence and policies in the Occupied Territories are legally and morally unacceptable. Consequently, while the ordeal of the Palestinians have been tragic, its imprint on others with a sense of justice and knowledge of history was distressing, to say the least. With the construction of a wall, creating a *de facto* new border fraught with a host of further predicaments, the lives of the Palestinians have become even worse.

Especially after the provocative 'grandstand' of Ariel Sharon on the steps of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the eruption of another *Intifada* (29 September 2000), the Palestinians experienced one shock after another. The occupying power laid sieges to public buildings and residential quarters, carried out indiscriminate assaults from tanks, helicopters and military watchtowers on traumatized civilians and bystanders, killed or wounded them, targeted children, assassinated individuals, occasionally used poisonous gases, prevented medical teams to function effectively, carried out collective punishment, demolished edifices, shelled even academic institutions, damaged mosques and churches, devastated live stocks and agricultural complexes, raised industrial enterprises to ground, bulldozed water wells, destroyed crops, uprooted trees, pursued arrest campaigns, prolonged detentions with no charge or trial, applied torture under detention, transferred them illegally, set strict criteria for release of prisoners, helped the illegal extension of Jewish settlements, closed commercial stores, tightened curfews, denied the Palestinians access to their work places, and harassed, arrested, wounded and even killed local and foreign journalists who documented these crimes.

All these crimes have been documented as to names, places and dates. Even bee hives were destroyed. The Israeli occupation forces deliberately targeted several competitive industrial establishments. For instance, the Al-Bayan Company, producing iron-sheets, and the Abu-Ghalioon factory, turning out tiles, both serious rivals to Israeli manufacturers, were completely destroyed. The total losses upon the Palestinian industrial sector (until 30 June 2002) reached \$1.164 billion.

What were described above were bad enough. But perhaps worse, in a way, was the creation of a wall, described by various commentators as a "huge barrier, racist construction, separation barricade, a tool of settlement expansion or an *apartheid* partition". Although the present Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is known to have brought up the issue of the so-called "security fence", racial discrimination goes to a much earlier date and attitude, as expressed by the assassinated PM Yitzhak Rabin who said: "We are here, and they are there".

The separation barrier, snaking into the Palestinian-owned lands, is composed of thick cement walls, deep ditches, and high-voltage electric fences. Pushing the Green Line aside, the wall now introduces a 'new border'. It stretches from northeastern part of the West Bank to its southernmost region and to the east of the Green Line and swallows vast arable and fertile Palestinian lands, isolating residential areas, forcing the indigenous residents to take refuge once more, and creating several hazardous economic and social consequences.

The wall's length in the West Bank is 360 kilometers, and the width ranges between 80 and 100 meters. It penetrates some kilometers into Palestinian territory, for instance, ten kilometers into Salfit City. Some of the Palestinians houses are left between the separation wall and the illegal settlements. The wall has racist features because it is designed to separate two peoples, who had lived in peace some time in the distant past. Now, there are barbed wires to obstruct access.

A trench, 4 m. in width and 5 m. in depth, is dug behind the wires. A paved road, 12 m. wide, is to serve