

The Permit Regime in the “Seam Zone” – Timeline

In 2002 Israel starts building a separation wall. The wall is not erected on the Green Line border, as required under international law, but deep inside the occupied territory. Palestinian land is thus trapped within an area designated the “seam zone” – isolated on one side from the rest of the West Bank, and on the other from the State of Israel. With the building of the wall, the military starts imposing a draconian permit regime in the enclosed area, under which, inter alia, every Palestinian who lives inside the “seam zone” or seeks to enter it, is required to obtain a special permit in advance for the purpose. The permit regime is tantamount to apartheid as it applies to Palestinians only, while Israelis and tourists are exempt from obtaining any sort of permit if they want to enter the “seam zone” or remain there.

The implementation of the permit regime by the military saps the Palestinians’ ability to lead normal lives. The permit regime turns on its head the premise of international law, whereby a person must be allowed free movement inside his country, and effectively serves as a means of collective punishment of the entire population of the OPT. The violation of the right of freedom of movement leads to the violation of other human rights: The right to family life, health, education, property, livelihood, culture and social and community life, all attended by a flagrant violation of the right to equality and human dignity.

The breach of human rights caused by the permit regime has devastating consequences; in effect it is a slinking dispossession of West Bank lands under a mantle of bureaucracy instituted in military legislation and sanctioned by the Supreme Court of the State of Israel.

Separation Wall – Map

1990s | **During the 1990s, Israel devises several plans for erecting a physical barrier between the West bank and Israel**

The objective of the barrier is to increase supervision and control over Palestinians' entry into Israel. The plans never materialize.

[Haaretz news item, December 11, 1995](#)

[Haaretz news item, December 21, 1995](#)



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18.7.2001	<p>The Ministerial Committee on National Security, headed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, approves the “seam zone” plan</p> <p>The “seam zone” is defined on the map as an area located on both sides of the Green Line. The plan purports to prevent entry of Palestinians from the West Bank to Israel, and to “implement in the area a ‘regime’ that would enable effective action to prevent, obstruct, and undermine infiltration, prevent illegal presence in Israel, and protect the Israeli interest in the long term”.</p> <p>Official PMO press release in English, July 18, 2001 (different from original press release in Hebrew, from which the above quote is taken)</p>
14.4.2002	<p>Israel announces the immediate start of construction of the separation wall: the cabinet clarifies that “this plan and its implementation do not amount to a drawing of national boundaries”</p> <p>The Israeli security cabinet proclaims that, “in order to improve and reinforce the readiness and operational capabilities in coping with terrorism, and to frustrate, obstruct and prevent the penetration of terrorist activity from the areas of Judea and Samaria into Israel”, the military and the police will prevent the entry of Palestinians from the West Bank into Israel and Jerusalem – other than in humanitarian and exceptional cases.</p>
April-May 2002	<p>The first high court petitions are filed against the separation wall</p> <p>The petitioners – villagers whose lands were requisitioned for the construction of the separation wall by virtue of military orders – assert that the seizure conflicts with the decision of the Israeli Government, and was performed without prior notice to the owners and without the required permits. The seizure of lands contradicts the law in the area and the norms of international law, and constitutes an attempt to annex lands and establish permanent boundaries outside of negotiations.</p> <p>Petition HCY 3325/02 (Hebrew) Petition HCY 3771/02 (Hebrew)</p>
24.4.2002	<p>The military issues a land seizure order, requisitioning dozens of acres of farmland of Palestinian villages in the Ramallah area, “for military purposes and given the special security circumstances”</p> <p>Many such orders are issued in the following months, expropriating hundreds of acres of lands owned by Palestinians along the entire planned route of the wall.</p>
9.5.2002	<p>The High Court of Justice dismisses the first two petitions against the wall</p>

	<p>The justices endorse the state's position that the wall's route has been determined according to the need for topographic control, a security zone and minimal damage to cultivated lands – with no political motivation. The HCJ rules that “the decision of the respondents [Israel] does not contain a flaw justifying our intervention”.</p> <p>Judgment in HCJ 3325/02 (Hebrew) Judgment in HCJ 3771/02 (Hebrew)</p>
15.5.2002	The Ministry of Defense establishes the “Seam Area Administration”, in charge of constructing the wall
24.6.2002	<p>Prime Minister Ariel Sharon: [The wall] “does not express a border of any kind, political or otherwise. It is a means only”</p> <p>The Israeli government is presented with the security concept of the “seam zone”, the “Jerusalem envelope” (the area surrounding all East Jerusalem neighborhoods annexed by Israel in 1967), and the “eastern security zone” (along the Jordan River, partly inside Israel). The government approves “the construction of security fences and obstacles, with the objective of reducing infiltration by terrorists from the Judea and Samaria Area into Israel”.</p>
31.7.2002	<p>The State Comptroller’s report points to defects in the implementation of the seam area project</p> <p>The report focuses on aspects of the project relating to the security of Israeli citizens and the activities of the Israeli security forces. The State Comptroller completely ignores the wall’s severe impact on the lives of OPT residents.</p>
2002-2010	<p>HaMoked operates an emergency call center to provide real time assistance to callers; throughout its years of operation, most of the incoming complaints concern the separation wall</p> <p>The call center handles, inter alia, stalled issuance of permits, delays in the opening of separation-wall gates designated for the passage of farmers, delays at the checkpoints and gates, and soldiers’ refusal to allow transfer of livestock, equipment and merchandise. Complaints are handled immediately by way of phone calls to the relevant military entities, in order to achieve on-the-spot solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On August 14, 2006, a resident of the village of Barta’a arrives by car at the wall gate leading to his village, located in what has become the “seam zone”. The man holds a permit to pass through the gate with his car, but the soldiers do not allow him to drive on – his two month old baby is with him in the car, and the soldiers maintain he’s a “passenger without permit”, who may not use the vehicle pathway. HaMoked’s call center contacts the Civil Administration humanitarian desk to demand

the man be allowed to drive through with his son, but to no avail. After a two hour delay, the soldiers at the checkpoint notify the man he must hand his son to a fellow villager to pass him across through the pedestrian pathway, while he can take car through the vehicle pathway. And so the father and his two-month old son cross the wall separately. (E. 7131)

- On August 31, 2008, soldiers refuse to allow a Palestinian to cross the separation wall en route to Khirbet al-Ra'adiya – a small rural community tapped inside the “seam zone” following the construction of the separation wall – with his donkey which carries a load of eight sacks of flour. The soldiers claim that this is a commercial quantity requiring advance coordination and that only two sacks may be brought in at a time. Following the call center’s intervention, the soldiers allow the man to cross along with the donkey and all eight flour sacks. (E. 7712)
- On June 20, 2010, soldiers prevent a Palestinian physician from crossing the separation-wall gate on her way to the “seam zone”-trapped village of Khirbet Um a-Rihan, though she has a valid “seam zone” permit issued for medical personnel. The call center’s inquiry reveals that this ban is of the “unclosed circle” type, as it is called by the military, which means that the military has a record of the physician having crossed the wall into the closed zone, but no record of her going out. The military’s automatic conclusion in such cases is that the person in question has entered Israel without a permit. Following HaMoked’s intervention, the military calls the physician back to the gate and allows her to cross. The ban is removed from the military’s database. (E. 8248)

March
2003

B'Tselem: the separation wall will infringe on the human rights of over 210,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank

[B'Tselem's position paper](#) concludes that the separation wall – which Israel plans to build inside the West Bank – will turn dozens of Palestinian communities into enclaves, trapped between the wall and the Green Line, and will separate dozens of other villages from their farmlands west of the wall. B'Tselem claims the planned route has been devised with almost no consideration of human rights and based on extraneous considerations, among them, the desire to have as many settlements as possible on the west side of the wall, facilitating their possible annexation to Israel.

1.7.2003

A report by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East: the separation wall has adverse impact on the human rights situation in the OPT

The [UNWRA report](#) concludes that the separation wall has a harmful effect on Palestinians’ rights relating to lands, water access, health care, employment and education.

21.8.2003	<p>The UN Human Rights Committee: Israel should stop constructing the separation wall within the Occupied Territories</p> <p>The UN determines that the “seam zone” and the wall have all encompassing repercussions on the life of Palestinians, in particular, on their rights to freedom of movement and access to health care and water.</p>
1.10.2003	<p>Israel resolves to proceed with the construction of the separation wall</p> <p>The government proclaims “every effort will be made to reduce as much as possible disturbances to the daily life of Palestinians following the construction of the barrier”.</p>
2.10.2003	<p>The “permit regime” is established: the military issues an order declaring the “seam zone” a closed area, allowing unrestricted entry and presence therein of none but Israelis (citizens and residents), as well as any Jew</p> <p>Palestinians who live in the enclaves formed in the proclaimed “closed area”, must obtain “permanent resident” permits in order to continue living in their homes; Palestinians who seek to enter the “seam zone” – whether to visit their family, farm their lands or for any other purpose – must obtain a special permit from the military.</p>
2.10.2003	<p>The Military Commander of the West Bank issues the “General Permit to Enter and Remain in the Seam Area”</p> <p>This general permit applies to “three types of people” (<i>sic</i>): tourists, Palestinians with permits of employment in any settlements found inside the “seam zone”, and Palestinians with permits of entry into Israel.</p>
6.11.2003	<p>HaMoked to the High Court of Justice: the construction of the separation wall inside the occupied territory contravenes the principles of international law</p> <p>HaMoked’s petition challenges the declaration of the “seam area” as a closed military area, and asserts that the permit regime effectively institutes an apartheid and subjects West Bank Palestinians to blatant inhuman, immoral and illegal discrimination. The petition is founded on the provisions of international law relating to belligerent occupation, among them those of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Hague Convention and the Rome Statute.</p>
24.11.2003	<p>Report of the UN Secretary-General on the separation wall: the construction of the wall is in breach of international law; Israel must stop building the wall and dismantle the segments already erected inside the OPT</p> <p>See report</p>
28.12.2003	<p>The Association for Civil Rights in Israel petitions the High Court of Justice: instruct the military to keep the separation wall gates connecting</p>

the “seam zone” to the rest of the West Bank open 24 hours a day, seven days a week

[ACRI asserts](#) that the intermittent opening of the gates infringes on the basic rights of tens of thousands of Palestinians, making their lives intolerable.

In February 2004, in proceedings on the general petitions by HaMoked and ACRI against the permit regime, the [State Attorney’s Office notifies](#) the court that Palestinian farmers will be allowed free entry to the “seam zone” through “crossings opened 24 hours a day, seven days a week, provided they seek to enter the ‘seam zone’ or leave it, in order to cultivate their land”. These promises remain a dead letter.

2004 and onwards

HaMoked and others file over 150 individual petitions to the High Court of Justice against the separation wall

The petitioners request the court to instruct Israel to dismantle segments of the wall which violate the OPT residents' rights and expropriate dozens of acres of Palestinian farmlands in order to expand settlements, unrelated to any security needs.

21.1.2004

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel petitions the High Court of Justice: instruct the military to revoke the permit regime and military orders implemented in the “seam zone”

[ACRI asserts](#) that the military closure of the area infringes on Palestinians’ basic rights, particularly the rights to freedom of movement, dignified existence and family life.

30.6.2004

Just ten days before the International Court of Justice in the Hague publishes its advisory opinion on the wall: the High Court of Justice voids the separation wall route in the Beit Sourik area (“the Jerusalem envelope”)

The [HCJ rules](#) that under the test of proportionality – based on international humanitarian law and Israeli administrative law – the damage to the local residents exceeds the security benefit of erecting the wall. But, counter to the petitioners’ claim, the court holds that the wall is being built for security rather than political reasons.

Based on this ruling, interim orders are issued in some petitions, suspending continued construction of certain segments of the wall. Many [petitions are granted](#), where the court rules that the planned route disproportionately infringes on the Palestinian residents’ rights. Israel is thus compelled to dismantle some segments of the wall and devise alternative routes less injurious to the residents’ lives.

9.7.2004	<p>The International Court of Justice in the Hague: the construction of the wall in the OPT and the attendant permit regime contravene international law</p> <p>The ICJ rules that Israel must dismantle the entire wall and compensate Palestinians harmed by its construction; and that the UN General Assembly and Security Council should consider further action to put an end to this illegal situation.</p>
20.2.2005	<p>Israel resolves to proceed with the construction of the separation wall on the revised route</p> <p>The government resolves that the wall will be constructed “with diligence, to minimize to the utmost ability its impact on the daily life of Palestinians, following the criteria prescribed in the HCJ decisions”.</p> <p>However, 85% of the revised route trails inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line.</p>
30.6.2005	<p>Israel admits for the first time: the wall’s route was intended to expand the area of settlements</p> <p>In response to HaMoked's High Court petition against the separation wall segment near the villages of ‘Azzun and An Nabi Elyas, the state admits that the route was chosen according to the unapproved plan of expanding the settlement of Zufin. This contradicts the state's earlier contention – based on which the court rejected a previous petition on this issue – that only operational-security considerations were behind this route.</p> <p>The HCJ grants HaMoked's petition, orders the dismantling of a segment of the wall, and condemns the state’s conduct: “In the petition before us, a grave phenomenon has been exposed. In the first petition, the Supreme Court was not presented with the full picture [...] The petition before us points to an event that cannot be tolerated, whereby the information provided to the court did not reflect all of the considerations taken into account by the decision-makers”. The court orders the state to pay the petitioners’ expenses in the sum of ILS 50,000.</p>
15.9.2005	<p>The High Court of Justice grants a petition by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel challenging the legality of the separation wall route in the area of Qalqiliya (the Alfei Menashe enclave)</p> <p>The HCJ rules that the route disproportionately infringes on the rights of the Palestinian residents in the villages trapped inside the enclave, severed from the rest of the West Bank, and orders Israel to dismantle the wall in the area and plan a route which is less injurious to the Palestinian residents’ lives.</p> <p>However, the court further rules that, under international law, the military commander is authorized to erect the wall inside the occupied territory also for the purpose of protecting settlers.</p>

In the judgment, Court President Aharon Barak maintains that the decisions of the HCJ and the International Court of Justice are based on a shared normative foundation, and that the difference in conclusions stems from the different factual basis presented to each court.

For a [critical commentary](#) on this judgment

6.4.2006 **HaMoked's amended petition to the High Court of Justice: the permit regime implemented in the "seam zone" constitutes a legal apartheid**

HaMoked amends its petition of November 6, 2003, following the HCJ's September 2005 ruling that the military commander is authorized to erect the wall inside the occupied territory in order to protect settlers. [HaMoked argues](#) that the permit regime creates a distinction between two kinds of people:

Israelis and tourists – who are free to travel in and out of the "seam zone"; and local Palestinians – for whom the area is closed, unless they obtain one of the special "seam zone" permits in order to enter, exit, work or sleep there.

HaMoked asserts that the permit regime contravenes both international humanitarian law and human rights law, and its implementation may be considered a war crime.

4.9.2007 **The High Court of Justice invalidates the wall route west of Bil'in. Court President Beinisch: "This route cannot be explained except by the desire to contain the eastern part of [the settlement of] 'East Mattityahu' on the west side of the fence"**

[President Beinisch adds](#): "the current route of the fence also raises questions as to the security advantage it provides. It is undisputed that the route passes mostly through topographically inferior terrain [...]. It endangers the forces patrolling the route".

July 2009 **In the framework of HaMoked's petition against the permit regime, the military publishes a set of standing orders relating to the "seam zone", which establishes detailed rules for entry, presence or residence therein**

The [Standing Orders](#) – dozens of pages long, containing numerous rules, regulations, forms, tables, and flow-charts – appear in Hebrew only; they defines no less than nine types of "Seam zone" permits, with a separate procedure for each. Thus, for example, they provide that, prior to issuing a "certificate of permanent resident of the seam zone", military officials must review the situation on the ground, visit the resident's home and examine tax-payment documents, the children's school reports, and "existing maps available at the DCO [District Coordination Office]". This procedure establishes other rules on the filing and handling of applications, the documents which must be provided with each application, the composition of the application-review

committee, and the handling of permit-extension applications – given that this permit is issued for a two year period only.

Another type of permit listed in the Standing Orders is the “agriculture permit”. This permit is not issued to anyone cultivating farmland trapped inside the “seam zone”, but only to owners or heirs of such lands who have documented proof of the fact. Under the Standing Orders, family members who wish to cultivate the land are “employees in the seam zone”; and the acknowledged farmer may obtain permits for them strictly based on the Standing Orders chart, which stipulates the number of workdays needed for each type of crop. According to this military chart, the cultivation of deciduous fruit trees requires just 20 workdays per year, all between December and August, and none the rest of the year. Whereas for vineyards, 17 annual workdays are allowed per dunum, to be used during the agricultural season stretching from April to September, as well as February, the month of pruning. Farmers cannot access their plots the rest of the year. Agricultural seasons and workday quotas are established for all other crops, olives, citrus fruits, dryland farming, open-field vegetable crops and hothouse cucumbers and tomatoes.

Rules, procedures and complex flowcharts exist also for the other categories of “seam zone” permits: permits for “new residents in the seam zone”, for merchants and traders, visitor permits (on humanitarian grounds such as a funeral or a wedding), permits for pupils attending schools outside the “seam zone”, permits for medical personnel and so on.

It is worth recalling that the “seam zone” is a part of the West Bank, which Israel surrounded with a wall, and that any Palestinian who lives or seeks to enter there must endure needless bureaucratic obstacles placed by Israel, in order to obtain the necessary permit. This is the true essence of the Standing Orders.

5.10.2009 **The High Court of Justice criticizes the state for willfully not dismantling part of the wall, as ordered by the court in HaMoked's petition**

Israel begins dismantling the wall around the villages of 'Azzun and An Nabi Elyas more than three years after the HCJ issued its judgement – and only following HaMoked's contempt of court motion on the issue. The [justices rule](#) that “this sort of conduct cannot be accepted. The judgments of this court are not recommendations and the state must respect them and implement them with due speed and efficiency”. The court instructs the state to pay the petitioners’ expenses to the sum of ILS 20,000.

March 2010 and onwards **HaMoked files petitions to the High Court of Justice to allow Palestinian farmers to enter the “seam zone” to cultivate their lands**

Following the construction of the separation wall, thousands of Palestinian farmers have ended up with their homes and farmlands on separate sides of the wall. Many who apply for “seam zone” entry permits to cultivate their lands trapped beyond the wall, are refused or given no answer. In its petitions,

	<p>HaMoked asserts that Israel unreasonably and disproportionately infringes on the farmers' rights to freedom of movement, freedom of property and freedom of occupation.</p>
5.9.2010	<p>Following HaMoked's petition, the military ceases to systematically detain a Palestinian youth while he crosses the separation wall which cuts off his home from the rest of the West Bank</p> <p>The youth has been detained at the checkpoint for a considerable amount of time almost daily. The petition stresses the violation of the petitioner's rights to freedom of movement and a livelihood. HaMoked asserts it is illegal for the military to regularly detain a person who seeks to go from one place to another inside the occupied territory.</p>
September 2010	<p>The military publishes a second version of the “seam zone” Standing Orders</p> <p>There are no substantive changes in revised Standing Orders implemented in the “seam zone”.</p>
6.10.2010	<p>Following HaMoked's High Court petition, the military issues a permit of “new resident in ‘seam zone’” to the husband of a Palestinian living inside the “seam zone”</p> <p>HaMoked asserted that in preventing the couple from living together under the same roof, their basic right to family life and the husband's freedom of movement were being drastically injured. HaMoked stressed its outright opposition to the permit regime, and added that had the military followed its own orders, the permit in this case would have been issued long ago, and the severe violation of the couple's rights would have been avoided.</p>
5.4.2011	<p>The High Court of Justice upholds the “permit regime” and rejects the general petitions: the closure of the “seam zone” and the implementation of the permit regime meet the tests of legality</p> <p>The petitions are rejected, though the court determines that “the application of the permit regime, with the requirement to receive permits in order to enter and exit the zone, constitutes a clear restriction on the freedom of movement of the Area's residents in this zone, and restricts the residents’ ability to access their homes, lands, and businesses located inside the seam zone”. Moreover, the court rules that the military must relax the regulations on relocation or visits to the “seam zone”. The court also instructs the state to set a clear and efficient timetable for processing permits, to ensure continuation of reasonable daily life.</p> <p>For a critical commentary on this judgement</p> <p>The petitioning organizations, HaMoked and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, criticize the judgment in a press release: “The HCJ chose today to</p>

	<p>endorse a systematic policy of discrimination that is done in the name of security but in fact seeks to force Palestinians out of their own lands”.</p>
20.7.2011	<p>The High Court of Justice condemns the state’s practice in issuing “seam zone” entry permits: in most cases, the military withdraws its refusal as soon as a petition is filed, issuing the requested permit before a hearing is held</p> <p>In granting the motion to cancel the hearing – filed following the state’s announcement the day before the hearing that permits would be issued to the petitioners, a married couple seeking to cultivate their lands inside the “seam zone” – Justice Rubinstein notes: “it is highly regrettable that a matter which could have been settled without a petition and a waste of secretarial and judicial time and all entailed – is settled at the last minute before the hearing. I request to put this comment before the relevant officials, insofar as they mind, and I hope they do”.</p> <p>While Justice Rubinstein emphasizes the drain on court resources, it is clear that the military’s problematic conduct primarily harms all the petitioners who are entitled to access their lands but are kept waiting for long periods of time until they receive a permit to do so; as well all the others who do not have the knowledge, time, stamina and means to fight the draconian permit regime by filing a court petition.</p>
November 2011	<p>Following the High Court of Justice’s recommendations in the general petitions, the military publishes the third version of the Standing Orders</p> <p>The main changes in the third version concern the setting of timetables in the procedure for filing “seam zone” entry applications and the procedure for filing rejection appeals. In reality, the timetables remain largely the same, at least with regards to the issuing of permits to Palestinians who seek to cross the wall as part of their routine lives, without being “permanent residents of the seam zone”.</p>
December 2011	<p>A UN report concludes, inter alia, that the yield of olive trees in the “seam zone” areas has declined by some 60% in recent years, compared to the olive yield on the other side of the wall, where farmers can access their plots in all seasons</p> <p>The report</p>
5.12.2011	<p>Following HaMoked’s High Court petition: the military allows a school principal to enter the “seam zone” in order to give private lessons to high school students</p> <p>HaMoked asserts that preventing the man’s entry to the “seam zone” harms his rights to occupational choice and freedom of movement, as well as the right of his pupils living there to education. HaMoked also notes that this case clearly</p>

	demonstrates the grave and disproportionate infringement of OPT residents' rights caused by the permit regime.
10.7.2012	<p>In the framework of HaMoked's petition, Israel undertakes to publish a new version of the "seam zone" Standing Orders by September 1, 2012</p> <p>According to the undertaking – recorded in the judgement of the High Court of Justice – the revised Standing Orders will establish, inter alia, directives and procedures concerning Palestinians who lease farmland inside the "seam zone".</p>
March 2013	<p>HaMoked's "The Permit Regime" report: the decline in the number of issued permits and the heavy bureaucratic burden imposed by the military severely harm the rights of Palestinians in the "seam zone"; the permit regime cannot be justified on "security reasons", and the violation of rights is its inevitable outcome</p> <p>The report shows that Israel's policy has clear and immediate dire consequences: the economic, familial, social and cultural isolation of Palestinians living in the "seam zone" resulting from their physical separation from the rest of the West Bank; and the dwindling of agricultural practices inside the "seam zone", including a sharp reduction in the scope of cultivated farmland there, which severely impacts some 150 rural communities and villages located east of the wall, with farmlands trapped west of it.</p>
2.4.2013	<p>HaMoked files the hundredth petition in a series of petitions to the High Court of Justice concerning farmers whose homes and lands are separated by the separation wall; petitioners have received permits in about 90% of the concluded petitions</p> <p>The petition</p>
6.6.2013	<p>The High Court of Justice to the state: a favorable policy should be adopted with regards to the issuance of "seam zone" entry permits, such that "the rule is to give and the exception is not to give"</p> <p>Thus says Justice Joubran during a hearing on three petitions by HaMoked concerning Palestinian holders of "seam zone" entry permits for the purpose of land cultivation, whose requests to renew their expired permits have been refused or left unanswered. Commenting on the fact that a short time before the hearing the military consented to give permits to two of the petitioners, Justice Joubran notes that is unclear why the respondents "harass" the petitioners who only wish to farm their lands in order to make a living – "not to play or visit" there – and thus force them to petition the court. Justice Hendel adds that when the military knows it intends to issue a permit, it must speed up the process to lessen the difficulties.</p>

	<p>Following the court's criticism, the military agrees to issue permits to all three petitioners, without unchanging its general policy on issuing "seam zone" permits.</p>
17.10.2013	<p>The High Court of Justice criticizes the military's sluggish manner of handling applications to renew "seam zone" entry permits</p> <p>In its judgment, the court emphasizes the special need to ensure that applications to renew agricultural entry permits are answered within two weeks of the application date, given that the military requires that such applications be filed in the last three weeks before the current permit expires; "such care is especially needed with regards to the six-month permit", given its short duration. The court also rules that a procedure must be formulated to allow applicants to keep track of the progress in handling their application and to ascertain their application has reached the competent entities.</p> <p>The criticism goes unheeded; the military does not act upon the justices' recommendations, and Palestinians are routinely kept waiting without the permit they need to cultivate their plots.</p>
January 2014	<p>Some 18 months past the deadline undertaken before High Court of Justice: the military publishes the fourth version of the Standing Orders</p> <p>Despite to assurances, the new Standing Orders make no reference to people who lease, rather than own agricultural land inside the "seam zone". Moreover, the new Standing Orders establish even tighter timetables than before for filing applications for a "seam zone" entry permit and providing responses to such.</p> <p>For more information</p>
21.1.2016	<p>Less than a year after instructing the state to reconsider revising the separation wall route in the Beit Jala area: the High Court of Justice approves resuming the construction of the wall in the area according to the original plan, except for some 225 meters to be left temporarily unbuilt</p> <p>In April 2015, the HCJ accepts a petition by Beit Jala residents and suspended further construction of a wall segment on the town's lands, close to two monasteries: "we have not been convinced that the fence cannot be built on a route that would allow achieving the underlying security objective, but would be less injurious to the rights of the monasteries and the protected residents". The justices instruct the state to devise an alternative route that would not cut off the territorial continuity between the monasteries themselves and between them and the local communities. The court opts not to rule on the damage to the Palestinian residents' agricultural lands and the restricted freedom to access them.</p> <p>Four weeks later, the state announces it intends to continue building this stretch of the wall according to the original route, except for a 225-meter-long opening to be left temporary on the western extremity of the segment, where the</p>

monasteries lie. The Beit Jala Municipality and the monasteries petition the HCJ again, arguing, inter alia, that the state is creating facts on the ground and binding the scope of discretion as to alternatives that might prevent turning 3,000 dunum of the residents' agricultural lands into an enclave beyond the wall. The [HCJ rejects](#) the petitions on the grounds that "there is no room to delay the construction until a full solution is formulated for the entire relevant segment". However, the court rules that insofar as the state decides in future to close the western opening, the petitioners could bring the entire local route for judicial review.

In late November 2016, six landowners, whose plots are about to be cut off from Beit Jala by the wall, file a lawsuit in Chile against the three HCJ justices who rejected the petitions. The claimants charge that approving this segment of the route constitutes a crime against humanity under Article 7 of the [Rome Statute](#). On December 2, 2016, the Chilean court rejects the lawsuit on the grounds that Israel has not ratified the Rome Statute; that this is a matter of damage to property rather than the uprooting of a protected population; and that there is no permanent hostilities in the area and therefore international humanitarian law does not apply there.

[Haaretz news item, December 3, 2016](#)

15.8.2016 **HaMoked to the Head of the Civil Administration: the military must stop its wrongful and disdainful practice of giving just last-minute summons to farmers and landowners who are to appear before "seam zone" appellate committees**

In [its letter](#), HaMoked protests against the military's disrespectful treatment of Palestinians who apply to the appellate committee after their permit application to access their lands inside the "seam zone" has been rejected. Despite the four-week period the military has for summoning the appellants to the committee, summons are routinely given just 48 hours before the committee hearing. HaMoked stresses that this is a disrespectful practice, which ignores the fact that appearance before the committee requires advance preparation and the loss of an entire workday; moreover, this is a recurring phenomenon in handling Palestinians' applications in other areas as well.

4.1.2017 **Ahead of the publication of the fifth version of the "seam zone" Standing Orders: HaMoked calls on the military to uphold its undertakings towards the Palestinians residents**

In [a letter](#) to the Head of the Civil Administration, HaMoked points to the severe flaws in the Standing Orders and their interpretation by the military. The Standing Orders should be revised, inter alia, on the following policy points: the issuance of permits to immediate relatives of owners of plots inside the "seam zone" – irrespective of the cultivated plot's size; cancelling the demand that landowners and business owners appear before the appellate committee rather than the farmers or laborers seeking a "seam zone" entry permit;

establishing a permit for livestock grazing; cancelling the restriction on the entry of minors who accompany “seam zone” permit holders.

HaMoked also notes that despite repeated guarantees to make the Standing Orders accessible to the Palestinian population, the military has not yet translated them to Arabic. At the same time, the military keeps rejecting applications on the grounds that the applicants failed to comply with the Standing Orders’ directives – which they cannot read or understand.

9.3.2017 **The military publishes the fifth version of the “seam zone” Standing Orders**

For the [new Standing Orders](#) (in Hebrew)

Currently **Following dozens of individual petitions against the route of the separation wall, certain segments of it have been dismantled and reconstructed closer to the Green Line. However, the separation wall – constructed mostly inside the West Bank on lands expropriated from Palestinians – continues to violate the basic rights of West Bank residents. Israel continues to implement a draconian permit regime in the “seam zone”, and betrays its obligation under international law to ensure the OPT residents are able to lead normal lives.**