



LIVE FROM *Palestine*

TESTIMONIES FROM
THE NONVIOLENT
RESISTANCE

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA SUPPORT GROUP
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The Apartheid Wall

By Brooke Atherton

A boy in Qalqilia watches as an Israeli crane builds the wall which will completely surround his city, turning it into an "enclave" or prison.

Photo: Maherah Silmi

On April 15, 2002 Ariel Sharon announced that he will "isolate" Palestinians from Israelis by erecting "walls and buffer zones" in a plan of "unilateral separation." In June of 2002, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) began confiscating Palestinian farmland and uprooting thousands of olive and other fruit trees to make way for the Apartheid Wall. Along some sections of the wall, the IOF has built a 25-foot-tall concrete wall lined with sniper towers and buffer zones of 90-300 feet for electric fences, trenches, cameras, sensors, and security patrols. In other areas the Israel is building a massive, electrified fence with deep trenches and additional barbed wired fencing on either side of it.

The first phase of the Apartheid Wall has been completed this summer, stretching 85 miles from the Qalqilia region north past Jenin at the cost of \$250 million. Another 150 miles of the wall is slated for completion by the end of the year stretching south from Qalqilia

The Israeli government is not building the Apartheid Wall along the "green line" which demarcates the border between what is now Israel and the West Bank. Rather, the Apartheid Wall snakes throughout the West Bank, cutting deeply into Occupied Palestinian territory in



order to confiscate key land and water resources and to bring illegal Israeli settlements into the Israeli side of the wall. Israel will confiscate 10% of the West Bank just with the construction of the western portion of the

As Qalqilia Mayor Maarouf Zahran explains, "They don't want the Palestinians to have sovereignty over the land. They break us up into isolated pieces. This is political—they do not want a Palestinian state joined."

through Jerusalem and Bethlehem and southwest to the Hebron area. According to plans released by Sharon in March 2003, the Apartheid Wall will eventually enclose all Palestinian population centers in the West Bank into isolated ghettos by extending the barrier along the Jordan Valley in the eastern West Bank. The cost of the wall is over \$1 billion with a total length that could exceed 450 miles.

Apartheid Wall from the southwest to the northwest of the West Bank, and will confiscate much more Palestinian land with the construction of the eastern portion of the wall. As Qalqilia Mayor Maarouf Zahran explains, "They don't want the Palestinians to have sovereignty over the land. They break us up into isolated

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Not for Security

By Lisa Nessan

We walked down from the village at 6 AM to arrive at one of the two gates in the so-called “barrier” of razor wire, trenches, patrol roads, fencing, trace paths, and motion detection system that surround Jayyous and separate it from its 8,600 dunam (2,150 acres) of agricultural land. Farmers begin arriving every morning at the north gate at 6:30 AM on donkeys, with carts, in tractors, on foot, in trucks and cars; one farmer even rides his bicycle. These are



Farmland flattened to dust in the wake of the Caterpillar bulldozer.

Photo: Lisa Nessan

farmers who go out to their lands daily, alone or with family members. They are going to harvest their crops: eggplant, lemons, guava, mango, okra, tomatoes, figs, cucumbers— even coconuts. Some come with baby seedlings to plant: cabbage, tomatoes, cauliflower, cucumbers, hot peppers, and bell

peppers. Others go to water their trees or to weed around their olive trees to prepare for the upcoming harvest. Every day they wait in the mornings and the evenings for one hour, two hours, three hours, and sometimes even four hours, for the soldiers to open the gate for 5 min., 15 min., 45 min., to allow them to enter their land on the other side of the fence.

The agricultural lands of the Qalqilia district are considered the food basket of Palestine. The gates along the fence have mostly been closed (some

have never been opened). Thousands of farmers have been prevented from reaching their lands since the first phase of the apartheid wall has nearly reached completion. In Jayyous, the opening and closing of the gates have been unpredictable and arbitrary, like most occupation “policies.” Farmers from the villages around Jayyous can travel up to 12 km to get to the gate in Jayyous only to find it closed. After a day’s work in their lands, farmers are held up at the gate with their crops in their trucks, in the sun . . . waiting. From closely watching the Israeli soldiers who have been opening and closing the gates each morning and evening over the past few weeks, it is clear that the “security” fence is not for security at all. The gate (and the apartheid wall in its entirety) has become yet another way to make life difficult, and yet another way to exert Israeli control over the Palestinian people.

We sit at the gate in the morning and evening to ensure that it is opened, and we stay until we hear through the farmers that everybody who wants to go to their fields has gone through. The farmers feel supported by our presence, although we sometimes feel we are not able to do enough. Many of the farmers and people in the village insist that we are the only reason the gate is opened at all. Today at the gate the farmers were notified that starting tomorrow, only donkeys and tractors and farmers on foot may enter the land through the gate; no private cars or trucks. The farmers tell us, “This is the step before the last. Soon we will not be able to go at all.” When we ask the soldiers, “How are the farmers going to bring back their harvest? Why is it OK to enter the land on a donkey, and not in a car?” One soldier replied, “Maybe terrorists do not ride donkeys.”

Israel says it “recognizes the necessity of finding the appropriate balance between the imperative need to respond to terrorism and the humanitarian interests of the local residents. . . Special arrangements have been made for Palestinian farmers separated from their lands.” Please do not believe these lies. One gate every 2-10 km, opened once in the morning and once in the evening for 10 minutes to 1 hour, whenever the soldier with the key feels like opening it. No cars or trucks allowed to enter. These must be the “special arrangements.” The gates continue the ever-present inhumanity of the Israeli occupation. This “fence” is a permanent closure of Palestine. ■

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Jubarra Students Defend Their Right to Education

By Cathy Mahoney and The International Women's Peace Service (IWPS)

Every day the children of Jubarra must wait for the soldiers to open the gate in the Apartheid Wall, then walk in a line past soldiers armed with machine guns, to go to school. September 1 is the first day of the new school year in Palestine. Like students all around the world, Palestinian children are excited about their first day back at school. They wake up early and put on their uniforms and backpacks with their new notebooks and pencils. But in the tiny hamlet of Jubarra, the teachers and children never know if they will be able to reach their school or not. It all depends on the soldiers who control the gate.

Jubarra is a hamlet of 300 people, too small to be considered a village. It has no school and relies on neighboring villages and the city of Tulkarem for food, schools, and healthcare. Since the completion of the Apartheid Wall around Jubarra, the entire village is trapped between the Wall and the Green Line (the 1967 border with Israel). There is only one road which passes through of Jubarra. The southern entrance to is blocked by a heavy steel gate in the Wall, which has been permanently closed since it's completion this summer. The northern end of the road which links Jubarra to Tulkarem is controlled by a military checkpoint.

The village leadership contacted the Israeli District Command Office (DCO) to arrange for the gate to be opened, but were not given a conclusive answer. The villagers decided to make a demonstration at the gate on the first day of school to demand that the soldiers open the gate for the students every morning and afternoon. They asked for international observers and media to be present for the demonstration.

We arrived at the gate at 7:00 AM.. About 50 students and teachers from Jubarra were already gathered at the top of the hill above the gate, ready to go to school. Several army jeeps and a dozen green-uniformed Israeli soldiers with machine guns were stationed in front of the gate. Soon, a small group of television and newspaper journalists arrived and joined the students and villagers at the gate. The students, teachers, and headmaster marched forward to the gate. The headmaster approached the soldiers and asked them to open the gate to allow the children to go to school, but the soldiers refused. We approached the soldiers and asked when the children would be allowed through. "We don't know," they told us. They had orders

not to let anyone through.

We asked, wasn't the gate supposed to be opened for the children? And they replied, yes, it would be opened every day. "Then why don't you open the gate now?" we asked. "Today is a special day." We asked why again, but the soldier just walked away.

Finally, about 7:45 a.m., the soldiers opened the gate just wide enough for the children to walk through in a single line past the soldiers with their machine guns. First the young boys, then the young girls, finally the older students and teachers, followed by the TV crews and journalists. The children gathered in a circle around the journalists, eager to tell their story on television.

A few minutes later, the soldiers shouted at the journalists to come back inside the gate. We listened to the clanging sound of the metal gate being slammed shut and watched the soldier lock the heavy chain around the gate. Then the soldier slowly stretched the coils of razor wire in front of the gate, once again imprisoning the people of Jubarra in their village. As we stood looking at the closed metal gate with its electric sensors and coils of razor wire, army jeeps drove along the new security road at frequent intervals. We wondered, will the army keep its promise to open the gate again to allow the children to return home? What will happen tomorrow and all the other days when no international observers and media are present. ■



Palestinian students approach a gate in the Apartheid Wall, walking single-file between an Israeli Army Jeep, an Israeli Police vehicle and armed soldiers in order to go to school.

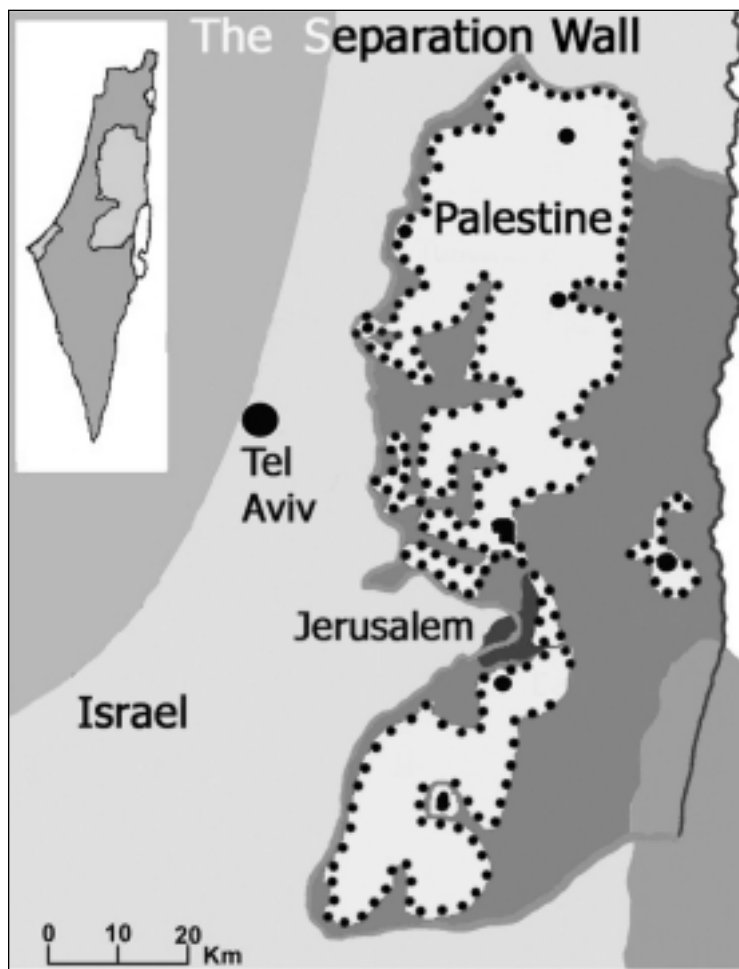
Photo: IWPS www.womenspeacepalestine.org

Warning sign: "Mortal Danger—Military Zone Any Person Who Passes or Damages the Fence Endangers His Life"

Photo: IWPS www.womenspeacepalestine.org



The Apartheid Wall Campaign



The dotted line indicates the path of the Wall—both it's already completed and yet to be finished sections. It will confiscate a huge portion of fertile land and water resources.

Map Source: Yediot Aharanot;
Published by www.gush-shalom.org

The district of Qalqilia is comprised of approximately 32 villages and 80,000 citizens. In this same area, there are 19 illegal Israeli colonies with an estimated population of 50,700. The city of Qalqilia has approximately 50,000 citizens. Prior to the beginning of the 2nd Intifada, 22% of the city's economy was based on agricultural production, today that figure is 45% because people who can no longer hold jobs outside the city are forced to return to the land.

The Separation Wall will completely surround the city of Qalqilia, separating farmers from their land. One third of the agricultural land of Qalqilia will be or is being confiscated by the state of Israel. 50% of the agricultural land of Qalqilia district belongs to villages that will be completely encircled by Israeli settlements. One third of the city's water supply will be confiscated in an area that was once considered the breadbasket of the West Bank.

This economic strangulation and physical imprisonment threatens the very existence of Qalqilia. The creation of this wall represents the largest land grab since the War of 1967. It will completely isolate Palestinian cities from each other, imprison their inhabitants, and decimate local economies.

—Andrea Prichett—Qalqilia, July 6, 2003

I cannot believe this Wall is for the security of the illegal settlements, which are all high up on the hilltops surrounding the fertile land of Qalqilia. Two days ago while doing Checkpoint Watch, there was no barbed wire around the main check point gate into town. Yesterday there was the first 3-6' of rolled barbed wire fence and the first concrete blocks that will be built into the 25' wall that meets the gate. People inside will not be able to see outside the city throughout much of the town, unless they are in a three-story home.

Today there is even more barbed wire and about 4-6 huge pieces of machinery at work tearing up the earth and placing the wall in place. I am in shock really, watching it. I cannot believe humans are capable of doing such a thing and hope that one day the world can name these war crimes for what they are.

—Terry Kekaha—Qalqilia, July 13, 2003

This morning we headed back to Barta'a, with the idea of doing checkpoint watch. The Barta'a checkpoint is where the Israeli soldier shot and killed the little boy Mahmoud the other day, and injured his sister, Hanan. Later we visited the family of the little boy who was killed. This was a sad and intense visit, as you may imagine. The parents are grief-stricken and their other children are traumatized. They witnessed their brother's head blown open and saw his brains come out.

I wouldn't be so graphic in describing this, except I can't get the image out of my mind of his siblings going to each other and with their finger drawing a circle on each other's head to indicate where Mahmoud's head was blown open. I'll never forget this. Little Mahmoud had a twin sister who holds out a shekel to anyone who comes near, showing the shekel that's "for me and Mahmoud!" She misses him, and every day asks where he is.

—Arla Ertz—Barta'a, July 29, 2003

Over 50 Internationals, 30 Israelis and approximately 300 Palestinians from the village of Anin marched up to the Apartheid Wall in a peaceful and nonviolent protest of the barrier that has cut the villagers off from over 12,000 dunams of their farmlands and uprooted over 5,000 of their olive trees.

The Israeli Army immediately attacked with sound bombs, tear gas and rubber bullets. Five Internationals were wounded. Nonetheless, with bolt-cutters and their bare hands they succeeded in opening up the gate in the fence, symbolically reclaiming the land for its owners. The gate is an illusion put forth by Israel that the farmers have access to the land, when in fact they do not. It is permanently locked and has bundles of razor wire pushed up against it.

—Wendy Kaufmyn—Anin, July 28, 2003

We went to the wall and stood helplessly by as 5 backhoes, two enormous dump trucks and so many other heavy vehicles tore into the ancient lands to make way for this wall of shame. The wall is growing at an incredible rate. The sheer industry of it . . . the workers, the dust, the intensity and the pace of the construction all indicate the machinations of a madman . . . an illness . . . a panic and a crime that will be deep and lasting.

—Andrea Prichett—Qalqilia, July 13, 2003, Checkpoint Watch

More on Yanoun from what I learned while in this amazing and peaceful village. There are approx 94 people (18 families). I wish you



could all see how beautiful this land is. And how warm the people are... The village runs on generator only and it is turned on from 7:30 PM to 11:30 PM daily—that's it. There is one small store that sells sunflower seeds, rice, candies, canned hum-

mus, tomatoes and not much else.

The trouble is that the village is surrounded by a settlement called Itamar. This settlement is home to a number of ideological settlers — armed settlers with a history of violence. Earlier this year, they burned the generator. The UN actually came in and gave them a new one, but it is under constant threat by the settlers. Yesterday there appeared to be another attempt to attack it. While sitting with the villagers, drinking tea, F-16's were flying overhead . . . ridiculously loud and intrusive . . . not to mention unnecessary.

—Tracie di Angelis, Yanoun, August 4, 2003

Today we went to take food to a Bedouin family who have been cut off from the village by the Apartheid Wall. There were about 20 Palestinians and 20 Internationals. The family has no access to food or ability to visit any of their loved ones. The people from the village bring them food every week.

We got to the "fence" which is actually a HUGE mass of razor wire, a ditch and then an electrified fence topped with barbed wire. Two of the local Palestinians climbed over the razor wire. One then climbed to the other side of the HUGE ditch. One man began to throw the bags of food to the other man . . . large bags of groceries, bottled water, etc. The man then threw them to a woman on the other side (over the electrified fence and under the barbed wire) where she then loaded all of the bags onto a donkey.

Everyone present clapped at their success. While this was going on, a bulldozer continued to work and you could hear the awful sound the whole time we were there.

—Michelle Hudson, Jayyous, August 28, 2003 ■



More than 50 Internationals, 30 Israelis and approximately 300 Palestinians from the village of Anin marched up to the Apartheid Wall in a peaceful and non-violent protest.

Photo: Wendy Kaufmyn

A section of the Wall which encircles Qalqilia. There is a sniper tower every 1,000 meters.

Photo: Terry Kekaha

The Apartheid Wall

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pieces. This is political - they do not want a Palestinian state joined.”

Although gates and checkpoints are being built into some sections of the wall, supposedly to allow Palestinians to cross, the wall stands to entrench the current Israeli Occupation policy of denying Palestinians the freedom of movement. Farmers who try to use the gates in the northern West Bank can never be sure whether the gates will be locked and closed. If the gates are open, the farmers know they may be prevented from crossing, shot at, beaten, or harassed by Israeli soldiers or the hired private

“security” officers who police the wall. “They are doing the same thing they did in 1948. They are making it so hard to farm and sell our produce that we will be forced from the land,” exclaimed one Qalqilia farmer.

The Israeli government claims the Apartheid Wall is for security purposes in response to the current Intifada, but plans for the wall began over three years ago. In addition, through-

out this Intifada, the Israeli government has learned that violating Palestinians’ human rights increases the likelihood of Palestinian retaliation and decreases the security of Israeli citizens. The path of the wall, which does not recognize existing borders between what is now Israel and the West Bank and extends between Palestinian territory and Jordan, makes the Israeli government’s motives clear. The wall is a political strategy to confiscate more Palestinian land and water resources, ethnically cleanse the remaining Palestinian territories, and prevent any possibility of a sovereign Palestinian State in the West Bank.

RESISTING THE APARTHEID WALL

In recent weeks, the U.S. administration has criticized the contradiction between Israel’s Apartheid Wall and the promise for a sovereign Palestinian State by 2005 included in their “Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East.” However, as Israel’s best political and financial supporter, the US is unlikely to take any meaningful action against Israel’s occupation policies and the Apartheid Wall. Israel’s Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom stated August 10th that, “The fence will continue to be built. Of course we want to

do everything we can in coordination with the Americans, but friends can also disagree.”

Only the determination and creative resistance of Palestinians and their supporters around the world can stop the Israeli colonization of Palestinian land. Palestinians across the West Bank are directly resisting Israel’s policy of further colonization, ethnic cleansing, and denial of Palestinian sovereignty. From July 28 to August 5, Palestinians and international activists with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) organized a week of coordinated direct action against the Apartheid Wall to compliment the local actions against the Israeli Occupation that are happening on a daily basis around the West Bank.

In Anin, a village west of Jenin, local Palestinians, international activists, and Israelis opened a small but symbolic hole in the Apartheid Wall while the Israeli Occupying Forces attempted to turn them back with tear gas, sound grenades, and rubber bullets. Five ISM activists were injured by rubber bullets fired at close range. In a similar action in the town of Deir Al Ghason in the Tulkarm region, Palestinians, internationals, and Israelis removed a section of razor wire blocking a gate in the wall while Israeli soldiers shot at the protesters with rubber bullets injuring 10 Palestinians and international activists.

Local Palestinians from Qalqilia joined with international activists in a march to the 25-foot-tall concrete section of the Apartheid Wall that surrounds their city. At the wall demonstrators spray painted messages of liberation on the wall in the colors of the Palestinian flag and using helium balloons lifted a banner reading, “No Apartheid Wall” above the height of the wall. They were joined by Israeli activists demonstrating on the other side of the wall. Culminating the week of action, Palestinians, international activists, and Israelis disrupted the construction of the Apartheid Wall at Mas’ha and prevented the demolition of a Palestinian home near the wall. After two days of disrupted construction, the Israeli Occupying Forces brutally arrested 44 Palestinian, international, and Israeli activists and partially demolished the A’amer house.

Despite all of the injustices the Israeli Occupying Forces impose upon Palestinians - Mohammed from Qalqilia described his community’s determination to stay and resist, “We believe in this land—this is why we don’t leave. This is my land, my father’s land, my grandfather’s land. I will not leave it—I will not even think of leaving it.” ■



A view of the 25 foot high Apartheid Wall in the Qalqiliya area.

Photo: Maherah Silmi

Only the determination and creative resistance of Palestinians and their supporters around the world can stop the Israeli colonization of Palestinian land.

The Wall's Path of Destruction

By Arla Ertz

We returned to the site of the demolished home in Taybeh, the one that was destroyed because it was too close to the Wall. This time we conducted a more detailed interview with Abed, the man we had spoken with the previous day, his father, and his mother. They told us that the Israeli army had confiscated 159 dunums (one dunum is equal to 1/4 acre) of their land to build the Wall. Olive trees had grown on the land. When they came to destroy the house, they told the family they would demolish it in 3-4 days, but instead they destroyed it sooner, on April 30 of this year. They were unable to get all their belongings out in time. The family was told to get out in 5 minutes, and they were locked in a single room of the nearby farmhouse. The demolished home had been built 5 years ago and was large, containing 4 flats. The mother and father lived in one, Abed lived in another, and his two



A view of the Wall from inside Qalqilia.

Photo: Maherah Silmi

View of the city of Qalqiliya and fields of produce. The area in the foreground has been subjected to repeated flooding with raw sewage from the adjacent Israeli settlement. This is a common tactic of Israeli settlers who live near Palestinian farmlands.

Photo: Terry Kekaha



brothers lived in the other two along with their wives and children.

The two brothers and their family moved to what once was a neighboring village, but now is separated from Taybeh by the Wall. Consequently Abed is unable to visit his brothers.

The mother, father, and Abed now live in the rundown farmhouse next to the site of the demolished home. Soldiers have told them that this house may possibly be destroyed in the future also. When the house they had been living in was destroyed, the UN gave them a tent to live in, which they showed us. We gave them ISM phone numbers, so that if they are

told this house will be demolished, internationals can come to stay with them if they would like.

Following this disturbing interview, our guide/translator friend took us to his family's home in Taybeh. It was beautiful, with a pleasant patio where we sat under then shade of a lovely tree while drinking tea and coffee before being served a sumptuous homemade Palestinian lunch and spending time talking with Ahmed's mother, sisters, nieces, nephews, and other family members. Once again the contrast of the wonderful humanity of the Palestinian people against the stark reality of the oppression of the Occupation filled us with

emotions that are difficult to bear. ■

Speakers Available

ISM volunteers who have recently returned from Palestine are available to make presentations to high school and college campuses, churches, organizations and house parties.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Northern California ISM Support Group needs volunteers to help with local organizing activities. For more information, call 510-236-4250 or email info@norcalism.org

Your Presence is Urgently Needed in Palestine

Volunteers are urgently needed to come to the Occupied Territories to stand with Palestinians against attacks on their very existence. The Israeli government continues to step up its brutal war on the Palestinian people. The *International Solidarity Movement* wants to make sure **the world is watching**.

ISM is a Palestinian-led movement of Palestinian and international activists working to raise awareness of the struggle for Palestinian freedom and an end to Israeli occupation. We utilize nonviolent, direct-action methods of resistance to confront and challenge illegal Israeli occupation forces and policies.

The first ISM campaign took place in August 2001. During the invasion of West Bank cities by the Israeli military in April 2002, international volunteers came from around the world to deliver food, accompany ambulances, and provide protection for the Palestinian people. ISM activists were the first to start documenting human rights abuses perpetrated by the Israeli military during the April 2002 invasion.

Since April 2002, hundreds of ISM volunteers from Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands and Africa have come to participate in ongoing ISM campaigns in Palestine. Come join us in the Occupied Territories and support the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom, truth and justice. ■



Demonstration Monday, July 14, in Jayyous, a farming village outside of Qalqilia. There are Palestinian and international demonstrators in foreground and Israeli construction equipment in the background, working on the Wall.

Photo: Terry Kekaha

For more information or to register: www.palsolidarity.org

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