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**The Apartheid Wall Saga Continues**

**By Aritro Ganguly**

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The Apartheid Wall saga continues

Terje Roed-Larsen, the UN special coordinator in the occupied territories (UNSCO) wrote an objective report on the impact of the current Intifada, on the Palestinian economy in THE FINANCIAL TIMES, on December 21, 2001. According to Roed-Larsen-

- Unemployment in West Bank has risen from 11% to 25%.
- Unemployment in the Gaza strip has crossed the 50% mark.
- The revenue of Palestinian Authority (PA) has declined by 57%.
- The overall loss to the Palestinian economy is estimated in the range of \$ 2.4 billion and \$ 3.4 billion.
- A steady decline of 37% in real incomes.
- 46% of the Palestinian population remains below the poverty level figure of \$ 2 a day.
- Israel refuses to pay the amount of \$ 350 million in taxes that it owes to the PA.
- It has cancelled the work permits of 45,000 Palestinians.

To compound matters, the Palestinian population is being beaten to abject submission by the use of brutal military and Air Force strikes, specifically aimed to annihilate the terrorists. The Hamas leaders Yasin Malik and Al-Rantissi were liquidated with missile strikes. Finally there is the "Apartheid Wall", which Israel claims is being built only to safe guard itself from the terror strikes of Hamas, Al Aqsa Martyr's brigade, Islamic Jihad and the Lebanese ultra force, Hezbollah.

The Likud party led coalition government, headed by Ariel Sharon, is stringently implementing these repressive measures. He is actively supported by former PM and Labour party leader Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu of the far right. The current government has a center of right ideological position and commands a wide range of support from the Labour on the left to the religious parties on the extreme right.

Historically and traditionally the Zionist state has been given unstinted support by the US to neutralize the pan Arabic nationalism as well as the communist activities abound in the Arab peninsula in the 50s and the 60s. The Likud Government also enjoys the active alliance between the influential Jewish

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lobby and the Christian Right of the US republicans. The pro Israeli cabal consisting of Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith and Richard Perle, who run the Bush administration, are actively promoting the Israeli measures.

Currently the issue of the "Apartheid Wall" is the most contentious among all the crises that has enveloped the Palestinian people. In May 2003, Sharon had categorically stated– "Ruling 3.5 million people can not go on indefinitely. You may not like the word but what's happening is occupation. Holding 3.5 million Palestinians is a bad thing for Israel, for the Palestinians, for the Israel economy. We have to end this subject without risking our security". This was how Sharon had hinted of his diabolical concept of the wall. But as soon as the work on the wall proceeded, it drew worldwide criticism from all respective quarters. On October 21, 2003 the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution demanding Israel tear down the proposed 673 km long barrier. In the near

unanimous resolution, which asked Israel to "Stop and reverse", only US, Israel, Micronesia and Marshall Islands voted against the motion.

Even as Saeb Erekat (chief Palestinian negotiator) and Yasser Arafat rejoiced that the world had just given its verdict, Ehud Olmert (senior Israeli Cabinet member) reiterated Israel's commitment. "The fence will continue to be built. We have to worry about Israel's security and it is clear that we will not act according to the instructions of a hostile, automatic majority, which has always acted against Israel" – he said.

The ambitious project is actually a sinister bid by Tel Aviv to grab as much land as possible from the Palestinians. Once completed it will gobble up the entire Jordan valley and 58% of the West Bank. The wall will deprive the Palestinians, their rights over the lands, water and other essential services such as medical facilities, schools and from the field of their jobs. It will be the most blatant act of Human Rights violation in the history of mankind. It will further cripple the Palestinian economy from its already fragile state.

However the judgment passed by the Israeli High Court on June 30, 2004, has ordered the government to re–route a 30 km section of the wall as otherwise it will infringe on the rights of some 45,000 people of ten Palestine villages. The Justices Aharon Barak, Mishael Heshin and Eliyahu Matza read out the complex verdict– "The route that the military commander established for the security fence....injures the local inhabitants in a severe and acute way while violating their rights under humanitarian and international law." However the court upheld the fact that the government had the right to build the barrier and that construction was permissible on occupied land but that an alternative route was possible.

Then on July 9th, The International Court of justice at The Hague, ruled that the wall was illegal. The non binding verdict said– "The court accordingly finds that the construction of the wall, and its associated regime, are contrary to international laws..... The court is of the view that the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall." It also ordered the Likud government to pay reparation to the affected Palestinians.

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The defiant Israel government refused to comply with the ruling. Deputy PM Yosef Lapid emphatically declared Israel's intention to continue the work on the wall. Ariel Sharon said that he wanted "to make clear, the state of Israel absolutely rejects the ruling of the International Court of Justice in The Hague." Despite Palestinian PM Ahmed Qureia's hope that the Americans would "not sabotage" the endeavor of the international community to deconstruct the "Apartheid wall", the White House officials as well as the opposition in the US condemned the ICJ ruling. In fact Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry as well as Senator Hilary Clinton stood staunchly by the Israeli decision. The support coming from the US opposition must have surely emboldened Ariel Sharon.

The only threat to Israel's master plan of compartmentalization of the West Bank to foil the peace plan comes from the persistent EU. The EU Foreign policy Chief Javier Solana has pledged to be a part of the peace negotiation despite repeated rebukes from Israel. The ICJ verdict has also galvanized many European Human Rights organizations to pressurize their respective national governments to impose economic sanctions against Israel because the Article 2 of the EU–Israeli association agreement states that trade restrictions can be enforced because of a country's poor Human Rights report.

All said and done, the enforcement of embargo on Israel seems unlikely as it still has and will always

have the US as its major backer. Till date US has donated Israel a record sum of \$ 92 billion along with Apache helicopters and heavy and light artillery. Israel itself is now a major weapon supplier to many nations and with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the volatile middle east, Israel would be seen as a deterrent or a buffer state. After all the US would be quite happy to deflect some of the Al Qaida and Mujahidin ire towards Israel. So Israel is completely at its freedom to continue their murderous occupation, ensuring the social and economic denigration of the Palestinian society and trampling their dreams of a free Palestine under the crushing burden of the Apartheid wall. The saga continues.

<http://www.ideamarketers.com/library/article.cfm?articleid=31107>

The author is a freelance journalist, volunteer social worker and web content developer who has written in four national and local dailies in India.

### **Wall Clocks tell time and decorate!**

**By Mike Yeager**

Clocks can be of any type – they could be wall clocks that not only decorates the walls, but also tells time or a mantel piece resting on one's table etc.. Wall Clocks can be of one of two types. Analog and Digital. While digital clocks are precise, the analog clock serve the same purpose. With the increasing need to be accurate, and every microsecond accounted for Digital clocks are the way to go.

Wall Clocks are a central time telling pieces. Be it a work place, home or a visiting place, its always nice to look up and know what time it is. After all time is money. They can also help other ways – for example a family can set a family alarm while a school can have a clock with a really loud alarm and a microphone attached to it. Apart from serving a functional requirement, of telling the time, the Wall

clocks can be used extensively as decorative pieces, collectors items and even investments.

You should see some on the large wall clocks tucked away in a mansion somewhere or an extensively decorated cuckoo clock. Wall Clocks are about more than telling time. They are about style.

Mike Yeager  
Publisher

<http://www.a1-clocks-4u.com/>

[mjy610@hotmail.com](mailto:mjy610@hotmail.com)



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