

# GRAFFITI THE WALL

## PREMISE

Art is one of the many great gifts bestowed upon creation by God. Ever since construction began on the modern wall in Israel people have imprinted upon it works of art in peaceful protest to the unjust treatment of God's children. We invite you to join in this act by painting your peaceful protest on this representation of the wall.

## MATERIALS

- Temporary Wall (or a section of the wall in your sanctuary if you're feeling bold)
- Paint & Brushes
- Stencils of Desired Images (you can find many online to print for free or make your own)
- Images of graffiti on the actual wall for inspiration (ATTACHED)
- Information about the wall, and graffiti on the wall (ATTACHED)

## SET-UP

- Lay out a painters cloth or tarp
- Place the section of wall on the tarp
- Surround the section of wall with images of graffiti from the actual wall
- Lay out stencils, paint, brushes, and information on the wall

## FACILITATION

1-2 facilitators to help get people started on their "graffiti"

# Background

In 2002 the government of Israel began construction of a physical barrier to divide Israel and the West Bank for the stated purpose of preventing entry into Israel by Palestinians who might carry out attacks on Israel's civilian population. Instead of being built along the so-called Green Line, 85 percent of the barrier is on Palestinian land. In many places it cuts deeply into occupied Palestinian land and has resulted in the confiscation and destruction of whole villages, thousands of olive trees and many acres of Palestinian land. The total length planned is 709 kilometers, double the Green Line's length. The barrier consists mainly (90 percent or so) of fences, ditches, razor wire, groomed sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a buffer zone. About 10 percent, around the most populated areas like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Qalqiliya and Tulkarm, consists of 25-30-foot walls.

In 2004, the International Court of Justice in The Hague, gave its advisory opinion on the question of the legality of the separation barrier being built by Israel. The opinion was in response to the request of the UN General Assembly of 3 December 2004. The court stated unequivocally, and contrary to the position held by Israel, that international human rights law applies in its entirety in occupied territory, along with humanitarian law. The court ruled that the separation barrier violates rights set forth in conventions to which Israel is party.

The court mentioned the rights to freedom of movement and the right against invasion of privacy of home and family, which are enshrined in Articles 12 and 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the right to work, to an adequate standard of living, health, and education, which are enshrined in Articles 6, 11, 12, and 13 of the International covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights.

Furthermore, it found that the separation barrier is intended to assist the settlements, the establishment of which violates Article 49 of the Convention. Also, the court pointed out that the restrictions placed on the local population located between the barrier and the Green Line are liable to lead to abandonment of the land, which also constitutes a violation of Article 49. In addition, the opinion stated that taking control of private land to build the barrier injured private property owners, and thus violated Articles 46 and 52 of the Hague Regulations of 1907 and of Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Israel does not accept the validity or legitimacy of the court's ruling.

There have been many challenges by Palestinian villages and Israeli peace groups to Israeli courts regarding the route of the barrier, some of which have led to

changes in the route. Most, however, are unsuccessful, and Palestinians continue to be separated from their land, their jobs, their schools and their families. It is estimated that about 250,000 Palestinians will be isolated because of the wall. Some Israelis object to the cost of the wall, about \$2 million per kilometer.

While many Israelis refer to this structure as the "security fence," many Palestinians call it the "segregation wall." The ELCA Peace Not Walls campaign, along with a number of American and Israeli peace groups, uses the term "separation barrier," because that best describes the structure and what it does. It is important to move beyond the naming of this structure to the more pertinent issues of its path and effects on both Palestinians and Israelis. Because Israelis in most cases are prohibited from visiting West Bank towns under Palestinian control, it is not surprising that in a Fall 2010 poll, 71 percent of Israelis reported having no Arab friends (The Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland, Professor Shibley Telhami, principal investigator) This barrier continues to divide people as well as land.

## **Israel has built a 443-mile separation wall,**

cutting off Palestinian towns and villages from each other and from the Israeli settlements built on Palestinian land. The Palestinian side of the Wall has become a palette for artists and others to express their ideas about walls and about peace.

## **Palestinians resist the separation Wall Israel is building on their land.**

The 443-mile long Wall cuts them off from other towns, school, family and work. They paint artwork on the Wall to transform the gray concrete; they write their feelings; they draw cracks in the wall and escape holes and use humor to make the wall seem less formidable. They write messages of hope: "The Palestinian spirit is stronger than any Wall."

## **What's at Stake**

For some Israelis and their supporters the separation barrier represents the most tangible symbol of and reason for the dramatic decrease in suicide attacks against Israeli civilians. For most Palestinians and many in the international community, this barrier is one among several reasons for such a decline. The ELCA supports the right and duty of the State of Israel to protect its civilians. But given the barrier's route, what's most at stake now are the lives of average Palestinians who are divided from their jobs, schools, farm fields, medical care and families — and who must spend hours each day in border crossings within Palestinian territory.





LIKE THE BERLIN SOMEDAY  
THIS WALL WILL BE ONLY  
IN MUSEMS.

MIKE CALIFORNIA











THIS WALL MAY  
TAKE CARE OF  
THE PRESENT  
BUT IT HAS  
NO FUTURE

*Giulia Cimarosti*