

# ‘Hope is a Radical Act’

Reflections on solidarity visit to Palestine November 2024



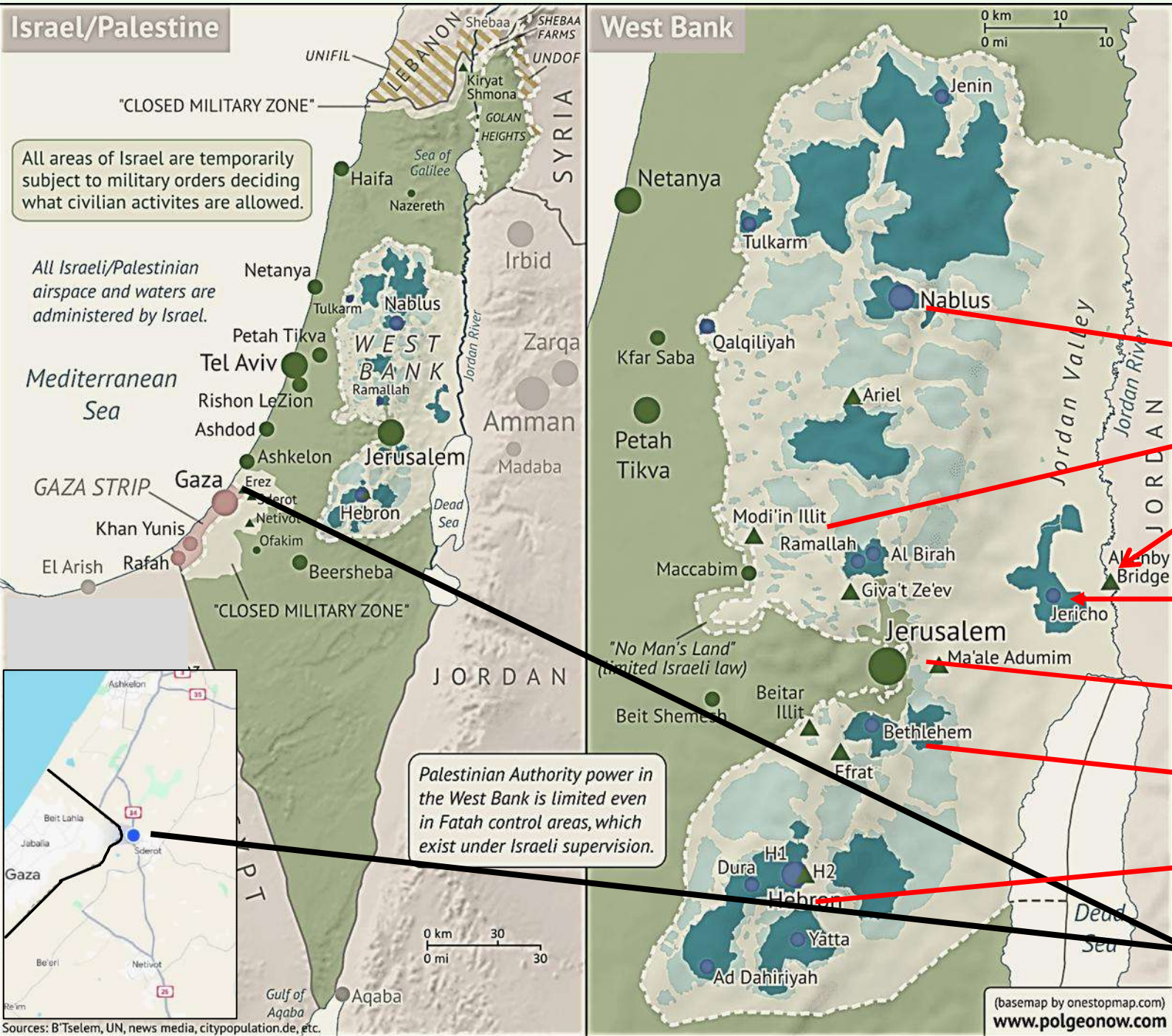


# Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center Jerusalem





# Israel/Palestine



## Key

Khaki colour areas show Israel. The light colour near Gaza is also Israel. A military zone.

The other colours are Palestine including all the Israeli settlements

1. Nablus
  2. Ramallah
  3. Jordan/Palestine border crossing
  4. Jericho
  5. Jerusalem
  6. Bethlehem
  7. Hebron
  8. Sderot/Gaza
- (Gaza is small pink area on larger map)

We only visited Israel once when we went to Sderot. Everywhere else was in occupied territory.





Lorries queuing  
up to cross the  
border



The Allenby or King Hussain bridge  
between Jordan and Israel



What is left of the Jordan River





Almost every hilltop has an illegal settlement on it. Some are small ones and others such as **Har Homa**, overlooking Bethlehem, are huge cities.







The **settlement infrastructure** includes **bypass roads**, which are designed to allow Israeli settlers to travel between settlements without interacting with or even seeing Palestinian communities. These roads, along with other forms of infrastructure like **electricity, internet, and military installations**, are being built on Palestinian lands.







The Israeli flyover avoids all contact or even sight of the Palestinians

A so-called agricultural gate for the Palestinians to access their land. It is rarely open and never for long enough.





**Al Makhroun valley**, UNESCO-recognised, near Bethlehem.

One of the last two remaining green and recreational spaces left for Palestinians.

A small illegal settlement sits in the middle of it. A Palestinian family and business were expelled.

The area is under imminent threat of being annexed, therefore exclusively for Israelis.







The entrance to the Jordan river and the baptismal site of Jesus. Closed for no apparent reason.

Inconvenient for us, but for Palestinians, long journeys on potholed narrow roads, leading to loss of time, extra petrol, and severe wear and tear on vehicles.



Typical red or yellow gate, installed and often closed by Israel, preventing Palestinians from easily accessing their village or land





Israeli roads  
widened by taking  
more Palestinian  
land.

Palestinians  
forced to drive on  
old potholed,  
narrow roads to  
access their own  
homes and land

You can see the winding rough back roads that Palestinians are forced to take.





## Bethlehem

**Wi'am** , Conflict Transformation Centre next to wall.

Israeli's calls the wall a security barrier. Palestinians call it the annexation wall, because 85% of it is built inside the West Bank taking more land

This area of Bethlehem is one of the most teargassed areas in the world.



The Israeli military also use skunk water—a disgusting foul-smelling liquid, which is sprayed on and clings to, skin, clothes, buildings, cars, and homes. The smell lingers for days and gets worse when washed with water. It is claimed to be chemical-free, but the lingering smell and its ability to trigger alarms at checkpoints or airports suggest otherwise.





**Anastas Walled-In Guest House**  
the original worst view in the world.



Image of  
Shireen Abu  
Akleh.  
Palestinian-  
American  
journalist shot by  
Israeli sniper in  
Jenin







**Teybeh village** is the only village left that is uniquely Christian. It is also known for its beer.

Olive picking with Rabbis for Human Rights prevented as areas made a closed military zone by the IDF.

Many olives not picked.



French diplomat arrived to pick olives in solidarity.





Multiple locks to undo before entering the **Tent of Nations**, southwest of Bethlehem

Never granted planning permission by Israel.  
Only demolition orders for structures including for water storage.

Caves used for accommodation and meeting rooms.



The Tent of Nations has had a long running battle in the Israeli courts to keep their land. For which they have documents dating back to Ottoman times

Over the years their fruit trees have been bulldozed by Israeli forces, and they have suffered many incursions from Israeli settlers.





Illegal settlements surround the Tent of Nations. They are under constant pressure and attack to give up the land.

Illegal settlement school built adjacent to the property.

Settlers constructing a road on their land along with a caravan and shed.

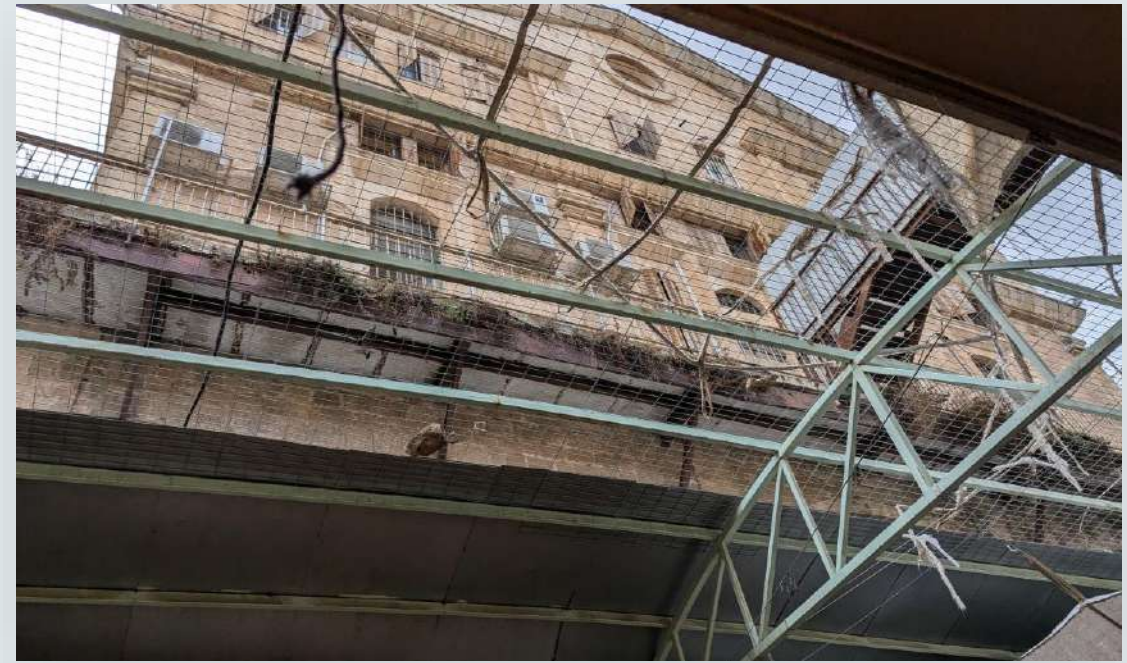
No recourse against this, except the Israeli courts, heavily weighted against them.







**The Old City of Hebron,**  
occupied by  
illegal Israeli  
settlements



Wire mesh to protect the Palestinians from the settlers  
who throw all sorts of nasty things down



We were closely  
observed

A very dirty  
nappy  
thrown down  
from the  
settlement





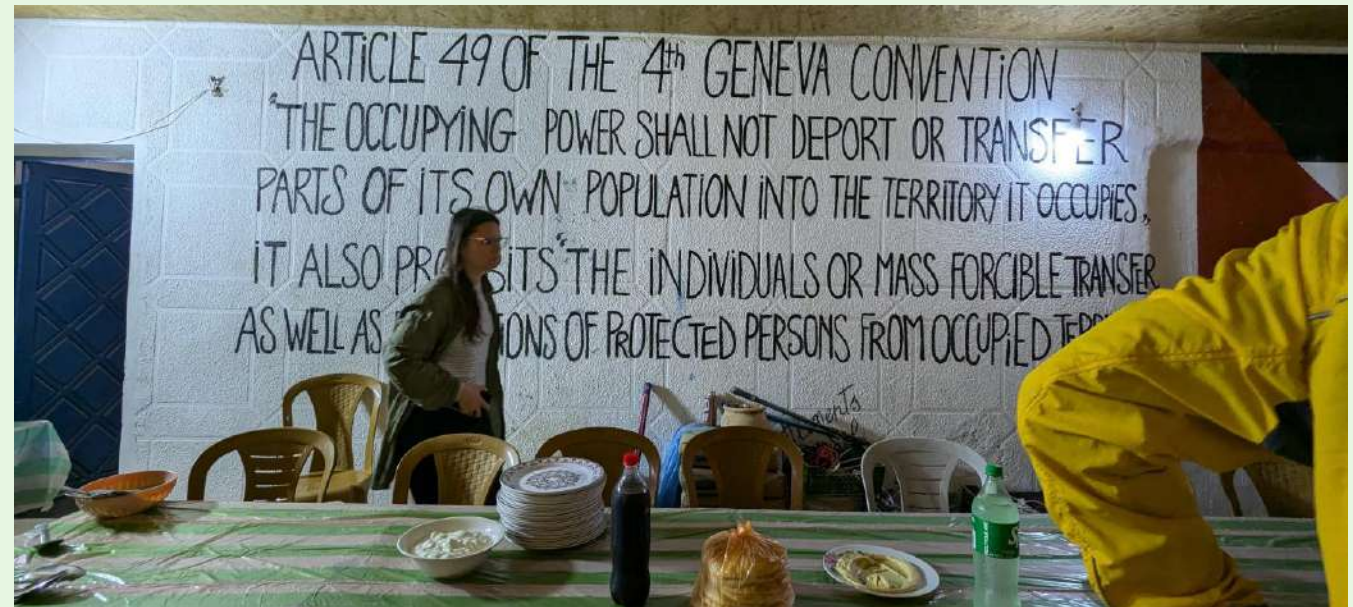
Shuhada Street, closed to Palestinians.  
We can walk there. Palestinians forbidden.

Many old city shops are closed and decaying





**Issa Amro**  
**Youth Against**  
**Settlements**







On our way out we were prevented from leaving until the IDF commander gave permission!! No threats but causing us inconvenience.





## **Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem**

Car park known as The Cow's Garden.

Year long dispute about ownership of this land as well, the dining hall of the Armenian seminary, private garden and parking of the patriarch, plus the homes of five Armenian families.

Remains of a blockade set up by young members of the church who camped out here when settlers turned up with bulldozers.

On 18 February, Armenian activists launched a legal case based on documents dating back more than 400 years showing the land was held in trust for the community



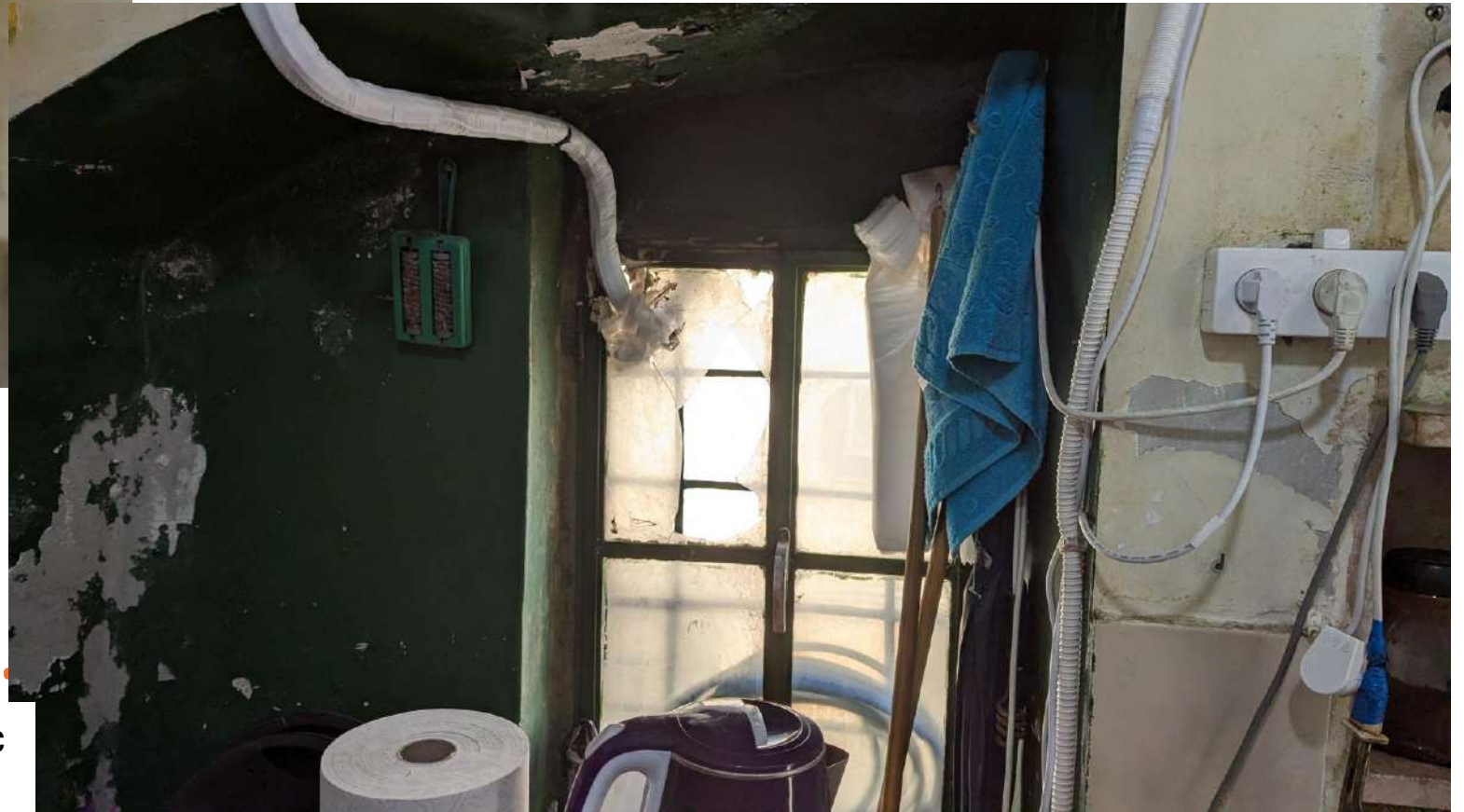




Broken plug socket

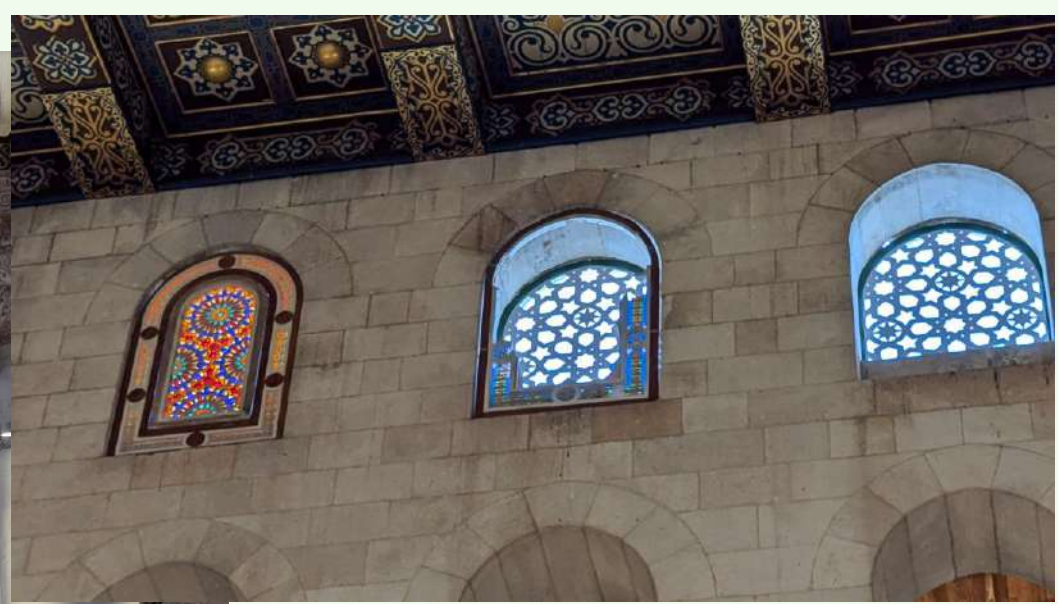
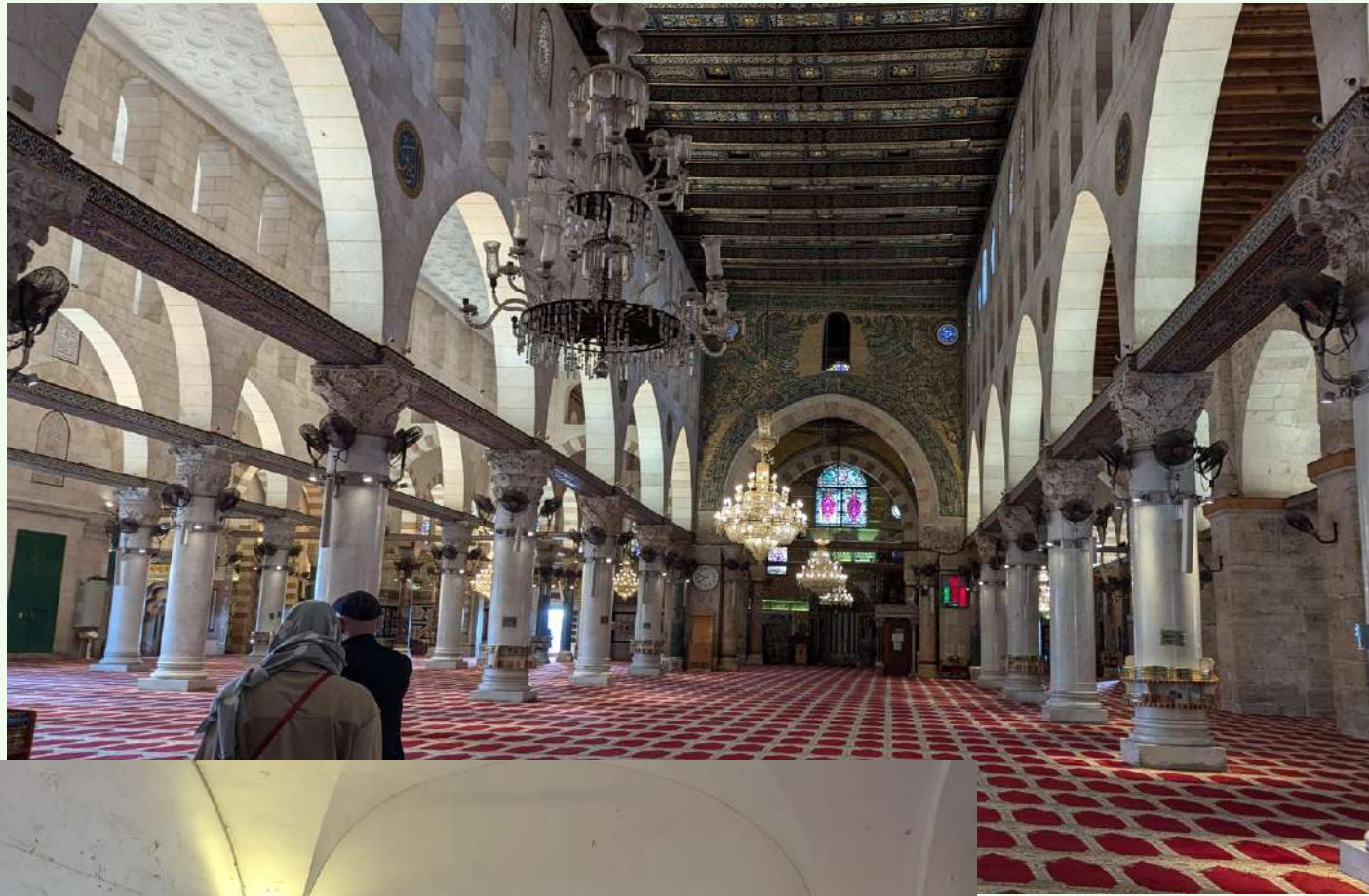
## Al Aqsa Mosque Compound

The office of the official tour guide in the grounds of the Mosque. Israel will not allow any maintenance or repairs to the building.



Broken window needs repairing and basic maintenance is necessary.





Damage around the Al Aqsa Mosque caused by the Israeli forces in a raid 18 months ago. Israel will not allow repairs. Broken decorative windows and a door.





As we travelled towards the border with Gaza, yellow chairs at the side of the road with the pictures and names of the hostages on them.

Also yellow flags and ribbons on cars



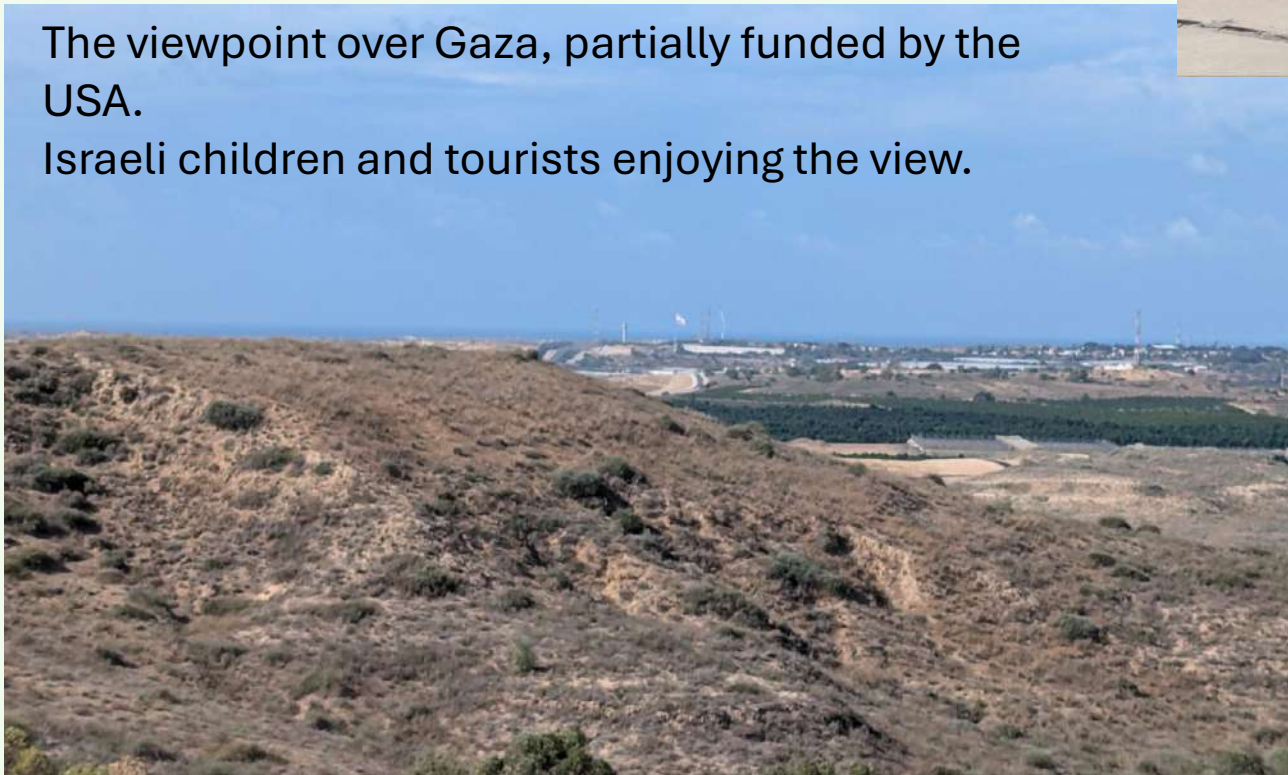


Avi Dabush, executive director of **Rabbis for Human Rights** and a survivor of the October 7th attack on Kibbutz Nirim and Roni Kaidar, member of **Other Voice** from Netiv HaAsara the closest Israeli village to the Gaza border.



The viewpoint over Gaza, partially funded by the USA.

Israeli children and tourists enjoying the view.



Roni told had worked toward making life in Gaza more comfortable, prior to 7th Oct.

She seemed not to understand that caging and blockading people indefinitely was not sustainable.

Avi was much more aware and understanding.





White smoke shows demolitions  
Grey smoke is caused by missiles



part of Israeli barriers with Gaza



We visited **UNWRA** in Jerusalem and heard about Israeli actions against them

3 new Bills had been passed in the Knesset

- To designate them a terrorist organisation along with other human rights organisations and NGOs
- To rescind all their privileges
- To stop all their operations in areas controlled by Israel including Area C of the West Bank (60%), East Jerusalem and Gaza.

Although Israel cannot end their mandate, because Israel did not create their mandate, It intends to impose a 'no contact' policy between UNWRA and Israel or with those presently co-ordinating with them.

If implemented, this will :

- Prevent UNWRA from any operations in the West Bank or Gaza.
- Prevents access to 3 million Dollars in an Israeli bank
- Prevent them from getting insurance on or maintenance of vehicles

