

ISRAELI QUARIES CONTINUE TO BRUTALLY DEVOUR PALESTINIAN LANDS



Picture: Israeli quarries in West Bank, Afaq Magazine, 2016.

- Israel's annual consumption of raw materials for construction is around 50 million tons and a quarter of which is obtained from quarries in the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967.
- According to a report by Yesh Din organization, in 2017, ten Israeli-owned quarries operated in Area C of the occupied West Bank. In 2008, about 12 million tons of stone were extracted from these quarries, which increased to 17 million tons in 2015.¹
- In 2014, the income of quarries in Israel was estimated at 6.1 billion shekels, 20% of this income was generated from the quarries in the West Bank.
- The World Bank estimates that the Palestinians lose US\$ 241 million annually due to Israeli restrictions on licensing quarries to Palestinians.²
- 94% of the raw materials extracted from the Israeli-owned quarries in Area C of the occupied West Bank are transferred to Israel.
- The Israeli occupation destroys the land after confiscating it from its owners, suffocating villages with dust and stone walls, damaging the environment and causing harm to public health, leaving gaps in the mountains without restoration.³
- In response to Yesh Din's lawsuit, the Israeli market is expected to extract approximately 276 million tons of raw materials from the West Bank by 2040.⁴
- Israeli activist and aerial photographer Dror Etkes, who monitors the Israeli settlement and land management policy in the West Bank, found that during a six-year period between (2009-2014), Israeli quarrying industry expanded its activity by more than 500 additional dunums of land in the West Bank.⁵
- Until 2015 Israeli quarries stole 3,522 dunums of Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank.⁶
- According to Bahjat Jabbarin, director of Environmental Quality Authority office in Hebron, quarries are located in rural and marginalized areas, normally suitable for animals and are considered a source of food for wild animals and natural grazing. However, the quarrying industry negatively affect the health of animals, especially

mammals and birds. It destroys the habitat, causes land segregation and soil composition destruction and leads to poor soil for planting. The dust moves hundreds of kilometers in the direction of wind, which causes the spread of diseases and respiratory problems to nearby community and inhabitants⁷.

- According to information provided by the Israeli Civil Administration, the quarry located within the Beit Hagai settlement is the third largest quarry in Israel and the largest in the West Bank. It annually produces and sells 3 million tons of gravel and stones, which constitutes 74 percent of the total product in Israel and the Palestinian territories, and this constitutes between 20 to 30 percent of Israel's consumption of stones and gravels. The quarry's revenues constitute about 80 percent of the settlement's revenues.⁸
- Approximately 80 percent of quarry workers are West Bank residents who are employed without labor rights and compensation.
- The Israeli occupation is engaged in theft of natural resources from one of the most important sectors for Palestinians, stone quarries and crushers, which accounts 7.1 times of the Palestinian gross domestic production⁹.
- Seven huge Israeli crushers operating in the Hebron district are located on about 3,500 dunums, which is classified as Area C and under full control of Israel. The Environment Quality Authority estimates 1,240,000 tons per month of natural resources produced in the seven crushers, estimated value of US\$134 million per year. This indicates Israel's methods of stealing Palestinian natural resources from only Hebron district.¹⁰

VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

- Israeli practices are explicit violation of several international treaties. Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: "All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence. Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others" and that "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his [or her] property."
- The United Nations Resolution 38/144 issued in December 1983 emphasizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people over their natural resources, including land and water, and recognizes their rights to claim compensation as a result of the illegal depletion by the Israeli occupation.
- The Israeli violation occurs despite the Fourth Hague Convention, which stipulates that the occupying power is merely a controller of natural resources.
- In 2011 the Israeli High Court decided that Israel's exploitation of natural resources in the West Bank for economic purposes is legal and that the establishment and operation of Israeli quarries in the West Bank "do not contradict international law".

1 <https://bit.ly/3EGEx7T>

2 <https://bit.ly/2XiTMmF>

3 Alhaq2014, report

4 Yesh-din2020 report

5 <https://www.maan-ctr.org/magazine/article/1018/>

6 <https://bit.ly/3CAiBJB>

7 <https://www.maan-ctr.org/magazine/article/1471>

8 https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=4073

9 Arab48/2018

10 <https://bit.ly/3kwyWZL>

Names and locations of the Israeli quarries seizing land in the West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem until the end of 2015:

No.	The name of the Israeli quarry or crusher	Governorate	Location	Year of establishment	Area of confiscated land	Gravel	Fine course	Base course
1	E'leit	Jerusalem	Biddu- Abu George street- Nkhailah	1990	194	250	160	0
2	Maidan	Hebron	Abu Alhenna- Alburj	1992	642	0	600	750
3	Wad Alkhalil	Hebron	Kherbit Arahwa	1995	347	400	380	0
4	Bani Ari crusher	Hebron	Suba-lthna	1996	280	0	200	350
5	Gal Eleit	Hebron	Mdaimna- south Athahryah	2014	325	400	340	0
6	Har Mudaien	Ramallah	Kharbatha Bani Harith	2002	350	400	400	0
7	Nouf	Ramallah	Shuqba	2003	318	350	0	300
8	Keiter	Salfeet	Azzawya	1997	675	700	500	0
9	Ali Zahav	Salfeet	Kafr Addik	2013	119	130	90	0
10	Tsofeen	Qaqilya	Jayous	2009	272	300	360	0
Total					3522	2930	3030	1400

Source: Field Research - Israel Violations Monitoring Department - Land Research Center, January 2016.

Swaillem Atel's Story "The Israeli quarries are dust of death"

Swaillem is a resident of al Rahwa, the Hebron Valley. The area is under attack from settlers and residents are being forced to move or are displaced to other areas. Swaillem says quarries affects and pollutes water as well as kills their livestock that is their main source of income, he adds that they cause diseases to the people living in the area including chest diseases, asthma and problems with breathing especially for children. The people are periodically visited doctors mostly for treatment of their breathing problems resulting from the dust spreading kilometers around the quarries. He also adds that the explosions cause panic to people and animals, as well as cracks in the houses. One resident lost 30 sheep from collapse of his cave following an explosion in the quarries. Another resident's house cracked and he lost 3 sheep. The residents are asking the authorities and humanitarian organizations to stop this violation and the activities of quarry.

Um Yousef "It is so hard to move away from my land even after turning it into quarry"

Um Yousef is a 70-year-old woman from Zawiya-Salfit, northern West Bank. whose land was confiscated by the settlers and a huge quarry was established on it. Um Yousef loves her land and used to cultivate it. One of her favorite activities was to ride the donkey and go to her land on a daily basis. Um Yousef continued to visit her land even after its confiscation and the establishment of the quarry. One day, her donkey, belongings and agricultural tools were confiscated by the Israeli army. Um Yousef needs a permit in order to reach whatever remains of her land. Her permit to visit the land has been withdrawn for several times. Um Yousef complains that dust and explosions destroy the rest of the neighboring lands, destroy crops and affect the quality of produce. She says that the work at these quarries should be stopped and that people should be allowed to rehabilitate and cultivate their land.¹

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