
Crossing the Line: The Tel Aviv-Jerusalem Fast Train

A new Israeli train line through
occupied West Bank areas

Who Profits from the Occupation
October 2010



The Coalition of Women for Peace

brings together ten feminist peace organizations and non-affiliated activist women in Israel. Founded soon after the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, CWP today is a leading voice against the occupation, committed to feminist principles of organizing and Jewish-Palestinian partnership in a relentless struggle for a just peace. CWP continuously voices a critical position against militarism and advocates for radical social and political change. Its work includes direct action and public campaigning in Israel and internationally; a pioneering investigative project exposing the occupation industry; outreach to Israeli audiences and political empowerment of women across communities; and capacity-building and support for grassroots activists and initiatives for peace and justice.

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Who Profits from the Occupation

is a research project of the Coalition of Women for Peace. Initiated in response to the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) on Israel, this research project is dedicated to exposing the commercial involvement of Israeli and international companies in the continuing Israeli control over Palestinian and Syrian land. The project publishes information about these companies on its website (www.whoprofits.org), produces in-depth reports and serves as an information center.

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Executive Summary

A new fast train line is planned to connect Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel's two main metropolitan centers, with two or three trains an hour, in a 28-minute route. This new train line, sometimes referred to as the A1 train, is one of the biggest infrastructure projects that the Israeli government has undertaken in the last decade. The route crosses official state borders into the occupied West Bank in two areas, using occupied Palestinian land, some of it privately owned, for an Israeli transportation project aimed exclusively for Israelis.

Part 1 of the report follows the planned route of the railway and its implications. It discusses the planning process and the legal considerations concerning the route, describes the situation of the Palestinian communities most affected by the route and provides firsthand accounts by the residents.

By crossing the Green Line border into the West Bank, the A1 train line is unlawful and unethical. According to international law, an occupier may not use the occupied resources solely for the benefit of its own citizens. This line was planned for the exclusive use of Israeli citizens; it is imposed on the local Palestinian residents by the dictates of a military regime, in which they have no representation; and it would be completely inaccessible to the local residents. The 6 kilometers (3.75 miles) of the railway route which fall outside the official Israeli state borders are creating devastating effects on the three Palestinian communities in the area.

Part 2 of the report focuses on the involvement of Israeli and international companies in the planning and

construction of the train line. Because the project requires special expertise, several international corporations have been contracted to provide economic and engineering consultancy, specialized tunneling machinery and tunneling work.

The report identifies a number of international corporations involved in the project and lists some of the main planners, consultants and contractors for each section of the train line. These contractors include two governmental companies: Deutsche Bahn (Germany) and Moscow Metrostroy (Russia), as well as private European firms such as Pizzarotti (Italy). As of October 2010, the construction in most of the route is well underway, but the main tunneling has not yet begun and the deadline for completion has been postponed to 2016-7.

Introduction

A new train line is planned to connect Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel's two main metropolitan centers, with two or three trains an hour, in a 28-minute route. This new train line, sometimes referred to as the A1 train, is one of the biggest infrastructure projects that the Israeli government has undertaken in the last decade. Surprisingly, this route crosses official state borders into the occupied West Bank in two areas, using occupied Palestinian lands, some of it privately owned, for an Israeli transportation project aimed exclusively for Israelis.

Once the planned train route crossed the Green Line border into the West Bank, it became unlawful and unethical. According to international law, an occupier may not use the occupied resources solely for the benefit of its own citizens. This line was planned for the exclusive use of Israeli citizens; it is imposed on the local

Palestinian residents by the dictates of a military regime, in which they have no representation; and it would be completely inaccessible to the local residents.

The 6 kilometers (3.75 miles) of the railway route which fall outside the official Israeli state borders may seem like a small infraction, but for three neighboring Palestinian communities, already shattered by a series of land confiscations and draconian movement restrictions, this railway line has devastating effects.

Building this train on occupied land is totally unnecessary. The old train line between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem does not cross the international border. A new and improved fast line could have stayed within state borders, and in fact such alternative routes were proposed in the planning process. The choice to cross the Green Line, and to cross it



'Deep soil for keeping': Piles of extracted soil from the preliminary digging work, kept for later use. The commercial use of any extracted soil from the occupied territory is illegal by international law. Picture taken in the main logistics base for Section C of the A1 railway, near Sha'ar Hagay, October 2010.

twice, was a deliberate choice, and a careful look at it exposes some of the workings of a distorted social, legal and economic environment based in a military occupation.

Part 1 of the report follows the planned route of the railway and its implications. The first chapter describes the planning process, the legal considerations concerning the route, and the ways in which the planners dismissed them. The next two chapters describe the two areas where the route crosses the Green Line border into the occupied area: The Latrun Enclave and Cedars Valley. The chapter on Cedars Valley includes firsthand accounts by residents of the two communities most affected by the route: Beit Surik and Beit Iksa. Part 1 concludes with the chapter “Why go through the West Bank”, which discusses the choice of the controversial route for the train.

Part 2 focuses on the involvement of Israeli and international companies in the planning and construction of the train line. Because the project requires

special expertise, several international corporations have been contracted to provide economic and engineering consultancy, specialized tunneling machinery and tunneling work. Part 2 includes a description of the status of construction as of October 2010, and lists some of the main planners, consultants and contractors for each section of the train line.

The Beit Surik Village Council has explicitly called for international intervention and support: “We, the people of Beit Surik, do not want the train line to be built on our land. We see as fundamentally important that the people of the world support our right to decide on the use of our own land and help us change the route of this train line”. (See the complete letter in section 1.3.1 of the report). As an Israeli organization committed to ending the occupation, we support the call of the Beit Surik Village Council. We have created this report so that others can become aware of, and respond effectively to the destructive effects of the A1 train route.

Methodology

Research for this report was conducted using both desk studies and field research. The desk studies included the collection and analysis of information from various public sources, including: land confiscation orders, records of public hearings of the various planning boards, court proceedings, different publications of the companies involved, of Israel Railways and the Israeli Ministry of Transportation and two appeals for information based on the freedom of information act.

The field research included visits to two of the communities most affected by the route of the new railway, Beit Surik and Beit Iksa, interviews with officials from the local councils, local farmers and land owners, visits to the railway’s construction sites and conversations with the workers on site.

Two months prior to publication, we contacted all the companies mentioned in the report with requests for their comments and responses. We have received no replies.

Part 1

The A1 train line and its implications



The Palestinian village of Beit Iksa, overlooking the railway construction site in Cedars Valley, a view from Road No. 1

1.1 Is it legal?

The construction of the railway on occupied land raises three legal concerns. First, building a permanent Israeli construction, such as a train line on occupied Palestinian land is illegal if it would not be accessible to local Palestinian residents, according to both international law and interpretations by the Israeli Supreme Court. The Israeli planning committee which discussed this legal concern dismissed it based on a proposed plan for a future expansion of the Israeli railroad system, which would connect it to the Palestinian cities of Gaza and Ramallah. The suggested plan is still in early planning stages; perhaps someday it would allow Palestinians from the occupied territory to use certain parts of the Israeli railroad system. Presently, given the conditions of occupation, the siege of Gaza, the closure of the West Bank and the general prohibition on the entrance of Palestinians from the occupied territory into Israel, this plan is not politically viable. Its main use, therefore, is for the planning committee to act as if the construction is legal.

Second, privately owned lands which belong to Palestinians from the areas of Yalu, Bet Surik and Bet Ikksa are used both for the train and for a network of access roads leading to the construction sites. The Palestinian land owners with the Israeli organization Peace Now¹ have appealed to the Israeli planning committee, claiming that land owners were not properly informed and the land confiscations did not follow the procedures specified by Israeli law. All of the appeals were dismissed, and in one case the fact of the appeal was used as proof that the owners were indeed properly notified.

A third legal issue concerns the mined material to be extracted from the train tunnels. This material is to be reprocessed and sold whenever possible, or used as filling by the contractor in prescribed areas. About 530,000 cbm are estimated to be extracted from the first tunnel alone, almost entirely from within the occupied Palestinian territory. Another 515,000 cbm will be extracted from the two other tunnels which cross into occupied areas, two thirds of which is estimated as reusable material, to be used by the contractor or sold for use in the construction industry. The two tunnel portals in the occupied area would be used to transfer vast amounts of dirt on specially built access roads through the West Bank, causing high levels of air pollution and creating health hazards for neighboring communities.

Any use of the extracted material other than for the benefit of the Palestinian population is a violation of international law, which explicitly forbids the exploitation of natural resources from the occupied area by the occupier for its own gain. However, dirt from within the occupied area would probably be used as filling in settlement quarries in the occupied area, and the proceeds from the sale of reusable material would go to the Israeli Civil Administration. None of it, however, would benefit the local Palestinian population.

The planning committee which heard and dismissed all of these legal concerns is the “Civil Administration Central Planning Board”, which is in fact an Israeli military committee, situated inside an Israeli military base, in Beit El, an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank.

¹“An Objection to the Expansion of Israel Railways’ Tel Aviv-Jerusalem Line”, Peace Now News, May 11th, 2009, available at: <http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=66&docid=3646>

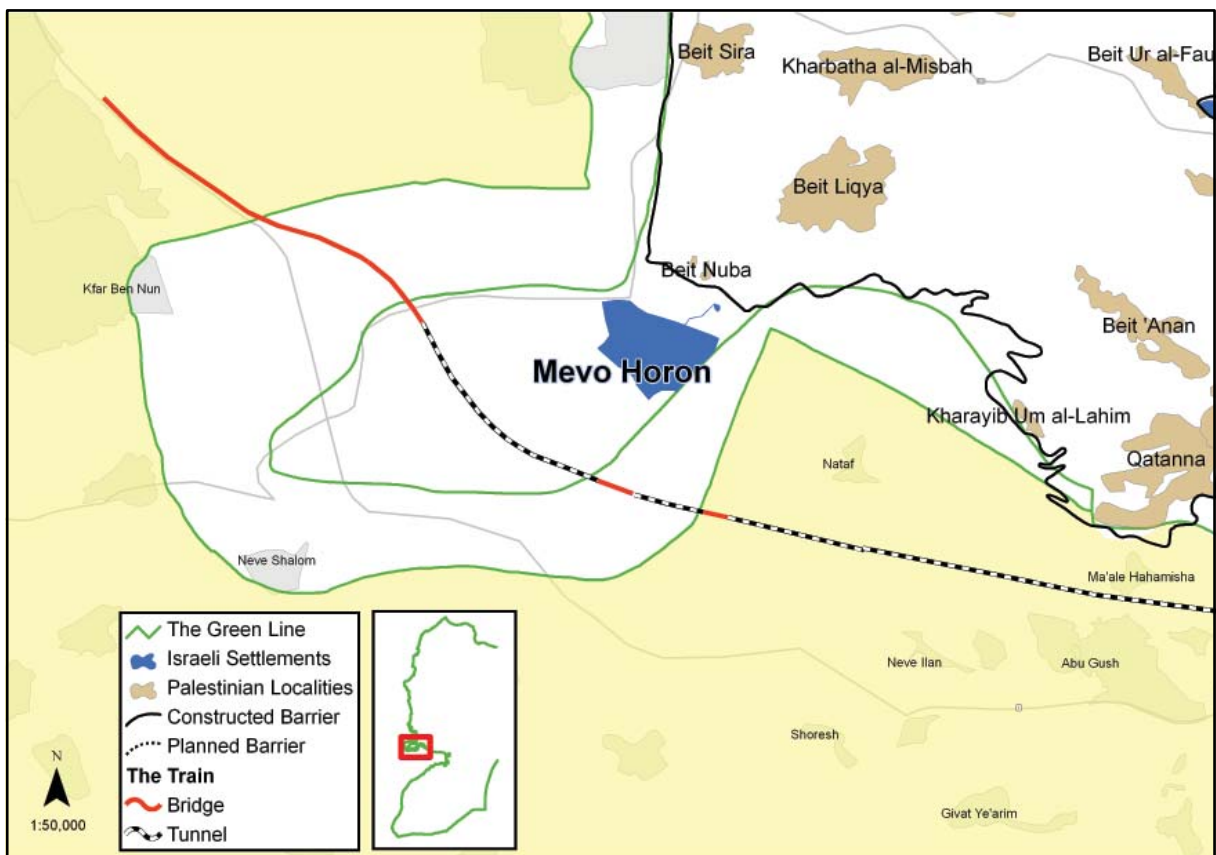
1.2 Crossing the Green Line: The Latrun Enclave

The first area where the A1 train route crosses the Green Line border into the occupied territories is in the Latrun Enclave. This segment was included in the original plan, issued in 1996 and approved in 2001. It is about three km long, starting at the end of the Ayalon Bridge (Bridge 6) and continuing with a tunnel (Tunnel 1).

The Latrun enclave was occupied in the 1967 war; the three Palestinian villages in it, Imwas, Yalu and Beit Nuba, were totally destroyed and their residents evicted. To prevent their return, the area has been declared a closed military zone ever since. Additionally, an Israeli settlement separates the enclave from the rest of the West Bank (Mevo Horon) and a large part of the area was declared

a national park². Israel has deemed this area strategically important due to its proximity to the Tel Aviv - Jerusalem road. Today, this main highway, called Israel's Road No. 1, goes through the Latrun Enclave. The Separation Fence was built east of the enclave inside the West Bank, leaving the entire Latrun Enclave on the Israeli side of the Fence.

As can be seen in Map 1, The Green Line is a double border in this area, with the area between the borders marking the pre-1967 no-man's land. The Mevo Horon settlement (in blue) is strategically located to close the Enclave off to Palestinians. The new Beit Nuba village is where some of the displaced and dispossessed refugees reside; they are unable to return to their lands in the



Map 1: The train route through the Latrun Enclave (Courtesy of Peace Now)

² "Remembering Imwas, Yalu and Bayt Nuba", ed. Amar Aghbaria, Zochrot 2007, (Hebrew and Arabic), available at: http://www.zochrot.org/images/latrun_booklet_web2.pdf

Enclave. The separation fence (marked in black), annexes, *de facto*, the Enclave into Israel. Road No. 1 to Jerusalem (in light gray) crosses the Green Line, but the train route (bridges are marked in red and tunnels in black and white) cross deeper, cutting through the Latrun Enclave.

When the Israeli military planning committee discussed objections filed by the Palestinian land owners in July

of 2005, alternative routes to the A1 train route included one option further south, through the Ayalon Valley, within the borders of the State of Israel. The committee decided to dismiss this option because of possible harm to the Ayalon Valley, which would “raise severe objections [by preservation bodies] that would halt all development for many years and perhaps cancel the plan altogether”.



Bridge 6, already built, crosses into the Latrun Enclave

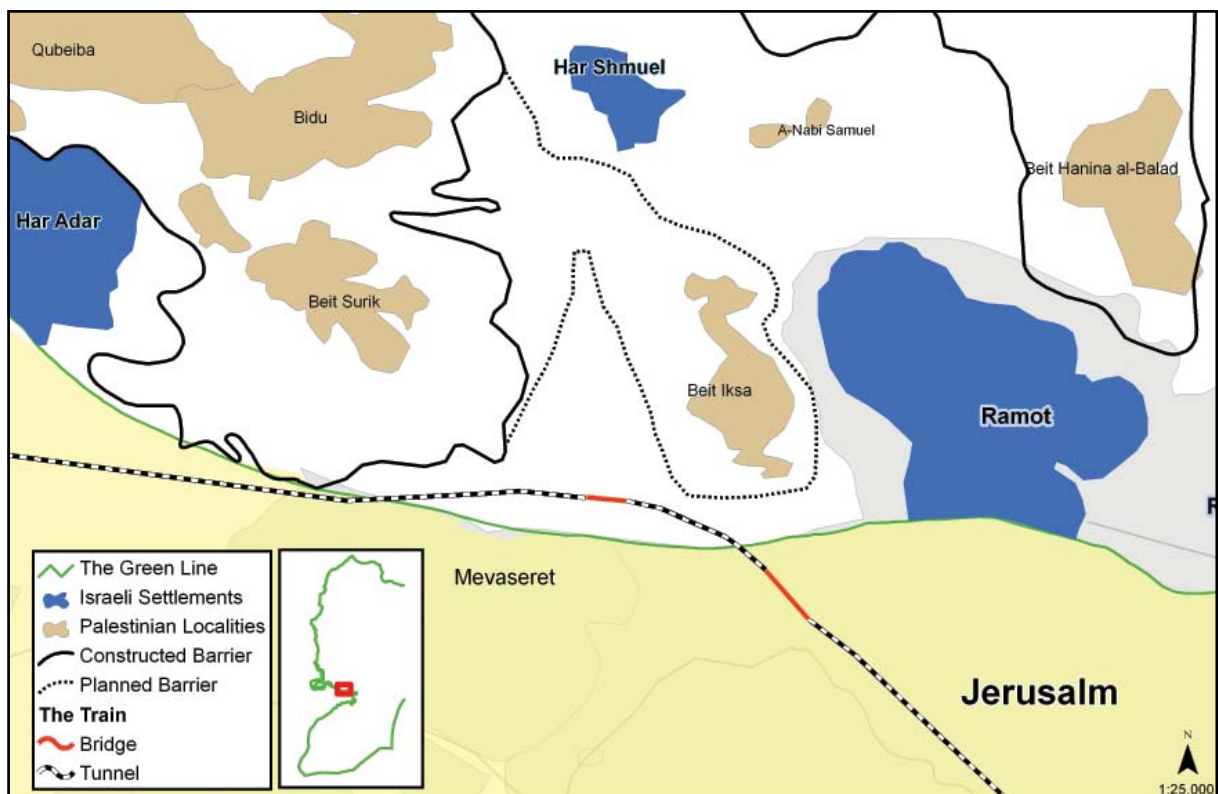
1.3 Crossing the Green Line: Cedars Valley

The second area in which the route crosses into the occupied West Bank is near the Palestinian villages of Bet Surik and Bet Ikksa (See Map 2). The route in this area consists of a tunnel – the end of the long tunnel (Tunnel 3) that comes out into Arazim (or Cedars) Valley, a bridge (bridge no. 9) over the valley and a second tunnel (Tunnel 3A).

The train route in this area passes just 250-300 meters (850-1000 feet) north of the Green Line border into the occupied area. This infringement was not in the original plans. The original route went through the north-most outskirts of the nearby Israeli town of Mevaseret Zion, with the tunnels opening to a bridge over Cedars Valley next to the houses of the Israeli neighborhood of Reches Halilim (lit. “Flutes Ridge”), which borders the Green Line. (Some of the houses in its outskirts are even beyond the Green Line.)

The Israeli residents of Mevaseret filed objections to this plan, and demanded that the tunnel portals be moved at least 500 meters further north. Three fast trains an hour, going in and out of the mountain, would probably create a serious noise pollution, destroy the view of the natural valley and consequently would decrease property value. The residents’ petition was not accepted in full: the new “intermediary” route, adopted mid-2005, is not as close to the neighborhood as originally planned, but is still visible from its houses.

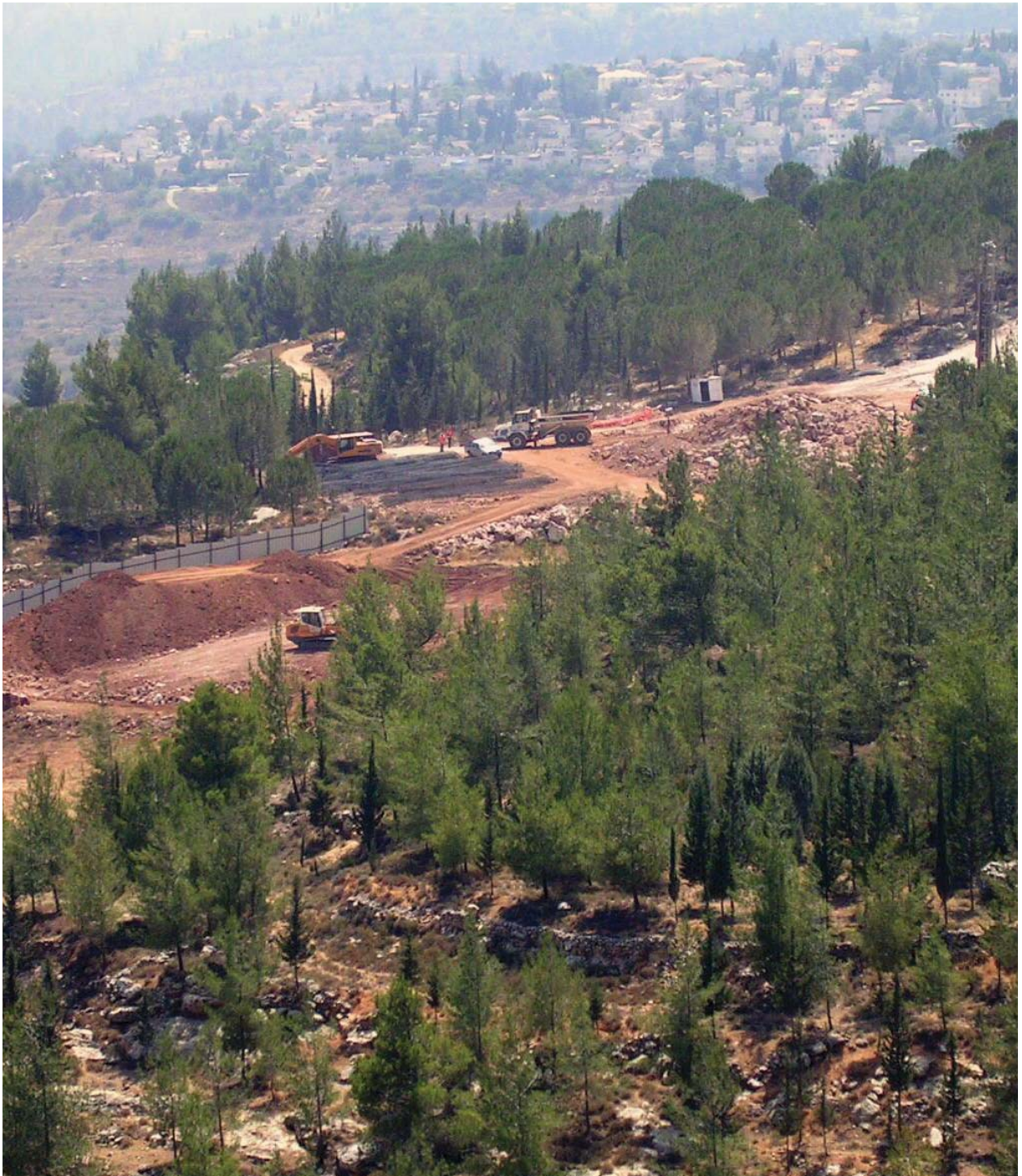
The new route cuts into the lands of the neighboring Palestinian villages of Bet Ikksa and Bet Surik, which lie on opposite sides of Cedars Valley. Additionally, access roads to all tunnel portals and waste removal tunnels, needed during the construction phase, will take up more agricultural lands and cross into village residents’ private lands.



Map 2: The train route crosses the Green Line into Cedars Valley (Courtesy of Peace Now)

These two villages, at the west entrance to Jerusalem, have traditionally used Jerusalem as the main municipal center for services and as a market for their goods and labor. When cut off from access to the city by the closures and then the separation fence, the main remaining livelihood of residents is based on agriculture, primarily tending olive and plum orchards. But the construction of the fence has also deprived

both communities of access to a large percentage of their farm land: some of it was confiscated for the construction of the fence and some remained on its other side. More lands would be lost to the new train, some for the construction, some for the actual route, and some, the residents fear, would remain inaccessible to the farmers for “security” considerations, forbidding access to a wide area near the train route.



The construction site in Cedars Valley, with the Israeli town Mevaseret in the background, a view from Beit Ikksa.

1.3.1 Beit Surik: Israeli justice

Beit Surik became famous in May of 2004, when its petition against the Government of Israel in the Israeli Supreme Court won an unprecedented victory, forcing the state to tear down the separation fence built in the area and rebuild it in a way that would minimize the harm to the local residents:³

The Court found that the “relationship between the injury to the local inhabitants and the security benefit from the construction of the separation fence along the route, as determined by the military commander, is not proportionate. ...Here are the facts: more than 13,000 farmers are cut off from thousands of dunams of their land and from tens of thousands of trees which are their livelihood, and which are located on the other side of the

separation fence. No attempt was made to seek out and provide them with substitute land, despite our oft repeated proposals on that matter. [...] The route of the separation fence severely violates their right of property and their freedom of movement. Their livelihood is severely impaired. The difficult reality of life from which they have suffered (due, for example, to high unemployment in that area) will only become more severe.”

However, the same Supreme Court ruling also reaffirmed the authority of the Israeli military commander to build the fence inside the occupied area, and the village of Beit Surik still lost about 31% of its lands to the fence even after the route’s correction.



View from Beit Surik towards the separation fence

³ “Beit Sourik Village Council v. The Government of Israel”, HCJ 2056/04, Israel: Supreme Court, 30 May 2004, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4374ac594.html>



Beit Surik cultivated land near the planned construction

There are about 4000 residents in the village, and the occupation determines their work options. Following the construction of the separation fence, day workers could no longer work in Jerusalem, and they were left unemployed. About 30% of the village's livelihood relies on agriculture: they grow plums, olives, and hot-houses tomatoes and cucumbers. For many villagers agricultural work was no longer an option since access to much of the village's land was cut off by the fence.

In a meeting with the Beit Surik Council in July 2010, they noted that the new train will cut off access to more lands "in the name of 'security' for the train". New confiscation orders which have already been handed out suggest that there may be another change planned in the route of the fence. Council members

estimated that about 90-100 families in the village will be affected. But the estimates are all tentative, since the village council has received no plans, no formal notices. Although the construction of the railroad on village lands is underway, the residents and owners receive very little information from the occupation authorities:

"We do not know where the train route will be. We have received no notice. The Israeli army throws papers over the fence." According to the head of the Beit Surik Council, Abu Fares (Ahmad Omr AlJamal), residents found military confiscation orders tossed near the fence on March 27th 2010. The plans were never formally delivered. "They said these were plans from 2004, but they never informed us. They make all these decisions between themselves, the army and the government".

August 2010

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to declare our objection to the proposed route of the Jerusalem - Tel Aviv train line, which passes through land belonging to the village of Beit Surik, in the district of Jerusalem in the West Bank.

The proposed route of the train line passes through agricultural land that was deemed necessary by the Supreme Court of Israel during the construction of the Apartheid Wall to preserve as part of Beit Surik for the wellbeing of the village population.

This train line would bring inconvenience and suffering to the village in terms of the lost land and in noise pollution, without any benefits, as the train is to connect areas that village residents, with West Bank ID cards, are not allowed to enter.

We understand that people of the Israeli settlement Mevaseret Zion appealed in 2005 to distance the planned route from their habitation due to noise pollution. It is unacceptable that the people of Beit Surik should suffer this noise pollution in their place.

Beit Surik was successful in challenging the route of the Apartheid Wall that surrounds the village, when the Supreme Court of Israel ruled in 2004 that “the route of sections of a wall in the area of Judea and Samaria (‘the West Bank’) be changed in order to avoid unnecessary hardship to the local Palestinian population.”

The village nonetheless lost 3000 dunams of land through the construction of the Wall. The proposed train line threatens to take away even more.

Beit Surik is one of a handful of Palestinian villages to have successfully challenged the course of the Apartheid Wall in the Israeli court, and we believe that planning this railway on the land recovered by the village stands as a direct challenge to that court ruling.

Moreover, under International Law, the Israeli state has no right to determine the use of land in Areas B and C of the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank. This proposal seems intended as a broader demonstration that despite the ruling of Israeli courts against the Israeli government, the Israeli government will nonetheless flaunt both international and its own laws to colonize Palestinian land as part of the Zionist project.

We urge that this proposal be modified. The train line should be constructed on land that has already been appropriated from West Bank villages, now lying on the Israeli side of the wall, as the service is exclusively for Israeli use and benefit. We, the people of Beit Surik, do not want the train line to be built on our land. We see as fundamentally important that the people of the world support our right to decide on the use of our own land and help us change the route of this train line.

Signed:

Village Council

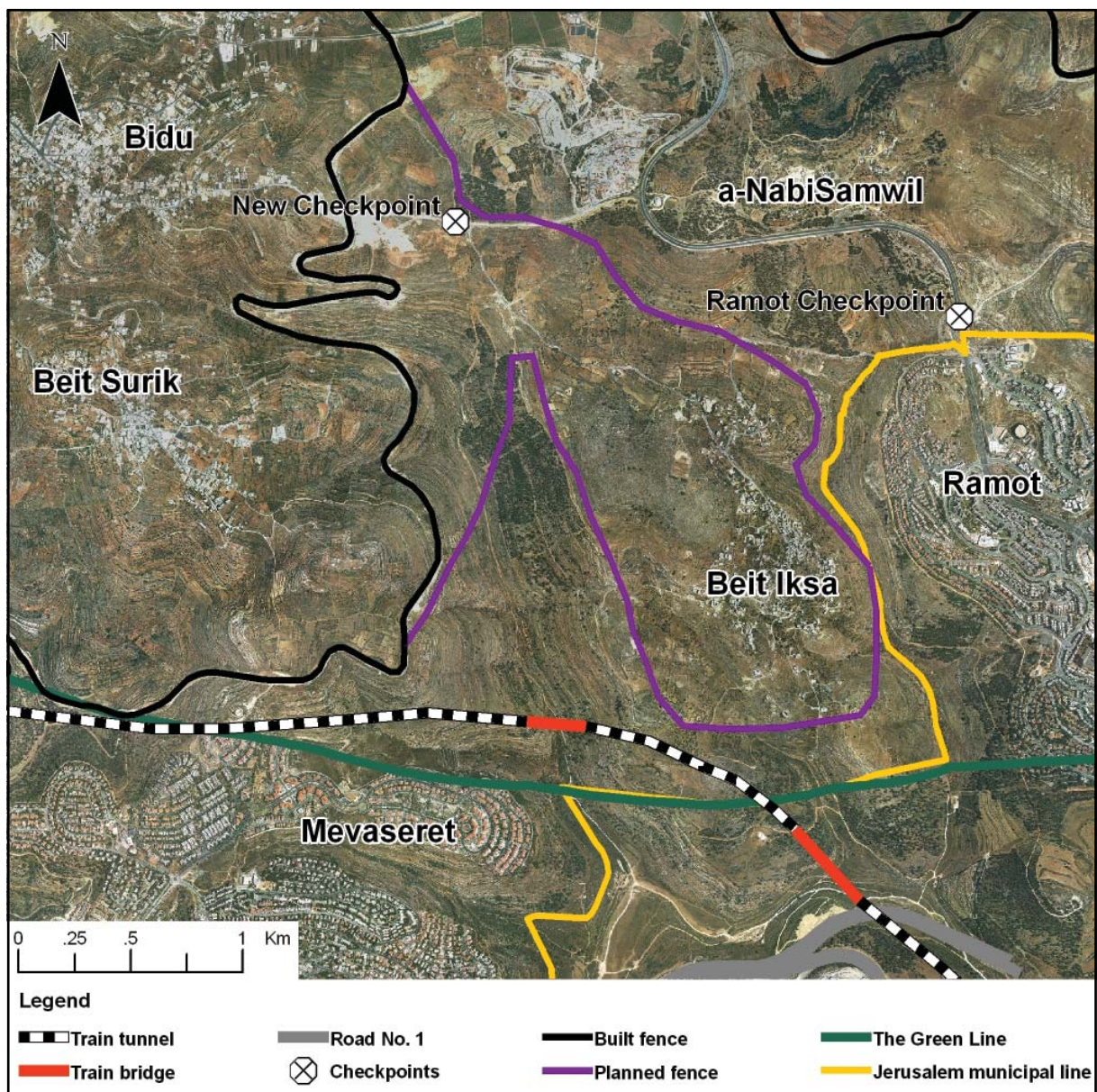
Beit Surik, Palestine

1.3.2 Beit Iksa: a community under attack

Beit Iksa is a small Palestinian village, surrounded by olive groves in the hills overlooking the entrance to Jerusalem. Its proximity to Road No. 1, to the new train bridge and to the main entrance to Jerusalem has created “an attack on the village on all fronts” as described by the Head of the local council, Abu Shadi. “We do not know where to start: the checkpoint,

the fence, settlement expansion on our lands, settler attacks, soldiers in the valley. The train is just one part of it all”, he said in an interview in July of 2010.

The separation fence in the area was planned to separate the village from the rest of the West Bank, including the neighboring Palestinian villages of Beit



Map 3: The planned and “temporary” separation fences near Beit Iksa (Courtesy of Shai Efrati and Peace Now)

⁴ “Between Fences: The Enclaves Created by the Separation Barrier”, Bimkom 2006, available at: <http://eng.bimkom.org/Index.asp?ArticleID=91&CategoryID=125&Page=1>

Surik and Bidu, leaving it trapped between the fence and the Green Line border in the “Seam Zone”, on the “Israeli side” of the separation fence⁴. Like the council of Beit Surik, Beit Ikxa’s council has appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court against the planned route of the fence and the devastation it would bring. Their appeal was rejected in September 2006, after the Israeli government announced a change in route of the fence in the area. The changed route would not trap Beit Ikxa in the Seam Zone; it would be built between Beit Ikxa and the neighboring Israeli settlement Ramot, which is a neighborhood of Jerusalem.

The route of the separation fence was changed due to an on-going debate among Israeli authorities which has nothing to do with the Palestinian residents’ appeals. On the one hand, the Israeli Police and the General Security Services wanted to separate the village from Jerusalem, in order to protect the city from what they described as a possible influx of unauthorized Palestinian workers to Jerusalem through Beit Ikxa, which they saw as a security threat. On the other hand, together with neighboring Israeli residents in Ramot and Mevaseret, the Ministry of Defense saw a security threat in having the fence too close to the settlement’s houses, the road and the bridge. In their view, to keep terrorists and snipers away, the fence had to be built on higher ground on the other side of the village, leaving Beit Ikxa on the Israeli side.

The Israeli government decided in April 2006 that the route of the fence should separate Beit Ikxa from Ramot and Jerusalem, but this fence was never built. Instead, in July 2009, a “temporary” fence was built separating Beit Ikxa and Cedars’ Valley from the neighboring Palestinian villages. On the other side of the village,

the valley between Beit Ikxa and Ramot is monitored by surveillance cameras and patrolled by army jeeps. It operates as a “virtual fence,” with no one allowed to cross it: and farmers with land in the area are often prevented from working their lands.



The new Beit Ikxa Checkpoint

In June 2010, without prior notice, the only road from Beit Ikxa to the Ramot Checkpoint was closed by the army; the only entrance to the village today is through a special military checkpoint. Only Palestinians who are registered as living in the village are allowed to cross the Beit Ikxa checkpoint and enter the village. In July 2010, trucks carrying supplies to the village were not let through. The village, once a suburb of Jerusalem and a short walking distance from the Jerusalem neighborhood of Ramot, is now a driving distance of about 35 km (22 miles) away from the city. The only way to get to Jerusalem from the village now is by using back roads leading through the Beit Ikxa checkpoint to Bidu and then to Ramallah and the Qalandia checkpoint. Of the 2200 villagers, about 40% have an Israeli residency status since they are considered residents of East Jerusalem. Many of them find that they have to leave the village and are relocating to Jerusalem.

Beit Iksa has lost about 60% of its lands to nearby settlements and the separation fence⁵. As with all Area C villages (areas of the West Bank which are under full Israeli control), only the built area in the village, about 600 dunams (approx. 148 acres), is approved for development. 2200 dunams (approx. 543 acres) were taken up for settlement construction. A whole new housing project and a new playground for children are presently being built in Ramot, on Beit Iksa lands. According to the village council, the new memorial for the victims of September 11, built next to the Green Line, is also on Beit Iksa lands.

In July 2010, 300 dunams (approx. 74 acres) of the village olive orchards near Ramot were set on fire. Although the entire area is under continuous surveillance by the Israeli army, the perpetrators were neither stopped nor caught. The village called the

Israeli fire brigade, but it never arrived.

By the time of our meeting with the village council in July 2010, they had received no written plan for the new train; they even described receiving misleading information from the Israeli authorities. The construction has just begun on the mountainside next to the village, and not on the side they had anticipated. Olive groves near the construction area are still accessible to the village farmers but only on donkeys or by foot; lands confiscated for the construction made the whole area inaccessible to vehicles. The residents fear that once the train is built, the entire area will become inaccessible to them for “security” reasons. This is an area of about 1500 dunams (approx. 370 acres), and the residents are concerned about the olive trees in it which are ancient olive trees, some of them dating back to Roman times.



Olive orchard in Beit Iksa near the west entrance to the city of Jerusalem

⁵ Case study report: “Israel hits Beit Iksa, Nabi Samuel and Beit Surik with new military order in favor of the Segregation Wall”, Monitoring Israeli Colonizing activities in the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem (ARIJ) and Land Research Center (LRC), January 17, 2007, http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=980



Abu Shadi, head of the council of Beit Ikksa, with land confiscated from the village

Abu Shadi owns about 30 dunams (7.5 acres) near the construction area. These are ancient olive trees, dating back to Roman times. He found flag markers all around his land, in preparation for the construction of the train route. He took these down. Some

of his land had been confiscated in the past for the Ramot checkpoint, which is no longer accessible to the village residents. He also owns about 120 dunams (30 acres) in the neighboring village of Nabi a Samwil, which he cannot even visit.



Hashem Hababa, mathematics teacher in the village, showing the construction area

Hashem Hababa was picking olives on his land in the valley between the village and Ramot. An army jeep approached, and the soldiers pointed a gun at him and said they would shoot him if he did not go back to the village. He was treated as if he was a day worker trying to enter Jerusalem without the proper permits, and nothing he said changed their minds.

In the area blocked for the train, Hashem and his immediate family (14 people) own 5

dunams (1.2 acres), and his extended family (about 350 people) owns about 200 dunams (approx. 50 acres) of olive groves. His family has also lost land for the Ramot checkpoint. He explains that every family lost some: if not for the train, then for the playground; if not for the playground, then in the valley; and if not in the valley then for the new settlement house; and the rest they have already lost to the wall. "If we appeal to the Israeli courts," he says, "and if we win the trial – the Israelis will just change the law... But we will never lose hope."

1.4 Why go through the West Bank?

The two places where the train route crosses the Green Line border into the area occupied in 1967 may seem small in size and politically insignificant, but they both have immense adverse impact on the daily lives, health, livelihood, property and future of the Palestinian residents in their vicinity (many of whom are already internally displaced persons, driven away from their homes following the war of 1967).

The first deviation of the train route into the occupied land in the Latrun Enclave was justified as the shortest path; the second in Cedars Valley actually lengthens the route of the train. In the Latrun case, the use of Palestinian land was justified by the planning committee using the claim that the Palestinians had already been expelled from the land; in the Cedars Valley case it was claimed that a tunnel and a bridge would not

really prevent the Palestinian land owners from continuing to use their land. In both cases, the separation fence has annexed the entire train route into the Israeli side, and cut the two areas from the rest of the West Bank.

In both cases, the Israeli planners decided to move the route into the military occupation's jurisdiction to avoid having to negotiate a compromise with Israeli citizens. In both cases, the objections of Israeli citizens were seen as a great obstacle, and the objections of Palestinian residents were readily dismissed by the Israeli military planning board. In both cases, preserving the Israeli landscape and property value was chosen over preserving Palestinian land and livelihood and upholding basic rights of Palestinians, thus violating international law.



The east end of Bridge 6, at the point of entry into Tunnel 1, deep inside the Latrun Enclave

Part 2

Corporate involvement in the A1 train line



The entrance to the main logistics base for the construction of Section C of the railway, October 2010

2.1 Foreign know-how and necessary expertise

The overall plan includes what would become the longest, highest bridge in Israel, as well as the longest tunnel, requiring the use of tunnel boring machines never used in the country before. The Israeli contractors for these sections were therefore required to partner with foreign contractors with the relevant know how and experience. The foreign knowledge brought in for these long tunnels is crucial for the project, and it was a formal requirement in some of the contracts. The machinery for these tunnels is also unavailable in Israel, and has to be built specially for this project by international suppliers.

We have identified a number of international corporations that have been involved in the project, including two governmental companies: Deutsche Bahn and Moscow Metrostroy, as well as private European firms such as Impresa Pizzarotti and HBI Haerter. A major partner contracted to do the tunneling, the Austrian Alpine Bau, chose to back out of the project before construction had started. As of October 2010, preparatory works for the tunneling of the long tunnels in the occupied area are underway, but the special tunnel boring machines (TBMs) have not yet arrived and the foreign companies contracted to do the tunneling have not started working yet.



The Italian firm Pizzarotti & C. S.p.A. was contracted to dig the tunnel into Cedars Valley using specialized tunnel boring machines. Picture taken near the portal of Tunnel 2, in the main logistics base for Section C, Sha'ar Hagay, October 2010.

2.2 Status of construction

The rail project has encountered countless setbacks since the beginning of planning in 1995. Objections to the route came from environmental organizations as well as from local Israeli and Palestinian residents along the route. After dozens of planning committee discussions and court sessions and two highly critical State Controller reports, the original deadline

was delayed by almost ten years, to 2016-7, and the original cost assessment doubled to about 6 billion NIS (1.67 billion USD). Only recently has the construction of contested sections of the project begun on the ground. The project has been divided into four sections; of these, one has been completed, and in two others the construction has begun.



Preparation digging for Tunnel 2 in the main logistics base for Section C, Sha'ar Hagay, January 2010.

2.3 Planners and consultants

As with any national infrastructure project of such magnitude, dozens of companies have been contracted for the planning, management and construction work. The following list includes some of the main companies contracted as planners and consultants for the entire route:

Amy Metom Engineers and Consultants

A private Israeli firm which was contracted by Israeli Railways to plan the entire route (A1).

DB International, of the Deutsche Bahn Group

A firm which belongs to the Federal Republic of Germany, contracted by Israel Railways to do the engineering for the rails electrification project, a \$550 million project, between the years 2002 and 2013. The company was also specifically contracted to plan the electrification of the A1 train line by Amy Metom, the line planners. During 2005 the company submitted specific independent reports for Israel Railways comparing the feasibility of different route options for the A1 route. They recommended the present route.

Parsons Brinckerhoff

An American firm which provided the Israeli ministry of finance with financial management oversight services of Israel Railways development programs from October 2004 to June 2009. In late 2005, as part of these services, Parsons Brinckerhoff inspected and monitored the planning and approval processes of alternative routes for the A1 train line. The company has also monitored and approved the various tenders issued for contractors for various sections of this project.

Parsons Brinckerhoff was purchased in September 2009 by Balfour Beatty plc, a public British firm traded on the London stock exchange.

HBI Haerter

A Swiss engineering firm which provided consulting and planning services to Amy Metom during 2006 concerning the tunnels ventilation in the A1 line.

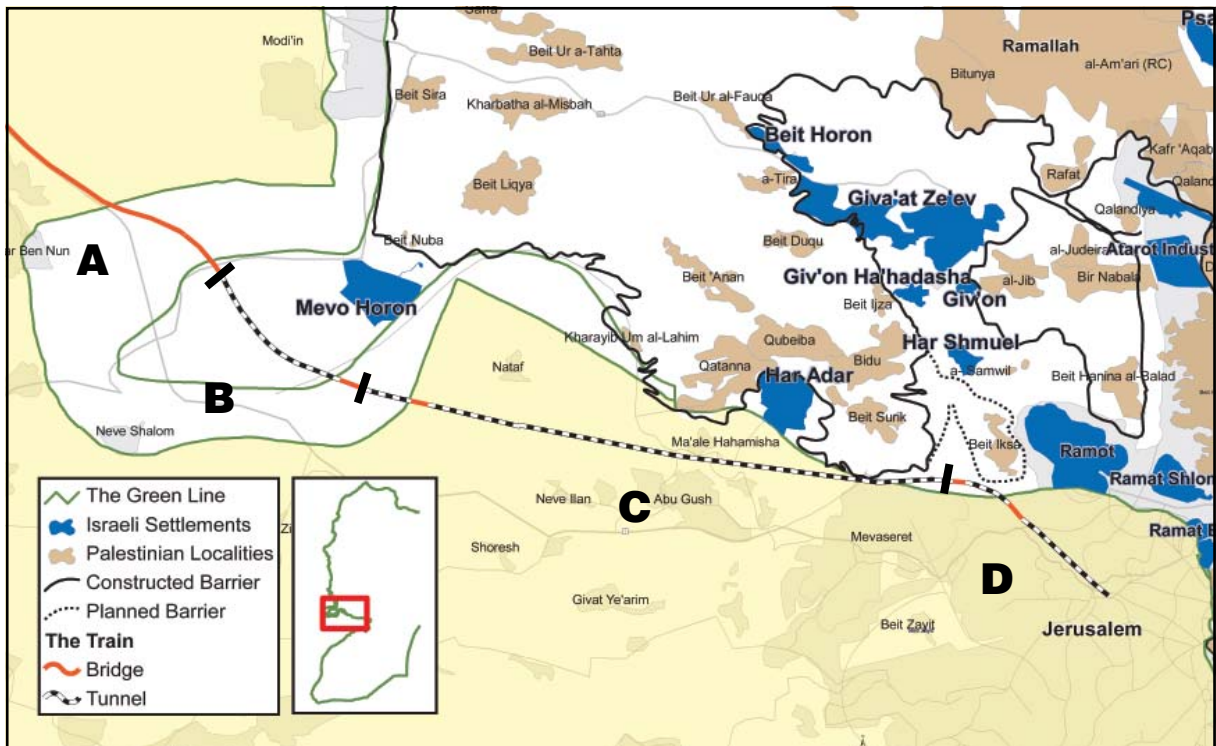
A.B. Plan

A private Israeli firm, contracted by the Israel Ministry of Transportation during 2008 to check the economic feasibility of the A1 train line.

The sign is a large rectangular board with a white background and blue and red text. At the top, it reads 'משרד התחבורה' (Ministry of Transportation) and 'רכבת ישראל בע"מ-חטיבת תכנון ופיתוח' (Israel Railways - Planning and Development Division). Below this, it states 'הקמת קו מהיר תל-אביב ירושלים (A1): קטע מודיעין-לטרון ביצוע עבודות גישור מק"מ 34,250 עד ק"מ 35,825'. The central part of the sign features a photograph of a red and white train on tracks. Below the photo, there is a small red box with white text: 'א.ג.ש. קיימים ביטוח קידוח והלום בבטון 08-9259142 057-77415467'. The bottom section of the sign lists three companies with their phone numbers: 'ברן הקמת פרויקטים בע"מ' (Baran Projects) with numbers 08-9259142 and 08-9259146; 'אמי מתום בע"מ' (Amy Metom) with numbers 04-8669555 and 04-8669777; and 'מנרב' (Minrav) with numbers 08-8516281 and 08-6266. The sign also includes logos for the Ministry of Transportation and Israel Railways.

A sign on Bridge 6, in the Latrun Enclave, specifying the companies involved in the construction of the bridge: Baran Projects (management and supervision), Amy Metom (planning), and Minrav Engineering and Construction (construction).

2.4 Section by section: what is being built and by whom



Map 4: The four sections of the Tel Aviv- Jerusalem A1 train route (Courtesy of Peace Now)

Section A: Section A is mostly inside the internationally recognized borders of the state of Israel. It stretches from the Ben Gurion airport to the Ayalon Valley, ending at the Ayalon Bridge (bridge number 6). In its last 150 meters, the bridge crosses into the Latrun Enclave, beyond the Green Line. This section has already been completed.

The Latrun railway bridge (bridge no. 6) has been built by the publicly traded Israeli Minrav Group. A second company, the Baran Group, also traded on the Tel Aviv stock exchange, has provided the project management for this section.

Section B: This section starts inside the occupied Latrun Enclave, and continues with a 3.5 km (2.1 mile)-long double tunnel (Tunnel 1); almost all of it lies in the 1967 occupied area. This section ends outside the enclave, with Bridge 7 in Sha'ar Hagay. The construction of this section has not begun, in fact the tenders for this section were the last to be published, and the construction companies which won the contracts were just recently announced.

The same Minrav Group that that built Bridge 6 was contracted to continue it with the Latrun tunnel. The partnership



Bridge 6, with a sign of the Minrav Group

that won the contract for section B, for about 660 million NIS (183 million USD), also includes the Russian OJSC Moscow Metrostroy, a company owned by the Russian Federation, which would provide the necessary experience in tunneling of such long tunnels.

Section C: This is the longest section in the route, about 30 km (18.6 miles) long, and it has been described as the most complicated. It starts in a logistics base and an industrial complex in Sha'ar Hagay, inside the no-man zone of the Latrun Enclave. The base would include residences for the workers in section C, a dedicated cement plant, storage areas for waste from the dig, and facilities for the special tunneling machinery.

The route in section C includes Tunnel 2 which leads from Sha'ar Hagay to Ytla Valley. Then it crosses two bridges over the valley and back into the mountain to an

11.5km (7 miles) long tunnel (Tunnel 3), which would become the longest tunnel in the country. Tunnel 3 crosses the Green Line border as it exits into Cedars Valley, and its portal in the valley is inside the Palestinian territory, near Beit Surik. This tunnel requires the construction of a network of access roads for the special tunnel boring machines and for the removal of vast amounts of dirt and waste from the tunnel, leading away from the portal in Cedars Valley, all inside the occupied area and on Palestinian land.

The contract to construct this section was awarded in October 2007 to a partnership of two companies, the Israeli private firm Shapir Civil and Marine Engineering, and the Austrian Alpine Bau (for its knowhow and experience in TBM tunneling). This contract is worth over 2 billion NIS. The construction of this section has been halted for years, due to insistent objections of green and environmental organizations



A sign at the entrance of the main logistics base of Section C, showing an aerial photo of the area. The base will include housing, storage and an industrial complex at the west portal of Tunnel 2.

in Israel. The alternatives offered by the environmentalists were rejected by the government, and in January 2010 work restarted in Sha'ar Hagay. Meanwhile, Alpine has backed down from the project, and a new tunneling expert replaced it, bringing in its international expertise – the private Italian firm Pizzarotti & C. S.p.A. The two companies have formed the new partnership S.P.R. Construction, Shapir Pizzarotti Railways, and construction has begun in preparation for the arrival of the TBM machines later in 2011.

Supervision of quality assurance and quality control for S.P.R. Construction is provided by the Israeli private firm Yugan Engineering. Another private Israeli firm, Eldad Spivak Engineering has won the contract for the management of sections B and C for Israel Railways. The contract includes supervision of the plans and contractors, coordination and management of the construction and quality control.

Section D: Starting in Cedars Valley, in the occupied area facing Beit Iksa, section D includes Bridge no. 9 over the valley and Tunnel 3A which goes back into the mountain, all of which are still in the occupied

area. Then it continues with another bridge and another tunnel, Tunnel 4, which leads into the city of Jerusalem, to an underground train station in Binyanei Ha'uma. For this section, all the contractors have been chosen, and works are well under way.


The tunnels in the section are short, and do not require TBMs or foreign expertise. A private Israeli firm, Hofrey Hasharon, has been contracted to build parts of section D, including digging Tunnel 3A from Cedars Valley.



A sign in the entrance of the construction site for Section C, October 2010



Machinery with the logo of Shapir Engineering, in the construction site for Section C, January 2010



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