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## **Separation fence to be built along a 12 km. route west of Qalqiliya and Tulkarem**

By Eitan Rabin, 11/12/1995

The Israeli security establishment and the Ministry of Public Security have decided on the construction of a separation fence along a 12 km. route west of Qalqilya and Tulkarem. The fence will be built according to the proposal of the Public Security Minister, Mr. Moshe Shahal, who came up with the idea together with officers of the Israel Defence Forces. In the upcoming weeks, groundworks for the construction of the fence and the planning of its route will begin until a tender for its installation is established.

Chief of the General Staff, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, presented the plan for the separation fence construction some two weeks ago in a special meeting, convened by the Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Shimon Peres, attended by Minister Shahal, Finance Minister, Avraham Shochat, the Commander of the Home Front Command, Major General Shmuel Arad, and other entities. In the meeting, the IDF representatives said that the fence would help – to a certain extent – to prevent security and criminal offences. In parts where there will not be a fence, mostly in places close to Arab housing, a wall will be erected as a barrier between the settlements.

The plan to construct the fence originated six months ago. At the time, in the preliminary deliberations, treasury representatives were averse to the plan owing to its high cost. Now it has been decided that with the implementation of the redeployment in the West Bank and the withdrawal from Tulkarm and Qalqiliya, which are close to Israeli population concentrations, the construction of the fence is required.

Security establishment sources estimate that the fence will lead to a considerable decrease in infiltrations and the extensive criminal activity, including theft of vehicles and other equipment transferred from Israel to the West Bank. The separation fence planners also hope it will help to increase control over the passage of laborers from the territories to Israel.

In the seam line settlements along the green line, the decision to construct the fence was received with satisfaction. Simultaneously with the construction of the fence, the IDF will step up its patrols along the seam line, and the Ministry of Public Security will augment the deployment of border Police units across the 88 settlements, called seam line settlements, following the staff work prepared by Major General Arad.

Yehudit Winkler adds: some 2000 inhabitants live in 20 seam line settlements in the area of Tulkarm. Their representatives have been holding discussions with the Ministry of Defence, the IDF and the Israel Border Police, centering on the demand for the creation of a physical barrier between them and Tulkarm. This means security fences, walls, electric fences and watchtowers. Furthermore, the settlements demand additional funds in order to purchase security vehicles, night vision devices, and for increasing the lighting in the settlements. Yair Madar, deputy head of the Lev HaSharon Regional Council, defines the prevailing feeling among the residents as that of mounting anxiety and uncertainty. Madar stresses that even during curfew periods Arab residents in their masses successfully infiltrated Israel on a daily basis.