

Ebtisam

From Deir Ballut

Ebtisam lives in the West Bank, in a village called Deir Ballut. Within the village, 200 houses are in Area C, controlled by Israel, and have demolition orders on them. On 2 June 2018 the decision to demolish these houses was frozen for six months, but no one wanted to continue work on their houses in this time for fear that it would be a waste of money and effort. Once a demolition order has been issued it can be very difficult to have it revoked. The army recently came and destroyed a cow barn at the edge of the village. The owners of the barn were only given notice of the demolition two days beforehand. Five months prior to that they destroyed a car wash.

The village is not allowed to build any wells. Ebtisam says this is because of nearby settlements that want access to the water and don't allow the Palestinian villagers to use it.

Because of the division of the West Bank into Areas A, B and C, there are many restrictions on travel routes, and Palestinians often find themselves stopped at checkpoints. Ebtisam would like her children to be safe, with no checkpoints to pass through. Every time her children head out of the house, Ebtisam is fearful that one of them will be shot by the army. She would rather they went to university abroad, where they would be safer than in Palestine. Most of the residents of Deir Ballut have to travel to nearby cities for jobs, and travel always comes with safety risks.

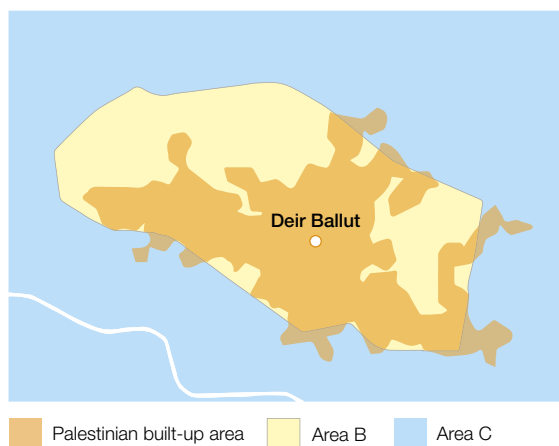
Ebtisam's 22-year-old daughter is often late for university lectures because of random checkpoints. She has to take photos of the checkpoints as evidence to explain the reason for being late. During the Second Intifada, a neighbour was pregnant with twins. She went into labour and was trying to travel to hospital when she was stopped at a checkpoint and held for six hours by the army. Both of the babies died as they were unable to receive the medical attention they needed.



Ebtisam lives only 15 kilometres from Tel Aviv in Israel, but because she is Palestinian, Ebtisam is forbidden from travelling there. This means that all international travel takes far longer. She says:

“I am in love with freedom.”

Ebtisam would like to live in a Palestine that is not divided into the three areas, where life would be much simpler.



Palestinian built-up area
 Area B
 Area C

Settlement – a place where Jewish Israelis live in Palestinian Territory (see the Israeli settlers case study)

Demolition order – legal notification that a building can be demolished at any time

Checkpoint – a place where Israeli soldiers or border police inspect documents and search people