

Baghdad : This Wall is their Grave

Stop the walls; stop the occupation!

By [BRussells Tribunal](#)

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Plans for Al-Adhamiyah confirm that the US occupation and its puppets in Iraq can build nothing but open-air prisons. It will fail

No military strategy can impose on the Iraqi people an occupation it overwhelmingly refuses. Its resistance is national and continues

What kind of government walls-in its own people? One desperate and illegitimate, tied to the fate of a defeated occupation

The latest US ploy to subjugate Baghdad — exemplified in plans to wall-in the district of Al-Adhamiyah — reveals in clarity the Great Lie of the US-led occupation of Iraq. This is nothing more than the implementation of apartheid and sectarianism by a foreign military police state, aimed to break the will of Iraqis who refuse to cede their country, its resources and future to foreign powers and their local lackeys.

Neither this tactic nor others will defeat the heroic resistance of the Iraqi people, which is borne both of situation and history, culture and progress. Sectarianism and apartheid cannot break the geopolitical unity of Iraq, which is a historical, social, economic and cultural reality.

The writing is already on the wall: the US-led occupation is bankrupt, morally, politically, economically and militarily; Maliki's puppet government exposed as the desperate, mercenary, sectarian, seditious, incompetent, corrupt and backward cabal that it is.

Apartheid, not protection

While US troops and contractors work in haste by night, and under military cover, to wall-in “selected” neighbourhoods in Baghdad, Maliki says one thing and his advisors another. Confronted by the ignominy of the similarity between the barricades his government shunts the Iraqi people behind and the vast Zionist offensive fortification splitting occupied Palestine, Maliki backtracked, saying there are “other ways to protect” Baghdad.

But these walls — vast concrete blocks that the US occupation is manufacturing at a rate of 2000 per week — continue to be constructed and have nothing to do with protection and everything to do with instituting a sectarian division of Baghdad ahead of plans to divide the whole of Iraq along sectarian lines.

By plain logic, when the occupation builds barriers in Iraq it imposes the existence of sectarian or ethnic differences. This sectarianism was brought with the US occupation and is a keystone of its strategy. That Baghdad and Iraq continue to be united in the heart of the population is a defeat for the occupation. Walls are imposed to break this unity, while at the same time they are proof of the failure and despair of the occupation and its puppets.

Not only immoral, but illegal under international law

The option of general imprisonment is not a new strategy, nor limited to Al-Adhamiyah. Al-Dawra, Al-Ghazaliyah, Al-Amiriya, Al-Amel and Al-Adl — all in Baghdad — are among 10-30 other Baghdad neighbourhoods slated to be sealed to the outside world, joining Tel Afar, Fallujah, Al-Qaim, Haditha, Samarra, Hit, Al-Khalidiyah, Yathreb and Al-Ratba as besieged “gated communities”, leaving hundreds of thousands of people under de facto house arrest and whole cities, towns and districts in de facto solitary confinement.

“Public order” and the exigencies of “security” cannot be used as justification for ghettoising whole neighbourhoods, towns and cities when the US-led invasion of Iraq was illegal, the subsequent occupation illegal, the puppet government but a furtherance of those illegalities, and current US military tactics but an attempt to quash the legal resistance of Iraqis to colonialism, occupation and aggression in violation of their right to self-determination.[\[i\]](#)

International humanitarian and human rights law prohibits collective punishment, mass civilian imprisonment, and grave violations of rights to freedom of movement.[\[ii\]](#) Occupying powers are also prohibited from engineering demographic changes in occupied countries under the laws of war. Forcible division of the population of Iraq — whether nationally or locally — is a war crime.[\[iii\]](#)

Plans for Al-Adhamiyah reveal other more nefarious aims common to plans to wall-in other Baghdad communities: Al-Adhamiyah is a historic bastion of culture, science, progress, and resistance to colonialism and imperialism. It is a centre of the national sentiment from which has emerged a sustained popular resistance to occupation. Walling-in Al-Adhamiyah is prelude to a wave of assassinations, mass violations of human rights, and political ethnic cleansing.

Stop the walls; stop the occupation!

Despite four years of brutal military aggression, the United States refuses to understand that by definition the Iraqi resistance is the entire Iraqi population resisting occupation. This desperate bid to create ghettos that can be cleansed of that legal resistance is assured to fail, short of complete annihilation of the entire resisting national population.

With polls reporting that over 80 per cent of Iraqis refuse the occupation, the US and its sectarian puppets will have to pacify, imprison or kill over 18 million Iraqis to succeed. America’s destiny in Iraq is thus a destiny of being rejected. The US occupation should accept its defeat and get out.

Every past attempt to ghettoise, wall-in or collectively imprison a population — from Warsaw to Vietnam and Algeria, through South Africa and occupied Palestine — has failed morally and militarily. US plans for Al-Adhamiyah, and indeed the entirety of Iraq, will likewise end up in the rubbish bin of history.

We call on people of integrity and conscience — workers, lawyers, parliamentarians, syndicates, activists, militants and practitioners — to raise their voices in protest, disgust and action:

Stop the military funding.

Stop the walls.

Stop the torture.

Stop the rapes.

Stop the assassinations.

Stop the plunder.

Stop the lies.

Stop the impunity.

Stop the illegalities.

Stop the occupation.

Recognise the resistance!

The BRussells Tribunal Committee

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[i] The principle of self-determination of peoples is enshrined in the [United Nations Charter](#) and reaffirmed by UN General Assembly Resolution [2625](#) (XXV) of 24 October 1970, pursuant to which “Every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to [in that resolution] ... of their right to self-determination.” Article 1 common to the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) reaffirms the right of all peoples to self-determination, and lays upon state parties the obligation to promote the realisation of that right and to respect it, in conformity with the provisions of the UN Charter.

The Commission on Human Rights has routinely reaffirmed the legitimacy of struggling against occupation by all available means, including armed struggle (CHR Resolution No. 3 XXXV, 21 February 1979 and CHR Resolution No. 1989/19, 6 March 1989). Explicitly, UN General Assembly Resolution [37/43](#), adopted 3 December 1982: “Reaffirms the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle.” (See also UN General Assembly Resolutions [1514](#), [3070](#), [3103](#), [3246](#), [3328](#), [3382](#), [3421](#), [3481](#), [31/91](#), [32/42](#) and [32/154](#)).

Article 1, paragraph 4 of the [1st Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions](#), 1977, considers self-determination struggles as international armed conflict situations. [The Geneva Declaration on Terrorism](#) states: “As repeatedly recognised by the United Nations General Assembly, peoples who are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination have the right to use force to accomplish their objectives within the framework of international humanitarian law. Such lawful uses of force must not be confused with acts of international terrorism.”

In the exercise of their right to self-determination, peoples under colonial and alien

domination have the right “to struggle ... and to seek and receive support, in accordance with the principles of the Charter” and in conformity with the [Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States](#). It is in these terms that Article 7 of the [Definition of Aggression](#) (General Assembly Resolution [3314](#) (XXIX) of 14 December 1974) recognizes the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination.

See also [Only Resistance is Legal](#), by Hana Al Bayaty, Abdul Ilah Albayaty and Ian Douglas (05 October 2006).

[ii] On the prohibition of collective punishment, see Article 50 of [The Hague IV Regulations](#), 1907: “No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly and severally responsible”; Article 33, [The Fourth Geneva Convention](#), 1949: “Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited”; and Article 51, the [1st Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions](#), 1977.

On freedom of movement, Article 12, paragraph 1 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) provides that: “Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence.”

US plans to construct “gated communities” would also impede the exercise by Iraqis of the right to work, to health, to education and to an adequate standard of living as proclaimed in the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

[iii] The construction of walled-in districts and their associated regimes, by contributing to demographic changes in Iraq and potentially entrapping protected persons in dangerous locations, contravene Article 49, paragraphs 1 and 5 of [The Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in the Time of War](#), 1949, and as such — as violations of the laws of war — constitute war crimes.

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