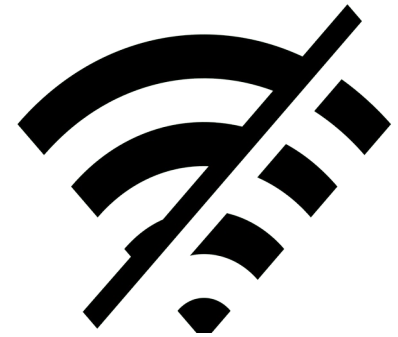


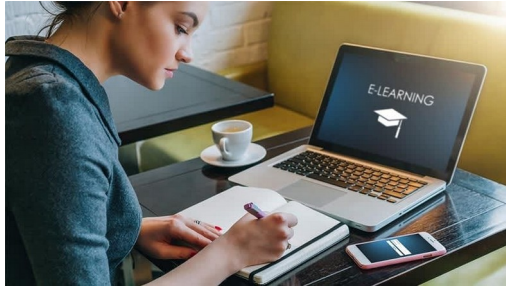
Palestinian ICT Infrastructure and Its Impact on Human and Digital Rights

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ISOC Palestine Chapter

IETF 118 Meeting
November 6, 2023



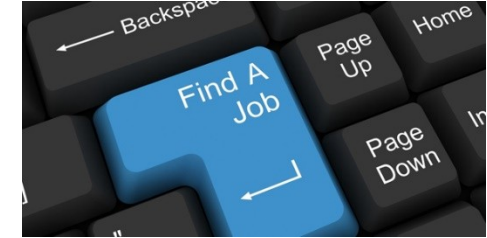
The Internet is a basic necessity in our life



Knowledge and education



Justice and government services



Jobs chances



Communication and freedom of expression



News



Health care services

The Internet as a human right

- The United Nations declared that access to the Internet and freedom of expression on the Internet are human rights

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10 March 2023

How Israel Controls the Palestinian ICT Infrastructure

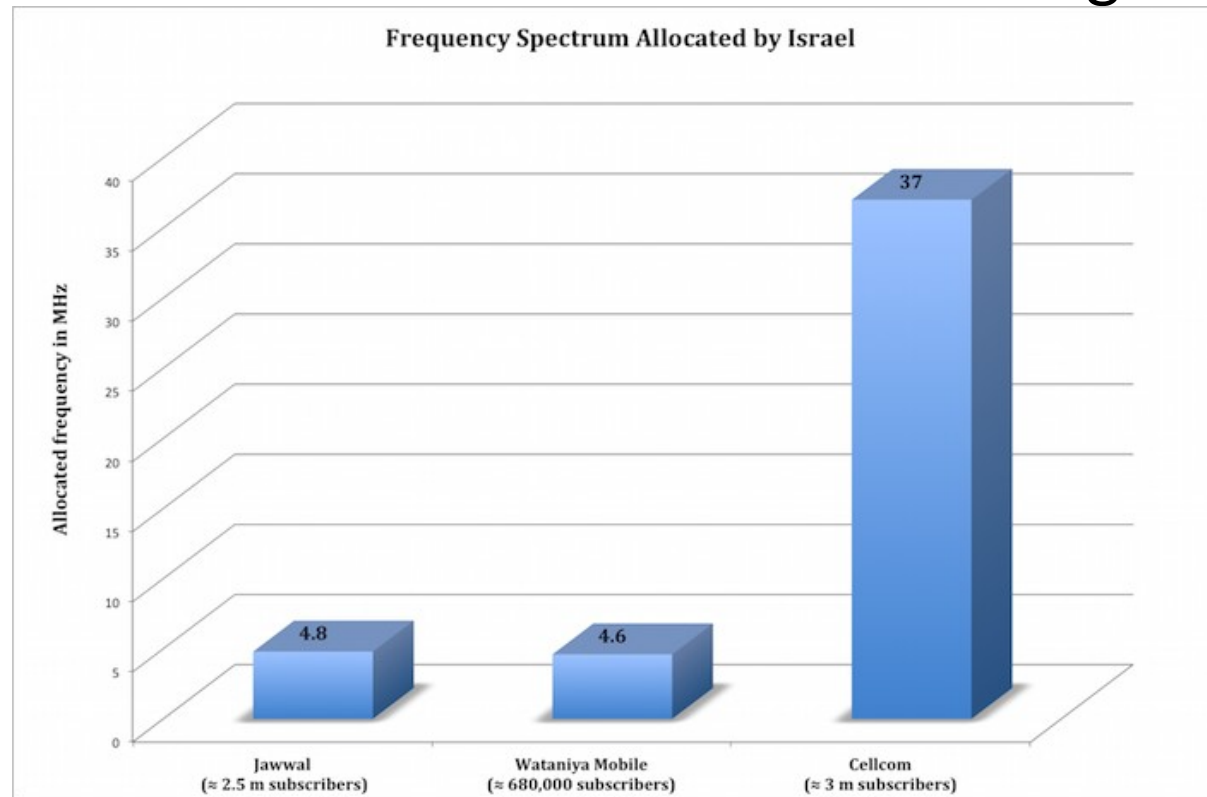
Palestinian Authority (PA) as per the Oslo Accords

- **Area A**, 18% under the control of the Palestinian Authority
- **Area B**, 22% fell under Palestinian civil control but joint Palestinian-Israeli security control
- **Area C**, 60% of the West Bank was under full Israeli control



1. Limiting Access to Frequencies & Technologies

- Israel restricts Palestinian access to the electromagnetic sphere



<https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/ict-the-shackled-engine-of-palestines-development/>

1. Limiting Access to Frequencies & Technologies

- More than 10 years have passed since the Palestinians first requested that 3G frequencies be made available
 - In the West Bank in early 2018
 - Gaza Strip are only allowed to use 2G services with an out of date equipment
- To this day, Palestinians do not have access to **4G**
 - Israel and the Palestinian Authority have agreed to launch 4G mobile service in the West Bank and Gaza by the **end of 2023**
- Jawwal and Oodedoo; the two mobile operators in the West Bank and Gaza have a combined **4.3 million** subscribers

2. Limiting Access to Global Technologies

- Israel requires Palestinian operators to apply for permits to build infrastructure
- Israel prohibits Palestinians from building switches, crucial telecommunications network equipment, in areas under full PA control
 - Jawwal located its switches in **England** and **Jordan**
 - Oodedoo (Wataniya) in **East Jerusalem**
- In Gaza, the only fiber optic connection between Gaza and the rest of the world is **in Israel**

3. Restricting the Import of Necessary Equipment

- The import of telecom equipment for Palestinian mobile, fixed telecommunications, and internet providers is severely restricted without clear or fixed rules
- Palestinian importers are required to submit ICT material requests that detail equipment quantities, compliance with Israeli standards, and the "**dual-use**" of the materials
 - The products are designed for both military and civilian purposes
 - In Gaza, restrictions on materials used by ICT companies like **cement and wood**
- Israel is creating a "**digital gap**" for Palestinians, denying them access to new ICT technologies and equipment

Abuses of Palestinian Digital Rights

1. Rights to Communication and to Access the Internet

- According to the World Bank, Wataniya and Jawwal need to construct at least **330** towers in **Area C** for optimal West Bank coverage
- Israeli restrictions on the ICT sector have restricted connectivity and integration between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
- The internet is being recognized as a human right, and denying access to it violates
 - **freedom of expression** and
 - **information access and usage**

2. Right to Privacy

- Israeli surveillance & tracking of Palestinians
 - Israel employs cameras and facial recognition technology everywhere to monitor and record Palestinians
 - Israel employs collaborators for spying, often pressuring them into cooperation with blackmail based on personal information obtained from surveillance (e.g., Israeli Army Unit 8200)
- Israel's use of automated phone calls and text messages (e.g., during military offenses in Gaza)
- Israel uses powerful spyware technology like **Pegasus** to spy on the smartphones of Palestinians

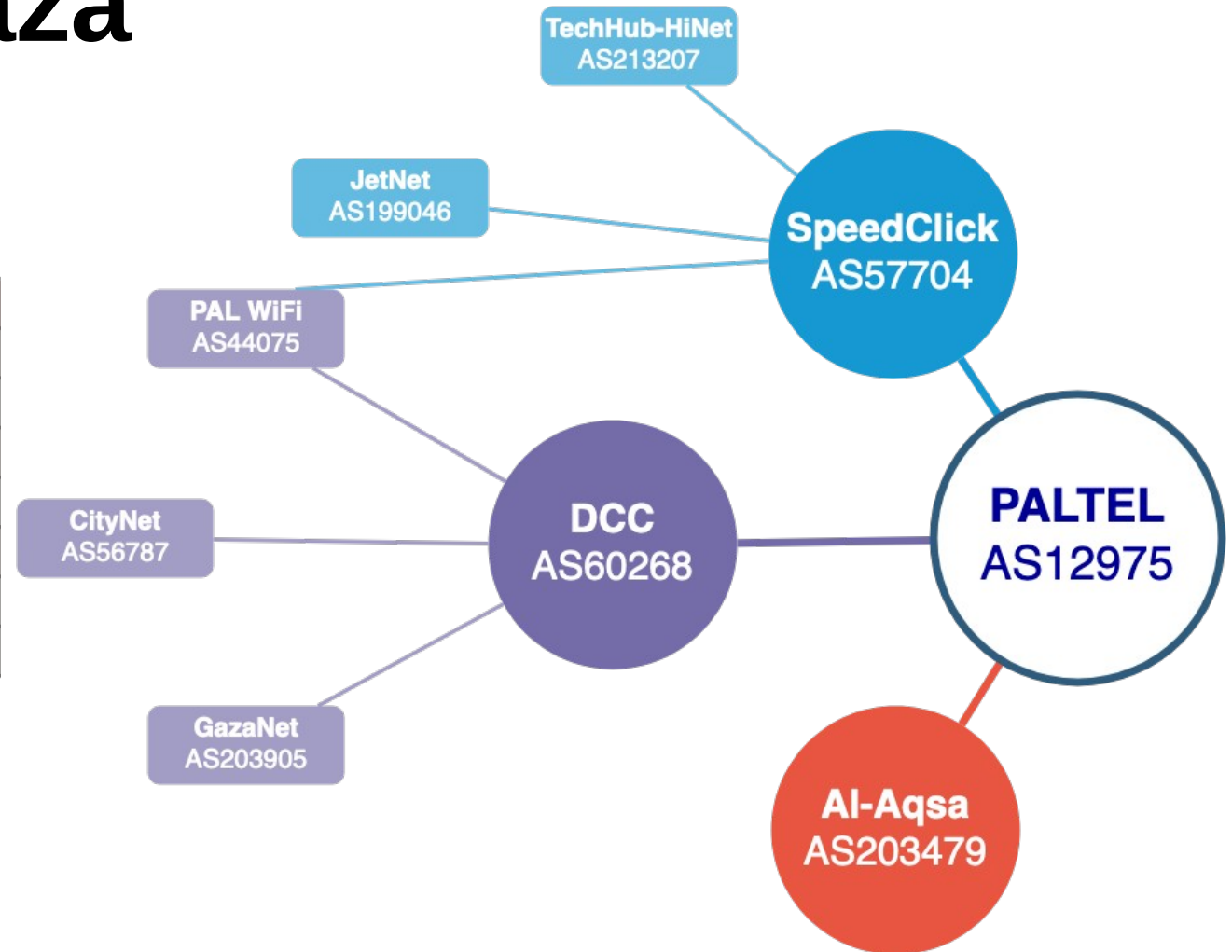
3. Right to Freedom of Expression

- Israel has targeted many Palestinians through their social media profiles
 - At least 161 cases where Palestinian citizens were arrested, interrogated, or indicted on social media platforms, according to Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel <https://www.adalah.org/ar/content/view/10939>
 - Online posts about Israel-Gaza war are costing some people their jobs <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/10/12/israel-gaza-war-social-media-job-firings/>
 - Between 2015 and 2018, Israel arrested over 500 Palestinians, according to the Palestinian Prisoners Studies Center
- The Israeli military employs **military laws and orders** related to incitement to control Palestinian content online and arrest Palestinians

The Ongoing Communications Blackout in Gaza

List of ISPs in Gaza

List of Gaza Strip ISPs			
ASN	ISP Name	ASN	ISP Name
AS12975	PALTEL-AS	AS42314	Fusion
AS15975	Hadara-AS	AS44075	PALWiFi-ASN
AS199046	JetNet	AS51407	Mada-AS
AS203479	Al-Aqsa-ASN1	AS56787	CityNet
AS210116	AlfaNet	AS57704	SpeedClick
AS213207	TechHub-HiNet	AS60268	DCC



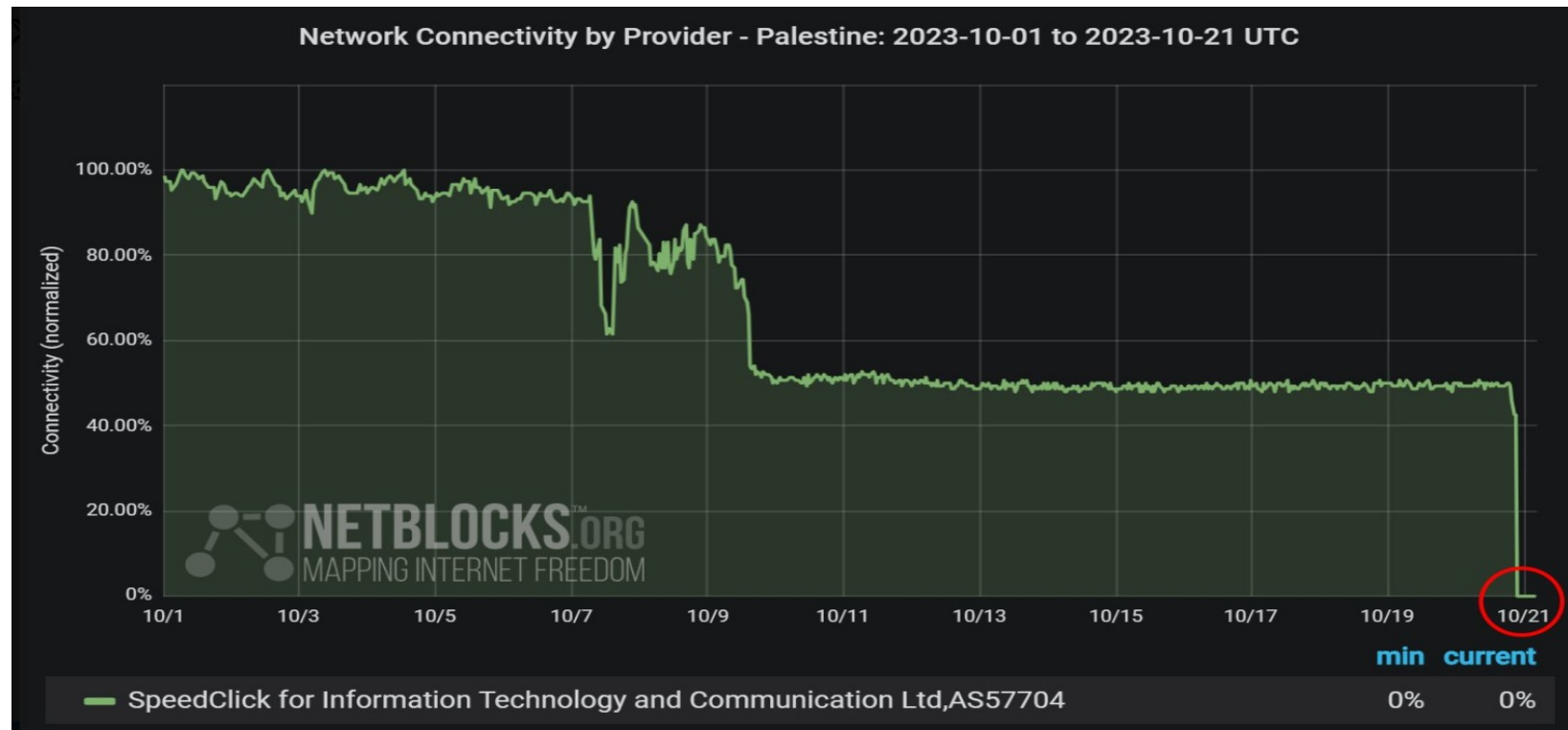
<https://smex.org/israeli-airstrikes-destroyed-internet-infrastructure-in-gaza-report/>

Internet cut off in Gaza

- After the October 7, 2023, Israeli has damaged Gaza's telecommunications infrastructure, resulting in less than **20%** operation
- Internet outages have several causes:
 - destruction of towers, the fiber optic network, and infrastructure Access to the sites was cut off due to the massive destruction of roads and buildings

E.g. SpeedClick fall offline

- SpeedClick on of the main IPS providers in Gaza



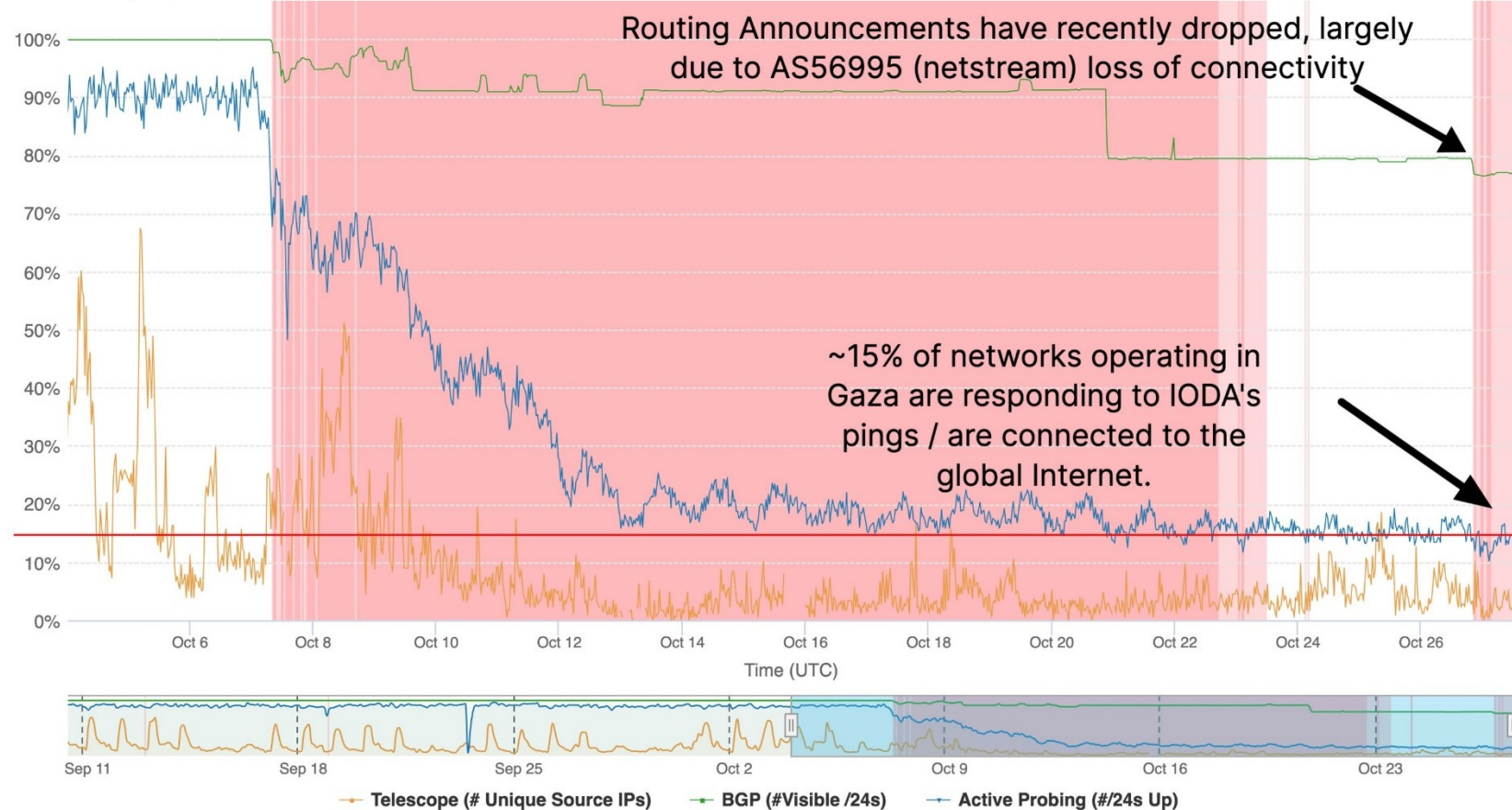
Internet cut off in Gaza

- On October 27th, Israel severed the last remaining lines of communication <https://techcrunch.com/2023/10/27/internet-access-in-gaza-is-collapsing-as-isps-fall-offline/>
- On October 29, the telecommunication services (landline, mobile, and internet) in Gaza Strip, were gradually being restored
- On November 1, the Paltel announced that the connection was cut again

The continued drop in connectivity since October 7

Internet Connectivity for Gaza Strip

October 4, 2023 12:23am - October 27, 2023 12:23pm UTC



<https://techcrunch.com/2023/10/27/internet-access-in-gaza-is-collapsing-as-isps-fall-offline/>

<https://pulse.internetsociety.org/shutdowns/internet-disconnected-in-gaza>

Calling for help from under the rubble for a mother and her daughter

- Doctor Doaa Abu Shakra
 - Ghaida, we are under rubble
 - But I have my mobile phone
 - No one came to get us out
 - I'm screaming
 - I don't know if the rest are alive
 - I don't feel anything
 - But in my arms Layal
 - There are only stones above me



The ongoing communications blackout in Gaza violates human rights and digital rights

- cutting the people of Gaza off from each other, from emergency assistance, and from the world
- leaving international media in the dark
- allowing Israel to commit more crimes
- spread misinformation, and
- prevent access to direct news from affected areas

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Israeli restrictions on Palestinians' digital rights have violated their internet access, privacy, and freedom of expression, resulting in a "**digital occupation**" of the Palestinian digital space
- Israel has to
 - stop the unjustified mass surveillance of Palestinians, especially online
 - respect the freedom of speech and privacy rights of Palestinians
 - uphold its legal responsibilities under international law and permit the Palestinians to build their own independent ICT infrastructure

Thank You

Q&A

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