



Area C embodies Palestine: terraced hills with olive groves where shepherds wander with their flocks and *ghazal* feed on misty mornings; striking *wadis* where foxes and mountain goats roam; the dry, rolling desert hills and green oases of *al-ghor*, the Jordan valley that is less and less accessible to Palestinians; the disappearing Dead Sea where Palestinians no longer feel welcome to swim. Area C comprises sixty-one percent of the West Bank and is crucial for a viable Palestinian State. Connecting Palestine's cities and villages, feeding its citizens, containing a wealth of natural and economic resources, housing immeasurable heritage and archeological treasures, it is among the most beautiful places in the world - but not under Palestinian control and thus, as of yet, as a viable resource mostly untapped. In Area C, check points and the Separation Wall restrict movement and access, which impacts livelihoods and restrains the entire economy; here the denial of building permits and house demolitions are as much a part of daily life as the uprooting of olive groves and the prevention of farmers from cultivating their fields and orchards. But Area C is also where the creative mind of Palestinians has found ingenious ways of showing resilience and developing strategies for survival and development and in this issue you can read about some of these.

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In these days of heightened tension and increased attention on Palestine, the information presented here gives relevant background to the current situation of anger over restricted access, untapped potential, and thwarted opportunities that define Area C, the heart and soul of Palestine.

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Editor



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