

The colonisation and ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem



“Israel’s main motivation is almost certainly demographic – to reduce the Palestinian population of Jerusalem, while exerting efforts to boost the number of Jewish Israelis living in the city – East and West” *Jerusalem and Ramallah Heads of EU Missions Report December 2005*

The Apartheid Wall is almost completed in Jerusalem, snaking around communities and shutting them out of the city. Settlements expand and new colonies emerge on the Palestinian lands left isolated behind the Wall. A 13.5 km railway built by French multinationals will integrate the illegal settlements into the city while further isolating Palestinians from their capital and their neighbours. As well as the fabric of the city, the historic ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of Jerusalem is being destroyed.

Jerusalem’s Heritage

For over two millennia Jerusalem has been a paradigm of religious, social and cultural diversity. For many centuries it was home to a Muslim majority, Christians of different denominations, and a small Jewish community, all living in harmony under a variety of regimes.

The seventh century Dome of the Rock, next to the Al Aqsa Mosque, is the most prominent building of the Old City, and is sacred to Muslims as the place from which the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven, to meet with God. Jews have always been allowed access to pray at the Western Wall, bordering the Dome of the Rock. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is perhaps the most sacred of the many churches in the Old City. As an international place of pilgrimage, Jerusalem was for centuries the hub of the Palestinian economy.

The city is therefore of central importance to both Muslim and Christian Palestinians in political, economic, social and religious terms. They regard East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

Under international law, Tel Aviv is in fact the capital of Israel, and that is where all foreign embassies are housed. However Israel has proclaimed Jerusalem the “undivided” and “eternal capital of Israel”.

The beginnings of segregation and colonisation

When the United Nations voted in 1947 to partition Palestine, Jerusalem was designated an international zone, lying in the heart of what was intended as a Palestinian state. However, Zionist militias overran the designated boundaries and

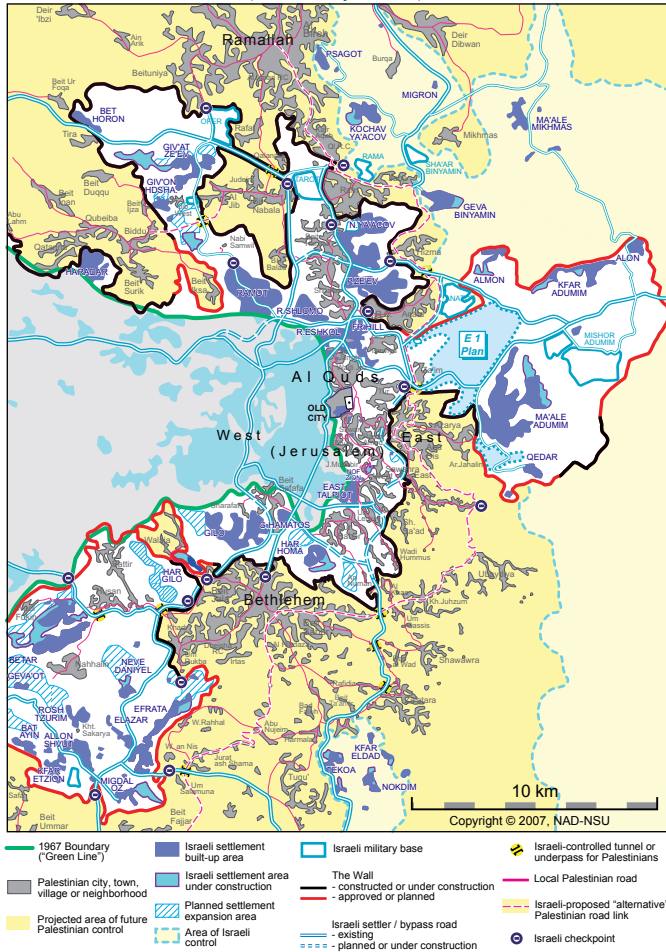
Dome of the Rock



Israel is currently ‘renovating’ an entrance to the Dome of the Rock having previously prevented the Islamic Waqf from repairing the entrance. This is in complete disregard of the fact that it is a World Heritage site protected by UNESCO, who have objected.

Palestinians and Muslims fear the work could damage the ancient site — especially since extremist Jewish groups constantly seek to destroy the compound to rebuild the Jewish Temple there. The bridge being constructed by the Israelis is big enough to hold armoured vehicles — to a site used daily for Muslim pilgrimage and prayer.

ISRAELI WALL AND SETTLEMENTS AROUND OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM (February 2007)



occupied 78% of what had been Palestine, including West Jerusalem. The *de facto* borders they established (the 'Green Line') lay just to the west of the Old City. In 1967 the Israeli army occupied the rest of Palestine — East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank — including the Old City, populated largely by Palestinian Christians and Muslims. Israel then started to implement plans for the judaisation of the city, as well as the colonisation of other areas of the West Bank and Gaza. ***Palestinians have now been reduced to 30% of the population of East Jerusalem through methods of land confiscation and discriminatory laws.***

Apartheid residency laws

The 'transfer' of the Palestinians from Jerusalem started with the creation of Israel in 1948 when 80,000 Palestinians were expelled by force from West Jerusalem. During the 1967 war, 125 houses of the Maghariba Quarter in the Old City were demolished and their residents were expelled to make way for the plaza of the Western Wall.

The identity and residency laws are continuously being tightened in order to reduce the number of Palestinians living in Jerusalem. Palestinian Jerusalemites are obliged to carry annually renewed blue Israeli ID cards, which give them 'the right' to live in East Jerusalem, but not to vote in Israeli national elections or take an Israeli

passport. The ID card can be revoked on a variety of pretexts. Those studying or working abroad temporarily have lost their ID cards and their rights to return. Those working or living in the West Bank, because of economic problems in East Jerusalem, face losing their rights if caught. Couples where only one has a blue ID card must be separated, or both live in the West Bank and lose all Jerusalemite status.

Discriminatory policies

After 1967, in contravention of international law, the Israeli government created the Jerusalem Municipality — a greatly enlarged Jerusalem to include all the illegal settlement colonies in and around the city, and land confiscated from the districts of Bethlehem and Ramallah. Building permits for Palestinians on their own land are all but unobtainable and Palestinian homes built in the area without permits are routinely demolished. The Palestinian Jerusalemites are subject to high taxation while expenditure on the services and amenities given to them is kept to a minimum. People have to choose between this or exile abroad or in what remains of the West Bank. If property is left empty (usually because Palestinians are not allowed to reach it) it is seized by the Israeli government.

Land confiscation and illegal settlements

Nowhere in occupied Palestine has settlement building been more evident than in the Jerusalem area. There are currently 211,000 illegal Israeli settlers living in and around Jerusalem on land confiscated from Palestinians.

After the 1948 war and the Nakba, 38 Palestinian villages in the Jerusalem district were destroyed and depopulated. Thousands of Palestinians were ethnically cleansed from numerous neighbourhoods in West Jerusalem. These included Baq'a and Talbiya, al-Maliha, Lifta, Deir Yasin, Ein Karem. The Palestinian people were replaced by new Israeli settlers.

Following the 1967 war, West Jerusalem expanded even further. Israel proceeded with the construction of huge blocks of settlements that form a ring around the city and isolate it from its Arab neighbourhoods, and from the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Bethlehem. These continue to be built on land confiscated from Palestinians around Jerusalem and also from the districts of Ramallah and Bethlehem. They are Maale Adumim to

The depopulation of al Ezariya

The population of al Ezariya, just to the east of the Old City, also depends on Jerusalem for employment, education and other services. During the past few months, 80% of the population of al Ezariya have deserted their homes in order to remain in Jerusalem. Out of 5,000 people, only around 1,000 remain in the village.

Case Study: Al-Ram in Jerusalem

The devastating impact of the Wall in Jerusalem has already crippled families and communities. In Al-Ram the Wall runs through the main road of the town.

- 40% of businesses have closed
- Small factories which provide vital employment have shut down
- 10,000 people have already deserted the area
- Over 20% of the houses are now empty.

the east, the Givon Bloc to the northwest, Gush Etzion to the southwest and the Benyamin Bloc to the north.

More settlements are being implanted into the hearts of Palestinian neighbourhoods. Examples include Nof Zahav in Mount Scopus, Kidmat Zion in Abu Dis, Almon in Anata, and an industrial zone in Beit Surik, Al Walaja and Beit Safafa.

The most ambitious settlement project underway is project E1 (see map). This is the expansion of Maale Adumim to form an enormous block comprising 4,000 housing units built on 12,000 dunums of land stolen from Palestinians. The overall plan will cover over 53 square kilometres, an area larger than Tel Aviv, stretching from Jerusalem to Jericho. It will completely encircle the city of Jerusalem by Jewish settlements and will divide the West Bank into two separate geographical areas rendering a future Palestinian state a non-viable option.

In the Old City, the ancient predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods are now a target. Pressure of every kind is being brought to bear on the Palestinian inhabitants to leave, and settlement is being planned. Israeli policy is to bar non-Jerusalem Palestinians from entering the city, as well as dispossessing them of their property in annexed Jerusalem. Then under this pretext, settlers are encouraged by government agencies to move to Palestinian homes declared as “state property”. Palestinian homes in Silwan, just south of the city walls, are continuously seized by Jewish settlers. Plans for new Jewish settlements in Palestinian neighbourhoods around the Old City, such as in Silwan, Ras el-‘Amud and Sheikh Jarrah, are under way.

Apartheid infrastructure

Settler-only highways criss cross the entire West Bank, connecting the illegal settlements. West Bank residents are not allowed onto these roads despite the fact that they are built on Palestinian land and that they pass in between Palestinian villages. Israel thus has complete control of the entire area. Meanwhile, Israel is constructing tunnels and alternative road systems, so they can claim that Palestinian areas have “transportational contiguity” – i.e. that what will be left is in some way viable.

A light railway project financed by European companies

including Connex is also underway. It will serve settler traffic around Jerusalem, integrating the settlements into the city and connecting them to those in the Jordan Valley. In this way European money and know-how condone and support the illegal occupation and colonisation of Palestine.

Checkpoints: access denied

The long-standing checkpoints controlling all movement in and out of the city have been ‘upgraded’ to what the Israelis call “international terminals”, causing even more harassment to Palestinian Jerusalemites. The Israelis are in the process of setting up official international border crossings, manned by border police, between Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Eight of the twelve routes and crossings to enter Jerusalem from the West Bank are closed to West Bank Palestinians. Of the remaining four, two major checkpoints at the entrances to the city, Qalandiya towards Ramallah and Qubbat Rahel (Rachel’s Tomb) towards Bethlehem, render the movement in and out of the city extremely difficult.

ID cards, automated turnstiles and metal detectors are the order of the day. West Bank Palestinians are denied access into the city, unless they obtain special permits from Israel. However carriers of these permits can be banned from entering on the slightest pretext. And Jerusalemites can be banned from entering the West Bank at whim.

This has led to additional commuting times and hardships, reduced access to religious sites, to the major Palestinian medical and education centres, and severe disruptions to economic activity. A steady exodus of Palestinian organisations and businesses from the centre of Jerusalem into outlying areas and to

International law

All the above policies and actions are in contravention of international law, and have been condemned by dozens of UN resolutions — to no avail.

- The International Court of Justice ruling on 9 July 2004 declares the Wall illegal and instructs the International Community “not to render any aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by it.”
- “The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its civilian population into the territory it occupies.” Article 49, Paragraph 6 of the IVth Geneva Convention
- The Hague Convention on Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land lays down that “the lives of persons, and private property must be respected: private property cannot be confiscated” Section IV, Article 46, The Hague Convention
- It is “forbidden for an occupying state to destroy any movable or immovable private property belonging to individuals, groups, states, public authorities, social organisations or cooperatives unless military operations require such destruction.” Article 53 of the IVth Geneva Convention

Anata

In 1967 the district of Anata covered over 7,500 acres within the Jerusalem Governorate (see map). According to the Anata Local Council, upon completion of the apartheid Wall, only some 575 acres will remain for the use of Anata residents. Israel has expropriated or isolated the rest. Anata and the adjacent Shu'fat refugee camp will be enclosed on three sides by the Wall. To the west, natural expansion will be prevented by a major road now under construction, and to its east by the Israeli military base Anatot, in addition to four settlements that will eventually control 4,750 acres.

The impact of this enclosure of Anata on the economic future for its residents is bleak. Some 45% of Anata's labourers depend on work in Israel, but the vast majority have lost their permits to travel into Jerusalem or Israel and are unable to work.

Ramallah has resulted. These closures have also led to the disintegration of cultural and social life, of which Jerusalem was the hub, for many generations.

The Apartheid Wall

The year 2006 witnessed the completion of the Apartheid Wall in Jerusalem — in clear violation of the International Court of Justice ruling in 2004, which called on Israel to dismantle the Wall and compensate the Palestinians.

The 190,000 Palestinians still living in and around Jerusalem can either remain under siege in the city or go into exile into the West Bank or abroad, with a permanent loss of the right to live in their homes. The Wall is designed to ensure the annexation of all the settlement blocks around the city and their expansion onto annexed Palestinian land.

The Wall has had a hugely detrimental effect on the lives of the Palestinians in Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. It is depopulating villages and tearing communities apart. Villagers, dependent on Jerusalem for their livelihood, must decide whether they move into the ghettos of Jerusalem or stay locked up in their villages on the other side of the Wall — where they will eventually be stripped of their Jerusalem IDs.

The fate of Jerusalem hangs in the balance. Israel will soon have cleansed most of the Old City of its indigenous inhabitants, and annexed it, with all of

the surrounding area, to the state of Israel, in blatant violation of international law and every notion of natural justice. The consequences of these actions will undoubtedly have global repercussions affecting us all.

Find out more:

- Save Jerusalem from the Apartheid Wall and Ethnic Cleansing. Stop the Wall Campaign: www.stophthewall.org
- Access to Jerusalem- New Military Order Limits West Bank Palestinian Access. UN Humanitarian Update Occupied Palestinian Territory February 2006. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/DPAS-6NBHUN?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=pse>
- Creating a Semi-Enclave: Focus on Anata, Jerusalem Governorate, by Palestinian Monitoring Group. http://www.miftah.org/Doc/Reports/2006/PMG_Anata_150606.pdf
- 'Quiet Transfer' in East Jerusalem Nears Completion. Elodie Guego. <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article5692.shtml>
- Report on the Israeli Violations within Jerusalem January to June 2006. Coalition of NGO's for Defence of Palestinian Jerusalemites Rights. <http://www.savesilwan.org/bulletins/11.htm>

What you can do:

- Support the Days of Action — contact PSC for details
- Contact PSC for postcards, posters and campaign material.
- Express your views to the media.
- Lobby your MP and MEP to urge the suspension of the EU Israel trade agreement.
- Write to your MEP protesting about the French multinationals' involvement in the building of the settler railway project.
- Write to the French multinational Alstom, to Connex and Veolia urging them to halt their involvement in the settler railway project (www.stophthewall.org)*.
- Support the Palestinian economy in Jerusalem and the occupied territories. (Contact PSC for more information.)

*The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) announced a small but significant victory in August 2006: following their campaign, Irish trade union representatives blocked the training of Israeli engineers and drivers on the Dublin light railway system.

Get involved!

Join the Palestine Solidarity Campaign

Return to: PSC, BM Box PSA, London WC1N 3XX.
Or telephone: 020 7700 6192 and pay over the phone, or
online: www.palestinecampaign.org



I enclose £ to help the PSC in its work.
 I want to join the PSC (individual £24 / unwaged £12)
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