



THE NATIONAL PARK PLAN ON MOUNT SCOPUS

POLITICAL INTERESTS **VERSUS** RESIDENTS' WELFARE

View of the neighbourhood of the A-Tur from Issawiye. Photo courtesy of Emek Shaveh

On 17/11/11, the “Mount Scopus Slopes Park Plan” was published for public review by the Jerusalem District Building and Planning Council (Town Planning Scheme – TPS 11092a). This plan, an initiative of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA), supported by the Jerusalem Municipality, should concern all who seek a political resolution to the conflict in Jerusalem, and who understand the implications of the park on the two adjacent Palestinian neighborhoods within Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries.

Residents of Issawiye and residents of A-Tur are protesting the National Park Plan, whose territory eats into their neighborhoods. The area is situated just meters from the Mt. Scopus Campus; however curiously the land there is considered to be outside the borders of the planned park.

According to the NGO **Bimkom, Planners for Planning Rights** the two neighborhoods are not able to expand to any other lands other than those which are now being planned for the national park. The last remaining reserves

of land that were allotted to the two neighborhoods – after other lands belonging to them were expropriated, and used for roads, Israeli institutions and so forth.

Over the last years, the two neighborhoods have held discussions with the municipality regarding arrangements that will allow for a solution, to allow for natural growth in the area, to prevent the demolition of tens of homes, and to enable the continuation of daily life in the area.

Residents of the two communities met many times with officials in the municipality and also discussed the plan with the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. They received numerous promises from the municipal representatives, spent great resources on amending their planning and building programs in accordance with the feedback given to them, and now are astonished at the deposit of the plan – as a breach of all the previous agreed-upon arrangements.

The National Park Plan also stands in contradiction to the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan. The Jerusalem 2000 plan

■ Residents of the neighborhoods of Issawiye and A-Tur, in cooperation with civil society organizations, are challenging plan to establish a national park on the slopes of Mount Scopus.

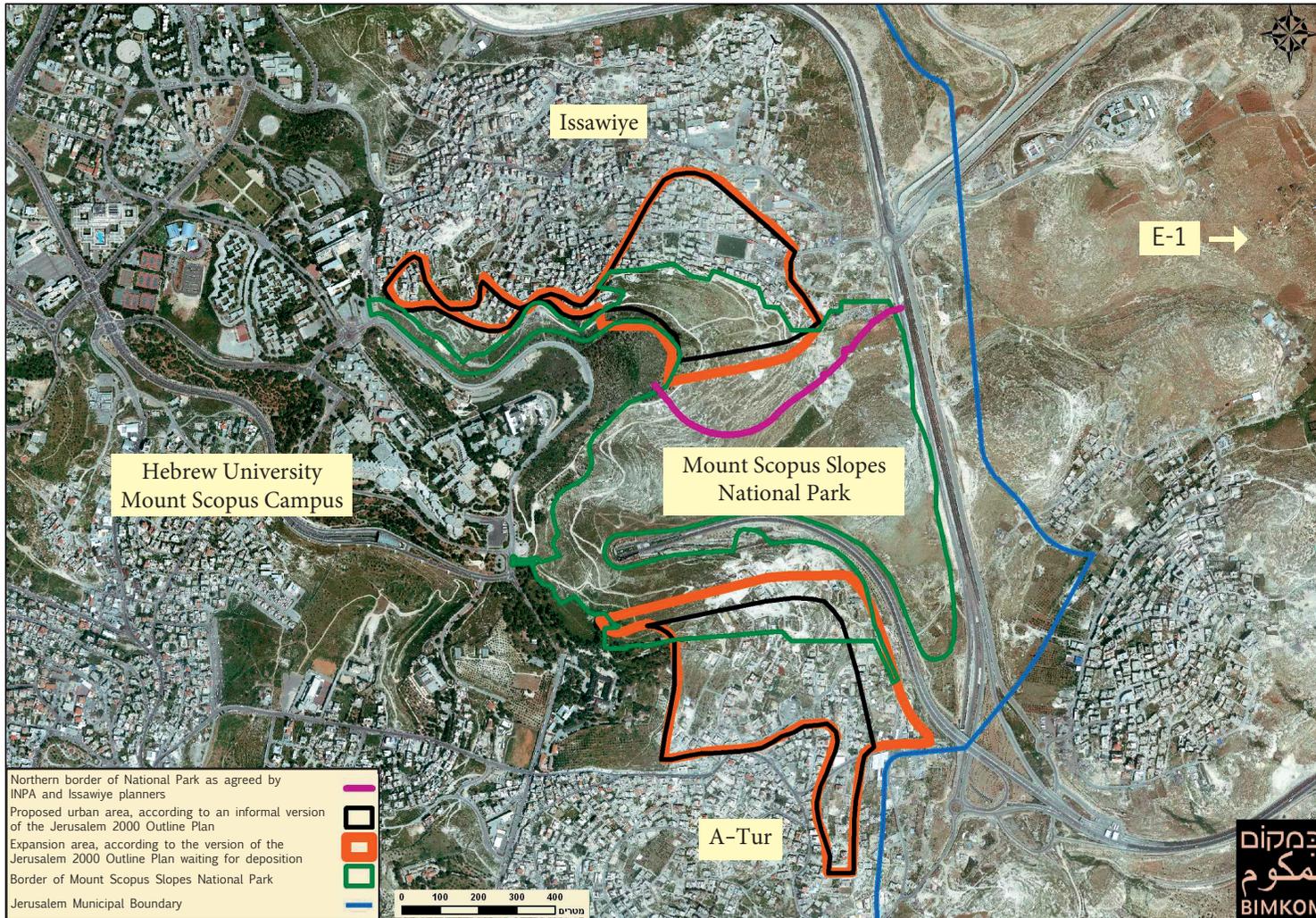
■ The designed park plan threatens to suffocate the Palestinian neighborhoods, preventing their development and thwarting a future political settlement.

■ Residents of Issawiye and A-Tur invite you to tour in the area of the proposed “National Park” and to visit their neighborhoods, with the aim of exposing both the damage that will be done to their rights and the breach of promises made to them over the years by the authorities.

identified areas within the neighborhoods for expansion, and now, the National Park Plan is eliminating them.

The National Park Plan is part of a larger plan that aims to create contiguity between Jerusalem and Ma’ale Adumim in the West Bank. The slopes of the park touch the area of E-1 – the site designated for the expansion of Ma’ale Adumim in the direction of Jerusalem. The U.S. government and the international community oppose construction in this area, which will isolate East Jerusalem and sever the necessary links between it and the West Bank. It will also cut the West Bank in two: the Ramallah area in the north and the Bethlehem area in the south. If approved, the plan will be a barrier to a two-state solution.

The antiquities that are found in the area of the designed park plan are of no greater importance, than for instance, those that have been found in Israeli neighborhoods that have been built in Jerusalem – such as Pisgat Ze’ev and Ramat Shlomo. Considerations for the preservation of antiquities cannot justify the declaration of a national park in this area.



Issawiye - Some 14,500 residents reside in Issawiye. Due to the limits of the current town plan and the lack of land registration, legal construction in the area is rendered virtually impossible -- even for purposes of natural growth. The result is that approximately 1,000 housing units have been built in the village without permit. By 2020, it is estimated that natural growth in the neighborhood will require an additional 1,000 housing units. Over the years, only a number of building permits were issued, and over 60 homes are in danger of demolition. The residents of Issawiye are astonished to discover how the lands that were promised for the development of their neighborhood are now being included in the proposed park plan.

A-Tur - Approximately 30,000 residents live in A-Tur, where dozens housing units have been built without permit (due to the reasons mentioned above vis a vis Issawiye). By 2020, it is estimated that natural growth in the area will require an additional 2,700 housing units. As in Issawiye, over the years, only a small number of building permits were issued, and 90 homes are in danger of demolition. Several years ago, parts of the neighborhood were expropriated for the purpose of laying down a road that will connect Ma'ale Adumim to Jerusalem. Residents of the neighborhood claim that they were given assurances that in exchange for this, they would be able to build in the lands now suddenly designated for the National Park Plan.

Many objections were raised to this plan. Yet in order to halt it, wide-scale public protest is needed.

We invite you to come to tours of the area designated for the "National Park" in A-Tur and in Issawiye.

Tours run approximately three hours, and will be held every Saturday in January, at 3:00 pm, beginning at the easternmost observation point of Hebrew University's Mount Scopus Campus.

Express your solidarity with the residents and demonstrate your objection to the plan, which damages the possibilities for a future resolution.

For additional information:

Nazeeh Ansari, Director of the A-Tur Community Center, mobile: 050-549-5061

Hani Issawi, Chair of the Issawiye Residents' Council, mobile: 050-559-8994

Edan Ring, Spokesperson for Ir Amim, mobile: 054-668-0085

Reuma Schleisinger, Spokesperson for Bimkom on the issue of the National Park Plan and Issawiye, mobile: 052-429-3334

www.stopscopuspark.org

لجنة سكان العيسوية
 لجنة حي خلة العين
 ועד שכונת ח'לית אל-עין ועד תושבי עיסאווייה
 ISSAWIYE COMMITTEE KHALT EL-EIN COMMITTEE

