

ISRAELI SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES IN EAST JERUSALEM *SNAPSHOT, AUGUST 2009*

CONTEXT

Ir Amim's analysis has identified three urgent threats to a negotiated agreement in Jerusalem:

1. The accelerated process of Israeli settlement in Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem.
2. Plans for development of E-1, which would prevent future development of a Palestinian capital to the east, and sever its connection with the West Bank.
3. The proposed Jerusalem master plan (Jerusalem 2000), which threatens to re-engineer the demographic distribution of Palestinians and Israelis in East Jerusalem; and to isolate a number of Palestinian communities.

This document provides a snapshot of the first threat, highlighting recent developments.

OVERVIEW

Recent months have seen the acceleration of the process of Israeli settlement in Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem. These settlements create a crescent of Jewish population along the ridges surrounding the Old City, and implant Jewish population in the midst of the Muslim and Christian Quarters, as well as in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah – precisely in the areas of most intense dispute in the Palestinian / Israeli conflict.

At the start of 2009 approximately 2000 Israeli settlers were living in Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem – primarily in the historic area. In the first half of 2009, plans are being advanced for the building of an additional 150 housing units that could settle another 750 people in strategic areas of disputed East Jerusalem. In addition, plans were advanced for Jewish community facilities (e.g., synagogues, community centers, ritual baths, etc.) in these areas.

Most of this activity is executed by private bodies, such as the Elad and Ateret Cohanim associations. However, it is evident that individual settlements are part of a strategic move, coordinated and facilitated by national governmental units, as well as by the Jerusalem Municipality. The latter's contribution is manifested in expedition of planning processes and increased "vigilance" regarding housing demolitions in the affected communities.

Of special concern are the recently exposed plans for a massive expansion of settlements in Ras Al-Amud and Silwan, as well as the approval of plans for construction in Sheikh Jarrah and attendant evictions.

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SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENTS BY AREA

MOUNT OF OLIVES AREA

Existing settlements

1. **A-Tur**
 - Beit Orot: 14 families and 80 Yeshiva students (approximately 150 people).
 - Hoshen: 3 housing units (approximately 20 people)
2. **Ras al-Amud**
 - Maale Zeitim Phase 1 (inhabited): 50 families (some 250 people)
 - Maale Zeitim Phase 2: 60 housing units currently being built
3. **Abu Dis** – Kidmat Zion: two buildings with 6 families (approximately 25 people)
4. **Mount of Olives Cemetery** – 2 buildings (some 15 people)

Developments in process

- **Abu Dis – Kidmat Zion** (TPS 7659) for about 220 housing units was submitted by Jerusalem Municipality and approved by the local planning committee on 22 May 2000.

New developments

1. **Ras al-Amud -- Maale David: Town Planning Scheme (TPS) 13098**

This new settlement extends the existing Maale Zeitim onto the 11-dunam lot vacated by the West Bank police headquarters (which moved to E-1).

 - Housing units: 104
 - Additional structures: Synagogue, Mikveh, kindergarten; Country Club, including clubhouse, library, swimming pool and large parking lot (total area of 6.3 dunam); in later stage bridge connecting new development to Maale Zeitim settlement.
 - Status: submitted by the Bukharian Trust to municipal planning department; not yet reviewed formally by local planning committee

SILWAN

Existing settlements

1. Wadi Hilweh /City of David: 60 families (approximately 250 people)
2. Silwan – Beit Yonatan & Beit HaDvash: 10 families (some 30 persons)

New Developments

Wadi Hilweh /City of David Compound – TPS 13638, 13632, 13542 and 12953

- Planned construction: about 20 housing units, school, community buildings, synagogue and tourist facilities.
- Status: submitted in 2009 by Elad to municipal planning department

SHIEKH JARRAH

Existing settlement -- Shimon Hatzadik Compound: 8 families and 20 Yeshiva students (**approximately 50 people**)

Developments in process

1. **TPS 2591 -- Shepherd Hotel Compound**
 - Housing units: 31
 - Status: Building permit approved to Irving Moskowitz in July 2009
2. **TPS 11536 -- Shepherd Hotel Compound**
 - Housing units: 90
 - Public structures: Kindergarten and synagogue
 - Status: submitted by C & M Co. (involving Irving Moskowitz) to municipal planning department in 2005
3. **TPS 12705 -- Shimon Hatzadik Compound**
 - Housing units: 200
 - Status: submitted by Nahalat Shimon Ltd. Archived by municipal planning department in May 2009

Related evictions:

- (a) August 2, 2009: Hanoun and Rawi extended families (approximately 53 people)
- (b) November, 2009: al Kurd family
- (c) Judicial eviction in process for another four extended families.

SOUTHERN EAST JERUSALEM

Existing settlements

1. **Jabel Mukaber**
 - Nof Zion: 90 housing units completed, and being populated; 280 units to be planned in future. Development by private developer, Yehuda Levy.
 - Be'emuna: 66 housing units under construction (TPS 6120) by private contractor.
2. **Palestinian Abu Tor --**
 - Hamfaked Street: some 20 settlers in various buildings
 - Elad Visitor Center in Peace Forest

OLD CITY

Existing settlements

- Christian and Muslim quarters: 80 families and 500 Yeshiva students in (total of some 1,000 persons).

Development in process

- Herod's Gate (TPS 9870) – 30 housing units – submitted by Ministry of Housing and Construction for discussion in the District Planning Committee 13 Dec. 2005. The plan does not meet planning pre-requisites, since it is too close to Old City walls.

Appendix I: Related Developments in 2009

In addition to the settlement activity detailed above, a number of related policies and actions continued to affect the situation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in Jerusalem during the first half of 2009.

CONSTRUCTION IN ISRAELI NEIGHBORHOODS IN EAST JERUSALEM

Gilo

2 plans for construction were submitted to the municipal planning department:

- TPS 13261 – by the Authority for the Development of Jerusalem for 780 housing units in the first phase and 600 housing units in a later phase – on the southern slopes of Gilo.
- TPS 13534 – by a private developer (Ganei Romema) for 95 housing units – in south-east Gilo

One plan was submitted for to the district planning committee for public review:

- TPS 11382 by the Israel Lands Authority for 57 housing units .

LAND PURCHASES IN PALESTINIAN NEIGHBORHOODS

A number of reports have appeared in the Israeli press about land purchases by settler organizations in various Palestinian neighborhoods. Ir Amim understands that there have been undisclosed purchases in Samiramis (north of the Separation Barrier, but within the Jerusalem municipal lines), Beit Hanina, Jabel Mukaber, and the Muslim Quarter of the Old City.

DEMOLITIONS OF PALESTINIAN HOMES

According to the Municipality of Jerusalem, in the first six months of 2009 40 Palestinian structures were demolished, including 15 which were demolished by the owners. This number is roughly representative of the average number of demolitions carried out in half a year in past years (i.e., 42 homes). Over the years 2004 – 2008, an average of 84 Palestinian homes were demolished in Jerusalem yearly. In 2008, 88 homes were demolished.

In this half-year period, demolitions occurred in virtually all of the Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem, including 5 in the Old City. It is notable that in the entire year of 2008, only 3 homes were demolished in the Old City.

Ir Amim (“City of Nations” or “City of Peoples”) is an Israeli non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in order to actively engage in those issues impacting on Israeli-Palestinian relations in Jerusalem and on the political future of the city. Ir Amim seeks to render Jerusalem a more viable and equitable city, while generating and promoting a more politically sustainable future.

