

OVERVIEW OF 2020 YEAR-END DATA

Below is a concise overview of our year-end data for political and settlement-related developments in East Jerusalem for 2020. Most notably, the Trump Administration's legitimization of the settlement enterprise and its tacit affirmation of Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem in January 2020 set off a spate of settlement advancements in some of most politically sensitive locations in East Jerusalem and its vicinity. In doing so, Israel further entrenched its control of East Jerusalem, while hurdling towards de facto annexation of "Great Jerusalem," undermining the prospects of a two-state framework with two capitals in the city.

THE IMPACT OF TRUMP'S POLICIES ON JERUSALEM

- [Ramifications of the US Middle East Plan on the Future of Jerusalem](#)
- [From United to Greater Jerusalem: Annexation 1967-2020 A New Map and Analysis](#)

ADVANCEMENT OF HOUSING UNITS IN NEIGHBORHOODS/SETTLEMENTS IN EAST JERUSALEM

Total Number of Housing Units (HU) Advanced (Tenders & Plans): 6288

- **Number of HU in Tenders: 2008**
- **Number of HU in Plans: 4280**

2020 saw the third highest number of housing units advanced (4280) in detailed outlines over the last decade, following 2012 with its record number of 6431 units and 2018 with 5820 units. While the overall amount of housing units promoted is lower than the aforementioned years, the number of advancements which occurred within highly politically sensitive and strategic locations in 2020 is unprecedented.

Publication of Tenders

Six tenders were published over the course of 2020. Five of those tenders were for a total of 2008 housing units (HU) and one tender for a commercial building. **The tenders' opening for bidding was consistently delayed, and as of the end of 2020, only the Givat Hamatos tender was open for bidding.**

- [1 tender for 1257 HU in Givat Hamatos](#) was published in February 2020 and thereafter open for bidding in November 2020 (*this is an increase from the 1077 HU as originally announced*).
 - If built, Givat Hamatos would become the first new settlement in East Jerusalem in 20 years. Located in a particularly strategic area, Givat Hamatos (along with Har Homa E and E1) has constituted a longstanding international red line due to its implications on the prospects of a viable two-state framework with two capitals in Jerusalem. By creating a contiguous Israeli built-up area between the existing settlements of Gilo and Har Homa, construction in Givat Hamatos will serve to seal off the southern perimeter of East Jerusalem from Bethlehem and the southern part of the West Bank, while isolating the Palestinian neighborhood of Beit Safafa.
- 3 tenders for 461 HU in Pisgat Zeev
- [1 tender for 290 HU in the built-up area of Gilo](#)
- 1 tender for a commercial building in Gilo

Housing Units in Detailed Outline Plans

The total number of housing units within 13 detailed outline plans advanced over the Green Line in Jerusalem: 4280

[One plan for 540 of those housing units is designated for a new settlement of Har Homa E, located between the existing Har Homa neighborhood/settlement and Givat Hamatos.](#) Along with Givat Hamatos, construction in Har Homa E will serve as another step in linking the existing Har Homa and Gilo neighborhoods/settlements to create an Israeli sealing-off effect along the southern perimeter of East Jerusalem. This will further fracture Bethlehem and the southern West Bank from East Jerusalem, while encircling Beit Safafa and depleting the remaining land reserves for further development of the neighborhood. If carried out, these measures will constitute a major obstacle towards the future establishment of a contiguous independent Palestinian state with a capital in East Jerusalem.

1 plan for 253 housing units in Gilo will expand the neighborhood/settlement territorially.

10 plans for a total of 3596 housing units are for existing built-up areas in neighborhoods/settlements, the majority of which are in Gilo.

144 housing units in two plans are designated for settlement enclaves within the Palestinian neighborhood of Beit Hanina.

DETAILS

New Settlement Projects

- [Har Homa E: Plan for 540 HU, Discussion at District Committee, deposited for objections, 04/12/20](#) (the current version of the plan calls for 540 housing units, which is a slight drop from the 570 units included in a previous version of the plan)

Expansion of Existing Israeli Neighborhoods/Settlements:

- Gilo: Plan for 253 housing units, Discussion on deposit at local committee with no decision, 21/12/20

Existing Built-up Areas in Israeli Neighborhoods/Settlements:

- French Hill: Plan for 135 HU, Deposited for objections, 25/5/20
- French Hill: Plan for 223 HU, Deposited for objections, 1/8/20
- Gilo: Plan for 868 HU, Approved for Objections at District Committee, 23/11/20
- Gilo: Plan for 618 HU, Discussion at Local Committee, 18/5/20
- Gilo: Plan for 348 HU, Discussion of objections at Local Committee, 29/12/20
- Gilo: Plan for 116 HU, Discussion of objections at District Committee and decided to hold another discussion, 10/11/20
- Neve Yaakov: Plan for 405 HU, Deposited for Objections, 21/11/20
- Neve Yaakov: Plan for 173 HU, Approved at District Committee, 19/10/20
- Pisgat Zeev: Plan for 300 HU in an old age home, Deposited for objections, 1/10/20
- Ramot: Plan for 157 HU, Discussion of objections at District Committee, 9/8/20

Settlement Compounds inside Palestinian Neighborhoods:

- Beit Hanina: Plan 740993 for 72 HU, Approved for deposit at District Committee, 10/5/20
- Beit Hanina: Plan 740951 for 72 HU, Approved for deposit at District Committee, 21/6/20

The abovementioned total does not include a number of other plans that received attention in 2020:

- A detailed outline plan in Atarot for 9,000 housing units. [At the beginning of 2020, a town plan scheme file was opened for the plan](#) (a step that typically signals upcoming discussions in the planning committees); however, no discussions took place at any planning committee level.
- [A master plan for 2200 housing units in Har Homa E was approved](#); however, because master plans do not hold any statutory weight, its approval will not enable the issuance of building permits for which detailed outline plans are required. The

detailed outline plan for 540 housing units (TPS 285411), which was advanced over the course of 2020 as noted above, is designated for a portion of the land within the aforementioned master plan.

- [A master plan for Givat Hamatos \(A, C, and D\) would add 3,900 housing units](#) to the 2,600 housing units in the already approved detailed outline plan for Givat Hamatos A, of which the tender for 1257 housing units was open for bidding in November 2020 (as mentioned above). The master plan did not receive final approval. Because a master plan is not statutory, it does not allow for the procurement of building permits.

Please note that because these plans were either not advanced (i.e. Atarot) or do not allow for the issuance of building permits (i.e. master plans), they are not included in the yearend total for the number of residential units promoted. However, it is important to at least reference them due to their sensitive and strategic locations.

SETTLEMENT PLAN ADVANCEMENTS IN GREATER JERUSALEM

- **E1:** two plans for a total of 3,401 housing units in an area of over 2,100 dunams were [deposited for objections by the Higher Planning Committee of the Civil Administration in February 2020](#). These plans constitute the first step in creating a contiguous, Israeli built-up area extending from Jerusalem through E1 to the Maaleh Adumim settlement -11 kilometers beyond the Green Line. The outcome of which would bisect the West Bank, driving a wedge between the Ramallah and Bethlehem areas, as well as fragment the contiguous Palestinian space between East Jerusalem and the West Bank necessary for a viable Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

[Objections were submitted by a number of Palestinian communities and Israeli civil society organizations, including Ir Amim](#). Although the period for submission of objections closed over the summer of 2020, a discussion on the objections was not yet scheduled.

- **Har Gilo (expansion):** [advancement of a plan for the expansion of the Har Gilo settlement, which includes 560 housing units](#), in an area located on the western side of Al-Walaja between the built up area of the village and the Al-Walaja bypass road which connects Jerusalem to the Har Gilo settlement. If actualized, this new settlement will complete the isolation of the village which is already surrounded on its other three sides by the Separation Barrier. **While the plan was approved for deposit in October, it has yet to be deposited.** [The plan, however, for the expansion of the Al-Walaje bypass road](#)—intended to accommodate future traffic to and from

the new settlement--was deposited in October. Ir Amim along with Bimkom and the village submitted objections to the plan.

EVICTIONS AND ATTEMPTED SETTLER TAKEOVERS OF PALESTINIAN HOMES

Given their strategic location as gateways to the Old City, Sheikh Jarrah to the north of the Old City and Silwan to the south are the two neighborhoods under greatest pressure from Israeli settler groups. State-backed settler organizations are advancing mass eviction proceedings and settler takeovers of Palestinian homes through the exploitation of primarily the Legal and Administrative Matters Law of 1970 along with other questionable Israeli legislation. This discriminatory legal mechanism enables Jews to reclaim assets lost during the war of 1948 via the Israel General Custodian, while no parallel legal provision exists for Palestinians who lost property in West Jerusalem. To the contrary, the 1950 Absentee Property Law enshrines that Palestinians who lost assets in Israel in 1948 cannot recover them. Moreover, because the Israeli government already compensated Jews who lost property in East Jerusalem in 1948 by providing them with alternative properties in West Jerusalem, they are essentially entitled to double compensation under the 1970 law.

Over 150 families in these two areas alone are under threat of eviction. 2020 saw an unprecedented number of court decisions upholding eviction claims against Palestinian families in favor of settler organizations. In Silwan, the Israeli courts authorized the eviction of 21 Palestinian families, while in Sheikh Jarrah they approved the eviction of 12 more families.

SILWAN

Wadi Rababa

ELAD entered a home (one housing unit) after claiming to have purchased it.

Wadi Hilweh

- The District Court rejected the Sumarin Family's appeal and ruled in favor of their eviction from the home in which they have lived since the 1950's. The family submitted a request for an appeal before the High Court in which a hearing will take place in April 2021. The Jewish National Fund (JNF) received ownership of the home from the Custodian for Absentee Property. As a result of a public advocacy campaign calling for the JNF to halt eviction proceedings against the family, it became clear that although JNF officially initiated the eviction, the lawsuit is being managed and funded by the ELAD settler organization. ELAD signed an agreement with JNF that would allow for the transfer of the property to ELAD once the family is evicted.

- After a lengthy legal battle, the **Supreme Court ruled in favor of the ELAD settler organization in September 2020 to evict the Salah Family from their home, displacing eight family members.** The property was then transferred into the hands of ELAD and settled by a Jewish family.

Batan al-Hawa

In 2020, various courts ruled in favor of the eviction of a total of 19 Palestinian families in the Batan Al-Hawa neighborhood in lawsuits levelled against them by the Ateret Cohanim settler organization via their management of the Benvenisti Trust. Approximately 84 families are in various stages of eviction proceedings, placing over 700 individuals from one community at risk of forced displacement.

- 5 families (Duweik Family) - Appealed to the High Court against the [District Court's ruling in favor of their eviction from November](#). Judge Dafna Barak-Erez recently asked the State's Attorney General to address several issues that are at the heart of the petition.
- [In December, three families \(Shweiki and Odeh\) received eviction orders from the Execution Office stating they must vacate their homes or else they would be forcibly removed.](#) The evictions were not carried out for various reasons and the orders expired.
- Eleven other families appealed to the District Court against Magistrates' Court rulings for eviction.
- In June 2020, [Ir Amim in conjunction with Batan al-Hawa residents filed a legal petition to the Jerusalem District Court against the Israeli Registrar of Trusts](#) which sits within the Ministry of Justice, arguing that it had facilitated Ateret Cohanim's acquisition of the Benvenisti Trust. Citing allegations of gross misuse and a conflict of interest on the part of the trustees, the petition called for the revocation of Ateret Cohanim members' appointment to the trust's management. Following the petition's submission, the Registrar of Trusts decided to conduct an in-depth investigation into the management and actions of the trust and its trustees. While the petition is no longer active, Ir Amim will be able to re-submit it depending upon the investigation's results.

Sheikh Jarrah

Over the course of 2020, there were a number of court rulings in favor of the eviction of a total of 12 families from the Kerem Al'ajoni section (the eastern part of the neighborhood) of Sheikh Jarrah.

- Five families (Sabbagh) - The Execution Office delivered an eviction notice to the families, but legal proceedings have delayed the eviction from being carried out.
- The Magistrates' Court ruled in September and October (two different cases) in favor of the eviction of seven families (Dajani, Dahudi, Hamad, Al-Kurd, Al-Qassam, Askafi, Jouani).
- At the end of December, Ir Amim along with residents from the Um Haroun section of the neighborhood (the western side of Sheikh Jarrah) [petitioned the Supreme Court against the actions of the General Custodian in Sheikh Jarrah](#).

TOURISTIC SETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN THE OLD CITY BASIN

In addition to state-sponsored residential settlement inside Palestinian neighborhoods, Israeli authorities privatize touristic settlement sites to settler organizations in order to reinforce settlement initiatives in the Old City Basin. The exploitation of tourism serves to erase the Palestinian presence and promulgate the idea that the entire area is an Israeli environment, while imposing a nationalistic Israeli character that blurs the multi-religious and multi-cultural nature of the space.

Batan al-Hawa, Silwan

The East Jerusalem Development Governmental Company (PAMI) published a tender with a budget of 900,000 NIS for the establishment of a visitor center depicting the story of the Yemenite Jewish community which settled in Batan al-Hawa at the end of the 19th century. The center is planned to be established in a home previously belonging to five Palestinian families who were evicted a few years ago by Ateret Cohanim via their management of the Benvenisti Trust. The budget has been allocated by the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs. Ir Amim filed a petition against the tender, requesting a freeze on the process due to allegations of a conflict of interest. Link here for more details: [Appeal against Yemenite Jewish Visitor's Center](#)

Wadi Hilweh, Silwan

- Excavations continue on the City of David's "Pilgrim's Way Tunnel" between the Pool of Siloam to the Givati Parking Lot which runs under Palestinian homes in Wadi Hilweh.
- The Israeli government attempted to seize land and obtain permits for cutting down trees for the planned cable car project. Both moves were halted.

Wadi Rababa, Silwan

The Custodian of Absentee Property issued an order to seize six plots of land in the Wadi Rababa area in close proximity to the ELAD settler organization's "House in the Valley" (*Bayit BaGei*) cultural center. Palestinian families who live in Silwan and claim to be owners of the respective plots petitioned the court against the actions of the Custodian of Absentee property. The area in question was designated by Israeli Planning Authorities as a National Park, which prohibits construction in the area. For several months, however, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority has been building terraces and placing boulders in the seized plots of land. This may serve to connect the City of David site to West Jerusalem by way of ELAD's "House in the Valley."

Sheikh Jarrah

[The plan to establish a yeshiva](#), replete with dormitories for hundreds of students, was advanced (TPS 68858) over the course of 2020. If constructed, the yeshiva will serve to significantly increase the number of settlers in the neighborhood. It is slated to be built on a plot of land which, according to the outline plan for the neighborhood, is intended for public buildings to serve Sheikh Jarrah residents. In light of the dire shortage of schools and public buildings in Sheikh Jarrah, the District Committee was obliged to instruct the Jerusalem Municipality to prepare a survey illustrating this shortage and mapping available plots to address the issue prior to the Committee's approval of the plan. The survey indeed revealed a serious deficit of buildings for public use. Despite this, the District Committee at the end of 2020 issued a proposal which would aid in ultimately approving the yeshiva plan while also advancing a project for Sheikh Jarrah residents on another plot in the neighborhood. Such a gesture is far from addressing the full scope of needs for the neighborhood. The proposal is expected to face opposition if it is brought for discussion during 2021.

Lion's Gate Area

A plan is being promoted for a promenade along the walls of the Old City in the section between Sultan Suleiman Street and the Lions Gate (TPS. 872952). This section passes between the walls of the Old City and the Muslim cemetery located outside the northeastern part of the Old City.

Armon Hanatziv Promenade

- The Jerusalem Development Authority attempted to promote a partition plan on the Armon Hanatziv promenade (plot 41 in block 30136 and plot 27 in block 20152) in

preparation for the establishment of cafes and a Ferris wheel. In various places along the promenade, the ELAD settler organization intends to develop touristic recreation sites on properties it has received from the state. At the eastern end of the Haas promenade near the UN Headquarters, ELAD is building a visitor center in Beit Shatz, while at the western end of the promenade the organization is managing a campsite along with Segway tours in the Peace Forest. A zip line is likewise planned to stretch from the Armon Hanatziv promenade to the ELAD complex in the Peace Forest.

- A plan is being promoted to move the police station from the eastern end of the Goldman Promenade at the entrance to Jabal Mukaber (TPS 773184). The removal of the police station will make it possible to implement an approved hotel plan. In the past, Israeli developers have tried to change the designation to that of residential land.

Home Demolitions

In 2020, the rate of home demolitions in East Jerusalem reached a record number of 144, which is 1.5 times higher than the average number of demolitions in the last five years. Much of the rise is due to the surge in self-demolitions in which 91 families were forced to demolish their homes in 2020 as a result of the full implementation of [Amendment 116 to the Planning and Building Law \(Kaminitz Law\)](#), which severely increases the enforcement and penalization against building offenses.

72 other units (stores, warehouses, etc.) were likewise demolished.