

Israel's Judaisation of Jerusalem

In the framework of Israel's policy of Judaising Jerusalem and making the Holy City its eternal capital, Israel has pursued a number of measures following its occupation and illegal annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967:

1 - The confiscation of land “in the public interest”, using a British law of 1943 and building 15 illegal settlements, covering an area of 24 sq km, or the equivalent of 35% of the area of East Jerusalem’s total of 72 sq km.

2 – The use of the Planning and Building Law, which has been applied to Jerusalem since 1976, which has turned around 40% of East Jerusalem a designated “green” zone to prevent Palestinian Arabs from building on it, but which has not stopped Israeli settlements being built on the same land (Har Homa and Reches Shuafat).

* In 1973 the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Jerusalem Affairs, led by the then Prime Minister Golda Meir, made a decision to keep the Arab proportion of the total population living within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem (East and West) at 22%.

* Despite the above measures, the Palestinian population has increased and today they constitute 35% of the total population, which has set alarm bells ringing among Israeli political decision-makers. This has led them to adopt “plan B”; the creation of “Greater Jerusalem” by annexing to the Jerusalem municipality all Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank but outside the old municipal borders of Jerusalem, thus altering population ratios.

* The decision of the Israeli government to establish the “separation barrier” (the “Apartheid Wall”) and to use it to ethnically cleanse those Arabs who live within the municipal borders of Jerusalem by pushing them beyond the wall to the north, north-east and east of the city. In this way, more than 100,000 Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem will no longer live within the municipal boundaries and will, according to Israeli law, lose all rights to stay in Jerusalem after seven years under Israel’s racist laws. This exposes as a sham the claim that the wall is all about Israel’s security; it has definite political aims and objectives:

A - To reduce the Arab population within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem;

B – To implement Israel’s vision of a Greater Jerusalem and the [illegal] annexation of all the [illegal] settlements that surround the city.

C – To place [Jerusalem](#) at the heart of the State of Israel, as it’s political and administrative capital.



Vital statistics of the wall around Jerusalem:

The following table illustrates the development of the process of establishing the wall in Jerusalem, according to information from the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) valid for the month of January 2007.

Length in Kilometres	Percentage of total length
89	54.94% completed
16	9.88% Construction at its highest level
57	35.19% Not constructed yet
162	100%

Upon completion of the wall, Jerusalem will lose approximately 90% of its territory, equivalent to 4% of the West Bank.

The wall isolates about 120,000 Jerusalem ID holders from their home city and about 240,000 Jerusalem residents from the rest of the [West Bank](#).

Area of land confiscated to build the wall:

The area of land annexed to the city for the construction of the wall is as follows:

- 3 square kilometres in the south-western areas of the city, where the goal is to get the largest area of vacant land with the lowest number of existing residents.
- A further 3 sq km cut out of northern Jerusalem, leaving around 26,000 Palestinians on the “non-Jerusalem” side of the wall even though technically they live within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, which were expanded after [1967](#).



Palestinian villages and areas isolated by the wall from the city of Jerusalem:

- The wall works to isolate and dismember Arab communities around Jerusalem in 25 villages inhabited by 228,200 people. The wall turns these into five enclaves surrounded by walls, settler-only roads and settlements. Two enclaves are located to the north of Jerusalem, one of which includes the villages of Al-Jdeera, Jeep, Beir Nabala and Beit Hanina al-Balad. The other is slightly to the north-west and includes the villages of Tira, Beit Dqo, Beit Ijza, Biddu, Beit Oasa, Beit Surik, Qubeibe, Qutna, Um-Allahm, Beit Anan, Beit Liqya, Beit Sira and Beith Kherbtha Al-Mesbah. The eastern enclave includes Anata, Shufat Refugee Camp, As-salam suburb and Al-Zaeem; in the south-east the enclave includes Bethany, Abu Dis, East Sawahra and Sheikh Saad. Finally, the north-eastern enclave includes Ram and the suburb of Bareed. All of these make life very complicated for the residents and destroys social relationships that had existed between the villages and the Holy City.

In the north-west of Jerusalem, the wall isolates the village of Nabi Samuel and Al-khalail neighbourhood to its west; to the east, the wall meets the settlements' streets to isolate the districts of Arab Alfahidat and Arab Jahalin east of [Anata](#).

- Israel focuses on building barriers separating what it claims as its territory from the Palestinian people; in the north of the Holy City it built a wall in the area of Qalandiya in order to separate Jerusalem from Ramallah. To the east a concrete barrier has been erected along the Mount of Olives to split parts of Abu Dis and Bethany from Jerusalem. In the south, a wall and a moat separate Bethlehem from Jerusalem and also leads to the de facto annexation of a large part of the Palestinian municipal property, including Rachel's Tomb located entirely within Bethlehem where it is surrounded by two refugee camps. This is in addition to building a wall around Kafr Aqb and the Kalandia refugee camp.

The Palestinian population in the northern part of the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem hold Jerusalem residency cards but they do not benefit from municipal services, and the Qalandiya checkpoint limits their access into the city. Yet another wall is being built in order to separate these areas from the West Bank, effectively shutting the population inside a [prison](#).

The impact of the wall on the economic situation in Jerusalem:

Over 35 years Palestinians have invested much money in the north of Jerusalem as a result of low taxes and easy access to building permits, leading to the revival of the commercial market and factories in the area. The separation wall came to hit these economic interests through the isolation of the producer from the consumer, in addition to the increase in the cost of manufactured items due to the time-consuming journeys arising from the barrier and check-points. This in turn led to an economic migration towards Ramallah and a programmed destruction of the economic base in the north of Jerusalem (the industrial area).



The effect of the wall on daily life in Jerusalem and the process of communication between people on both sides of the wall:

In a study for the Israeli Institute for Research on Jerusalem, it was found that the population density in the Arab area of the city was 2.3 persons per room, while in the Israeli sector; it was 1.1 persons per room. As a result of the migration of Arab Jerusalemites which is now taking place from the areas behind the wall to the Jerusalem area (for fear of losing their Jerusalem identity), which has reached 300 people a week, pressure on the geographical unit has increased. There is now a higher population density which reflects negatively on the overall social situation; for example, according to studies of the Islamic Courts, there is a high incidence of divorce, which in 2003 reached around 15% of all marriages. Another phenomenon is the high rent, around \$700 dollars for an average residential unit of medium size and specifications. Also to be taken into account is the pressure on education and the universities and the rise in students dropping out in search of [work](#).

The Jerusalem Centre for Social and Economic Services has warned of the risks of building the wall in the eastern part of Jerusalem up to the Jordan Valley on the overall daily activities and life of the citizens in the city, especially that the wall will increase the isolation of Jerusalem completely from its geographic and demographic depth in the West Bank, cutting off relations with citizens in the suburbs and towns located outside the municipal boundaries. The Centre indicated damage to villages and towns such as Anata, Hizma, Geba and Ram, in addition to the village's north-west of Jerusalem, which have become trapped between the two walls of the eastern and western settlement blocs, hindering the movement of citizens. The greatest impact of the wall is represented in the separation of neighbourhoods located within the municipal boundaries of the city from those located outside, preventing the inhabitants of the latter to have access to Jerusalem; they are thus also deprived of access to health and educational [institutions](#).

With the continued building of the wall around the city of Jerusalem, the completion of which is expected in early September 2010, warnings of its impact, particularly on the education and health sectors, have already started. This has pushed those sectors in the Holy City to hold an emergency meeting in which they examined the implications of building the wall on these sectors, especially the impact on the 75% of workers who live in the West Bank. The construction of the wall around Jerusalem will deprive the education and health institutions of their traditional sources of staff. Dr. Arafat Alhadmi, Director of Al-Maqased Hospital, estimates the number of Jerusalemites in the health field who will be affected negatively by the building of this wall to be more than 100,000. Such workers will not be able to reach the city's hospitals and health centres; this excludes consideration of the Israeli proposal for Palestinian hospitals in Jerusalem to open outposts in the areas separated by the wall, especially in Shufat and the suburb of Bared.

Mohammed Sawan, President of the Union of Palestinian Teachers, notes that the new measures arising from the completion of the wall coincides with the beginning of the new school year. This will reflect negatively on more than one hundred schools in the city of Jerusalem, the enrolment for which stems mainly of West Bank residents and a large number of students who come from towns and villages outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem who will have to queue for hours to get through checkpoints.



Mr. Sawan set out the plans of the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem, which talks about renting buildings for schools and classrooms and funding a bus service to districts which will be separated by the wall and asked, “If the neighbourhoods in the heart of the Holy City which are not isolated by the wall are in dire financial and other assistance, how is it possible for the municipality to allocate huge amounts of money for neighbourhoods where it has planned to get rid of [thousands of residents and citizens](#)? A report revealed by Physicians for Human Rights has stressed that Israeli policies are the reason for the deterioration of Palestinian health provision in the Old City of Jerusalem because the apartheid wall prevents Palestinians from the West Bank from gaining access to the first medical centre in the occupied territories and Jerusalem’s hospitals, thus putting the continued survival of these hospitals at risk.

East Jerusalem has a medical centre providing services to the Palestinian population, such as treatment for malignant neoplasm, open-heart surgery, children’s heart surgery and some eye and bone operations; these are only available in Jerusalem and cannot be accessed anywhere else in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, over the years, East Jerusalem has been cut off from the rest of the occupied territories, and the separation has reached a new level with the construction of the wall

This arbitrary separation between hospitals and patients has a massive negative impact on hospitals and threatens their very existence.

The report added that the “solution” suggested by the Israeli Army - a permit system - has failed miserably, as the number of Palestinians in need of treatment far exceeds the number of people obtaining permits to enter Jerusalem. There have been cases where even medical staff have not been granted permits to cross checkpoints, resulting in the inability of East Jerusalem hospitals to perform their humanitarian [function](#).

Changing the demographic composition of the population of the city to change its identity:

The wall cannot be separated from Israel’s overall policies in Jerusalem; it overlaps and intersects with them to achieve the same objectives, especially with regard to the Israeli policy in to change Jerusalem’s demography and thus change its identity, using several means to achieve this:

1 – Working to increase the property assets of the Jewish population, Israel encourages them to live in the city, with Housing Minister Effi Eitam aiming to settle thousands of Jews in Arab neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem, especially in Ras al-Amud and Wadi Joz. The minister believes that this will “foil the scheme to divide the capital of Israel”. The plan calls for intensifying the Jewish presence not only in the old town, but also in the eastern area of Jerusalem, especially in the neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud and Abu Dis, the settlement of which – as the minister said – will lead to bringing about the required demographic change. The plan provides for the granting of loans and credits to those who wish to buy residential units in some towns in Galilee and Negev, while the Jerusalem proposal talks about doubling the amounts up to 100,000 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) rather than NIS 50,000, for those buying one housing unit.



2 - At the same time as boosting the Jewish presence Israel is moving to demolish and confiscate Palestinian property and prohibiting new building licences. In East Jerusalem, 66% of the land is taken by force, including 5% of the Old City, and 61% in the West Bank. While the Palestinian residential areas in the city represent 10.7% of the area of the city, settlements established on the territories occupied in 1967 represent about 2.7%, and the occupation forces confiscated 85% of the territory of Jerusalem

The Israelis have authorised the building of 654 new housing units in the settlement of Givat Zeev on the land of Arab citizens in the towns of Beitunia and Beit Deqou, north of Jerusalem. Israel also announced last June a plan to build a new settlement in Jerusalem to connect the settlement of Maale Adumim with the occupied city in order to make Jerusalem one bloc cutting the West Bank into two parts; access from one to the other will only take place by passing through that settlement

The [development](#) of the area of Jerusalem Municipality Borders from 1948 - 1999

% old-city/Jerusalem	%	Area in thousands of Acres	Year
4.7	-	19.33	1948
2.7	73.3	33.5	1952
2.5	7.5	36	1963
2.4	5.8	38.1	1966
0.83	173.5	108	1969
0.83	0.2	180.3	1983
0.83	0.5	108.5	1985
0.83	13.4	123	1993
0.71	2.7	126.4	1999
0.15	375	600	Future plan



The impact of the wall on the negotiations for Jerusalem:

The apartheid wall will affect the final status negotiations on the basis that Israel is imposing facts on the ground and these facts include the seizure and exploitation of the law of absentees and all other laws, whether they emanate from the British era (the laws of the mandate) or after it, such as the Absentee Property Law of 1950, in order to resolve the issue of Jerusalem. Of special concern is the issue of sovereignty over religious properties; the Wadi Araba agreement between Jordan and Israel placed such control with Jordan. Thus, if one takes into account that more than 86% of the area of Jerusalem is under direct or indirect Israeli control, then the remaining area for Palestinians is only 14%; introduce the Absentee Property Law which will help Israel to control that 14% and you can see that there are determined efforts to resolve in Israel's favour the "battle of Jerusalem" before the final status [negotiations](#).

