

The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12



Edited By

Dr. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh



Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

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**Al-Zaytouna Centre
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The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12

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Chapter Six

The Land and the Holy Sites

The Land and the Holy Sites

Introduction

No matter how often writers try to find new ways to describe what is taking place in Jerusalem, they find themselves repeating the term “escalation of the pace of attacks.” This is because the Israeli focus on Jerusalem has continued to rise, year after year. A researcher following what is going on in Jerusalem will struggle to monitor and classify the huge amount of reports they gather regarding the steps taken towards Judaizing the city, steps that encompass almost every area of life in the city.

This sudden awakening to Jerusalem is not surprising, as the Judaization of the city is the biggest and most prominent manifestation of the expression “the Jewishness of the state,” which has become the central expression of the “Zionist political mind.” For, if Israel was a state with a “Jewish identity,” its capital “Yerushalayim” must be likewise. Such a city, to this day, remains a dream. The beholder of the city’s horizon will notice great blocks of buildings surrounding it. But his eye cannot miss its Arab and Islamic identity; for its mosques and churches are the first to meet the eye, even 44 years after the city’s complete fall in to the hands of the Israelis. Preceding this, we are likely to witness, year after year, an escalating race to settle the city’s identity.

First: Islamic and Christian Holy Sites

1. Al-Aqsa Mosque

During 2011, the Israeli authorities continued to violate the sanctity of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. These violations included excavations, attacks on the properties belonging to the mosque, intervention in its management, and break-ins. Such incidents, carried out during the period 22/8/2010–21/8/2011 by Jewish extremists, Israeli officials and security agencies numbered 34. At the same time, Israel took a series of measures to ease restrictions that were imposed on Jews’ entry into the mosque. Furthermore, 2011 witnessed one of the largest Jewish group incursions



into the mosque, on 9/8/2011, corresponding to the ninth of Ramadan. Meanwhile, occupation forces imposed, during the month, tight restrictions on the entry of Muslims wishing to perform special late night Ramadan prayers (*Tarawih*) and their Friday prayers.¹

**a. Developments in the Political, Religious and Legal Stances Towards
al-Aqsa Mosque**

In 2008, the Knesset State Control Committee asked State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss to “examine the enforcement of the Antiquities Law on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.”² Lindenstrauss’s office set about preparing a report on the subject, which it presented to the concerned committee in 2010. On 3/8/2010, the committee started to discuss it and decided to keep it, hidden from the public since it is considered highly sensitive for diplomatic and security reasons. Very limited sections of the report were approved for publication.³ These parts were not published until 17/5/2011, and were limited to short sentences, which said, “These works [done by the Islamic Endowments (*Waqf*) in Solomon’s Stables] were carried out without any coordination with the authorities that deal with legal enforcement in the Temple Mount, and without the required permits and licenses. The use of mechanical tools during some of the works regretfully damaged some of the archaeological evidence.”⁴ The report came to the conclusion that “It is important to highlight that any work or excavation at the Temple Mount should be carried out in keeping with the character of the site, with the necessary licenses, and according to archeological standards.”⁵ This report and its conclusions came to serve the agenda of Jewish extremists who call on the government to confront the Islamic Endowments and force them to coordinate with the Israel Antiquities Authority in any works they plan to carry out in *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This report coincided with a systematic media campaign launched by a group of extremist Jewish associations in cooperation with politicians, among them members of the Knesset, in which they accused the Israeli police of instituting discriminatory policies against Jews wishing to visit the Temple Mount. This campaign led to a hearing, held on 15/6/2011 by the Knesset Interior and Environment Committee in which Police Chief Superintendent Avi Bitton was questioned.⁶ It also led

to an investigation, by Israel's Attorney General, Yehuda Weinstein, of the conduct of Israeli police. These efforts ended with the convening, on 7/8/2011, of an extended meeting in the office of Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin that included top police officials, a group of politicians, and representatives of Jewish associations. In this meeting, it was agreed to:⁷

1. Allow Jewish soldiers to enter the mosque in their uniforms (which had been banned previously).
2. Allow visits to the mosque for brides on their wedding day, suggesting that wedding ceremonies may be allowed inside the mosque.
3. Stop subjecting religious Jews to search procedures and strict supervision when entering the mosque.

Regarding developments in religious attitudes, what was striking was the move by Safed's Chief Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, one of two chief rabbis in the official rabbinate, calling upon the Israeli public to offer "Passover sacrifice on the Temple Mount." He decreed that the Jewish people who avoid performing this ritual were putting themselves at risk of "kareth," a biblical term meaning supernatural punishment for transgressing Jewish Law.⁸

In 2010, a group of Jewish extremists presented a plea to Israel's Supreme Court requesting "permission to bring a sacrifice on the Temple Mount prior to Passover." State attorneys asked the Supreme Court to reject this plea saying, "Performing the ritual on the Temple Mount would deal a severe blow to public safety and security."⁹

b. Excavations and Constructions Under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and in Its Periphery

By the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, excavations below *al-Aqsa* and in its periphery moved up to a new phase. The focus had been on increasing the number of excavations and expanding them, but now switched to rehabilitating the excavations and opening them to visitors; so that they would form, after their inauguration and after completing linking them one to the other, a Jewish historical city under the mosque. This change in focus indicates that this city's infrastructure has been completed. The following table shows the rise in the number of excavations under *al-Aqsa* Mosque:



Table 1/6: Excavations Under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and in Its Periphery, 21/8/2011¹⁰

Direction		Southern side	Western side	Northern side	Total
Type of excavations	Completed	5	10	0	15
	Active	12	9	2	23
Total		17	19	2	38

Excavations Under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and in Its Periphery, 21/8/2011

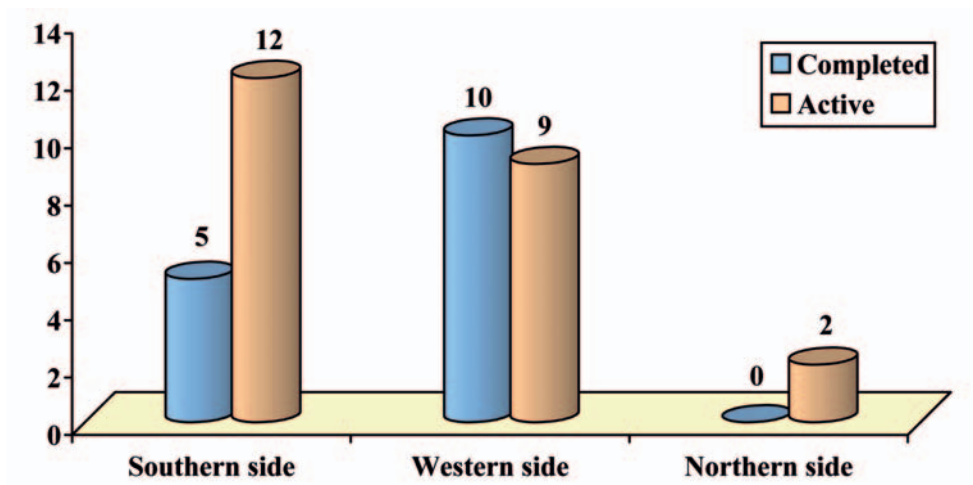
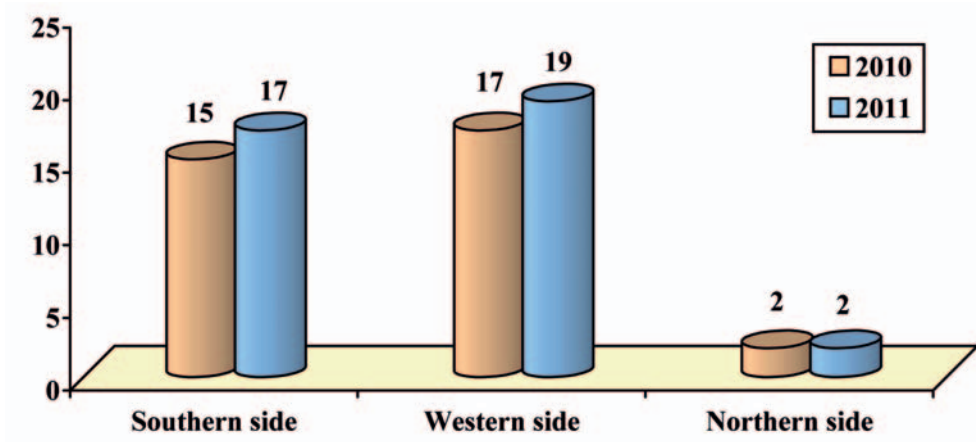


Table 2/6: The Rise in the Number of Excavations Under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and in Its Periphery, 22/8/2010–21/8/2011¹¹

Direction of excavation	No. of excavation sites in 22/8/2010	No. of excavation sites in 21/8/2011	% increase
Southern side	15	17	13
Western side	17	19	11
Northern side	2	2	0
Total	34	38	12

The Rise in the Number of Excavations Under *al-Aqsa* Mosque and in Its Periphery, 22/8/2010–21/8/2011



The most important of the inaugurated digs was a tunnel linking the “City of David” in Silwan to the south and the Western Wall’s network of tunnels to the north; the Herodian road forms a section of this. The importance of this tunnel stems from the fact that it connects the two wings of the historical Jewish city, south and west of the mosque.¹²

Furthermore, the Israeli authorities focused on preparing an infrastructure that would allow the presence of Jewish shrines. So, in November 2011, they confiscated the land, an area of 800 square meters, in order to convert it to a parking lot for visitors to the City of David.¹³ On 4/10/2010 the occupation’s municipality approved an integrated project for the rehabilitation of the vicinity of the Western Wall, aiming to attract around 15 million visitors annually. The project includes opening, for the first time since the city was occupied, a new gate in the Old City’s southern wall.¹⁴

The most prominent facility that was opened to visitors is the Ophel City Walls Site, a large complex of ruins from what is claimed to be of the First Temple period and which the Jews believe to be the Water Gate. The corridors were constructed among the ruins of the Umayyad palaces situated south of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and were opened to visitors as part of the Jewish Historic City.¹⁵



The Issue of the Mughrabi Hill

The Mughrabi issue came to public attention on 15/2/2004 when the stone retaining wall that supports the hill from its northern side, overlooking Western Wall Square, crumbled after a snowstorm. The explanation for the collapse of the hill's wall at the time was the cement bases that the Israeli authorities poured for the umbrellas that were installed in the place shortly before. Another reason was that the Israeli authorities did not allow the Ministry of Awqaf Islamic Affairs and Holy Places to fortify or restore the hill, when in fact the weight placed on it was purposely increased. Just over a year after the hill's collapse, on 20/4/2005, Israel put up, in place of the hill, a wooden ramp that allows entrance to the mosque from the Mughrabi Gate.¹⁶

Before elaborating further on how this issue developed, it is helpful to explain the background. The hill came into being in this area after the Moroccan Quarter, situated to its north, was demolished on 11/6/1967, followed by the honorary Khanqah building, which is situated to its south and was in turn demolished on 16/6/1969. All these buildings used to stand at the same level. However, the demolition work that leveled them to the ground left the passage going up to the Mughrabi Gate standing alone, looking like an isolated block.¹⁷ This tells us that the hill is artificial, consisting of a demolished passage, standing over structures that go back to at least the Ayyubid period; hence their need for constant maintenance and care. This background also tells us that the Mughrabi Hill and the rooms beneath it are the last Islamic structures in this area.

The work to demolish the Mughrabi Hill started on 6/2/2007, part of a plan to rehabilitate the area from a biblical point of view.¹⁸ These works led to numerous repercussions and reactions. One of these came from UNESCO, when its Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura, sent a technical mission, in the period 27/2–2/3/2007, to make a technical assessment of the location. Their report made five recommendations, which included the following, “The Government of Israel should be asked to engage immediately in a consultation process with all concerned parties, in particular the authorities of the Waqf and of Jordan.”¹⁹ This call came after Jerusalem was placed on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger.

This call by UNESCO constituted a precedent that surpassed the fundamentals of international law in this regard. There is a constant in the various resolutions of UN bodies which is that the affairs of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Islamic endowments



in Jerusalem are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Ministry of Awqaf Islamic Affairs and Holy Places. This call turned Israel into a genuine party and turned the Jordanian ministry into one of the “concerned parties.” Nevertheless, the Jordanian government responded to this call. Since then the World Heritage Committee has held a series of meetings to look into this matter as a standing item on its agenda. The Israel Antiquities Authority presented its vision of a solution, by erecting a metal bridge on pillars over what remains of the hill, while the Jordanian authorities opposed this project. However, and in numerous meetings, they were not able to present an alternative project, in view of the fact that Israeli authorities did not allow them to visit the site and take the necessary measurements and soil samples, in order to prepare their own plan. Thus we ended up with two viewpoints belonging to two parties contesting the guardianship of the site. This was the first time that this alternative viewpoint had been given since the city was occupied, having been the exclusive right of the Jordanian authorities.

In spite of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry’s favorable response to the UN resolution, which called on the two parties to cooperate in finding a solution, the Israeli authorities continued to bar Jordanian experts from entering the site. When the Jordanians were allowed entrance, their tools were all confiscated. This prompted UNESCO’s Executive Board on 21/10/2010 to call “upon Israel to enable the necessary access to the site to Jordanian and Waqf experts, most notably, in order to take the necessary measurements for the concept design proposed by Jordan, ... and to enable Jordan as a concerned party to present its final design for the restoration and preservation of the Mughrabi Ascent.”²⁰ Then, after exhausting negotiations, the Israeli authorities allowed the Jordanian technical experts to inspect the site and examine soil samples, provided that they leave within six hours;²¹ enabling the Jordanian authorities to prepare their own plan, which it presented to UNESCO on 27/5/2011.²²

On 22/5/2011, the Jerusalem city engineer sent a strongly worded letter saying that the temporary wooden bridge “was not intended to provide a permanent solution and is not suitable for security and civilian needs, as well as may be hazardous due to deteriorating physical conditions,” in an effort to bring the subject back to the limelight.²³ Then on 26/10/2011, Jerusalem city engineer announced his intention to dismantle the bridge because it was in danger of collapse. He gave the Western Wall Heritage Fund 30 days to work on a replacement plan.²⁴ Thus, from Israel’s viewpoint, legal procedures were completed for the demolition of the hill.



This announcement provoked strong reactions, especially as it included a specified period after which the demolition may take place. An Egyptian public campaign, as well as a Jordanian one, started to stop the demolition. On 13/11/2011, the Egyptian campaign sent letters to al-Azhar, the Coptic Church and to the SCAF demanding action to stop the demolition.²⁵ Then, on 16/11/2011, Grand Imam of al-Azhar Ahmad al-Tayyib warned against destroying the hill and called on Arab leaders to take action;²⁶ he also called for dedicating Friday 25/11/2011 to Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque.²⁷ And on 24/11/2011, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, sent a letter to the Jordanian King ‘Abdullah II, expressing the need for immediate action to stop the demolition of the hill.²⁸ On 25/11/2011, mass rallies were held in Jordan, Egypt and GS. One of these was held in Suweima, a border village in the Jordan Valley north of the Dead Sea, the closest place in Jordan to Jerusalem, only 25 km away.²⁹ Furthermore, the Jordanian Foreign Ministry sent a letter to its Israeli counterpart regarding the Jordanian stance in this regard. On 25/11/2011 Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed the Jerusalem municipality and the Public Security Ministry to postpone for a week the demolition of the Mughrabi Bridge, due to warnings from Egypt and Jordan of possible repercussions.³⁰

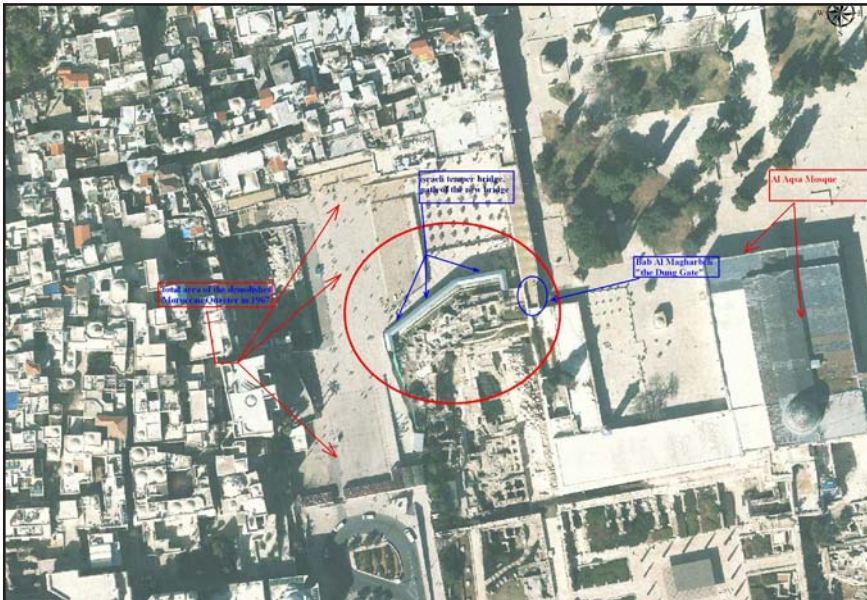
On 11/12/2011, in an attempt to pressure the prime minister, officials closed the Mughrabi Bridge, three days before the municipality deadline to close the ramp, because it posed a threat to public safety.³¹ During that period, many Arabic condemnations of this decision were issued; among them a letter from the Jordanian foreign minister on 9/12/2011, in which he warned Israel against closing the wooden ramp to *al-Aqsa* Mosque.³² Israel reopened the bridge on the morning of 14/12/2011. Two Knesset members, Aryeh Eldad and Uri Ariel of the National Union Party (Halhud HaLeumi) were the first to enter *al-Aqsa* Mosque,³³ coming over the bridge after its reopening, having previously announced their intention to break into the mosque on that date.

In spite of the fact that the storm surrounding the issue of the Mughrabi Hill has passed, the hill remains under threat. Most of the rubble that existed was, in effect, removed. What is more serious is Israel’s intent to remove all that remains of the hill, and to pave the place in order to enlarge the Jewish prayer area. That is why there is a lot of focus on the idea of an iron bridge standing on pillars, because this would allow the removal of the hill and expansion of the prayer area. There is no doubt that the issue of the Mughrabi Hill will return to the forefront soon.

The Mughrabi Hill After the Demolition of the Passage and the Removal of Its Debris



The Mughrabi Hill Location and the Wooden Ramp Relative to *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the Western Wall Plaza



c. Jewish Presence Inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Interference in Its Administration

Realizing Jewish presence in the mosque as a “permanent right” represented the central goal of “Zionist actions,” both on the level of extremist Jewish associations and on an official level. These associations consistently called for “Ascent to the Temple Mount,” a matter which they were able to consecrate over the years 2009 and 2010. They also tried to give the temple the status of “the center of Jewish life” and started to organize educational trips for students, intensify introductory tours, and pressure the Israeli police into changing the rules governing entrance to the mosque. They succeeded with the settlement reached on 7/8/2011 in the office of Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin; immediately after which, the largest recorded mass incursion in the history of the mosque took place; when 500 Jewish settlers stormed it under police protection on 9/8/2011, which coincided with the month of Ramadan.³⁴

After Israeli police agreed to allow uniformed Israeli soldiers to break in to the mosque and hold celebrations, some members of the police force began to take part in these rituals. Such incursions used to be met with stones and shoes and the Israeli police began to arrest anyone who dared call takbeer, “*Allah-u-Akbar*” (*Allah* is the greatest) to the intruding groups. Such incidents took place on 13, 16 and 17/3/2011, with the aim to confront those sitting in the benches of learning in the mosque.³⁵ The Israelis began using methods to keep worshippers away from the mosque and deter them from visiting. They would issue against them six months expulsion orders, subject to renewal; even if they were guards of the mosque and were employed by the Islamic Endowments. Furthermore, they would make a point of recording the names of those who attend lessons at the benches of learning; monitoring their entry daily, in preparation for issuing rulings against them.³⁶

This reality has led to a decline in direct confrontation related to the storming of the mosque, with the exception of calls to execute major break-ins, such as those that took place during January and February of 2012. Extremist Jews no longer enter the mosque afraid and in a hurry to leave, as was the case over the last few years. Their visits have become rather long and more regular, and include the performance of public rituals, as happened on 2/6/2011, when 200 Jewish extremists performed a public congregational prayer in the mosque, with the participation of members of the Israeli police assigned for their protection.³⁷

It can be said without exaggeration that, time-wise, the mosque has become divided between Muslims and Jews; with the police providing full daily protection to all those wishing to enter it during times other than those designated for Muslims. This police protection is based on rulings issued by the Israeli Supreme Court in this regard; with the result that hundreds of settlers enter the mosque routinely.

The most noticeable attack carried out by the Israeli police came on 20/4/2011, when a policeman threw an incendiary bomb in to the wooded area east of the mosque that would have caused a great fire were it not for the quick response of the worshippers who immediately put it out. The Israeli police entered as soon as the fire was extinguished in order to clear its traces.³⁸

Finally, we cannot overlook the unprecedented steps and measures taken by the police to limit the presence of worshippers in the mosque during Ramadan, the time when vitality usually returns to the mosque with police measures failing to limit the number of worshippers attending. The first attempts to break into the mosque came on the first night of *Tarawih*, on 31/7/2011, carried out by 20 settlers who approached from the direction of the Lions Gate.³⁹ On the first Friday of the month, 5/8/2011, the Israeli police broke into the mosque and emptied it of those worshippers practicing *I'tikaf* (retreat in a mosque), claiming they had no right to stay there overnight;⁴⁰ in a move designed to consecrate the temporal division of the mosque. The police imposed tight entry restrictions, barring men under 50 and women under 45 from entering the mosque. They closed the Qalandiya crossing to buses, and forced those coming to pray to disembark from their buses at the Qalandiya checkpoint and continue either by taking other means of transportation or by walking.⁴¹ In spite of these severe measures, the number of worshippers on the first Friday reached 120 thousands;⁴² and on the second, 170 thousands.⁴³ This prompted the police to intensify their measures on the third Friday, with the result that only 70 thousand worshippers were able to reach the mosque.⁴⁴ What happened on this third Friday constituted a great challenge to the Palestinians; so their religious scholars, leaders and authorities called for dense presence in the mosque on the night of the 27th of Ramadan; with the result that their numbers on that night reached 300 thousands.⁴⁵

2. Jerusalem's Islamic Holy Sites

In addition to the attacks on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the most prominent attacks on Islamic holy sites were as follows:



a. Hosh Al Shahabi

On 13/1/2011, *al-Aqsa* Foundation for Endowment and Heritage issued a statement pointing out that the Israeli authorities had inaugurated Hosh Al Shahabi, which is part of Ribat al-Kurd, located north of the Iron Gate in *al-Aqsa*'s Western Wall. They opened it to Jewish visitors under the name of the "Small Wailing Wall."⁴⁶



b. The Mamilla Cemetery

On 25/6/2011, under Israeli police protection, more than 100 graves in the Mamilla Cemetery were razed for the benefit of establishing the Center for Human Dignity–Museum of Tolerance Jerusalem (MOTJ).⁴⁷ This museum is being built and sponsored by the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), as an additional branch to its two other Museum of Tolerance branches already established in Los Angeles and New York.⁴⁸ On 12/7/2011, the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee approved the plan to build this museum,⁴⁹ which will swallow up most of the remaining area of the cemetery of no more than 20 thousand square meters; its original size having been 10 times as large. On 25/9/2011, the President of the Council of Islamic Cemeteries in Jerusalem, Mustafa Abu Zahra, declared that great quantities of water were flooding the western side of the cemetery, due to two open pipes belonging to Jerusalem's municipal water company, the Gihon Company.⁵⁰ And on 13/10/2011, a number of extremist Jews burned a tree in the cemetery and smashed 15 graves.⁵¹

c. 'Ukasha Mosque

On 14/12/2011, Jewish extremists torched the historic 'Ukasha Bin Muhsin Mosque in West Jerusalem and defaced its walls with obscene graffiti, consisting of offensive comments about the Prophet Muhammad. The Israeli authorities placed this mosque at the disposal of the "Guardian of Absentee Property" and turned its courtyard into a playground for children. This attack was one of a series of attacks by Jewish extremists who belong to an extremist organization carrying out a campaign called "Tag Mehir" (price tag).⁵²

3. Jerusalem's Christian Holy Sites

a. The Issue of the Cremisan Monastery

On 9/9/2011, the Israeli army handed the nuns of the Cremisan Monastery, northwest of Beit Jala, a military order from the head of the Israeli Regional Planning and Construction Committee. The order notified the owners of land threatened by the Separation Wall north of Beit Jala city, in Bethlehem Governorate, that they should submit their objections to the proposed new route of the Separation Wall in the area within 30 days.⁵³

b. The Dwindling Number of Christians in Jerusalem

Data issued by the CBS for 2010 showed that the number of Christians in Jerusalem continued to decline; 14,500 persons, among them, 11,600 Christian Arabs. This means that Christian Arabs now represent 1.5% of the city's population.⁵⁴ If this rate of decline continues, the Christian Arab presence in Jerusalem will cease to exist in less than 15 years.

4. Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in the Rest of Historic Palestine

a. The "Tag Mehir" Movement

The year 2010 witnessed the burning of mosques in the WB. Usually, the arsonists would leave behind a phrase saying "burning done" followed by a number. But what is striking is that, during 2011, those carrying out these acts were signing the name of the extremist settlement movement "Tag Mehir," which was created to oppose any policy of evacuating settlements. Many of its operations in the WB were signed Migron, in reference to a settlement outpost near Ramallah that the Israeli Supreme Court was considering evacuating. In August 2011, the court ruled that the Israeli government should evacuate it completely by 31/3/2012.

The second important event that saw a great number of attacks on holy sites, properties and citizens, committed by the same movement, happened when the PLO went to the UN seeking recognition for the state of Palestine. Table 3/6 shows the escalation in arson attacks on mosques after September 2011.

What is striking when looking closely at the attacks perpetrated by the movement is how at ease its members were storming Palestinian towns. This attitude took the group to the point of trying to attack al-Hassan al-Kabir Mosque in the center of the town of Bir Zeit on 9/9/2011.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the attacks follow a pattern; the arson starts by breaking windows or by looking for back entrances



from where to throw flaming tires or incendiary materials inside. They failed in reaching their goal when on 7/12/2011 they faced a tightly shut and protected ‘Ali ibn Abi Taleb Mosque in Bruqin near Salfit. This mosque had received two demolition notices, prompting the inhabitants to take protection measures.⁵⁶

b. Attacks Perpetrated During 2011

During 2011, both the Israeli army and the settlers played their own role in storming and attacking holy sites, and assaulting those who sought to safeguard them from attacks. The following table displays the most notable of the attacks and violations committed against the holy sites:

Table 3/6: Most Notable Israeli Attacks on the Holy Sites in the Rest of Historic Palestine 2011⁵⁷

Date	The Event
16/1/2011	Construction of a Judaized tourist resort above al-Qishla Cemetery in Jaffa begins after the razing and concealing of the Islamic graves.
16/1/2011	Settlers desecrate al-Nuzha Mosque in Jaffa, throwing stones and chanting anti-Muslim slogans.
17/2/2011	The Yazra Mosque in Tubas Governorate is demolished.
23/2/2011	Israeli authorities prosecute and fine ‘Abd al-Majid Muhammad, who is in charge of the holy sites file in <i>al-Aqsa</i> Foundation, because of the restoration of an Ottoman mosque in Jerusalem.
24/2/2011	Confiscation notice served on an endowment land in Acre, with the aim of allowing a railway line to pass through it.
28/2/2011	Arson attack on Salman al-Farisi Mosque in the village of Burin.
28/2/2011	Notification given for the demolition of ‘Ali ibn Abi Taleb Mosque in the town of Ramadeen, south of Hebron.
3/3/2011	Break in at the Nabi Yunus Mosque in Halhoul, the intruders perform Jewish rituals.
19/3/2011	Israeli forces storm Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Mosque in the town of Housan, west of Bethlehem.
22/3/2011	The Israeli army breaks into ‘Awarta’s old mosque.
29/3/2011	Settlers desecrate Nabi Yunus Mosque in Halhoul.
3/4/2011	Jewish parties raze and destroy the cemetery of al-Naghmaghiya Village, south west of Haifa, which has an area of more than 15 donums.
9/4/2011	The Israeli authorities offer a mosque in the city of al-Taiba for sale in public auction.
12/4/2011	A group of settlers write Hebrew sentences on the gravestones and the walls of the cemetery adjacent to Martyrs Street in Hebron. ⁵⁸
20–21/4/2011	Closing of the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron for two days.
23/4/2011	Israelis attack Christian worshippers in Jerusalem.
3/5/2011	Setting fire to the mosque of the Hawwara School in Nablus.

Date	The Event
21/5/2011	Settlers throw stones at Khalid ibn al-Walid Mosque near Hebron.
7/6/2011	Setting fire to al-Maghir Mosque, east of Ramallah.
12/6/2011	An Israeli ruling to demolish 'Ali ibn Abi Taleb Mosque in Bruqin near Salfit.
14/6/2011	Notification of demolition for the mosque of al-Ma'sara Village, southwest of Bethlehem.
19/6/2011	Extensive unearthing and digging operations in al-Qishla Cemetery in Jaffa.
22/6/2011	The Israeli Supreme Court denies an application to reopen Beersheba's Grand Mosque for prayer and decides to turn it into a museum of Islamic and Oriental heritage. Despite this, the site was turned into a Jewish museum on 27/12/2011.
7/7/2011	Israeli parties try to obliterate the features of the mosque of the depopulated village al-'Abbasiyyah.
9/8/2011	Installation of a new Israeli checkpoint at the entrance of the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron.
15/8/2011	Jewish extremists perform Jewish religious rituals in the cemetery of Beit Ummar in Hebron district. ⁵⁹
5/9/2011	Israeli settlers set fire to al-Nourain Mosque in Qasra Village, southeast of Nablus.
7/9/2011	Vandalizing of the Prophet Lot Mosque in Hebron.
8/9/2011	Graffiti hostile to Muslims and Arabs written on the walls of the historic Yatma Mosque, south of Nablus.
9/9/2011	Settlers write offensive graffiti on the walls of Birzeit Grand Mosque.
25/9/2011	Digging at al-Qishla Cemetery in Jaffa.
25/9/2011	Closing of the Ibrahim Mosque to Muslims for two days.
3/10/2011	Arson attack on al-Nur Mosque in the village of Tuba Zanghariya in the Galilee.
6/10/2011	Demolition notice served by the Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality on two gates and stairs on Sea Mosque in Jaffa.
7/10/2011	Vandals attack al-Kazakhana and Christian cemeteries in Jaffa.
11/10/2011	For the third time, the occupation demolishes the Yarza Mosque in the Jordan Valley, east of Tubas.
20/11/2011	Demolition notice served on a mosque west of the town of Nahhalin. ⁶⁰
21/11/2011	A Jewish extremist breaks into Hasan Beik Mosque in Jaffa.
24/11/2011	The demolition of Khirbet al-Maqfareh Mosque, south of Yatta in the Hebron Governorate.
7/12/2011	Attack with a bomb burns parts of Kresa Mosque in Dura in Hebron.
7/12/2011	Settlers try to burn 'Ali ibn Abi Taleb Mosque in Bruqin, west of the city of Salfit. ⁶¹
15/12/2011	Attack on Nabi Matta Mosque in Hebron.
15/12/2011	Israeli settlers set fire to al-Nur Mosque in the village of Burqa, east of Ramallah.
17/12/2011	Assault on Saint John the Baptist Church on the banks of the Jordan River, near the border with Jordan.
19/12/2011	Racist slogans written on the walls of the Sahaba Mosque in Bani Na'im in Hebron.



c. A Bill to Ban Adhan

On 8/12/2011, the extremist Member of the Knesset from the ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beitenu Party, Anastassia Michaeli, proposed, along with five colleagues, a law to ban the call to prayer (adhan) being made using loud speakers by mosques in mixed Jewish-Arab areas, such as Nazareth and Jerusalem, including in the Old City and *al-Aqsa* Mosque. “The proposal aims to prohibit mosques from sounding the nighttimes and early morning calls of the Muezzin—who uses a public address system to beckon worshipers to pray—in order to avoid disrupting nearby residents.”⁶² Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his support of the proposed law on 11/12/2011.⁶³

Second: The Population Under Occupation

Demographic balance remains a great concern for Israeli decision-makers. This concern seems to grow deeper year on year as the increase in the Arab population goes beyond all expectations; Arabs will represent 40% of the population by the year 2020. The fact that the occupation authorities use two parallel strategies to achieve the desired demographic balance, increasing the Jewish population on the one hand, and decreasing the Arab population on the other. Over the last four decades, increasing the Jewish population proved to be impossible; for Jewish internal migration toward cities surrounding Jerusalem continued to absorb a big percentage of the natural population growth as well as the immigrants coming from abroad who had previously stayed in the city. Attempting to limit the Palestinian population became the better solution for the Israeli authorities. This was to be done by expelling a large number of Palestinians from Palestinian population centres to outside the cities. Those who remain within Jerusalem’s city limits were to be driven to the farthest point possible from the Old City and the city centre, in order to reduce the mass of this population bloc.

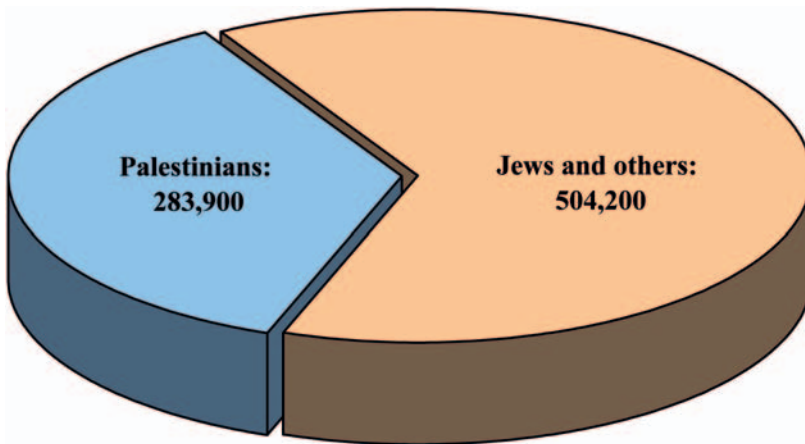
1. The Demographic Battle's Reality⁶⁴

Table 4/6: Number of Residents in Jerusalem 2009–2010⁶⁵

Group	Year	Population	% Annual growth	% of the total population
Palestinians	2009	275,900	2.9	35.7
	2010	283,900	2.9	36
Jews and others*	2009	497,000	1	64.3
	2010	504,200	1.4	64

*This category includes Jews, non-Arab Christian residents, as well as those not classified by religion. As for the “others,” their number in 2010 reached 12,400, 1.6% of the city’s population.

Number of Residents in Jerusalem at the End of 2010



Careful reading of the Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2011 and of the numbers released by the CBS related to Jerusalem show the following:

a. In 2009, the total number of residents of the city amounted to 773,000; while in 2010, it was 788,100.

b. During 2008, the Israeli authorities conducted a census that resulted in an altering of the number of Arab and Jewish inhabitants, which had previously been based on the estimates of the 1995 census.⁶⁶ Thus they lowered the number of Arab inhabitants from 268,600 to 268,200. They also lowered the number of Jewish inhabitants from 495,000 to 492,200.⁶⁷

c. The number of Christian Arabs continued to decline significantly, as mentioned earlier.



d. This re-count led a jump in the Arab population increase from 2.7% before the census to 2.9% after it.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, it led to altering the Jewish population increase to 1% for 2009 and 1.4% for 2010, after having been 1.6% before the census.⁶⁹ It thus became lower than the Jewish population increase state-wide, which came to 1.7% for 2010. Still, this increase remained higher than those in other major Jewish cities, such as 0.9% in Haifa and 0.1% in Tel Aviv.⁷⁰

e. The net internal migration of the Jewish population continued its negative trend; as during 2010, around 11,100 Jews arrived in the city from its surroundings, while around 18,300 others left the city during this same year. Thus the resultant net internal migration came out negative, with around 7,300 more Jewish residents leaving the city than those arriving in it.⁷¹

f. Population increase varied greatly among Jerusalem's settlements. The Har Homa (Jabal Abu Ghneim) settlement continues to be the most successful in attracting Jewish citizens. Thus in 2009, the total population growth was 2,109 persons, with 21.6% annual growth. As for the other settlements, their annual population growth varied between -1.4% in East Talpiot, -1% in east Gilo, -0.2% in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City; while other settlements registered limited positive rates; 0.4% in west Gilo, 1.1% in Pisgat Ze'ev, 1.2% in Ramat Shlomo, and 1.5% in Neve Yakov.⁷²

g. In spite of the fact that these settlements registered a decline in population, Israel continues to expand them. An example of this is the Gilo settlement where the government approved an expansion of 5,377 residential units during 2011.⁷³ Oddly, it places these settlement expansions under the title of "natural growth."⁷⁴

h. The limited number of Jewish immigrants moving to Jerusalem from abroad continued. In 2010, they numbered under 3,400 (from a total of 22,800 immigrants who came to Israel from abroad).⁷⁵ A study of the immigrants to Jerusalem in the period 2002–2009 shows that 58% of them came from the US and Western Europe, indicating religious motives for their immigration.⁷⁶

i. During the period 2006–2009, the ratio of ultra-orthodox Jews to the city's total Jewish population was fixed at 29%, which is four times the state-wide ratio of 8%.⁷⁷

j. Due to the high proportion of religious Jews, internal migration became concentrated between Jerusalem and the WB settlements. For, of the 7,138 Jews who left the city during 2009, 3,631 of them (50.9%) headed to the WB settlements.⁷⁸

k. According to estimates by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (JIIS), by the end of 2009, Palestinians continued to make up the majority in Jerusalem's eastern part. For, of a total population of 466,600 living in this part of the city, 272,900 were Palestinians, representing 58% of the population, compared to 193,700 Jews, representing 42%.⁷⁹

2. Attempts to Expel the Palestinians

a. The Shu'fat Crossing: a New "International" Crossing

In its quest to reduce the number of Palestinian inhabitants, the Jerusalem Municipality faces the dilemma of not being able to specify their exact place of residence. Over recent decades, and with the continuous restrictions on housing and living within the municipal boundaries, a great number of Jerusalemites got used to living outside these boundaries in the suburbs adjacent to the city, such as al-Ram, 'Anata and al-'Eizariya; simultaneously adopting the address of any of their relatives or that of an unoccupied property. All these measures aim to secure their blue residency cards. And although the municipality was aware of these measures, it did not then have an effective means to limit this moving mass of population or estimate their numbers. It has, however, belatedly started to gradually develop these means.

As plans were being made for the construction of the Separation Wall, the Israeli authorities were also planning to use it as an effective means to cut off the largest possible number of Palestinians from their city, once and for all. So they deliberately placed some Palestinian population concentrations that were within the municipal boundaries outside of those boundaries; among them, the town of Kfar 'Aqab, part of 'Anata, Dahiyat al-Barid, Ras Khamis, and Shu'fat refugee camp.

With the start of the Wall's construction, limiting the Jerusalemites' movement became a reality, as passage became confined to certain military checkpoints. The Israeli authorities adopted a plan to limit the number of these crossings and turn them into "international crossings" where stringent entrance measures are applied. For the Palestinian inhabitants, passing these international crossings each day poses great hardship, and forces those living outside the Wall to go to nearby WB urban centers and abandon their commute to Jerusalem.

The first crossing of this kind was that of Qalandiya, which limited the communication between Jerusalem and Ramallah and the northern WB cities.



However, the fact that not all sections of the Wall in the other directions were completed prevented the establishment of other crossings. During 2011, Israeli authorities completed the Wall's construction in the areas of Shu'fat, 'Anata and Ras Khamis in full. They started work on the infrastructure necessary for turning the Shu'fat crossing in to something more like an "international crossing." They inaugurated it on 12/12/2011, thus forcing the residents of those three towns to enter Jerusalem through it.⁸⁰

Shu'fat Crossing, Fully Equipped



b. Evacuating the Bedouin Communities in East Jerusalem

On 11/9/2011, the Israeli government voted in favor of the Prawer Plan, under which tens of thousands of Bedouins would be uprooted from their homes east of Jerusalem.⁸¹ Concerns have been raised about the proposed relocation site. The site is located close to al-'Eizariya and does not meet minimum standards in terms of distance from municipal dumping grounds so is likely to pose a health hazard to the communities, as well as providing limited access to grazing lands. OCHA-oPt confirmed that the occupation authorities intend to execute the eviction orders early in 2012. These orders affect 2,300 Bedouin who reside in 20 communities in the hills to the east of Jerusalem, of whom children represent 66.7%. The OCHA-oPt report stated that 302 Bedouins were evicted from the area by force during the period 1/1–1/9/2011.⁸²

These evictions come in preparation for the completion of the last section of the Separation Wall that wraps around Ma'ale Adumim and its surroundings and brings them within the city's limits; as these Bedouin encampments are present in the vicinity of Ma'ale Adumim and in the area that separates it from Jerusalem's Municipal boundaries.

c. Inclination Towards Modifying Jerusalem's City Limits

On 13/12/2011, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat officially announced his intention to separate the neighborhoods to the city's northeast, which include the Shu'fat refugee camp, 'Anata, Ras Khamis, Dahiyat al-Barid, and Kfar 'Aqab, from the municipal boundaries and hand them over to the PA. He further announced his intention to modify those boundaries so that the Ma'ale Adumim settlement and its vicinity will be brought within the city's limits.⁸³

This step had been a point of contention among Israeli planners over the past few years. Some of them saw that it is the only effective method to alter the demographic balance in the city. Others expressed their apprehension lest this move be an-ill advised expansion in directions far from the Jewish center of the city that would end in failing to attract residents. It seems that, with this announcement, the mayor has made up his mind in this regard, at least in what concerns the Adumim eastern bloc. It is not clear if he has the same intentions regarding the northern and southern blocs.

At least what is clear is that separating those Arab communities from Jerusalem will place 22 thousand to 55 thousand Palestinian inhabitants, who hold blue ID cards and were counted in past censuses, permanently outside the city's limits; while the Adumim bloc will add approximately 32 thousand Jewish residents to the city. If this move is completed, it is expected that it will lead to altering the demographic balance by reducing the Palestinian proportion of the population to between 30–31.7%; the ratio sought by the Inter-Ministerial Committee charged with the task of examining the rate of development in Jerusalem, known as the "Gafni Commission."⁸⁴

3. Demolition of Houses and Structures

A report by the Land Research Center (LRC) stated that, during 2011, 41 houses, inhabited by 282 Palestinian citizens, among them 177 children, were demolished; while 134 received demolition orders, in addition to two residential towers,



al-Rasheed and al-Zahra' in Beit Hanina. As for structures, 56 were demolished and 17 others were threatened with demolition.⁸⁵

Furthermore, in 2011, there was a plan proposed to cleanse the whole neighborhood Um-Harun, consisting of 32 houses. Furthermore, 14 residences were threatened with eviction and possible take over while the Hijjo family residence in Silwan was seized by Israelis.⁸⁶

4. The Palestinian Citizens' Deepening Cost of Living Crisis

The figures released by the JIIS for 2009 reveals the extent of poverty in Jerusalem and Israel:

Table 5/6: Extent of Poverty in Jerusalem and Israel 2009⁸⁷

Category	Families (%)	Children (%)
Within the non-Jewish population	69	82
Within the Jewish population	23	45
In Israel	21	36

Table 5/6 shows that the ratio of non-Jewish families living below the poverty line in Jerusalem has risen from 60% in 2008⁸⁸ to 69% in 2009, an increase of 9% in a single year; while the percentage of Jewish families under the poverty line remained about the same. At the same time, the Jerusalem Center for Social and Economic Rights (JC SER) indicated that 80% of Palestinian heads of household owe the municipality astronomical figures in taxes and fines.⁸⁹ A peddler from Jaffa Gate served a year in jail because of his inability to pay fines. In December 2011, his debt stood at 330 thousand shekels (approximately \$87 thousand).⁹⁰

5. The Decision to Force Curriculum Changes on Jerusalem Schools

On 7/3/2011, the Educational Sector of Jerusalem Municipality (ESoJM) released a circular demanding that private schools in East Jerusalem receiving budgetary allocations from the Israeli authorities purchase textbooks prepared by the Jerusalem Education Administration (JEA) rather than the PA, where the JEA is a joint body of the municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Education.⁹¹ And so, on 6/9/2011, at the start of the academic year, the JEA distributed altered copies of the textbooks, from which it removed whole pages and subjects, leaving them blank so it was clear that they had been censored.⁹² This method is in keeping with the JEA objective of graduating citizens without identity who would constitute cheap labor for the Israeli market.

The gravity of this decision stems from the fact that most, if not all, private schools in Jerusalem receive regular financial allocations from the Israeli municipality, which sometimes make up 30% of their budgets, thus limiting their immunity in the face of Israeli measures.

Following the announcement of this decision and the start of the school year, the Civil Campaign for Preserving the Palestinian Curriculum in Jerusalem called for declining to receive the altered books or the municipality's representatives. Moreover, the Parents' Committee Union announced a two-hour suspension of classes on 8/9/2011,⁹³ and a one day strike on 13/9/2011.⁹⁴

These steps coincided with an announcement by East Jerusalem Education Directorate that it would provide all the textbooks in their original form, free of charge, in sufficient numbers and without exceptions.⁹⁵ The directorate was successful in smuggling the textbooks into the city.

These moves led to overriding the decision to impose altered curriculums on private schools in 2011. However, this does not mean abrogating the decision; especially that, quite simply, the Israeli municipality can trade off its financial allocations for teaching altered curriculums; then the private schools would not be able to easily refuse.

6. The Policy of Targeting Children

Since 2009, Israeli authorities have been targeting children in the neighborhoods threatened with eviction, namely, in al-Bustan neighborhood. Later they widened this targeting to include al-'Isawiyyah. A report by The Association for Civil Rights in Israel stated that "according to data supplied by Israel police, over the past year [2010] more than 1,200 Palestinian minors from East Jerusalem have been investigated on suspicion of participating in throwing stones." Among those detained, there were children younger than 12. Furthermore, the report mentioned that the police are known to break into homes at night to pull children out of their beds, blindfold them, handcuff their hands, and take them in for questioning in interrogation centers.⁹⁶

7. Escalating the Policy of Shutting Down Institutions

Since 2003, Israeli authorities have been following a policy of shutting down Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem, with the aim of limiting Jerusalemite society's ability to confront and adapt itself to the occupation's measures. The year 2011



witnessed escalation in this regard when, on 25 and 27/10/2011, the Israeli authorities broke into four development institutions in the city and stuck closure orders on their doors.⁹⁷ Then on 1/12/2011, an Israeli court extended their closure for a year, on the grounds that they are financed by “terrorist” organizations.⁹⁸ The institutions affected by the closing order were:

- a. Al-Quds Foundation for Development, which works on bolstering Jerusalemites’ perseverance, and execute infrastructure and restoration of property projects, in addition to providing legal support and intervention.
- b. The Sa’ed Institution is an educational institution working on strengthening schools’ infrastructure and providing educational support in the city.
- c. The Shu’a’ Women’s Association is a development society dedicated to the empowerment of women.
- d. Work without Borders Foundation helps people find job opportunities through the Internet and is based in Kfar ‘Aqab.

Third: The Settlement and Judaization Process in Jerusalem

In mid-2011, a Jerusalem Day poll was conducted by the Geocartography Knowledge Group on behalf of Israel’s Channel One News. The survey showed that 66% of Israelis opposed handing over any part of Jerusalem to the PA. A 73% majority opposed placing Jerusalem’s holy sites under international control. In addition 67% of Israelis want to simply get on with building up and developing the city as the capital of Israel.⁹⁹ On the other hand, *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper published a survey which showed that only 15% of the Israeli public favored Jerusalem for residential purposes.¹⁰⁰

1. Consolidating Jerusalem’s Standing as the Center of the State

The year 2011 witnessed a practical and political reassertion of the Basic Law: “Jerusalem, Capital of Israel,” which considers Jerusalem “the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court.” It “shall be given special priority in the activities of the authorities of the State so as to further its development in economic and other matters.”¹⁰¹ In February 2011, a plan was revealed to build an army base adjacent to the Augusta Victoria Hospital on a 32 donum piece of land on Mount Scopus. This plan includes the command and staff school, the school for national security and the military academy.¹⁰²

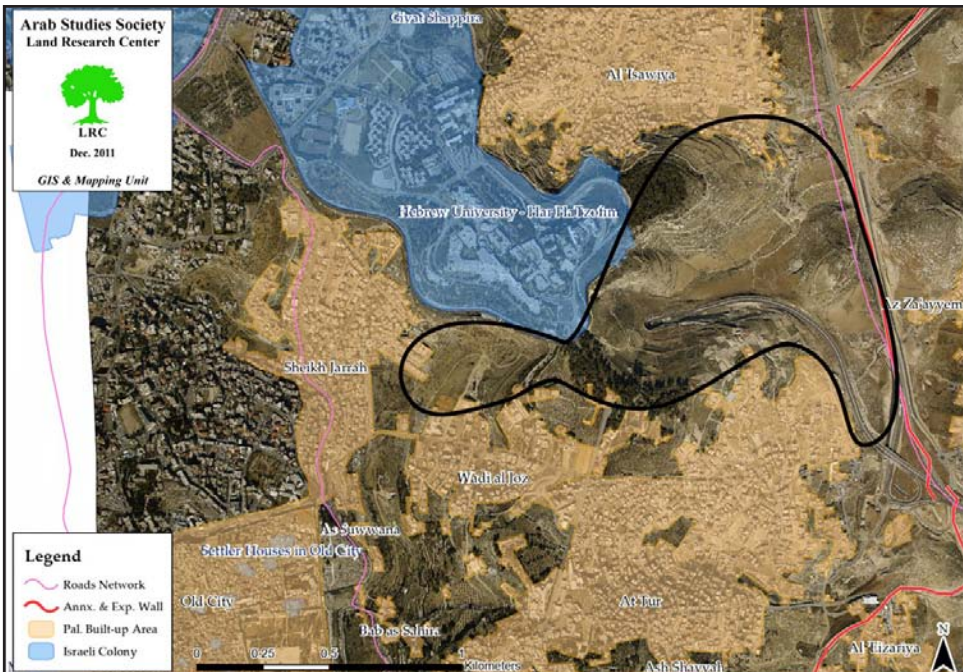
This is considered the first army base situated within the limits of the city's eastern part since its full occupation in 1967.

On 1/6/2011, the Knesset Economic Affairs Committee held a special session to discuss moving government offices from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a step which is likely to create 3,500 job opportunities in the city.¹⁰³ On 19/6/2011, the owners of Channel 10 announced at a press conference with Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat that the channel would move its news department to Jerusalem at the beginning of 2012.¹⁰⁴ Then on 22/6/2011, Israeli activists launched a campaign on Facebook asking Israeli ministers whose ministries are located in Tel Aviv to relocate to Jerusalem. They threatened to close the entrances of those ministries with chains if their demands were not met.¹⁰⁵ At the end of June 2011, the Jerusalem Development Authority (JDA) announced that it would invest 15 million shekels (about \$4.4 million) in developing Yatsiv Street in the Atarot Industrial zone.¹⁰⁶ All of these decisions were made following a cabinet meeting that the Israeli government held in the citadel of Jerusalem in the Old City on 29/5/2011, during which it launched the Merom Plan for the development of the city and allocated 290 million shekels (\$83.6 million) to its fulfillment. This five-year plan aims to “strengthen the capital economically through two primary channels: tourism and high-tech.”¹⁰⁷

2. The Biblical Park Project in al-‘Isawiyyah

On 4/4/2011, the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee approved Plan no. 11092A, turning 700 donums of al-‘Isawiyyah and al-Tur lands, northeast of Jerusalem, into a national park with a religious character, based on a claim that the area contains valuable Jewish relics that go back to the period of the Second Temple. This park is a joint project of the Jerusalem Municipality, the JDA and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. It will extend on Mount Scopus Slopes to connect the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to the E1 project, and establish geographic contiguity between them, while isolating the north Jerusalem neighborhoods totally from the Old City.¹⁰⁸ So on 10/1/2012, they started razing 70 donums of this area to start work on constructing the park,¹⁰⁹ after having razed, on 20/12/2011, a football field belonging to the Ibrahimi College, situated between the school and the area where work on establishing the park will begin.¹¹⁰ The following two pictures show the location of the biblical park scheduled to be built in al-‘Isawiyyah and how it will devour all the empty spaces available for urban expansion in Wadi al-Joz, al-Tur and al-‘Isawiyyah neighborhoods:





3. Developments in Building the Wall Around Jerusalem

A report by OCHA-oPt indicated that, after amendments made to its proposed path, the total length of the Wall has become 142 km. Of this total, at the end of 2011, 90 km had been built, representing 63% of the total length. As for the areas under construction during 2011, they have a total length of 14 km, representing 10% of the Wall. There remained 38 km, 27% of the Wall's length, scheduled for implementation. Most of this remainder is located in the E1 area, or what is known as the Adumim bloc,¹¹¹ and is scheduled to be completed by 2014.

During 2011, construction was centered on three main points: the first in the area of Shu'fat and Ras Khamis, in preparation for closing the Wall completely and opening the Shu'fat crossing as an international crossing. The second was in the southern block of the Wall, in the Beit Jala area, which serves to complete the separation of the Etzion settlement bloc from the Palestinian population centers in its vicinity; also in al-Walaja and al-Khader, which serves to finish encircling the group of villages situated close to the Green Line.¹¹² As for the third point, it falls in the vicinity of the Qalandiya Airport, where there are completed sections of the Wall. On 6/12/2011, the Israeli authorities began establishing a 300 meter no go buffer zone for Palestinians to bolster the Wall, in preparation of turning the whole Qalandiya Airport area into an industrial zone;¹¹³ a matter that was actually announced at the beginning of 2012.¹¹⁴

4. Consolidating the South Jerusalem Settlements

By careful observation of the announcements connected to Jewish settlement, whether those related to approval of starting construction by the Jerusalem Municipality or the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee, or those of the Ministry of Construction and Housing tenders, it becomes clear that the Israeli municipality strongly believes that the south Jerusalem settlements will achieve what was not achieved in the past by attracting Jews to come live in the east of the city. This tactic is encouraged by the unparalleled success of the Har Homa settlement, situated south of the city, close to the Jewish center in the west of Jerusalem.

A close examination of table 6/6, which monitors the development of settlement units during 2011, reveals that the share of the southern settlement blocs between Gilo (which includes Har Gilo), Har Homa and Giv'at Hamatos constitutes 73% of the residential units that witnessed growth this year.



Table 6/6: Israeli Plans and Tenders to Build Housing Units in a Number of WB Settlements Including Jerusalem, 1/1/2011–20/12/2011¹¹⁵

Location	Settlement	No. of approved or proposed units for construction	Total no. of housing units in each governorate
Jerusalem	Giv'at Ze'ev	980	15,487
	Ramot	236	
	Ras al-'Amoud	200	
	Shim'on Hatezdik	13	
	Gilo	5,377	
	Ramat Shlomo	1,299	
	Pisgat Ze'ev	916	
	Sheikh Jarrah	386	
	East Talpiot	90	
	Giv'at Hamatos	2,610	
	Har Homa	3,340	
	Ma'ale Adumim	40	
Qalqilya	Karnei Shomron	46	46
Nablus	Shilo	119	119
Salfit	Ariel	277	277
Ramallah	Beit Arye	100	100
Bethlehem	Betar 'Illit	982	1,299
	Efrat	317	
Jericho	Masua	80	80
Total		17,408	17,408

5. Putting Jerusalem Light Rail into Operation

On 19/8/2011, Jerusalem Light Rail (JLR) began limited passenger service; and on its first day, it had more than 40 thousand passengers.¹¹⁶ This project is considered the most ambitious and most controversial transportation project undertaken by the Jerusalem municipality since its founding.

The project goes back to the 1990s when the Israeli government was discussing mechanisms that would allow them to effectively connect the eastern and western parts of the city, in a manner that would prevent dividing the city in the event of any future peace settlement. The government also faced the problem of connecting the settlements in the east of the city to its Jewish center in the western part, to

bring life and vitality to these settlements and increase their appeal to Israeli Jews. This is in addition to creating geographic contiguity among them that lets their inhabitants feel that they are living in neighborhoods within a city, and not in isolated fortresses in an ocean of Arabs. The JLR project was approved in 1999; however, its implementation did not start until 2006, when the contract was awarded to a specifically formed consortium named CityPass. This consortium was made up of five companies; the French company Alstom is the engineering partner in it, while the company Veolia (also French) is the service operator. Work on establishing the first and main line of this rail was postponed several times because of objections from religious Jews. The overall cost of establishing the first stage was 2.2 billion shekels (\$660 million).¹¹⁷

In spite of the fact that the rail project has bitten off large areas of Palestinian neighborhoods, deliberately narrowing the main streets through which it passes, and in spite of the fact that it was built with the aim of bolstering settlement activity east of the city and attracting Jewish citizens to it, and despite it not running on the Sabbath, it still faces objections from ultra-orthodox community demanding some carriages be segregated along gender lines so that men and women are not forced into close proximity. Generally, there are further objections to its slowness, and to the fact that it does not solve the congestion problem.¹¹⁸

Jerusalem Light Rail



Fourth: Political Developments

1. Jerusalem in the Negotiation Documents

On 23/1/2011, Al Jazeera television revealed the existence of a large number of documents and records made of secret negotiations between representatives of the Palestinian and Israeli governments, starting with the Annapolis Summit. Perhaps the fast-moving events in the Arab world that followed the publication of these documents overshadowed them and blocked the attention, analysis, and media coverage they deserved. The Al Jazeera ‘Palestine Papers’ contain many records of negotiations and letters that dealt with the subject of Jerusalem; as this subject was present in most of the sessions of what is called “the trilateral or tripartite mechanism” joining together the Palestinian negotiator, Israeli negotiator and their American sponsor. It was also present in most of the “bilateral mechanism” meetings that took place periodically between the leadership of the Palestinian negotiating team and its Israeli counterpart to evaluate progress in the areas under consideration.

a. Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Palestinian negotiator expressed clearly his willingness to discuss “creative ways” to reach a settlement on the matter of the mosque. This was quite clear in two statements made by Sa’ib ‘Uraiqat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, to the American Middle East Envoy George Mitchell during their meeting on 21/10/2009. The first comment was that he was ready and willing to discuss everything, including the Old City adding, “except for the Haram [*al-Aqsa* Mosque] and what they call Temple Mount. There you need the creativity of people like me.”¹¹⁹ That was an attempt on ‘Uraiqat’s part to encourage the Israelis to accept a settlement freeze and enter into direct negotiations. In the second statement, ‘Uraiqat’s position was more detailed, in the context of reviewing the progress of detailed discussions in the relevant committees. When Jonathan Schwartz of the US negotiation team asked him about Jerusalem, ‘Uraiqat answered:

It’s solved. You have the Clinton Parameters formula [in reference to Clinton’s proposals following the negotiations’ collapse in 2000]. For the Old City sovereignty for Palestine, except the Jewish quarter and part of the Armenian quarter... the Haram [*al-Aqsa* Mosque] can be left to be discussed – there are creative ways, having a body or a committee, having undertakings for example not to dig. The only thing I cannot do is convert to Zionism.¹²⁰

The last phrase suggests that he was ready for any compromise short of publicly converting to Zionism.

b. The Old City

During those meetings, the Old City did not occupy much space in the discussion; as the principle subject was generally Jerusalem and land exchange, with emphasis on the issues that the Palestinian delegation considered “contested,” such as settlement building and sovereignty over *al-Aqsa*. The Palestinian negotiator’s position in this regard can be garnered from the land-swap map presented by the Palestinian side on 4/5/2008. On this map, the Jewish and the Armenian Quarters are among the areas given to the Israelis.¹²¹ This position was repeated with the same clarity in the ‘Uraiqat-Mitchell meeting of 21/10/2009, during the discussion about how the issue of Jerusalem is “solved” on the basis of Bill Clinton’s parameters; which means giving up an area close to third the area of the Old City, with the borders of the Palestinian state beginning directly at the edge of the Western Wall, in which case *al-Aqsa* Mosque would become a border area.

c. Sheikh Jarrah

While the inhabitants of Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood to the north of the Old City were engaged in a long and bitter struggle with settler organizations and the Israeli state agencies that support them, and with the ruling to expel the first Palestinian family from their home in July 2008, the focus of the Negotiation Support Unit (NSU) was on how to benefit from this event to speak about an Israeli precedence of resettling Palestinian inhabitants, in reference to the internal population transfer scheme, as the exchanged letters among the members of this team on 20–21/7/2008 indicated.

Two weeks before the expulsion order was issued, and in his meeting with Tzipi Livni on 30/6/2008, Ahmad Qurei‘, the chief Palestinian negotiator, said to Livni, “so for an area in Sheikh Jarrah, I have to see an equivalent area.”¹²² This came in the context of exchanging lands in Jerusalem. Livni’s reply to him was “This is about making progress on issues on the table.” Qurei‘ was saying that giving up Sheikh Jarrah to the Israelis is a matter already conceded by the Palestinians, along with asking for a substitute. Livni’s response was simply to ignore the subject, telling him later, when they were discussing the issue of Jerusalem, that she cannot refer to this subject and she is going to “just listen.”¹²³ This was after the Knesset



gave preliminary approval to a bill that requires the Israeli government to conduct a referendum on giving up territory annexed by Israel, including Jerusalem.

In a meeting between Sa'ib 'Uraiqtat and Robert Serry, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Serry told 'Uraiqtat that he had visited Salam Fayyad and discussed the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. He added, "One thing is we need to find a dignified solution for the Sheikh Jarrah families—give them a package to rent something in the area, in Jerusalem. We have also been talking to the Jordanians." 'Uraiqtat seems to have been convinced of this "dignified solution." His only comment was, "It has to be Salam [Fayyad], not you [the UN] or the Jordanians, to pay them."¹²⁴

Sheikh Jarrah is likely to be just the first among the Jerusalem neighborhoods to be threatened with mass expulsion and its fate will probably be met by the other neighborhoods, whose total population comes to about six thousand people. This matter is understood by any observer of Jerusalem's affairs, and cannot have been missed by the Palestinian negotiator.

d. Settlement and Land Exchange

On 4/5/2008, in a meeting with Tzipi Livni, the Palestinian negotiating team presented maps outlining proposed land swaps with Israel. Although the proposals were based on the principle of a 1:1 ratio, with the exchanged lands having the "same size and value," it offered the Israelis a total of 41.67 km² in exchange for 9.43 km² for the Palestinians, meaning a ratio of 4.4:1 in Jerusalem, according to Israel's unilaterally declared border within Jerusalem as well as adding "No Man's Land."¹²⁵ The principle of "same value" remained merely verbal while the maps presented suggested something different. The Israeli negotiating team met the idea of the "same value" with derision; the Israeli negotiator Tal Becker said to Qurei', "How can we measure this? Land has the same value"; while Livni commented "Or is it only a slogan?"¹²⁶

These generous offers prompted Sa'ib 'Uraiqtat to say, on more than one occasion, that what he and his negotiating team were offering was "the biggest Yerushalayim in history," insisting on using the Hebrew word for Jerusalem. He repeated his use of Hebrew for Jerusalem several times including during the meeting of the Palestinian negotiating team with Livni and her team on 30/6/2008 when Livni said of Jerusalem, "since I cannot refer to it, I won't say anything. I am going to just listen."¹²⁷



Regarding Jerusalem's settlements, the Palestinians "suggested that 63% of all settlers be included in less than 2%." In exchange, the Palestinians demanded finding a different solution to the Ma'ale Adumim and Har Homa settlements, because they interrupt the Palestinian geographical and population contiguity. The Palestinians proposed keeping these two settlements but placing them under Palestinian sovereignty. The settlers would become a minority in the Palestinian state, similar to the Palestinian minority in Israel, but with a willingness to grant them special arrangements to guarantee their security. In his meeting with Livni on 4/5/2008, Qurei' told her, "there is common interest in keeping some settlements. This is the concession that we make for the purpose of meeting your legitimate interests and making the two-state solution feasible."¹²⁸

e. No to Jordan

On 5/5/2009, Sa'ib 'Uraiqt met with his NSU team to prepare a draft of the final proposal from the Palestinians. 'Uraiqt wanted to hear their views and suggestions for the upcoming meeting between Mahmud 'Abbas and Barack Obama. He asked them to look into the comments of all parties including Jordan, while stressing, "We don't want Jordan involved in Jerusalem."¹²⁹ This stance is hardly surprising, for when he was talking about "creative ways" to reach a settlement on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, he dealt with the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf Islamic Affairs and Holy Places as if it does not exist, presenting his own suggestions for the mosque's administration.

2. Deportation of Jerusalem MPs

The issue of deporting Jerusalem MPs came to light following the PLC elections on 25/1/2006 won by Hamas. The then Israeli minister of interior issued decrees to revoke the citizenship of three Jerusalem MPs, Ahmad 'Attoun, Muhammad Totah and Muhammad Abu Tair, in addition to that of the Minister of Jerusalem Affairs in that government, Khalid Abu 'Arafah. These decrees were issued in spite of the fact that the Israeli government had formally permitted the holding of Palestinian elections in the east of Jerusalem.

The deportation decree was not immediately implemented, however the Israeli authorities arrested all of the MPs, only to release them separately between 2009 and 2010; thus bringing the issue of their deportation once again to the forefront. On 30/6/2010, Israel arrested MP Abu Tair on a roadblock and took him for



questioning;¹³⁰ he was then sentenced to expulsion after more than four months imprisonment. The three others, who received the same sentence, decided to seek asylum at the International Red Cross (IRC) headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in Jerusalem, both to bring back their issue to life and to avoid getting expelled. Their sit-in there lasted a whole year, sleeping and meeting their families in the protest tent in the courtyard of the IRC building in Jerusalem. This sit-in turned the protest tent into a center that attracted the mass media and public protests. This infuriated Israel to the extent that it made a decision to end this sit-in, even if by force. On 26/9/2011, an Arabist unit of the Israeli army, in cooperation with the Minorities Department of the Central Investigations Unit, carried out a kidnapping operation of MP ‘Attoun from inside the IRC headquarters;¹³¹ and he was taken into custody. A ruling was issued to release him on bail, on condition that he signs a personal pledge that he would not enter the city except after gaining a permit from the Israeli authorities. ‘Attoun rejected the offer, which led to an extension of his detainment. On 6/12/2011, the military court in ‘Ofer Prison decided to deport him to Ramallah.¹³²

As for Muhammad Totah and Khalid Abu ‘Arafah, on 7/12/2011 they received a call from the Israeli intelligence authorities telling them that if they did not leave the IRC headquarters within 48 hours, they would be removed by force.¹³³ On 23/1/2012, Israeli intelligence carried out its threat by kidnapping them and taking them into custody.¹³⁴ The issue of the treatment of the Jerusalem MPs is a stark example of Israel’s policy of punishing Palestinians for the choices they made in free elections. That these elections were held in the east of Jerusalem with Israel’s approval made no difference. The peaceful sit-in continued for more than a year and action from the international community and the Arab and Islamic worlds failed to materialize once again. The Israeli authorities executed two military operations inside the headquarters of an international humanitarian organization, protected by international law, without facing any consequences, however nominal, from any branch of the UN.

3. Draft Law of Jerusalem “Capital of the Jewish People”

The Israeli state was keen to stress just how important it considers Jerusalem to be to it, claiming full and “final” possession of the city and any other neighboring land that it decides to annex. This was expressed in the 1967 amendments to the “Law and Administration Ordinance,” which stipulated that the minister of



interior has the power to extend the state's boundaries to include any part of "the land of Israel"; expressed thus: "The law, jurisdiction and administration of the State shall extend to any area of Eretz Israel designated by the Government by order."¹³⁵ These amendments also included considering Jerusalem, with its two parts, a unified municipality. The Israeli Knesset reasserted this in the Basic Law: "Jerusalem, Capital of Israel" issued in 1980; which states that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel," and that it is "the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court."¹³⁶

It seems that, for a large number of Israeli politicians, these assurances are no longer enough; for with the growing obsession with the "Jewishness" of the state, they now want this to be reflected directly in Jerusalem.

4. Developments in Moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem

Although, according to UN resolutions, the east of Jerusalem is considered occupied territory from which Israel must withdraw, the American Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, for the purpose of initiating and funding the relocation of the Embassy of the US in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Since then, every American president has suspended, for a period of six months, the limitations set forth in some sections of this Act.¹³⁷ This suspension is also used to blackmail the Palestinian political leadership at critical junctures. When the PLO decided to make its bid to the UN Security Council for membership for the state of Palestine, it was counteracted by a bill in the Congress, drafted in March 2011. The bill called for the "Removal of Waiver Authority-The Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995" and stated that "the United States Embassy in Israel should be established in Jerusalem as soon as possible, but not later than January 1, 2013." Then it added, "Not more than 50 percent of the funds appropriated to the Department of State for fiscal year 2013 for 'Acquisition and Maintenance of Buildings Abroad' may be obligated until the Secretary of State determines and reports to Congress that the United States Embassy in Jerusalem has officially opened."¹³⁸ They brought this bill to attention once again in September 2011,¹³⁹ and the possibility of passing it still exists, in light of the entrenched trend of unlimited support for Israel in American decision-making circles.



Fifth: Jerusalem: a Look at the Near Future

If we put aside the numerous details of the Judaization of Jerusalem and pursue a far-reaching, more comprehensive overview, we find that Israeli decision-makers, in particular on the municipality level, are pushing with all their might towards reaping certain fruits, the seeds of which were sown years ago. Perhaps the most important fruit sought after by Jerusalem's Mayor Nir Barkat is the tipping of the demographic scales in favor of the Jewish population. This is a cherished dream of Israeli planners that the former mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, tried to realize. It seems that realizing this dream today has become possible, in case the mayor was able to wrest crucial decisions on the political level, such as changing Jerusalem's territorial boundaries and strict application of the law revoking resident IDs of those Jerusalemites proven to live beyond the Israeli recognized municipal boundaries. Such achievements would open the door to Barkat for a new term as mayor, with the next elections scheduled to be held in the summer of 2013. As for the basic tactics for settling the demographic issue, which are likely to be consolidated in the coming two years, they are:

1. Applying a strict system that monitors Jerusalemites' movements through checkpoints to and from the city. This started with the application of the magnetic cards system, which would build for the municipality accurate databases that include the residences and work places of all Palestinian Jerusalemites, based on the hours of their passing through the checkpoints. By virtue of these databases, an extensive campaign can be conducted to withdraw residence cards and limit the Palestinian population mass once and for all; an issue that has long plagued Israeli decision-makers in Jerusalem.

2. Speedy and effective fortification of the southern settlements' ring, working to turn it into a solid block of modern Jewish suburbs, linked to the city's Jewish center by direct roads and expressways that do not pass through any Palestinian neighborhood. The focus is on building housing units that are small in size and low in price, which would appeal to young Jewish couples and so boost the rate of natural population growth of the city's Jews.

3. Overcoming the financial obstacles that were delaying the completion of the eastern part of the Wall, "Jerusalem Envelope," that encircles the Ma'ale Adumim settlement bloc and connects it directly to the city. Concurrently, seeking to empty its surroundings of its Bedouin population and improve the infrastructure in the area



connecting it to the municipal boundaries, commonly known as the E1 Corridor. Finally reaching the point of declaring an official alteration of the boundaries and the annexation of the Adumim bloc to the city.

On the level of religious and cultural identity, it is clear that extremist Jewish associations are bent on completing the Western Wall area rehabilitation project as soon as possible, including removal of what remains of the Mughrabi Hill, enlarging the prayer area, building an iron bridge, and opening a new gate in the city's wall to welcome more Jewish visitors. This plan is shared by municipality and government circles, but faces Palestinian, Jordanian, Arabic, Islamic and international opposition that delays the completion of these projects. Hence, it is expected that the Mughrabi Hill issue will witness fundamental developments or maybe leaps to overcome the obstacles that delay the project's implementation. It is also expected that *al-Aqsa* Mosque will be subjected to wider, larger and better organized incursions, especially after the changes made in the rules of engagement between the Israeli police and the Jews storming the mosque. It is further expected that the police will consolidate their control over the Palestinians' presence in the mosque during Ramadan.

Sixth: Israeli Settlement Expansion

Israel continued its settlement plans in the WB, including Jerusalem, brushing aside Palestinian demands and even those of the world community to stop these practices. By the beginning of 2012, the number of settlers in the WB, excluding East Jerusalem, had reached 342 thousand; while in East Jerusalem, their number was 200 thousand.¹⁴⁰

Israel continues the construction of settlements in occupied Jerusalem and the rest of the WB. It also continues the systematic Judaization of the holy city's landmarks, indifferent to international protests condemning its settlement activities. The Netanyahu government encouraged Israelis to move to WB settlements and settlers to buy through offering subsidies. In addition, settlers are provided with sensitive information through political and military channels; it was revealed that there are dozens of political figures and army officers and soldiers leaking this information to Israeli right wing activists who carry out acts of violence against Palestinians in the WB and are active in resisting the evacuation of the settlement



outposts. There is also what are called “price tag” acts, which are acts of vandalism carried out by settlers against the Palestinian people with the tacit approval of the Israeli government. There was also revelation of the means through which the settlement outposts in the occupied WB are legitimized. These, according to Israeli reports, include falsifying title deeds, seizing Palestinian agricultural lands and building on them, encircling lands with walls and guard dogs, as well as other methods of robbery and fraud.

The EU has opposed Israel’s policy of forced expulsion of Palestinians from Area C, which constitutes 62% of the WB. The EU has pointed out that the Israeli policy in these areas aims at multiplying the settlers’ numbers while reducing those of Palestinians. Furthermore, this policy will turn these areas into pockets or “fingers,” cut off from the rest of the WB; and therefore would prevent the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state in accordance with the two-state solution on the borders of 4/6/1967.

Attacks by settlers and Israeli forces in all the Palestinian governorates continued; emboldened by approval of more settlement plans and the demolition of agricultural structures and homes in the Jordan Rift Valley area, in the eastern WB.¹⁴¹

The settlers receive strong and clear support from the political establishment. Prime Minister Netanyahu has declared, “We will continue developing Jerusalem, its neighborhoods, and people,” adding, “This is our right and obligation, not as punishment to the Palestinians but as our basic right.”¹⁴² As for the head of the Israeli Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, he commented on settlement in the WB by saying, “Populating the land of Israel is a part of Zionism, which was once based entirely on a policy of settlement.” He added, “When our neighbors decide to allow us to live in the country together, there will be peace,” and also said, “I whole-heartedly believe that the land of Israel is ours in its entirety.”¹⁴³

Moreover, the Israeli authorities continued to sanction tenders to build new settlement units. The PLO Department of International Relations confirmed in a report issued on 5/9/2011 that during August 2011 Israel approved the building of 3,050 new settlement units, most of which were in East Jerusalem.¹⁴⁴

As for the Peace Now Movement, it indicated in its report issued on 7/9/2011 that the pace of construction in WB settlements is almost double that in the territories occupied in 1948. Within the latter the construction rate stood at one housing unit for every 235 Israelis, while in WB settlements, it is two housing units

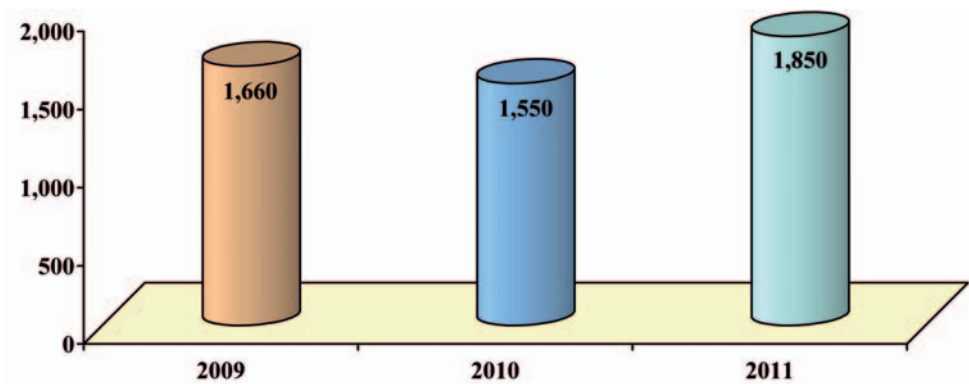
for every 246 Israelis. Also according to this report based on aerial photos and field visits, over 10 months (October 2010 to July 2011) immediately following the end of the partial and temporary building freeze, construction began on 2,598 housing units in the WB, of which 63% of them (1,642 units) are ground level houses (villas and cottages) and more than half of them (52%) are for religious Jews. The Peace Now Movement added that the construction of 3,700 housing units continued throughout the construction freeze period. The report added that ground works began for the construction of at least another 317 units; and 100 housing units were added in mobile homes. Moreover, it has become evident that at least 383 units under construction are considered “illegal” according to the Israeli planning and building laws that apply to settlements, and 157 of them are located in illegal outposts;¹⁴⁵ bearing in mind that all settlement construction is illegal.

Another report by the Peace Now Movement monitored at least 3,500 units under various stages of construction during 2011, located in 142 settlements and outposts in the WB.¹⁴⁶ The following table shows the rise in the pace of construction in the settlements compared to 2009 and 2010:

Table 7/6: Number of Housing Units Built in the WB Settlements, East Jerusalem Excluded, 2009–2011¹⁴⁷

Year	2009	2010	2011
No. of housing units	1,660	1,550	1,850

Number of Housing Units Built in the WB Settlements, East Jerusalem Excluded, 2009–2011



The first Peace Now report mentioned above indicated that the planned route of the Separation Wall penetrates the depth of the WB in four “fingers.” Thus, in the Ariel finger, 245 housing units are under construction; in Gush Etzion, 329 housing units; in the Karnei Shomron-Kedumim finger, 114 housing units; and in the Ma‘ale Adumim area, 212 housing units.¹⁴⁸

In its 2011 annual report, the PA’s Information Center Concerning Colonization and Annexation Wall Affairs indicated that they had monitored, until the end of 2011, the presence of 474 settlement sites in the WB. In these, there are 184 settlements, 171 settlement outposts, 26 other settlement sites, and 93 buildings that were, partially or totally, overtaken by settlers in Jerusalem. According to the same report, the total area of settlements has reached 140 km², that is, about 2.5% of the total WB area. However, half of these lands are vacant lots; it seems that Israel plans to keep them in reserve for future expansion.¹⁴⁹

In the Ministry of Housing’s official list of upcoming tenders during 2011, there were 2,057 residential units in East Jerusalem, in addition to 1,577 units for the rest of the WB.¹⁵⁰

Seventh: Confiscation of Palestinian Land and Water Resources

Palestinian civil and official institutions documented an increasing severity in Israeli attacks on the WB during 2011, indicating that these attacks targeted citizens, lands, residences and farms.

The annual report of the LRC registered the following violations committed by Israeli government bodies and settlers in 2011, in all WB governorates, including Jerusalem: demolition of 200 Palestinian residences and threatening 500 others with demolition; Demolition of 400 structures and threatened 300 others with demolition by making it impossible to gain construction permits to build homes, making demolition costly, and forcing Palestinians to tear down their homes with their own hands.

According to the same report, the area of encroached upon agricultural lands totaled approximately 12 thousand donums, of which 11 thousands



were confiscated, and the rest were threatened with forced eviction. This is in addition to razing, burning and vandalizing more than two thousand other donums of agricultural land. The center reported that total or partial damage affected more than 20 thousand trees, 50% of which were uprooted or totally burned, while sewage, which ruins trees, crops and soil, was poured on wooded lands.¹⁵¹

Concerning the city of Jerusalem, Israel confiscated or stole 3,158 donums of Palestinian land; chopped down, uprooted or burned 1,098 trees, demolished 41 residences in which 282 Palestinian citizens used to live, among them 177 children; threatened 134 residences with demolition, in addition to tearing down 56 structures and threatening 17 others with demolition.¹⁵²

The Jordan Rift Valley did not escape Israel's confiscation tactics. A report by B'Tselem–The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, revealed how Israeli authorities had plundered and looted the Jordan Rift Valley's natural resources, motivated by a wish to impose facts on the ground in order to annex the area. The report asserts that Palestinian owners are forbidden from using 77.5%, or 1.249 million donums, of the Jordan Rift Valley;¹⁵³ and that Israel is plotting to obtain 140 thousand donums of Dead Sea lands. The Israeli official in charge of this file claims that the land is state land. The first section of the land lies adjacent to the Dead Sea that had dried up since 1946, and therefore these dried-up lands are no longer the local Palestinians' private property; instead they are the property of the state.¹⁵⁴

On the Palestinian domestic front, an Israeli plot was uncovered that aimed at confiscating one million donums of Arab land in the Negev. This plot is found among the recommendations of the governmental committee formed in 2008 and headed by the retired Chief Justice Eliezer Goldberg. Israel hopes to settle 300 thousand Jews in the Negev over the coming decade.¹⁵⁵

The following table lists examples of land confiscated in the WB, including Jerusalem:



Table 8/6: Examples of Lands Confiscated in the WB 2011

Area	Confiscated lands (donums)
Yassuf Village	600 ¹⁵⁶
‘Azun	400 ¹⁵⁷
Beit Ummar	800 ¹⁵⁸
Batir Village in Bethlehem	148 ¹⁵⁹
Bethlehem	7,000 ¹⁶⁰
Qalandiya	400 ¹⁶¹
al-Khader	150 ¹⁶²
Brikot of Beit Ummar	600 ¹⁶³

As for the issue of Palestinian water, Minister-Head of the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) Shaddad ‘Attili accused Israel of destroying wells and ponds used for collecting rain water (a method used since Roman and Ottoman times) belonging to Palestinian rural communities in WB, with the aim of driving them out. ‘Attili accused Israel of systematically destroying the water infrastructure. He added that this destruction is carried out in Area C in the WB, which is under full Israeli control and represents 60% of the WB.¹⁶⁴

A 2011 report by the Palestinian Hydrology Group states that the available renewable water resources in Jordan, Israel and Palestine total 2.8 billion cubic meters (BCM). The Palestinians are allocated 8.2% of the total available water resources in the Basin while Israel uses 57.1%. It added that total water use in the settlements is 75 million cubic meters (MCM)

a year, of which 44 MCM is pumped from wells in the WB. Total daily per capita water use for settlers is 780 liters per capita per day (l/c/d), where 461 l/c/d come from the WB. Total daily per capita water use of each Palestinian in the WB is 192 l/c/d. This means that each settler uses four times more than each Palestinian.¹⁶⁵

Eighth: Destruction of Palestinian Agriculture

The Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture announced that its slogan for 2012 is “National Product = Resolution” in defiance of Israel’s destruction of the Palestinian agricultural sector that targets its infrastructure and damages local produce.

The ministry also stated that the losses of the agricultural sector in the Gaza War of 2008/9, known as “Operation Cast Lead” by Israelis and as “the Battle of al-Furqan” by Palestinians, exceeded half a billion dollars; adding that direct damages came to \$174 million, while indirect damages came to \$413 million.¹⁶⁶

Israeli measures and policies led to a number of negative consequences and manifestations that have contributed to the marginalization and distortion of Palestinian agriculture. The following are representative examples of these:

1. Lack of investment in agricultural infrastructure, in particular in research stations, marketing, laboratories, and agricultural roads.
2. Heavy subsidies to Israeli farmers and settlers, which limits the competitiveness of Palestinian farmers. This led to flooding the Palestinian market with subsidized Israeli agricultural products.
3. Expropriation of water resources and agricultural lands, settlement measures, continuous attacks, and settlers terrorizing Palestinian farmers.
4. Building the Separation Wall, which isolated large agricultural lands behind it, in addition to the lands on which it was erected.
5. Limiting freedom of movement of goods, individuals and agricultural services.



6. Uprooting trees, which are considered a main source of income to many small farmers, in addition to their being a natural treasure and a source of biodiversity.
7. Preventing shepherds and cattle owners from reaching natural sources of grazing, especially in areas close to military camps and settlements.

All of this led directly or indirectly to distortions and additional expenses borne by the Palestinian farmer. It also contributed to reducing the added value and profit of farmers. It turned agriculture into an unprofitable occupation, by marginalizing it and limiting its role in the national economy.¹⁶⁷

In addition to Israeli practices against Palestinian farmers and agriculture in general, Israeli forces often raze agricultural lands, cut trees, and even demolish agricultural villages more than once. For example, on 9/2/2011, Israeli forces demolished six residential structures and 21 animal pens in the community of Khirbet Tana in the Nablus Governorate. These demolitions displaced six families (52 people) and affected a total of 106 people. This is the third time since January 2010 that the community has experienced wide-scale demolitions, and the fourth time since 2005.¹⁶⁸

In the Jordan Rift Valley, acts of demolition, razing and uprooting whole Palestinian villages are on the increase. Israeli authorities went as far as attacking people, killing livestock and destroying agricultural crops. As for the territories occupied in 1948, specifically in their south, they were subjected to a fierce campaign of destruction, razing and uprooting by the Israeli authorities. Thus the Israelis destroyed the village of Abu Jroul more than 40 times; they have further cut and ruined thousands of fruit trees, in particular olive trees.¹⁶⁹ Also in May 2012, al-‘Araqib Village was subjected to destruction for the 38th time.¹⁷⁰

The following table lists a number of cases of Israeli attacks on Palestinian trees and agricultural lands in the WB:

Table 9/6: Number of Israeli Attacks on Trees and Lands 2011

Area	Type of attack
Qasra Village south of Nablus	Uprooting 500 olive trees ¹⁷¹
Al-Toyour area east of Beit Dajan	Uprooting 420 olive trees ¹⁷²
Khirbet Um Nir in Hebron	Uprooting 600 olive trees ¹⁷³
Deir al-Hatab in Nablus	Burning 250 olive trees ¹⁷⁴
Bani Na'im in Hebron	Burning 20 cultivated donums ¹⁷⁵
Qalqilya	Burning more than 150 olive trees ¹⁷⁶
'Aqraba in Nablus Governorate	Burning 300 olive trees ¹⁷⁷
Beit Exa in Jerusalem Governorate	Stealing 100 perennial olive trees ¹⁷⁸
Jaloud Village in Nablus Governorate	Burning 150 donums ¹⁷⁹
Ramallah	Burning 100 olive trees ¹⁸⁰
Al-Walaja in Jerusalem Governorate	Uprooting 80 olive trees ¹⁸¹
Salfit	Cutting down 500 olive trees ¹⁸²
Beit Ula in Hebron	Uprooting 200 olive trees ¹⁸³
'Awarta in Nablus Governorate	Burning 20 donums ¹⁸⁴

On 9/10/2011, the Minister of State Mahir Ghuneim stated that, since the beginning of 2011, Israeli authorities and settlers have targeted 9,131 olive trees, between burning, uprooting, breaking and razing; of these, 1,307 were targeted since the beginning of September.¹⁸⁵ International and Palestinian aid and development agencies working to improve olive oil production have declared that the destruction of Palestinian olive trees by Israeli settlers will lead to a reduction in the 2011 yield, estimated to be worth about \$500 thousand.¹⁸⁶

Ninth: Demolition of Palestinian Homes

A report by OCHA-oPt indicated that, during 2011, almost 1,100 Palestinians, more than half of them children, were forcibly displaced as a result of the demolition



of their homes by Israeli forces. This is an increase of 80% when compared with Palestinians displaced during 2010. The report added that some 4,200 additional Palestinians were affected by the demolition of structures related to their livelihood. It stated that Israeli forces have destroyed over 620 Palestinian-owned structures in 2011, a 42% increase from 2010. These included 222 homes, 170 animal shelters, 46 rainwater cisterns or pools, two classrooms and two mosques (one of them was demolished twice). The report added that over 60% of the Palestinian-owned structures demolished in 2011 were located in areas allocated to settlements.¹⁸⁷

The following table shows the number of structures demolished in 2011, according to area:

Table 10/6: Demolitions of Palestinian Structures 2011¹⁸⁸

Month	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
WB Area C	20	68	77	15	31	131	29
East Jerusalem	9	1	1	0	2	1	2

Month	August	September	October	November	December	Total
WB Area C	0	20	62	40	87	580
East Jerusalem	0	2	1	3	11	42

Tenth: The Separation Wall

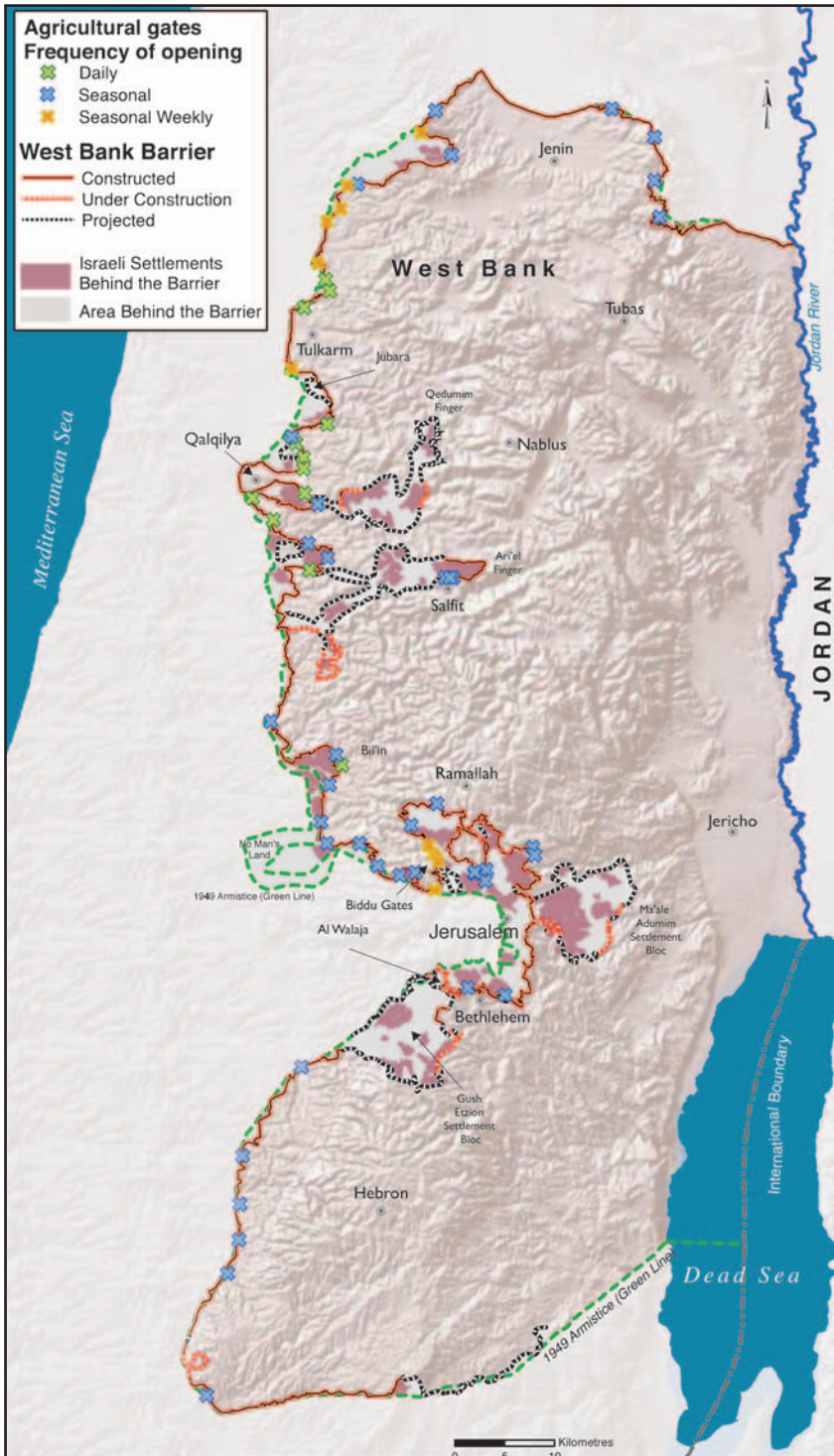
A survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) showed that the area of lands confiscated for the sake of building the Wall was 49,291 donums of state-owned lands, since the beginning of its construction and until the end of June 2008; distributed as follows:

- 22,141 donums in the north of the WB.
- 13,875 donums in the middle of the WB.
- 13,275 donums in the south of the WB.

According to the same report, the area of land isolated behind the Wall that has become hard to reach totals 274,607 donums, distributed as follows:

- 89,498 donums in the north of the WB.
- 123,526 donums in the middle of the WB.
- 61,583 donums in the south of the WB.¹⁸⁹

The Separation Wall Route in the WB, July 2011¹⁹⁰



During 2011, Israel continued building the Separation Wall in the WB. A report by B'Tselem revealed that the length of the completed part of the Wall, 85% of which runs inside the WB, has become 437.5 km long, representing 62% of its planned route. Another 58 km is currently under construction.¹⁹¹

In August 2011, Israel's Supreme Court approved the route of the Wall in the section that encircles the built-up area of al-Walaja, a Palestinian village located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. This Wall, which is made of concrete and stands nine meters high and 700 meters long, will sever the village and isolate it from hundreds of donums of its farmland, leaving only one opening that connects it to the WB.¹⁹²

Regarding the village of Bil'in, the Israeli army started, on 26/6/2011, dismantling part of the Wall that cuts through its land. In July 2011, the military completed its relocation of that part of the Wall, seven years after public pressure from Bil'in residents and their supporters, and four years after Israel's Supreme Court ordered the rerouting of the Wall to run closer to the Modi'in Illit settlement. The rerouting returned 700 donums of farmland to the villagers; however, another 1,500 donums of their land remains expropriated west of the Wall.¹⁹³

Early in 2011, Israeli sources said that work on building the Wall in the Jerusalem area, the "Jerusalem Envelope," will be finished within one year. In effect, during 2011, the building of the remaining points of the Wall was completed. These points are located in the region of Qalandiya and west of Shu'fat in an area that exceeds 20 km². As for the neighborhoods threatened with becoming isolated from Jerusalem, these are: Shu'fat refugee camp, Ras Khamis, Ras Shehadeh which is part of Shu'fat lands, Kfar 'Aqab and Semiramis; this is after Abu Dis, al-Sawahrah al-Sharqiya, al-Ram and al-Dahiya were left outside the Wall, isolated from Jerusalem.¹⁹⁴

Concerning the north of the WB, 7,356 Palestinians in the Jenin area are living under harsh conditions because of the Wall. There are 11 communities in the occupied Jenin governorate living in tragic humanitarian conditions, in enclaves that emerged following the Wall's construction, where they are denied connection to their natural extension in Jenin. The most important of these isolated spots are the towns of Eastern Barta'a, Um al-Rihan, Khirbet Dahr al-'Abd, Khirbet 'Abdullah Yunus, al-Minthar, Dahr al-Maleh, 'Arab al-Hamdoun, and Khirbet al-Mukahhal.¹⁹⁵



The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) revealed in a report, which documents violations by settlers and Israeli soldiers during the olive harvest season, frightening facts established by the occupation that prompted a great number of Palestinian farmers to abandon their olive groves isolated inside the Wall. In a preliminary random survey of three Palestinian communities in the Jenin Governorate, PARC disclosed that the Wall caused Palestinian farmers to abandon 46.5% of the olive groves isolated by the Wall and which had an area of 750 donums.

In its report, PARC said that, for many Palestinian farmers, the Separation Wall has become a hindrance keeping them from their agricultural lands, which lie isolated inside the Wall. PARC estimated that losses due to farmers' abandoning about 350 donums of their isolated olive groves total about one million shekels annually (about \$300 thousand). PARC warned that, if the Israeli authorities continue to follow this policy towards the isolated lands inside the Wall, by 2020, 70% of these lands would be abandoned. This fact requires urgent action at the Palestinian political level, and from relevant public and civil institutions; to on the one hand remove the obstacles that keep Palestinian farmers from reaching their lands, and on the other hand to motivate those able to reach their lands through initiatives and programs that would contribute to using and exploiting these abandoned lands once again.

PARC brought to light the complicated procedures that Israeli authorities impose on farmers to keep them from reaching their lands. Among these, strictness in granting permits to able-bodied Palestinian farmers, and granting them only to old people. This of course results in olives being left unpicked. This is in addition to granting permits to the primary beneficiary of the land and denying them to his wife, children or siblings.¹⁹⁶

Conclusion

Israel is racing against time in its intensive program to Judaize Jerusalem and seal its future in any future peace settlement with the Palestinians. In the presence of an extreme right-wing and religious government, backed by a "Zionist society" with tendencies in the same direction, Judaization procedures and racist practices are getting more severe and cruel, targeting Islamic and Christian holy sites, as well as the Palestinian people and their land.



Israel's insistence on continuing its Judaization and settlement programs was a message to the Palestinian, Arab and international communities that Israel is ready to frustrate the peace process and empty it of any meaning. It is ready to brush aside UN resolutions and international efforts, even American ones, when they disagree with its settlement and Judaization policies. Thus, 2011 did not bring anything new on the level of Israeli policies towards the land and the holy sites, except for more vigorous and accelerated measures, which are likely to be the general feature of 2012, too.



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This Report

The Palestinian Strategic Report 2011/12 is the seventh in a series of annual resourceful academic studies. It discusses the developments of the Palestinian issue of this period in an objective and comprehensive manner. The meticulous analytical reading of events tries also to foresee the near future. This Report has become a basic reference on Palestinian studies, it is a must read for all those concerned.

An outstanding team of 12 academics and experts contributed to this Report in seven chapters. They covered the internal Palestinian situation, the Israeli scene and the Israeli-Palestinian relations, the Arab, Muslim and international stances towards the Palestinian issue. This Report focuses also on the issue of Jerusalem and the holy sites, and the suffering of man and land under the Israeli occupation. Besides, the demographic, economic and education indicators are also studied and analyzed.

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