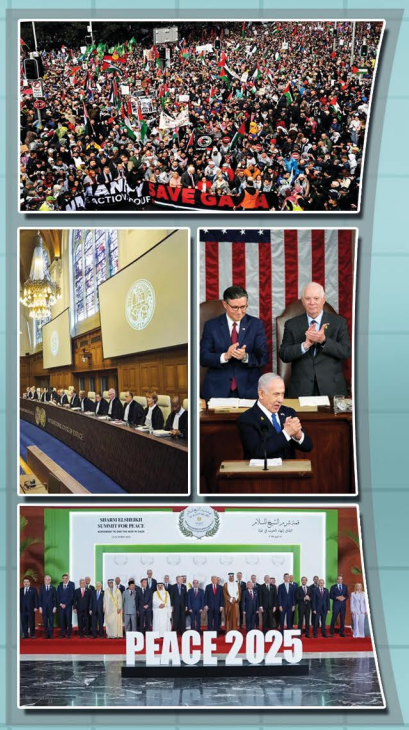
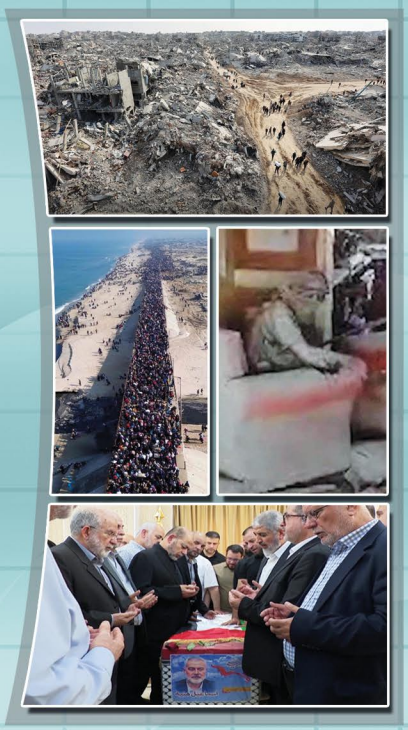
The Palestine Strategic Report 2024 – 2025





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Al-Zaytouna Centre For Studies & Consultations

The Palestine
Strategic Report
2024 – 2025

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Chapter Three

The Land and the Holy Sites

The Land and the Holy Sites

Introduction

After two years of war in GS, alongside a shifting regional war stretching from WB to Lebanon, Yemen and Iran, as well as Israeli bombardment targeting seven Arab and Muslim countries, it has become necessary to view the phase that began in 2017 as a regional "endgame phase." This phase laid the groundwork for the conflict's escalation to its current level of intensity, as Israel, backed by the US, has sought to impose a decisive resolution across all fronts. Israeli aggression is now aimed at achieving the final objectives for which Israel had been preparing over decades, particularly with regard to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, rather than merely imposing cumulative facts on the ground for the future.

In response to these endgame phase attempts, the Lion's Gate Uprising emerged in 2017, followed by the Marches of Return and the accompanying rounds of armed escalation in 2018. This was succeeded by the Mercy Gate Uprising, which began on 17/2/2019 and succeeded in reopening the *Musalla* of the Mercy Gate, remaining sustained for two months to prevent Israeli police from resealing it. Subsequently, three Jerusalem uprisings unfolded: to block the displacement of residents from Sheikh Jarrah Neighborhood, to prevent the closure of Damascus Gate Plaza, and to stop the 28th of Ramadan incursion into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. These culminated in the Sword of Jerusalem Battle (referred to by Israel as Operation Guardian of the Walls), which culminated in the dispersal of the Jerusalem Day Flag March under resistance rocket fire on 10/5/2021. Later, with the emergence of local battalion formations in Jenin RC, followed by Tulkarm RC and Nur Shams RC, the Unity of the Arenas Battle erupted on 5/8/2022 to forestall their elimination. It was followed by the Spiritual Retreat (*I'tikaf*) Battle on 5/4/2023, and ultimately by Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023.

The comprehensive endgame phase assault targeted Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the right of return, and sought to isolate the Palestinian people and their cause. In response, seven parallel confrontations were launched to counter this

process: five centred on Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, one on the right of return, and the final one aimed at preventing unilateral control over the emerging resistance formations in the WB. Therefore, the Palestinian response was grounded in a firm commitment to core principles, confronting the agendas of elimination with their direct opposites rather than merely seeking to contain them, even if preventing escalation remained an important driver of action.

Anyone examining the history of the conflict with Zionism in Palestine can readily conclude that the nine-year period extending to 2026 has been the most intense and confrontational phase in the history of the conflict. This assessment suggests that Jerusalem has constituted the central arena of the endgame phase. Because Operation al-Aqsa Flood sought to reverse the trajectory of this endgame phase and turn it into one of Israeli retreat, the Israeli response was to double down on decisive resolution and elimination. What had previously been pursued through a relatively gradual combination of political and military instruments was transformed into an immediate wartime objective enforced through overwhelming military power. This was reflected in the genocide in GS, efforts to induce displacement in the WB, the continued Judaization of Jerusalem and *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the incorporation of UNRWA into the war itself, attempts to eliminate the right of return, and efforts to suppress any resistance will while establishing a regional order subordinate to the Israeli centre under the doctrine of "peace through strength." This trajectory has also been advanced through the Abraham Accords, conceived as functional agreements aimed at integration into the Zionist project and going beyond the conventional meanings of both "peace" and "normalization."

If this interpretation is correct, it is therefore unsurprising that the endgame war would return to its central arena in Jerusalem after being temporarily de-escalated on the GS front following the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration on 13/10/2025. This is precisely what followed: Jerusalem once again emerged as a primary arena of the endgame phase, reflected in the demolition of the UNRWA headquarters in the Sheikh Jarrah Neighborhood, the accelerated Judaization of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and efforts to further entrench its Jewish character, and renewed attempts to resolve the issue of mass displacement in central neighbourhoods, particularly al-Bustan and

Batn al-Hawa in Silwan. Simultaneously, displacement pressures intensified in the Sheikh Jarrah Neighborhood, while expansion continued in the eastern desert fringes and Bedouin communities. Efforts also advanced to further sever Jerusalem from its northern hinterland in Ramallah through a series of "Operation Capital Shield" measures. These developments were accompanied by the announcement of new settlements and major expansion projects across Jerusalem.

First: Al-Aqsa Mosque

Al-Aqsa Mosque today stands at a moment of what may be described as a historical exposure, in which the forces that once constrained attempts to erase its identity have largely receded. Over the decade of uprisings (2013–2023), a cumulative configuration had taken shape comprising four main elements: individual operations; mass mobilization in Jerusalem and the 1948 occupied territories with contributions from the WB; popular engagement from outside Palestine; and the involvement of resistance forces from GS. However, the war on GS has effectively neutralized the resistance's ability to engage with developments at *al-Aqsa*, while also producing a heightened deterrent effect on popular mobilization amid scenes of mass destruction. External engagement has, in turn, become largely absorbed by the dynamics of the war in GS and, despite its intensity, has remained increasingly detached from influencing decisive outcomes in *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Within this context, individual operations remain the only component that, at times, continues to respond directly to assaults on *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

Al-Aqsa Mosque has previously experienced two comparable phases of what may be described as historical exposure, coinciding with the intensification of displacement and replacement schemes targeting it. During the *al-Aqsa Intifadah*, which combined popular mobilization with organized armed resistance to the occupation, a key form of deterrence was established. However, following its decline and the resumption of intensified incursions in 2003, the first exposure phase emerged. In response, new protective dynamics were introduced, most notably through "journeys (*Shad al-Rihal*) to *al-Aqsa*," from within the

1948 occupied territories. As escalation continued and incursions were formalized in 2008 through designated time allocations, this defensive framework required further consolidation. Accordingly, the response took the form of the "knowledge platforms" (*Masatib al-'ilm*), revived and sustained by the *Murabitun* (*al-Aqsa* Mosque male and female defenders) in direct confrontation with intrusions. In effect, participation from the 1948 occupied territories, through sustained presence and mobilization (*ribat*) and the knowledge platforms initiative, constituted the central response to this first phase of exposure.

By 2015, Israel had already banned *al-Aqsa* guardianship institutions, blocked the establishment of alternative frameworks, and outlawed the Islamic Movement in the 1948 occupied territories. This generated what can be described as a second moment of exposure,[1] to which the response came through the Knives Uprising and other lone-wolf resistance operations in the same year. Together, these developments marked the emergence of an accumulating deterrence equation in defense of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, unfolding through a series of successive and closely spaced uprisings, as outlined earlier. That equation has now, in turn, reached a third moment of exposure, thereby increasing pressure to formulate new forms of response, none of which have yet materialized and may still be in formation.

At the same time, and in recognition of *al-Aqsa* Mosque's status as the symbolic core of the endgame project, the Judaization agenda has advanced along three main trajectories: temporal and spatial division of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and the foundation of the intangible temple through the imposition of biblical rituals. Within this framework, religious Zionism increasingly assumes that conditions are ripe to move to the next stage of Judaization, encouraged by what it perceives as the current historical exposure of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

1. *Al-Aqsa* Mosque During the GS War

During the GS war, particularly beginning in Ramadan or March 2024, Israel shifted from a reactive approach to actively leveraging the war to advance *al-Aqsa* Mosque into a new stage of Judaization. Accordingly, the main patterns of transformation affecting *al-Aqsa* Mosque during the war in GS can be summarized as follows:

a. *Al-Aqsa* Mosque Siege

On 17/9/2023, coinciding with its assault on *al-Aqsa* Mosque during the extended Jewish holiday season, Israel initiated a policy of siege targeting the mosque. Its courtyards were repeatedly emptied of worshippers[2] that morning and repeatedly throughout the holiday period,[3] while the route leading to Chain Gate, designated as the exit point for Israeli settlers conducting incursions, was also cleared. Israeli forces additionally assaulted the *Murabitun* stationed outside after barring them from entering *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[4] Beginning on 25/9/2023, Israel further restricted access to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, permitting entry only to the employees of the Islamic Awqaf, Affairs and Holy Sites Council in Jerusalem (Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf) and elderly residents of the Old City from the evening prayer until the afternoon prayer (*'Asr*) of the following day.[5] These measures were intended to allow Israeli settlers carrying out incursions to operate with near-exclusive control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque during the final days of the assault season, while preventing both the observance Spiritual Retreat (*I'tikaf*) and the morning presence of *Murabitun*.

With the conclusion of this assault season, Operation al-Aqsa Flood ensued. Israel thereafter maintained the siege of *al-Aqsa* Mosque for several weeks, during which attendance at prayers declined to the extent that it barely filled a single row in al-Qibli Mosque. Moreover, Friday prayers did not surpass 5 thousand worshippers throughout the first ten weeks following the onset of the GS war.[6] These restrictions were eased only during Ramadan,[7] particularly on the twenty-seventh night of the month.[8]

Over the course of the two-year GS war, this policy has continued, albeit with relatively limited easing of restrictions and the selective use of certain occasions, most notably the last Friday of Ramadan and the twenty-seventh night,[9] to obscure the reality of a continuous siege on *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

At the same time, Israel has further entrenched these conditions on the ground by converting checkpoints at the mosque's gates into permanent installations reinforced with metal cages.[10] In addition, it has also expanded the system into four fixed security checkpoints for those entering from outside the Old City, and five for those coming from beyond Jerusalem. Even worshippers arriving from within the Old City are required to pass through at least two checkpoints, including residents living as close as fifty meters from the mosque.

b. Militarization of *al-Aqsa* Mosque

Israel has progressively imposed security measures, beginning with the installation of barbed-wire fencing along sections of the mosque's perimeter wall at points that previously enabled access to *al-Aqsa* Mosque during periods of crowding or through adjacent homes for those familiar with the Old City's pathways. Consequently, worshippers now experience the mosque as a heavily securitized space. This was followed by the upgrading of the existing surveillance system, originally concentrated above the Tankaziyya School, Ablution Gate, and around Remission Gate and the Bani Ghanim Gate Minaret—and its reinforcement with smart, facial-recognition cameras covering much of the mosque's open courtyard.[11] The most significant shift, however, began on 13/3/2024, coinciding with the first Friday of Ramadan, when Israeli authorities deployed armed police patrols to move directly above worshippers during prayer, including in moments of bowing and prostration. This development disrupted the post-1967 status quo, which had been anchored in the principle that "no prayer under the presence of weapons."[12]

Since then, Israeli police have increasingly exercised overt control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In practice, they have interrupted prayers to demand identity checks, searched iftar meals of fasting worshippers, and repeatedly disrupted religious lessons, including questioning imams and preachers in the midst of their sermons. This has effectively reduced the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf's role, administered by Jordan, to a narrowly circumscribed management of "Islamic presence" under occupation-imposed spatial and temporal restrictions, after having overseen the mosque's full administration for decades following the 1967 occupation.

By Ramadan or March 2025, an investigative report by Al Quds International Institution (QII) documented 30 military and police positions in and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque. These included a permanent police station in the courtyard of the Dome of the Rock, along with nine foot patrols stationed at fixed points, three of which were reinforced units of more than five personnel each. The following map illustrates the militarization of *al-Aqsa* Mosque as of that date:

Map 1/3: Map of the Militarization of *al-Aqsa* Mosque[13]

c. The Expansion of Partitioning Practices

During the GS war, four new realities were imposed. First, the duration of incursions was further extended[14] to six hours and fifteen minutes daily, compared to three hours when this arrangement was first introduced in 2008, prior to which it did not exist at all. Second, exclusive control by the intruders over the eastern

courtyard of *al-Aqsa* was consolidated, to the extent that it increasingly resembled an undeclared synagogue within the *al-Aqsa* Mosque compound.[15] Third, in 2024, the presence of worshippers along the intruders' movement routes was completely prohibited.[16] Fourth, in 2025, restrictions were tightened further by banning Muslim worshippers from any location that would allow them to see or film the intruders throughout the duration of the incursion.[17] Collectively, these measures effectively granted Israeli intruders unrestricted freedom of movement, as though they were the de facto owners of the mosque during their presence, while confining Palestinian worshippers to al-Qibli Mosque or the inner sections of the Dome of the Rock courtyard. In parallel, the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf guards, administered by Jordan, were barred from accessing exposed service points along the intruders' route and were compelled to remain inside enclosed buildings, domes, or worship chambers whenever their duties were situated near open areas.

These developments continue to expand. In fact, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Yariv Levin, addressing Temple groups during a Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*) celebration held in front of the Moroccan Gate on 21/12/2025, pledged to extend the hours of incursions to include evening periods.[18]

d. Deepening the Jewish Character of *al-Aqsa* Mosque

Since 2019, Temple groups have introduced a new mechanism for advancing the division of *al-Aqsa* Mosque by institutionalizing Jewish religious rituals within the compound. These rituals were framed as the "intangible foundation" of the Temple, conceived as a precursor to its eventual tangible establishment. Over time, settlers escalated these practices incrementally until 24/7/2024, when Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, himself closely associated with these circles, instructed Israeli police at *al-Aqsa* to allow public collective Jewish religious rituals inside the mosque compound.[19] He had already signaled this shift by personally leading a collective prayer at *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 5/6/2024.[20]

Ben-Gvir, who has led the Judaization of *al-Aqsa* Mosque in coordination with Temple groups and the broader Religious Zionist movement, did not stop at legitimizing these rituals. On 26/6/2025, he introduced an additional measure permitting collective dancing, singing, and celebrations inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[21] This development further advances the mosque's Judaization by transforming it into a public space for settler religious and nationalist celebration.

This deepening of the Jewish character of *al-Aqsa* Mosque is also evident in the steady increase in the number of settlers storming the compound, as shown in the following table:

Table 1/3: Annual Trend in the Number of Settlers Storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque, According to the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf and Temple Groups

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf figures	34,112[22]	48,238[23]	48,223[24]	53,605[25]	65,364[26]
Temple Groups figures[27]	38,150	54,201	52,853	60,319	73,403

The rise in the number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque is clearly evident over the two years of the war on GS, despite discrepancies between the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf and Temple group figures. According to the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf statistics, the increase reached 11% in 2024 and 22% in 2025.

e. Expulsion and Media Blackout at *al-Aqsa* Mosque

An expanding ban regime has effectively restricted access to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, affecting an indeterminate number of regular *Murabitun* and the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf employees, as well as journalists during the war on GS. This has been compounded by a shifting list of activists and reporters subjected to ad hoc expulsions ahead of each escalation cycle. In 2024, 130 individuals publicly reported receiving expulsion orders,[28] rising to 287 in 2025,[29] while many additional cases remain unreported and undocumented.

During 2024–2025, a dual-track policy of media suppression around *al-Aqsa* Mosque has become increasingly apparent. It combines intensified exclusion, harassment, and imprisonment of journalists on "incitement" charges with systematic targeting of *Murabitun* and their documentation efforts. Those "found filming incursions" are expelled, banned from the site, or compelled to delete recorded material.[30]

The cumulative effect has been a near-collapse of independent documentation. In practice, settler-produced content on their own platforms has become the primary source of information about events inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This dynamic was particularly evident during the Hebrew New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*) incursion, when the blowing of the horn (*Shofar*) inside the compound on 23–24/9/2025

reportedly occurred five times without contemporaneous documentation, and was only later confirmed through videos published by settlers after the end of their fasting period.[31]

f. The Attempt to Impose So-Called Israeli Sovereignty over *al-Aqsa* Mosque

Bringing *al-Aqsa* Mosque under the administration of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs was a central objective pursued by the Israeli authorities following the annexation of Jerusalem on 27/6/1967. Sovereignty rests on two foundational pillars: legitimacy and force. An occupying power, by definition, cannot credibly claim sovereignty over the territory it controls, as it lacks the element of legitimacy, and therefore tends to overcompensate through reliance on force. *Al-Aqsa* Mosque has consistently exposed the limits of this logic, given its deeply rooted Islamic legitimacy. As a result, the Israeli occupation has relied heavily on coercive power over time, in the expectation that sustained control would gradually reshape perceptions of legitimacy. However, recurring Palestinian resistance, periodically erupting from *al-Aqsa* Mosque over the decades, has continuously reaffirmed the absence of such legitimacy while also undermining the effectiveness of force through sustained and active opposition. Together, these dynamics continue to erode the attempt to impose Israeli sovereignty over the mosque.

The various measures imposed on *al-Aqsa* Mosque during the GS war can be understood within this theoretical framework of attempted sovereignty. In practice, these efforts are often expressed through direct actions intended to test the extent of presumed control over the site. Over the past two years, two such tests have stood out. The first was the imposition of full control over the mosque's opening and closure during the 12-day war, from dawn on Friday 13/6/2025 to sunset on Tuesday 24/6/2025, when *al-Aqsa* Mosque was fully closed for about 12 days.[32] This marked the first complete closure imposed by Israel since its reopening to worshippers on 16/6/1967.

The second was the imposition of censorship over the Friday sermon and prayers inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque, including a ban on any supplication for GS. Violations by imams, preachers or worshippers were met with arrest or removal from the mosque, while sermon content itself became grounds for detention and exclusion.[33] This measure reflects a long-standing objective pursued since 1967: subordinating *al-Aqsa* Mosque to the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs.

In the wake of these wartime-imposed changes, a de facto reality has consolidated in *al-Aqsa* Mosque in which a parallel Jewish identity has emerged alongside its Islamic character. The next phase of this trajectory centres on deepening this biblical framing through four incremental pathways of Judaization. First, there is the expansion of settler incursion hours and the further entrenchment of temporal division. Second, efforts continue to appropriate the eastern courtyard of *al-Aqsa* Mosque for permanent settler use. Third, there is an intensification of attempts to impose Jewish religious rituals inside the compound, including reported efforts to conduct animal sacrifice during Jewish Passover (*Pesach*) between 1–8/4/2026, alongside the gradual introduction of ritual objects such as the horn (*Shofar*), Torah scrolls and prayer shawls (*Tallit*), etc. The fourth and most consequential pathway involves the progressive erosion of administrative authority over *al-Aqsa* Mosque, through the steady encroachment on the powers of the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf and the transfer of effective control to Israeli police. This includes regulating opening and closing times, managing access and periods of spiritual retreat (*I'tikaf*), controlling sermons and prayer through exclusion policies, and restricting reconstruction and maintenance activities.

2. *Al-Aqsa* During the Major Escalation Seasons

Escalation at *al-Aqsa* Mosque typically unfolds in recurring waves tied to major biblical and Zionist-nationalist holidays, which Temple groups have turned into organized seasons of mobilization and mass incursions into the compound.

Long-term monitoring of these groups indicates four principal escalation seasons each year.[34] The first is Passover (*Pesach*), which falls around April in the Gregorian calendar and lasts eight days. As one of the Three Festivals (*Shalosh Regalim*), it is closely associated with Temple-centered narratives. Activities during this period generally focus on efforts to introduce animal sacrifice rituals into *al-Aqsa* Mosque and to normalize the idea of their future implementation.

The second escalation season coincides with 28 *Iyar* in the Hebrew calendar, the Hebrew anniversary of the completion of Jerusalem's occupation in the 1967 war, officially marked in Israel as Jerusalem Day (*Yom Yerushalayim*). Falling between late May and mid-June, this occasion centers on displays of alleged Israeli "sovereignty" through flag-waving, collective singing and dancing, clapping, and group prostration rituals intended to symbolically assert control over *al-Aqsa*

Mosque and reshape its identity. The Zionist right marks the occasion through the "Flag March" or "Dance of the Flags," during which far-right groups carrying Israeli flags and Temple banners march from the Israeli municipality building along Jaffa Street and attempt to enter the Old City through Damascus Gate. The procession then moves through al-Wad Street near the gates of *al-Aqsa* Mosque amid chants of selected Torah passages and religious songs led by Religious Zionist rabbis, reflecting the fusion of religious ritual and nationalist symbolism.

The third escalation season of incursions is *Tisha B'Av*, which commemorates the destruction of the Temple. Observed on the ninth day of the Hebrew month of *Av*, falling between late July and mid-August in the Gregorian calendar, it lasts one day. During this occasion, Temple groups typically seek to maximize the number of settlers entering *al-Aqsa* Mosque, while replicating practices associated with the anniversary of Jerusalem's occupation, particularly public displays intended to assert alleged "Israeli sovereignty" over the compound.

The fourth and final escalation season is the extended Jewish holiday period, which Temple groups have transformed into the longest and most intensive phase of assaults on *al-Aqsa* Mosque. It begins with the Hebrew New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*), a two-day religious holiday during which particular emphasis is placed on blowing the horn (*Shofar*) in and around *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This is followed by the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), the "Sabbath of Sabbaths," the holiest day in the Jewish religious calendar, marked by total fasting and the suspension of worldly activities, including transportation and driving. Through incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque during *Yom Kippur*, Temple groups have gradually sought to revive the notion of the "atonement sacrifice" associated with the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*), thereby framing entry into the mosque compound on that day as a sacred act.[35] The period from *Rosh Hashanah* to the end of *Yom Kippur*, known as the Ten Days of Repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*), has increasingly become a season of incursions and ritual displays centred on al-Aqsa Mosque, with *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* constituting its principal focal points.

One week after *Yom Kippur* comes Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), one of the Three Festivals (*Shalosh Regalim*) associated with the Temple narrative. Lasting seven days, it also functions as a harvest festival. During this period, Temple groups focus on bringing the Four Kinds (*Arba'ah Minim*), consisting of palm branch (*lulav*), two willows (*aravot*), a minimum of three myrtles (*hadassim*) and

one citron (*etrog*), into al-Aqsa Mosque, thereby symbolically treating the site as the alleged Temple itself. This practice derives from the biblical conception of the Temple as the dwelling place of the Divine Presence (*Shekhinah*), where offerings are presented at its purported site of manifestation. The final observance in this extended holiday cycle is *Simchat Torah*, which marks the completion of the annual Torah reading cycle. During the celebration, Torah scrolls are ceremonially adorned and "presented to the Lord." Although of lesser religious significance than the preceding holidays, it serves as the symbolic culmination of the season. It was on the morning of this occasion that Operation al-Aqsa Flood began on 7/10/2023.

In sum, this final escalation season comprises four major holidays spanning 22 days, including ten principal holy days. Historically, it has constituted the most volatile escalation season targeting *al-Aqsa* Mosque and the season during which most uprisings, *Intifadah*s, and wars sparked by developments at the mosque have erupted.[36] This trajectory ultimately culminated in Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023, which coincided with the morning of *Simchat Torah*, the final day of this extended holiday cycle.

From a broader perspective, five of the ten major confrontations triggered by developments at *al-Aqsa* Mosque since 1990 erupted during this extended holiday season. This highlights the extent to which the religious dimension embedded within these holidays constitutes a central factor in understanding the dynamics of the conflict over *al-Aqsa* Mosque, rather than a marginal or merely technical consideration.

Temple groups face a structural challenge in that these four occasions are concentrated within roughly six months of the year, spanning approximately from the fourth to the tenth month of the Gregorian calendar. Consequently, their efforts to storm *al-Aqsa* Mosque and impose new realities there are largely interrupted during the remaining half of the year. To overcome this constraint, these groups have sought to expand the calendar of religious occasions linked to the Temple narrative and transform them into additional opportunities for incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. One prominent example is the Jewish festival of Purim, which in Jerusalem extends over three days, with the third day (*Shushan Purim*) holding particular significance. Although religiously marginal, the holiday has gained strategic importance for Temple groups because it falls about one month before Passover (*Pesach*), making it an effective preparatory stage for the latter. Beginning

in 2025, Temple groups succeeded in incorporating *Purim* into the calendar of relatively large-scale incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The following table illustrates the annual increase in the number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque during *Shushan Purim*, the day on which the festival is observed in Jerusalem, one day later than in other cities.

Table 2/3: Annual Trend in the Number of Settlers Storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque During *Shushan Purim*

Year	2021[37] (28/2)	2022[38] (17/3)	2023[39] (8/3)	2024[40] (25/3)	2025[41] (16/3)
No. of Settlers	233	122	128	228	555

The second occasion that Temple groups have worked to integrate into the incursion calendar is the Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*), which typically falls in December and lasts for eight days. Like *Purim*, it is a relatively marginal holiday that entered Jewish tradition at a later historical stage. Nonetheless, its strong association with the Temple narrative has facilitated its incorporation into the schedule of major incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque. During *Hanukkah*, these groups have placed particular emphasis on attempts to introduce the menorah into *al-Aqsa* Mosque and to light it at the mosque's gates at night. Since 2024, they have succeeded in elevating the holiday into a central occasion for organized incursions.[42] As a result, Temple groups now operate within a framework of six primary annual occasions for assaults on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, rather than four, reflecting a gradual but sustained escalation. This shift has been incremental. During *Hanukkah* in 2018, the number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque did not exceed 619, averaging roughly 103 per day of incursions.[43] The following section outlines the trajectory of this increase since 2021.

Table 3/3: Annual Trend in the Number of Settlers Storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque During the Eight-day *Hanukkah*

Year	2021[44] (29/11–6/12)	2022[45] (19–26/12)	2023[46] (8–15/12)	2024[47] (26/12/2024–2/1/2025)	2025[48] (15–22/12)
No. of Settlers	1,883	1,795	1,332	2,556	2,835
Average per day	313 (six days)	299 (six days)	266 (five days)	426 (six days)	473 (six days)

a. Major Escalation Seasons 2024

The Jewish Passover (*Pesach*) season (23–29/4/2024) witnessed five days of incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque out of the holiday's seven days, as incursions were suspended on Friday and Saturday. During this period, a total of 4,345 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque,[49] averaging 869 intruders per day, an increase of 27% compared to the previous Passover season in April 2023, which had coincided with the Spiritual Retreat (*I'tikaf*) Battle during Ramadan.

Ahead of this season, 15 rabbis issued a letter to the Israeli government calling for settlers to be permitted to conduct ritual animal slaughter at *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[50] At the same time, the Returning to the Mount (*Chozrim LeHar*) movement offered a reward of 50 thousand shekels (about $13,357) to anyone able to bring a sacrificial offering into the mosque compound.[51] Israeli police also intensified their presence around *al-Aqsa* Mosque through patrols and mobile checkpoints designed to facilitate settler incursions.[52] The settlers performed the Priestly Blessing (*Birkat Kohanim*) ritual near the Western Arched Gate (*Ba'ikah*) overlooking the Dome of the Rock,[53] a ritual previously conducted inside the eastern courtyard of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, and brought Torah scrolls into the compound for public readings.[54]

The Hebrew anniversary marking the completion of Jerusalem's occupation (5/6/2024), referred to in Israel as Jerusalem Day (*Yom Yerushalayim*), coincides with the 28th of the Hebrew month of *Iyar*. *Al-Aqsa* Mosque incursion on this occasion involved about 1,600 Israeli settlers, the largest participation recorded for this anniversary since 1967, and included four current and former Israeli ministers. The event featured the widespread display of Israeli flags throughout the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque and repeated public renditions of the Israeli national anthem, without any apparent intervention by Israeli police, in contrast to previous years. It also witnessed the largest collective performance of full-body prostration on the grounds of *Al-Aqsa* Mosque,[55] a practice first introduced there in 2022.

The incursion also witnessed the introduction of black *Tefillin* prayer phylacteries into *al-Aqsa* Mosque, where Rabbi Michael Puah placed them on his head, marking a further step in the gradual introduction of biblical ritual instruments into the mosque compound.[56]

Temple Destruction (*Tisha B'Av*) (13/8/2024), marked a watershed moment in the history of incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque for two main reasons. First, it recorded the largest number of settlers storming the compound to date, reaching

about 3 thousand, nearly double previous figures. Furthermore, Israeli police introduced new entry protocols, increasing each group to 200 settlers and allowing three groups to enter simultaneously. This enabled up to 600 settlers storming the compound at any given time, surpassing the number of *al-Aqsa* guards, the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf officials, and mosque staff present on site. This imbalance was further accentuated by restrictions on Muslim worshippers, the tightening siege on the mosque, policies of exclusion, and the sustained targeting of the *Murabitun*.[57]

At the same time, the day marked the sixth incursion into *al-Aqsa* Mosque by Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir since taking office, and his third since 7/10/2023. Ben-Gvir personally oversaw the performance of Jewish religious rituals inside the compound, where dozens of intruders performed full-body prostration before media cameras. He was also seen leading chants of "The People of Israel Live" (*Am Yisrael Chai*) alongside the Israeli national anthem, biblical prayers, and the display of Israeli flags throughout the mosque compound.[58]

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir Storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Overseeing Collective Full-body Prostration[59]

Settlers quickly capitalized on the official backing embodied in Itamar Ben-Gvir's patronage of these rituals and moved to expand them into additional areas within *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Consequently, elements of these practices and

incursions were extended to the western plaza opposite the Dome of the Rock, as well as to the eastern section of the compound, which settlers have increasingly dominated since 2019.

The extended Jewish holiday season (2–24/10/2024) comprised four major religious observances. The first was the Hebrew New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*), which fell on Thursday and Friday, 3–4/10/2024. During the Thursday incursion, 483 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque and blew the horn (*Shofar*) inside the compound for the fourth consecutive year.[60] Beginning with the Hebrew New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*) and concluding with the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), the Ten Days of Repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*) were marked by settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque while dressed in white robes (*kittel*), regarded in Jewish tradition as "garments of repentance." The *kittel* is also associated with the priestly class (*Kohanim*), whose symbolic presence Temple groups have increasingly sought to institutionalize within *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[61] The second observance in this season was the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), which fell on Saturday, 12/10/2024, during which no incursions took place. The third and most significant occasion was the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), which extended from Thursday, 17/10/2024, to Wednesday, 23/10/2024. Over five days of incursions, excluding Friday and Saturday, 5,980 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque, averaging 1,196 per day. For decades, Temple groups have sought to consolidate *Sukkot* as the principal season of incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque due to its multi-day duration.

During the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), *al-Aqsa* Mosque witnessed renewed horn (*Shofar*) blowing, documented for the first time in a video released by Temple groups themselves.[62] This occured despite *Shofar* blowing not being part of the traditional ritual framework of *Sukkot*. In addition, the additional prayer associated with Sukkot was, for the first time since the occupation of the mosque, collectively performed in the eastern plaza of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[63] Participants also brought in the Four Species (*Arba'ah Minim*), with related practices documented inside *al-Aqsa* for the fourth consecutive year,[64] since their initial recording in 2021. Stormers also entered the compound wearing white robes (*Kittel*),[65] despite the conclusion of the Ten Days of Repentance (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*), for which the garment is traditionally reserved, in an effort to symbolically reinforce the presence of the priestly class (*Kohanim*). Full-body prostration was performed collectively throughout the holiday period, alongside attempts to introduce it into

a new area of the compound not previously used for this ritual, namely the northern section near the Gate of Darkness.[66]

The season concluded with *Simchat Torah* on Thursday 24/10/2024, during which 334 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[67] This day coincided with the anniversary of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, which occurred on the same morning the previous year. Despite the relatively limited number of settlers, Israeli police restricted access to *al-Aqsa* Mosque and assaulted and arrested a young Palestinian man[68] and a young woman[69] who managed to enter, reflecting a notably retaliatory posture in the handling of the day.

The performance of Jewish religious rituals inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque outside their designated religious timing remains a key indicator of how Temple groups and, more broadly, the Religious Zionist movement use ritual practice as a tool of control. The significance of these practices lies in their role in advancing the Judaization of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

The Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*) (25–31/12/2024) saw 2,556 stormings of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, averaging 426 per day, a 60% increase compared to 2023. During this period, *Hanukkah* menorah was lit in the eastern courtyard of *al-Aqsa* for the third time in its history, following limited attempts in 2021 and 2023. This practice further consolidated the eastern plaza as a de facto, undeclared synagogue within *al-Aqsa* Mosque. It has become a recurring feature across all storming seasons in 2024 and was expected to continue into 2025.

In addition, on the first day of this escalation period, Thursday 26/12/2024, the *Hanukkah* dance (*Hora*), previously performed for years at the mosque's gates, was brought inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque for the first time, marking a rare precedent and, according to available documentation, possibly the first instance of this ritual being performed within the compound.[70] Furthermore, the Priestly Blessing (*Birkat Kohanim*) was also performed daily throughout this holiday period,[71] further consolidating its status as a potentially normalized ritual within *al-Aqsa*, alongside other practices that have already become routinized. These include the full-body prostration, performed daily since its endorsement by Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir on 13/8/2024, as well as *Shofar* blowing, morning and evening prayers, *Bar Mitzvah* ceremonies, and additional holiday prayers, all of which have gradually been normalized within *al-Aqsa* Mosque in recent years.

At the level of imposing religious symbols and ritual objects, a settler stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque wearing *Tefillin* (black prayer phylacteries) for only the third time since Israel's occupation of the site. *Tefillin* are among the principal ritual items used in daily Jewish prayer, alongside the prayer shawl (*Tallit*), the ritual fringes (*Tzitzit*), and the Jewish prayer book (*Siddur*). Temple groups have repeatedly sought to introduce these items into *al-Aqsa* Mosque,[72] particularly after petitioning the Israeli Supreme Court in 2022 to permit their entry into the compound.[73]

The unilateral domination of the Old City at night was also repeated, particularly along the Cotton Merchants' Market route and in Ghazali Square near Lion's Gate. The menorah was lit in its near-complete form outside Cotton Merchants' Gate, in a ritual observed annually since 2017. Similarly, the menorah-lighting ceremony in the Western Wall Plaza, attended by Israeli ministers and rabbis, has continued almost uninterrupted since the occupation of Jerusalem.

Lighting the *Hanukkah* Menorah at Cotton Merchants' Gate, on the Night of 1/1/2025[74]

During the Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*), Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir personally led the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque and took part in prayer recitations inside the compound.[75] This episode highlights how the Judaization of *al-Aqsa* and the institutionalisation of Jewish religious rituals within it have become embedded in official Israeli government policy, rather than remaining confined to fringe groups or activist organisations. In this context, Ben-Gvir has advanced the implementation of the eleven demands submitted to him by Temple groups upon taking office.[76]

b. Major Escalation Seasons 2025

The Jewish holiday *Purim* (13–16/3/2025)[77] witnessed a notable escalation at *al-Aqsa* Mosque. On the main day of the holiday, Sunday 16/3/2025, 555 Israeli settlers stormed the compound despite coinciding with the 16th of Ramadan. During the storming, settlers performed collective full-body prostration rituals in the eastern courtyard of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, while one group continuously chanted Torah passages throughout different areas of *al-Aqsa*. Some participants also used the holiday's costume tradition to storm the mosque dressed in the attire of the *Kohanim* priestly class, presenting these garments as a form of festive disguise.[78]

The Jewish Passover (*Pesach*) season (13–19/4/2025) was preceded by the imposition of a second layer of Israeli police checkpoints along the roads leading to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, including the routes to Bani Ghanim Gate, Iron Gate, Cotton Merchants' Gate and Chain Gate. All of these branch off from al-Wad Street, the main road running parallel to the mosque's western gates. These checkpoints remained in place permanently, marking a further consolidation of the security siege imposed on *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[79]

Over the course of this season, 6,768 Israeli settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque[80] across five days, averaging 1,354 settlers per day. This represented a 56% increase over the previous year and more than an eightfold increase compared to 2015, when only 780 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque during the same holiday season.[81]

The Jewish Passover (*Pesach*) season also saw intensified assaults on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, including repeated instances of collective full-body prostration, one of

which involved Israeli Knesset member (MK) Zvi Sukkot.[82] The period further featured collective chanting and musical prayers in the eastern courtyard[83] and other parts of *al-Aqsa* Mosque,[84] alongside storming of the mosque by settlers dressed in garments associated with the priestly class (*Kohanim*).[85] During the same period, settlers extended their ritual presence beyond *al-Aqsa* Mosque, turning Ghazali Square near Lion's Gate,[86] the Cotton Merchants' Market leading to the Cotton Merchants' Gate,[87] and the Mercy Gate Cemetery to the east[88] into spaces for prayer, singing, and dancing throughout the holiday. These developments ran in parallel with continued activity at the Western Wall Plaza, reflecting a broader expansion of Jewish ritual practice into the northern, western and eastern peripheries of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Commenting on these developments, Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir stated, "What wasn't done for 30 years is being done on my watch, and I'm happy to have the honor, by the grace of God, to lead this huge change."[89]

The Hebrew anniversary marking the completion of Jerusalem's occupation (26/5/2025): referred to in Israel as Jerusalem Day (*Yom Yerushalayim*). Ahead of the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, Israeli police introduced new measures raising the number of settler groups permitted to be present simultaneously inside the compound to six.[90] This followed an earlier decision on 13/8/2024 to increase the number from one group to three, with each group capped at 200 settlers, as previously noted. As a result, the number of settlers allowed inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque under Israeli police protection rose from 150 before 13/8/2024, to 600 thereafter, and then to 1,200 beginning on this date. These successive increases, implemented in coordination with the mobilization efforts of Temple groups, demonstrate that altering the status quo at *al-Aqsa* Mosque is fundamentally a state policy. Rather than independently driving these changes, Temple groups have served as instruments through which the Israeli government has advanced and institutionalized.

Israeli police Instructions Issued to Temple Groups on 22/5/2025 ahead of the Storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque Marking the Hebrew Anniversary of Jerusalem's Occupation

- שמור -

מחוז ירושלים – מרחב דוד
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פקס: 02-5898922
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כ"ד אייר, תשפ"ה
22 מאי 2025
סימוכין: 40215225

מרחב דוד

הנדון: הנחיות למבקרים ולעולים להר הבית לשמירת כללי מנהג המקום ביום ירושלים 2025

1. כחלק מהיערכות משטרת ישראל לביקורים בהר הבית במהלך יום ירושלים, מרחב דוד נערך בכוחות מתוגברים לאבטחת עולי חרגל ושמירה על הסדר הציבורי.
2. לאור צמי ריבוי עולי הרגל והמבקרים, המשטרה תערך לכניסת קבוצות כל 10 דקות לערך, ועד 6 קבוצות במקביל והכל בכפוף למנועת הקבוצות בשטח הר הבית.
3. מבקש להישמע להוראות המשטרה, לזמני וסדרי הביקורים בהר וזאת על מנת ולאפשר לכלל המבקרים לעלות להר בנחת ובבטחה.
4. מרחב דוד נערך על מנת ולאפשר העלייה להר תוך כוונה להנעים את חווית הביקור, יש להישמע להוראות המשטרה והנחיות השוטרים.
5. קבוצות המעוניינות להתארגן לביקור, יש לתאם מראש עם יחידת תימ"ק.
6. בברכת יום ירושלים שמח.

בברכה,

דביר תמים, נצ"מ
מפקד מרחב דוד

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עמוד 1 מתוך 1

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That day witnessed the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque by 2,092 Israeli settlers, a 31% increase compared to the previous year.[91] The event was personally overseen by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir,[92] who deliberately participated in Jewish religious rituals inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque.[93] Speaking to the press, he stated, "There are really a lot of Jews who flood the Temple Mount. It's so wonderful to see. Today, it is already possible, thank God, to pray on the Temple Mount, to bow down on the Temple Mount. We thank the Holy One, blessed be He, for this, and we will continue, continue, continue."[94]

He was joined in the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque by Minister of the Negev, the Galilee and National Resilience MK Yitzhak Wasserlauf, and MK Yitzhak Kreuzer. For the first time since the onset of settler storming in 2003, the compound also witnessed small-scale mobile flag marches across its various sections,[95] including participation by MK Zvi Sukkot.[96] The day further saw repeated public collective rituals resembling group chanting in the eastern section of *al-Aqsa* Mosque,[97] in which MK Amit Halevi also took part.[98] Halevi had previously submitted a bill on 7/6/2023 proposing the spatial division of *al-Aqsa* Mosque between Jews and Muslims.[99]

Temple Destruction (*Tisha B'Av*) (3/8/2025), marked the largest storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque since its occupation to date. On that day, 3,969 settlers stormed the compound, about 4 thousand according to the figures of the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf, marking a 32% increase compared to the same occasion in the previous year, which had recorded 3 thousand stormers and had itself been the highest figure at the time. Earlier records for this occasion stood at 2,200 settlers in both 2022 and 2023.[100] This escalation reflects a trajectory pursued by Temple groups since 2017, aimed at transforming *Tisha B'Av* from a day of mourning into a performative moment of renewed commitment to the reconstruction of the Temple, with record-breaking storming figures.

The Israeli police preceded the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque by reaffirming the expanded entry arrangements adopted on 22/5/2025. These provisions allowed for the simultaneous entry of six groups of stormers, each capped at 200 settlers, with a new group admitted every ten minutes. This system reflects a deliberate effort to institutionalize a sustained and enlarged settler presence inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque. As has become standard practice during major storms in recent years, the National Security Minister personally oversaw this event,[101] including leading prayers for one of the settler groups in the eastern courtyard.[102] He was joined by fellow minister Yitzhak Wasserlauf, as well as three MKs: Sharren Haskel, who serves in an honorary capacity as deputy foreign minister; Amit Halevi, known for advancing proposals to spatially partition *al-Aqsa* Mosque; and Osher Shekalim, a prominent figure in the movement advocating the restoration of settlement activity in GS.

Itamar Ben-Gvir took part in the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque from multiple directions. He first joined a Haredi prayer at Cotton Merchants' Gate, as this group refrains from entering *al-Aqsa* Mosque in line with a rabbinical ruling that temporarily prohibits such access. He then entered *al-Aqsa* with supporters from the Religious Zionist camp, before proceeding to the Western Wall Plaza, where he participated in Jewish religious rituals. Other political figures also participated in various forms of provocation. Osher Shekalim performed full-body prostration, while Amit Halevi displayed Israeli flags in front of the Dome of the Rock.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu reiterated his standard post-incursion statement that "Israel's policy of maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount has not changed and will not change."[103] The formulation serves, on the one hand, to reassure Arab official actors, and on the other, to deploy the term in a deliberately ambiguous manner, whereby each act of escalation is effectively absorbed into the very "status quo" it purports to preserve.

This assault also marked a further qualitative shift, as it was the first major occasion following the decision by Itamar Ben-Gvir instructing Israeli police to facilitate and endorse settlers' dancing and singing inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque. On 3/8/2025, the storming of *al-Aqsa* witnessed an unprecedented convergence of ritual performance, including chanting, singing, applause, shouting and mass dancing circles.[104] Within *al-Aqsa* Mosque, participants performed collective full-body prostrations, the Priestly Blessing (*Birkat Kohanim*), recitations of the Book of Lamentations (*Eicha*), and the biblical morning and evening prayers. The storm began with a collective *Shema* prayer on the roof of al-Marwani Mosque, underscoring a further deepening of the ritualisation of the space.[105]

Taking advantage of their large numbers and the exceptional facilitation provided by Israeli police, the intruders stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque and moved between its eastern courtyard, the western courtyard facing the Dome of the Rock plaza, and its various gates, which settlers have repeatedly violated, carrying out near-continuous ritual performances throughout the day.[106] They also continued to expand the introduction of Jewish ritual objects. For the fourth time, they brought in *Tefillin*,[107] alongside items that have become increasingly routine in *al-Aqsa*, including prayer caps (*Kippah*), prayer shawls (*Tallit*), and the ritual

fringes (*Tzitzit*). They further carried Torah scrolls and circled with them outside the Moroccan Gate,[108] signaling a growing push toward normalizing Torah reading inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque. In parallel, Temple groups are expected to intensify efforts before Israeli courts to authorize these practices, paving the way for their further institutionalization within *al-Aqsa*.

The extended Jewish holiday season (23/9–14/10/2025) began with the Hebrew New Year (*Rosh Hashanah*), which fell on 23–24/9/2025, during which 897 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The most notable development was the consolidation of collective settler dancing and singing inside the compound, marking the second major escalation season aimed at institutionalizing these practices as imposed realities within *al-Aqsa*. The storming also featured settlers wearing white robes (*Kittel*), intended to underscore the presence of the Priestly class (*Kohanim*) at the site.[109] In addition, the horn (*Shofar*) was blown for the fifth consecutive year and with greater frequency than in previous years, reportedly reaching seven instances according to Temple group sources.[110] Several incidents were audiovisually documented, although worshippers, journalists and *al-Aqsa* guards were unable to detect them at the time. The acts only became publicly known after settlers themselves showcased them following the conclusion of their fasting period. These developments reflected the intensified blackout and restrictions imposed on *al-Aqsa* during the holiday season. Palestinian media platforms were forced to document the storming remotely from the Mount of Olives using high-zoom cameras capable of capturing only limited footage of the incursions,[111] a condition that persisted throughout the entire escalation season.

The second observance in this season was the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), which fell on 2/10/2025. Given the holiday's strict fasting rules, which prohibit travel and transportation, settlers customarily precede it with what they term a "compensatory storming" of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Accordingly, on 1/10/2025, about 600 settlers took part in such a storming.[112] *Yom Kippur* itself witnessed the blowing of the horn (*Shofar*) inside the synagogue established within the Tankaziyya School, part of which overlooks the western arcade of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. This ritual has now been performed for the fifth consecutive year. The notable development in 2025, however, was the circulation of video footage showing that those celebrating in the synagogue and blowing the *Shofar* were Israeli soldiers in full military uniform.[113]

The third and most significant occasion was the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), which extended seven days, 7–13/10/2025, including five storming days, as such activities cease on Fridays and Saturdays. During this escalation, 7,119 settlers stormed *al-Aqsa* Mosque,[114] averaging 1,424 per storming day, marking a 5% increase over the previous year. If this trend stabilizes at its current level, it may suggest that Temple groups are approaching the limits of their mobilization capacity, despite receiving full institutional support and despite the coincidence of *Sukkot* with the announcement of a ceasefire in GS after two years of war. The broader pattern of stormings, together with the apparent ceiling in daily and seasonal participation, points to the limited demographic base of this current, whose influence continues to derive largely from the backing it receives from the Israeli government and state institutions. The holiday period also witnessed multiple episodes of collective dancing in the eastern courtyard of *al-Aqsa* Mosque,[115] at times involving hundreds of settlers.[116]

Bringing the Four Kinds (*Arba'ah Minim*) into *al-Aqsa* Mosque has become a central objective of Temple groups during *Sukkot*, as the ritual symbolically invokes the notion of the "Divine Presence (*Shekhinah*) dwelling in the Temple" while reinforcing the claim that *al-Aqsa* Mosque itself is the site of the alleged Temple. Attempts to smuggle the Four Kinds into the mosque began in 2013 and were documented consistently from 2018 onward, continuing annually except in 2020. The major shift came in 2025, when settlers openly and collectively performed the ritual multiple times while storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque under the observation of Israeli police and without interference.[117] This marked a significant departure from the previous status quo, under which Jewish religious rituals and their associated ritual objects were formally prohibited inside the mosque compound.

The fourth and final occasion in this extended season is *Simchat Torah*, which saw another storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque by Ben-Gvir. This marked his thirteenth storming since taking office and his tenth since the onset of the GS war up to that point.[118]

The extended Jewish holiday season also witnessed the first-ever formal distress appeal issued by the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf on 13/10/2025, addressed to King 'Abdullah II of Jordan. The statement read:

> The Islamic Awqaf, Affairs and Holy Sites Council – Jerusalem issues an urgent distress call to His Majesty King ‘Abdullah II ibn al-Hussein, the Hashemite Custodian of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, urging leaders of the Muslim world and the international community more than ever before to exert pressure on the Israeli occupation authorities to halt the most severe dismantling of the existing religious and legal status quo witnessed in the history of *al-Aqsa* Mosque/ al-Haram al-Qudsi al-Sharif, particularly during the year 2025 CE.[119]

The Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*) (14–22/12/2025): lasted eight days, including six days of storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque. During this period, 2,835 intruders stormed the compound, averaging 472 per storming day,[120] an 11% increase compared to the previous season, further consolidating this holiday cycle as one of the principal periods of intensified pressure on *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

Israeli police again leveraged the scale of storming during this season to impose new de facto arrangements. The Cotton Merchants’ Gate was closed to Muslim worshippers throughout the holiday during *Maghrib* and *Isha’* prayers, further privileging settler access over that of worshippers in the mosque and its surrounding area. At the same time, Temple groups convened the Light for the Temple conference, on 17/12/2025 at the International Convention Center (Nation’s Building) in Jerusalem,[121] reflecting their continued efforts to position the Temple agenda at the centre of Israeli public discourse.

From a ritual perspective, symbolic candles were lit, symbolizing the ritual lighting of the menorah, alongside a collective enactment of full-body prostration. This marked the third holiday season in which singing and dancing circles have been held inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque since its occupation. Throughout the festival period, efforts also continued to introduce biblical ritual objects and symbols into the compound, including the raising of the so-called Temple flag inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

In the vicinity of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the menorah was lit daily throughout the nights of the holiday season outside Cotton Merchants’ Gate. A dinner gathering was held in front of it on Wednesday, 17/12/2025, for the first time in the history of these ritual practices around *al-Aqsa*. This was followed on Thursday, 18/12/2025, by a procession around *al-Aqsa* Mosque’s gates, accompanied by the display of the

Temple flag, the lighting of the menorah, the blowing of the *Shofar*, and singing and dancing in Ghazali Square outside Lion's Gate to the north.[122] Since 2017, Temple groups have increasingly sought to designate this square as a central site for festival celebrations.

c. Analysis of the Major Escalation Seasons in *al-Aqsa* Mosque 2024–2025

The shift in the scale and character of the storming of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, whether in terms of numbers, the ritual practices performed, the associated collective celebrations, or the introduction of biblical ritual objects during the two years of the GS war, constitutes the most significant quantitative and qualitative escalation the mosque has witnessed in the two decades since the opening of daily incursions in 2003. More consequential, however, was the parallel transformation in the regulatory and security regime imposed by Israeli police. During the war, new layers of checkpoints were established around *al-Aqsa*, while existing checkpoints were reinforced with iron enclosures. Inside *al-Aqsa* Mosque, police foot patrols were introduced during prayer times, exceeding nine deployments per day. Surveillance was also extended to sermons delivered from *al-Aqsa* Mosque's pulpit, prayers in its mihrab, and broader religious instruction and activities, including repeated attempts to restrict lessons and cancel events held within the compound. At the same time, access for settlers was significantly facilitated, resulting in a sharp increase in the number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque at any given time, from about 150 before the GS war to around 1,200 thereafter.

In practice, this increase in the number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque (11% in 2024 and 22% in 2025) would not have been achievable without the extensive facilitation measures granted to them, alongside the intensified siege imposed on *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the tightening restrictions around it, and policies aimed at excluding Muslims and progressively eroding sustained forms of presence and steadfastness. Indeed, it can be argued that the facilitation provided by Israeli police to Temple groups continues to exceed their actual mobilization capacity by nearly a twofold margin. Under police regulations allowing entry in groups every ten minutes, with a ceiling of 200 settlers per group and an extension of the storming window to six and a half hours, the system effectively enables up to 39 groups per day, amounting to a theoretical maximum of about 7,800 stormers. In practice, however, the recorded peak remained significantly lower, reaching 4 thousand stormers on 3/8/2025.

This conclusion is further supported by a quantitative review of the annual aggregate of storming incidents. Assuming an average of 230 storming days per year, the daily averages are as follows:

Table 4/3: Average Daily Number of Settlers Storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque 2024–2025

Source	2024	2025
Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf	233	284
Temple Groups	262	319

Taken together, these figures underscore a structural shift: *al-Aqsa* Mosque has moved from a pre-2003 baseline of zero daily settler stormings to an average of 284–319 stormers per day in the current period, with peaks reaching up to 4 thousand during major religious holidays. At the same time, any numerical interpretation of this trend must be situated within a parallel spatial reality of the compound. The average number of stormers remains only marginally comparable to Muslim worshipper presence during even the least attended prayers. A single row in the al-Qibli Mosque accommodates about 80–100 worshippers, and it is uncommon for fewer than four rows to be present. Accordingly, even low-attendance prayers regularly match or exceed the daily average of stormers. Given that the al-Qibli Mosque has a capacity of about 5,300–5,500 worshippers, a fully attended prayer in the mosque alone produces a Muslim worshipper presence that surpasses even the record number of stormers recorded during the largest incursions.

What converts this apparent numerical limitation into a condition of effective dominance is the role of the Israeli police, through policies that impose a sustained siege on the mosque and the systematic removal of worshippers. This includes restricting access even for those who manage to enter *al-Aqsa* Mosque during storming periods, and preventing them from remaining in the vicinity of the stormers. It further entails facilitating settler exclusivity over *al-Aqsa* Mosque during storming hours, to the extent that it is effectively rendered available for Jewish religious rituals, chanting and dancing. The key point that should not be overlooked is that the political and institutional backing provided by the Israeli government, together with its security and military forces, to Temple groups, and its adoption of their objectives, constitutes a far more decisive and far-reaching

factor than anything these groups could achieve through their own organizational capacity or limited base of supporters.

At the same time, everything that has been imposed at *al-Aqsa* Mosque in terms of storming, ritual performance, singing, chanting and public celebration remains contingent on the continued dominance of Israeli police over the site and its capacity to consistently sustain and protect this imposed presence. This leads to two key implications. First, these developments remain, for now, within the realm of provisional realities. They have not yet translated into a structural transformation of the mosque's gates or physical fabric, although their persistence keeps open the possibility of such an outcome over time. Second, challenging the authority and control of Israeli police over *al-Aqsa* Mosque constitutes the decisive avenue for halting this trajectory of domination and potentially reversing it. This returns the analysis to a recurring historical pattern evident across successive uprisings and waves of mobilization: sustained presence and mobilization (*ribat*) has functioned as the primary mechanism for constraining the expansion of Judaization at the site, while resistance in its various forms has been instrumental in pushing it back. Furthermore, repeated uprisings, sustained mobilization and continuous presence have all contributed to slowing the consolidation of control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque, preventing it from reaching its intended end state, and at times producing tangible reversals, as seen in the removal of the electronic gates, the restoration of Mercy Gate, and the resumption of the spiritual retreat (*I'tikaf*) practices.

In light of the role Israel seeks to assign to the genocide in GS as a moment intended to suppress the Palestinian spirit, erode any remaining will for resistance in Palestine and across the region, and position it as a gateway to a final settlement, there has been a parallel effort to extend this logic to *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Yet, to date, this project has advanced primarily through gradual, incremental steps rather than decisive measures that would fully operationalize the assumption that mass violence can produce strategic resolution. From this perspective, *al-Aqsa* Mosque stands at a critical juncture in the history of its occupation. Either its custodians and *Murabitun* will succeed in reasserting forms of resistance capable of generating reversals, drawing on the symbolic and mobilizing force of the sacred as a source of renewed agency, or the occupying power may come to judge that conditions are sufficiently permissive to move toward more decisive interventions, initiating structural transformations within *al-Aqsa* Mosque itself.

3. Constructions Beneath *al-Aqsa* Mosque and in Its Vicinity

a. Constructions in Its Vicinity

In 2007, a centralized master plan was introduced to consolidate a series of Judaization projects around *al-Aqsa* Mosque under the label "Old Jerusalem." Since then, several projects have developed along two main trajectories:

First: The establishment of major Jewish religious and cultural institutions in the vicinity of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, including the Temple Institute's headquarters, the Burnt House Museum, and the Strauss House project. These sites are already completed, operational, and open to visitors. Efforts are currently underway to reinforce this institutional cluster through the construction of *Beit HaLiba* (Core House) to the west of the Western Wall Plaza, as well as the Kedem Complex to the south, the largest of the planned projects.

Second: The restoration and activation of "historical synagogues" associated with early waves of Religious Zionist settlement in Jerusalem during the second half of the 19th century. This process began with the Isaac's Tent (*Ohel Yitzhak*) Synagogue, located above the Hammam al-Ain endowment, which was opened in 2009. It was followed by the Hurva Synagogue, situated above the waqf of the Great Omari Mosque and opened in 2010. The most prominent and largest of these is the *Tiferet Yisrael* (Glory of Israel) Synagogue.

These large-scale projects have advanced at a pace that falls short of the ambitions driving efforts to reshape the city's identity. Although this development surge began nearly two decades ago, its key components have progressed unevenly. The Kedem Complex, located south of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, remains in the archeological excavation phase that precedes foundation laying.[123] By contrast, the *Beit HaLiba* (Core House) project and the *Tiferet Yisrael* (Glory of Israel) Synagogue have only recently begun to move forward after decades of delay and stagnation.

***Beit HaLiba* (Core House) project**

It is situated at the far western edge of the Western Wall Plaza. Its planners circumvented archaeological constraints by constructing it on metal pillars anchored above the bedrock of the excavations. The project was completed and inaugurated in 2023.[124]

The *Beit HaLiba* (Core House) on the Western Side of the Western Wall Plaza Following its Inauguration in 2023
(with its steel foundations visible above the underlying archaeological remains)

***Tiferet Yisrael* (Glory of Israel) Synagogue**

The project was undertaken by the Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish Quarter, one of the principal Judaization bodies affiliated with Jerusalem Municipality. Preparatory archaeological excavations began in 2012, and the project faced repeated objections due to the building's height, which exceeds ten meters. Situated on elevated ground in the Sharaf neighborhood, it is poised to become one of the most prominent structures on Jerusalem's skyline. Although foundation-laying ceremonies were held on several occasions, actual construction did not commence until 2022 and was completed in June 2025. Disputes subsequently emerged over its intended function: ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) groups sought to convert it into a synagogue under their control, while the Israeli government decided on 25/6/2025 to designate it as a public community-benefit center open to a variety of activities rather than prayer alone, placing it under the administration of the company that developed it.[125] Nevertheless, the project had not been officially inaugurated at the time of writing.

The *Tiferet Yisrael* (Glory of Israel) Synagogue in Jerusalem's Sharaf Quarter After Its Completion in June 2026

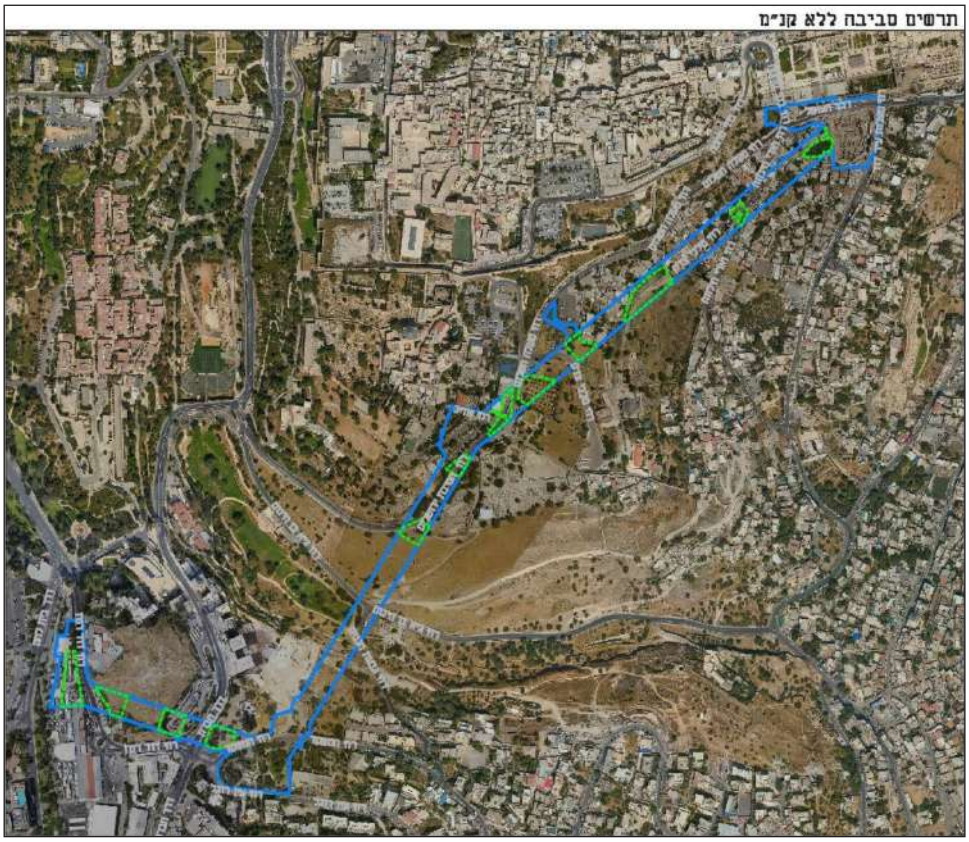
As Israel sought to consolidate these Judaization efforts through infrastructure projects aimed at reshaping the city's physical and symbolic landscape, these initiatives developed unevenly. The "Trump Station" high-speed rail project near the Western Wall Plaza in the Old City, first announced in 2017, was eventually cancelled and later appeared to have been largely symbolic, intended to accommodate US President Donald Trump during his first term. It was formally removed from the final rail plans submitted in 2023.[126] Other projects, however, continued to advance, particularly the Cable Car Project around the Old City. At the same time, a new proposal was introduced to establish an Israeli police centre near the Iron Gate, northwest of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

Developments in the Old City Cable Car Project

The cable car project around the Old City has received sustained backing, particularly since 2019. On 29/6/2022, the Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Transport and Road Safety launched the tendering and contracting process, which was completed on 2/5/2023.[127] The municipality subsequently initiated land expropriation measures to secure sites for the project's stations and the pillars intended to support the planned cable car route to the Old City. On 9/12/2023,

the municipality announced extensive land expropriations in Wadi al-Rababa and Wadi Hilweh in support of the project. Some of these expropriations involve key roads and transportation junctions constructed primarily on land owned by Jerusalemite Palestinians.[128]

Map 2/3: Locations of Land Expropriations for the Cable Car Project in Silwan



Police Station Building Plan Near Iron Gate

On 4/11/2024, the Israeli police announced plans to construct a new station in the Old City near Iron Gate, one of the western gates of *al-Aqsa* Mosque. The site is linked to al-Wad Street, the main artery running parallel to the mosque's western entrances. It would be added to an existing nearby Israeli community police center at Beit Hanina,[129] alongside another station opposite Chain Gate and a heavily armed Border Police post at Remission Gate, further consolidating policing

control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque, which is widely viewed as the most consequential instrument in its Judaization.

The plan was submitted for preliminary approval to the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee on 8/10/2024, with a 15-day period for objections. Several appeals were filed and were still under review as of August 2025,[130] with approval and implementation widely expected. The proposed facility would be built on a 440 m² plot confiscated by military order from the families of al-Mu'aqqat, al-Tarhi, and Abu Mayyaleh. It is designed as a three-story structure with a total built-up area exceeding one thousand square meters.[131]

Map 3/3: Location of the Planned Police Station Near Iron Gate

Ezrat Israel Egalitarian Plaza at the Western Wall, potentially placing *al-Aqsa* Mosque Under the Authority of the Official Rabbinate

The Ezrat Israel egalitarian prayer platform at the Western Wall Plaza emerged from demands by Reform and feminist religious currents to allow women to engage in full prayer practices, aloud with Torah scrolls, and while wearing ritual garments such as prayer shawls (*Tallit*) and prayer caps (*Kippah*), on equal footing

with men in the open space of the Western Wall Plaza. These demands have been categorically rejected by the official Ashkenazi and Sephardi rabbinate, which regards them as a fundamental breach of established Jewish liturgical norms that reserve congregational prayer for adult men and prohibit women from handling Torah scrolls or wearing core ritual attire. Support for the so-called "upper prayer space" (Ezrat Israel egalitarian plaza) has nonetheless developed, envisaging a site near the level of the Moroccan Gate in the walls of *al-Aqsa* Mosque, with capacity for about 900 worshippers. The proposal has since become a point of sustained religious and legal contention within Israel.[132]

Ezrat Israel Egalitarian Plaza South of Moroccan Hill

Traditional religious factions have also pursued legislative action in the Knesset to amend the Protection of Holy Places Law (1967), enacted after the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967. The law affirms "the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them" and that "the Holy Places shall be protected from desecration,"[133] but leaves the terms "religions," "holy places" and "desecration" undefined, reflecting its intentionally broad drafting and the wide discretion it grants the Israeli authorities. Exploiting this ambiguity, these factions have proposed designating the official rabbinate as the sole authority empowered to define "desecration" in Jewish holy sites, without clearly delimiting those sites themselves. This would effectively settle internal disputes in favour of traditionalist positions over reform and feminist movements,

extend rabbinical oversight to the Ezrat Israel egalitarian plaza, and, on the basis of a prior Supreme Court ruling that classified *al-Aqsa* Mosque as a "Jewish holy site" falling within the scope of the law, potentially expand such authority to *al-Aqsa* itself.[134] Despite reservations within Temple groups, Itamar Ben-Gvir and his party have endorsed the amendment, framing it as an opportunity to place *al-Aqsa* under rabbinical authority by leveraging the law's ambiguity. In practical terms, this could enable far-reaching restrictions on activities within the compound, including educational activities, children's recreation, and Muslim religious practices such as iftars, all of which could be construed as "desecration."[135] In this reading, Ben-Gvir saw that the initiative would significantly curtail the role of the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf and consolidate rabbinical control over *al-Aqsa* Mosque, in effect, on a final and irreversible basis.

b. Excavations

Archaeological excavations in the period covered by this report are concentrated in two main axes surrounding *al-Aqsa* Mosque: the western and southern flanks, with multiple excavation sites active in each. These excavations continue to serve two principal objectives: first, the recovery of artefacts that can be correlated with the biblical narrative; and second, the integration of tunnel networks and their development into a comprehensive underground archaeological–touristic complex designed to present that narrative. The most prominent excavations on the western side include the Western Wall tunnel network and the Robinson's Arch excavations, where recurring discoveries are regularly announced. On the southern side, key active sites include the Davidson Center excavations and adjacent work in the Umayyad palaces, followed further south by the Givati Parking Lot excavation, above which the Kedem Complex is planned. The most active effort aimed at completing an integrated tunnel system is the long subterranean passage being excavated under the name Pilgrims' Way or Pilgrimage Road.

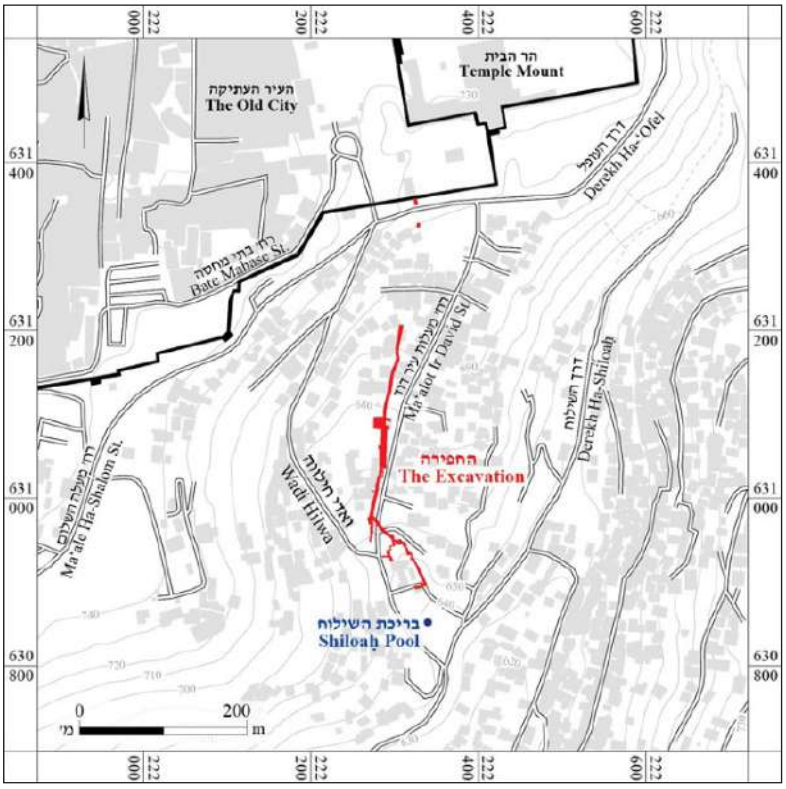
Pilgrims' Way Excavations

The project seeks to link the Silwan Pool, located south of the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood, with excavation sites surrounding *al-Aqsa* Mosque from the southwestern axis, at an aerial distance of roughly 600 meters. Excavations began in 2013 as a joint initiative between the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the Ir David Foundation (Elad), which promotes the establishment of the "City of

David" in the area of Wadi Hilweh. The Israeli government allocated 22 million shekels (about $6.8 million), while Elad contributed 28 million shekels (about $8.75 million), bringing total funding for tunneling and related works to about $15.5 million by 2023.[136]

Excavation work on the tunnel has continued since 2013 at a depth of about 3–4 metres underground. The project has caused structural cracks and collapses in several homes in the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood, forcing some residents to abandon their houses.[137] On 29/6/2019, part of the tunnel was inaugurated in the presence of David Friedman, then US ambassador to Israel, and Jason Greenblatt, President Donald Trump's envoy for the peace process.[138] Another section was inaugurated on 15/9/2025 with the participation of Secretary of State Marco Rubio, serving during Trump's second administration, alongside Mike Huckabee, the US ambassador to Israel and a leading figure within Christian Zionism.[139]

Map 4/3: Excavated Sections of the Pilgrimage Road Between the Silwan Pool and *al-Aqsa* Mosque's Southwestern Wall



Second: Jerusalem's Islamic Holy Sites

Al-Aqsa Mosque remains a central focus of the Israeli right and the Temple groups, alongside the Silwan area, where excavations and Judaization projects have intensified. The targeting, however, also extends to Islamic endowments and several mosques in Jerusalem's Old City, as well as to the city's cemeteries. These policies are rooted in the same settler-colonial replacement logic that seeks to establish Jewish holy sites at the expense of Islamic holy sites, and at times directly over them and across their entire area, as in the case of *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

During the period covered by this report, numerous assaults on Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem were documented. The most notable included attempts to expand the area confiscated for settlers in Ribat al-Kurd, the Judaization of Mamilla Pool, a central remaining section of the historic Mamilla Cemetery west of the Old City, and the demolition of mosques in Jerusalem.

1. Ribat al-Kurd (Hosh al-Shihabi), referred to by Israel as the "Little Wailing Wall"

This Mamluk-era structure was originally established to host worshippers and *Murabitun* arriving in Jerusalem from distant regions. It is located adjacent to Iron Gate, one of *al-Aqsa* Mosque's western gates. Over time, settlers seized parts of the site and renamed it the "Little Wailing Wall," claiming that some of the worship chambers and main hall directly adjoin *al-Aqsa* Mosque's Western Wall, making it a northern extension of the Western Wall.

On 6/5/2025, Israeli police raided the site under direct orders from Netanyahu. They removed a waste container used by residents, along with soil barriers and an iron gate installed by the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf to block access to the Western Wall tunnels. The area was subsequently allocated for settler prayer and use, while renovation works were undertaken to facilitate this transformation, further expanding the section of Ribat al-Kurd under settler control.[140]

2. Mamilla Pool

The Israeli municipality views the Mamilla Cemetery as a historical archive of Jerusalem, reflected in burial layers dating back to the Roman era. It has therefore sought to erase this record, which contains no Jewish burials, while simultaneously

treating the site as a valuable real-estate reserve in the heart of the city, to be gradually appropriated and redeveloped.

The cemetery's central area originally covered 208 thousand square metres (208 dunams), but has been steadily reduced through successive projects:[141]

- **After 1948:** Construction of two roads through the cemetery.
- **1959:** Establishment of Independence Park over 52 dunams of cemetery land.
- **1967:** Construction of a multi-storey municipal parking facility on the cemetery's north-western section.
- **After 1967:** Expansion of the commercial zone adjoining the parking facility.
- **1968:** Construction of the Leonardo Plaza Hotel on the cemetery's south-western side.
- **2015:** Establishment of cafés linking the parking area to the hotel along the cemetery's western edge.
- **2019:** Construction of the Center for Human Dignity—Museum of Tolerance (MOT) on 8 thousand square metres of cemetery land.

In sum, these projects have encroached upon 166 dunams of the cemetery's original area, leaving only its eastern section intact at about 42 dunams. Following its designation as an Israeli "heritage site" on 25/5/2025, and the announcement of a restoration project during a joint visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jerusalem mayor Moshe Lion, Israeli authorities have also taken control of an additional six dunams corresponding to the pool itself. The planned "rehabilitation" of the site is expected to entail further encroachment on its surroundings, reducing the remaining cemetery area to under 36 dunams, around 17% of its original size.[142]

Mamilla Pool was originally part of Jerusalem's freshwater system and is linked to the Patriarch's Pool in the Old City. Both were supplied by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's Pools in Artas, Bethlehem, as part of a broader system designed to provide water to Jerusalem. The pool measures 100 m long, 60 m wide and 6 m deep, with a capacity of about 36 thousand cubic meters.[143]

Recent Photo of Mamilla Pool, Designated for Rehabilitation as an Israeli Heritage Site

3. Demolition of Mosques

On 19/11/2024, the Shayyah Mosque in Jabal al-Mukaber, Jerusalem, was demolished. The mosque, built in 2004, covered 50 m^2. On 14/12/2024, Israeli municipal teams posted a demolition order on the door of the Al-Isra' Mosque in Silwan's Wadi Yasul neighbourhood. Built in 2002 and covering 150 m^2, it joined the Al-Qa'qa' Mosque in Abu Tayeh neighborhood in Ain al-Lawzeh–Silwan, which has been under demolition threat since 2014.[144]

Al-Rahman Mosque in Beit Safafa had already received, on 16/12/2021, an order to demolish its golden dome, which had been renovated during restoration and expansion works four years earlier. Following complaints from adjacent settlers, residents were compelled in March 2023 to lower the dome's structure and alter its colour.[145]

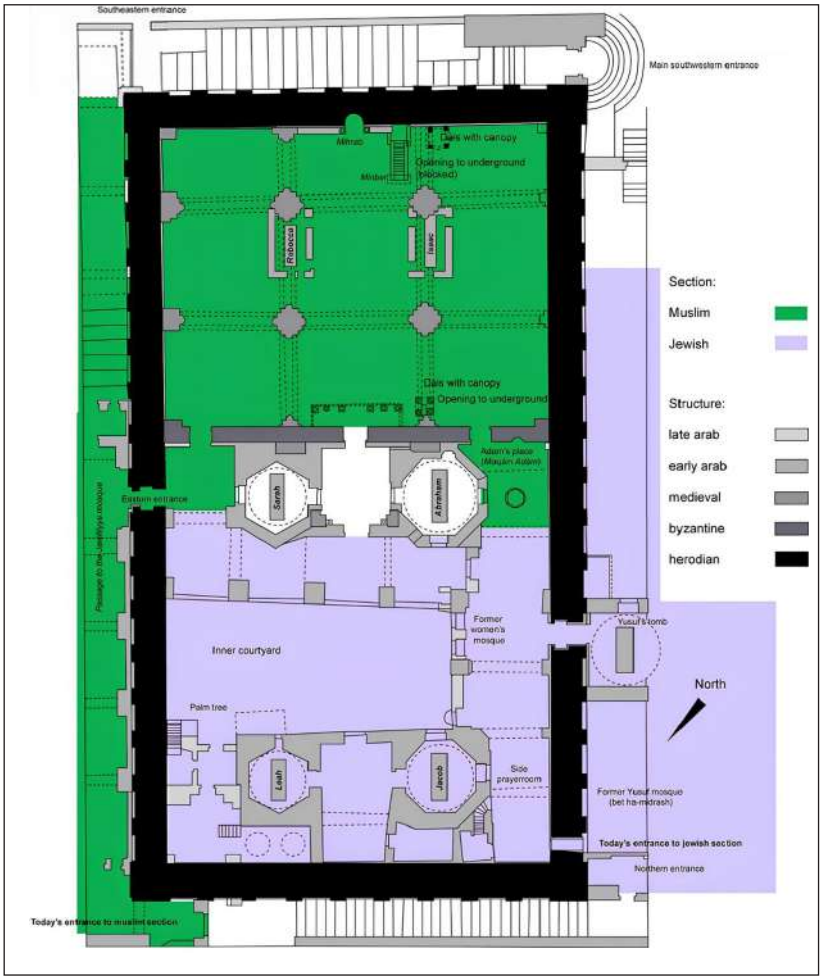
Third: Islamic Holy Sites in the Rest of Palestine

1. Ibrahimi Mosque

The Ibrahimi Mosque, including its adjoining structures, covers an area of 2,480 m².[146] Since 1976, Israeli authorities began gradually confiscating parts of it. Following the 1994 Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and in line with the recommendations of the Israeli Shamgar Commission,[147] the authorities allocated the al-'Anbar section and the mosque courtyard, including the cenotaphs of Abraham and Jacob, as well as the western and northwestern entrances, to Jewish settlers. They also designated the covered arcades of the mosque, known as the "Isaac Hall," along with "Adam's Chamber" west of the cenotaph of Abraham and its eastern entrance, in addition to the Jawali Mosque, for Muslim worship. According to precise mapping using Google Earth, the area allocated to Muslims amounts to 862 m² of the original mosque, plus 307 m² for the Jawali Mosque, totaling 1,169 m², about 47% of the mosque and its annexes. The remaining 1,311 m², or about 53%, has been allocated to Jewish settlers.

Aerial view of the Ibrahimi Mosque, showing al-'Anbar to the right and al-Jawali Mosque to the left.

Spatial Division of the Ibrahimi Mosque Imposed by Israel under the Shamgar Commission Recommendations



Moreover, time-sharing arrangements have been introduced whereby the Hebron Awqaf Directorate cedes full control of the mosque to Jews for ten days of their religious holidays each year, while Jews, in turn, grant Muslims access to the courtyard and the main prayer hall for ten days annually.[148] These include the two days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the four Fridays of Ramadan, the evening of 27th of Ramadan, the Hijri New Year, the Prophet's birthday, and the occasions of the Night Journey (*Isra' and Mi'raj*).

The Hebron Agreement, signed on 17/1/1997 between the PLO leadership and the Israel, further consolidated the aftermath of the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre. It divided Hebron into two areas, H1 and H2. H2 remains under full Israeli control and includes Shuhada Street, the Wholesale Market, Tel Rumeida, the Old City and the Ibrahimi Mosque, extending to the settlements of Kiryat Arba and Givat Harsina.[149] H1, by contrast, is under Palestinian administrative control and covers the rest of the city's neighbourhoods. This division has severely restricted access to the Ibrahimi Mosque for most residents and has contributed to a broader socio-spatial dynamic that effectively pushes Palestinians out of the Old City and the Ibrahimi Mosque's surrounding areas.

As part of efforts to expand its control over the mosque to encompass its restoration and administration, Israel introduced a plan in 2020 to install an elevator facilitating settler access to the Ibrahimi Mosque, and began foundational excavation works on 10/8/2021.[150] According to the Hebron Reconstruction Committee, the project would appropriate 91 m² of the mosque's area, in addition to 300 m² designated for external courtyards and access corridors.[151] This marked the beginning of a broader effort to strip the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and the Hebron Reconstruction Committee of their restoration authority. On 11/7/2024, Israel imposed the installation of temporary metal panels over the mosque's open courtyard as a prelude to constructing a permanent roof. After the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs rejected the measure, the Israeli government moved on 26/2/2025 to revoke the Awqaf's authority over the restoration and maintenance of the Ibrahimi Mosque.[152] This was followed in April 2025 by the removal of the mosque's director and head custodian, and on 25/8/2025 Israeli forces forcibly cleared restoration equipment from the mosque and ordered the Awqaf not to retain any of it.[153]

In November 2025, Israel suspended the confiscation order targeting the uncovered courtyard entrances of the Ibrahimi Mosque, and on 31/12/2025 approved plans for a permanent roof over the courtyard.[154] It later removed the mosque's director, Mu'taz Abu Sneineh, and its head custodian, Humam Abu Murkhiyyah, on 18/1/2026.[155]

Simultaneously, Israeli forces refused to hand over the mosque during the ten days traditionally allocated for Muslim religious occasions in 2025, including Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, while granting Jewish settlers control during their own religious holidays. This constituted a further step toward consolidating Jewish dominance over the mosque's identity and administration.

2. Al-Istiklal Cemetery in Haifa

Al-Istiklal Cemetery in Haifa remained subject to repeated attacks by settlers and Israeli authorities because it contains the remains of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam. The issue resurfaced on 12/8/2025, when National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir called for the cemetery's demolition during a session of the Knesset Internal Affairs and Environment Committee.[156] Later, on 10/12/2025, Israeli police removed a tent erected by the Waqf Committee beside al-Qassam's grave to facilitate ongoing visitation.[157]

3. Holy Sites in GS During the Gaza War[158]

According to Gaza's Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Israel targeted 1,160 of GS's 1,244 mosques, leaving 93% either partially or completely destroyed. Of these, 909 mosques (73%) were entirely razed, including the Great Omari Mosque, the oldest mosque in GS.

Israel also destroyed 40 of Gaza's 60 cemeteries (67%), including 22 that were completely obliterated. Religious figures were likewise targeted during the war, with more than 233 imams and khatibs killed.

Fourth: Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem and the Rest of Palestine

Israel approaches the Palestinian population through the same logic of exclusion characteristic of a settler-colonial project that seeks land without its indigenous inhabitants, to be replaced by Israeli settlers. With the rise of Religious Zionism, however, there has been a shift in the motivations guiding attacks on holy sites. Certain Islamic sites are targeted through a logic of appropriation and replacement, most notably *al-Aqsa* Mosque, the Ibrahimi Mosque, Joseph's Tomb in Nablus,

and Bilal bin Rabah Mosque in Bethlehem. Other Islamic sites are subjected to a logic of hostility and erasure as elements of an unwanted identity. A similar logic extends to Christian holy sites across Palestine. In this context, some of these sites have increasingly become more directly implicated in the conflict, while both Islamic and Christian holy sites remain broadly exposed to a comprehensive logic of erasure.

1. Targeting of Churches During the GS War[159]

Three historic churches in GS were targeted during the offensive. The first was the Church of Saint Porphyrius in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, dating to the 5th century CE and regarded as the third oldest church in the world. It was struck twice in the early stages of the war, on 10/10/2023 and 19/10/2023, resulting in the killing of displaced civilians sheltering inside.

The second was the Baptist Church, affiliated with the Anglican Episcopal Church, established in Gaza in 1882 and housing a hospital within its compound. On 17/10/2023, the hospital was hit in a mass-casualty strike that killed more than 500 displaced persons and patients, with further attacks reported thereafter. The third was the Church of the Holy Family, the only Catholic church in GS, founded in the early 20th century by Franciscan monks.

2. Attacks on Churches and Monasteries

On 30/1/2026, video footage from a fixed camera at the open gate of the Church of Gethsemane documented a group of students from Jewish religious schools passing by while repeatedly spitting on the ground in front of the church as an expression of hostility. The clip itself is only a few seconds long.[160] On 19/2/2026, Israeli settlers wrote racist slogans targeting Christians on the walls of the Visitation Church in the depopulated village of Ain Karem west of Jerusalem. The same slogans were also sprayed on several vehicles parked nearby.[161]

3. Restricting Worship

Restrictions on Christian worship, particularly during Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, have become an annual pattern of pressure and harassment. This is especially evident during pilgrimages for prayers inside the church and intensifies when coinciding with periods of war or escalation, as in 2021. The same pattern recurred during and after the Gaza war. On 4/5/2024, Israeli police

erected checkpoints around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Aftimos Market (Muristan) area to block access on Holy Saturday according to the Eastern churches' calendar.[162] Access for WB Palestinians was further restricted through quotas, while some worshippers were violently assaulted.[163]

Similarly, on 19/4/2025, when Easter coincided for both Eastern and Western churches, police once again set up checkpoints and closed roads leading to the church, attacked worshippers en route, and continued to bar Christians from the WB from entering the site.[164]

Moreover, during the 12-day war against Iran, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was subjected to the same assertion of claimed Israeli sovereignty, resulting in its closure from the morning of 13/6/2025 until the morning of 25/6/2025.[165]

4. Decline in Arab Christians in Palestine and Jerusalem

The number of Palestinian Arab Christians has steadily declined since the British occupation of Palestine in 1917 and the emergence of the Zionist project. Their share fell from 10.8% of the total Palestinian population, and 9.6% of the total population living in Palestine including Zionist settlers, according to the official British Mandate census of 1922,[166] to 3% of Palestinians in historical Palestine, and 1.5% of the total population of historical Palestine including Israelis in 2024.[167] This represents the lowest proportion of Christians relative to the overall population of Palestine since the advent of Christianity in the land. As such, it should be viewed with serious concern, not only because it undermines a key component of the Palestinian social fabric, but also because it may enable extremist Christian movements to advance claims that Christianity has disappeared from its birthplace. In turn, this could revive new crusading narratives in the future, with potentially broader implications for Palestine and the Arab countries more generally.

Fifth: Israeli Settlement Expansion in Jerusalem and the WB

Accurate figures on the number of Jewish settlers in the WB remain unavailable, as Israeli statistics deliberately avoid reporting precise totals. According to the *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2025* issued by PCBS, largely based on Israeli sources, the settler population in the WB stood at about 286 thousand in 1994, at

the onset of the Oslo Accords' implementation. By 2024, this figure had risen to 779 thousand,[168] reflecting an increase of about 270% over three decades.

By contrast, the Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem (ARIJ), which specialises in land and settlement studies in the WB, estimated on 14/5/2024 that the settler population exceeded 954 thousand, including 350 thousand settlers (36.7%) in occupied East Jerusalem.[169] Based on these estimates, the settler population grew by about 330% during the same period.

1. Outposts

These outposts are established by settlers through caravans or mobile homes that function as the nucleus of further expansion into Palestinian land. Over time, they are integrated into infrastructure and service networks, gradually evolving from settler-led initiatives into settlements formally supported by the Israeli authorities. They are often misleadingly labelled "illegal settlements," while those backed by Israeli authorities are described as "legal settlements," as though Israel were the arbiter of legality. In fact, all settlement activity on Palestinian land is illegal.

The number of outposts reached a record high of 89 in 2025, with their annual growth developing as follows:

Table 5/3: Growth of Outposts 2022–2025[170]

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
No. of Outposts	12	18	51	89

The table shows that the number of outposts established annually increased almost sevenfold within only four years. Concurrently, Israeli authorities expanded official support by integrating 13 outposts into state service networks in 2024[171] and about 22 more in 2025.[172] This reflects a coordinated dynamic in which official backing intensifies alongside the growing number of newly established outposts.

Table 6/3: Distribution of the New Outposts in 2024–2025 by Governorate

Governorate	New outposts 2024	New outposts 2025
Ramallah	15	19
Hebron	11	22
Bethlehem	11	11
Nablus	4	14
Salfit	2	4
Tubas	2	4
Jericho	3	6
Jerusalem	1	8
Tulkarm	2	1
Jenin	–	–
Qalqilya	–	2
Total	**51**	**91**

2. Official Settlement Plans and Tenders

Settlement construction advances through three stages: the preparation of urban plans submitted for approval, their partial endorsement by planning committees, and finally the issuance of implementation tenders. In 2024, 111 master plans were submitted, proposing 13,189 housing units. Of these, 60 were advanced for approval, enabling 4,253 units, while 34 tenders were issued for 1,039 units.[173]

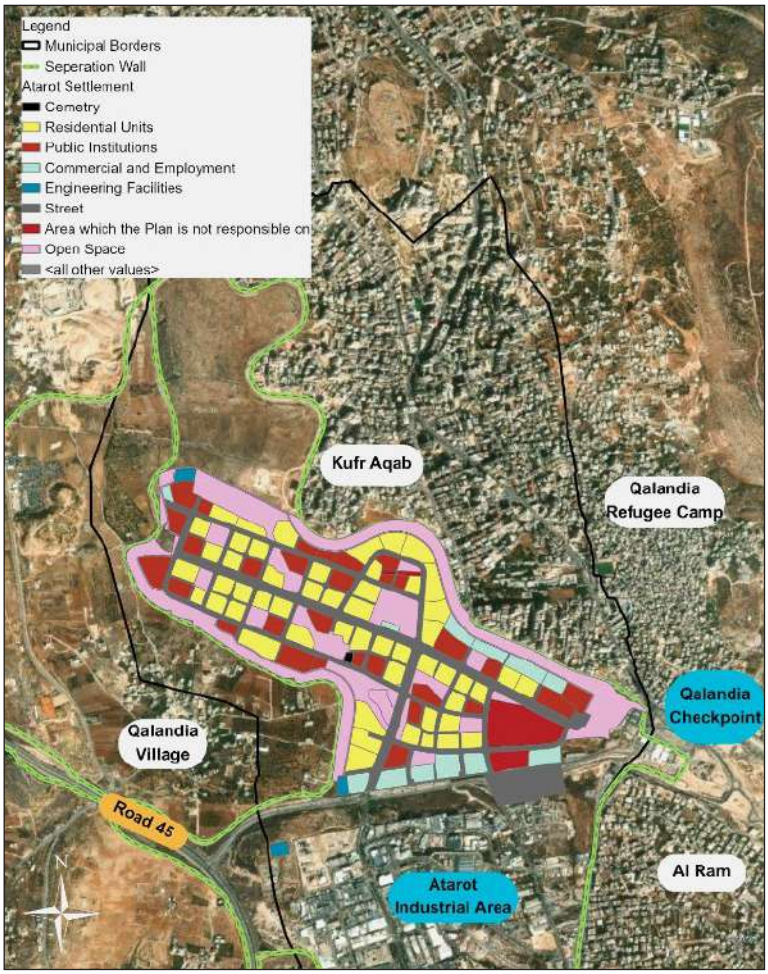
In 2025, this pace accelerated significantly amid what was perceived as a permissive wartime environment. A total of 265 master plans were submitted, covering 34,979 housing units. Of these, 198 were advanced for approval for roughly 20,850 units, including 10,098 units issued for implementation, around ten times the 2024 figure.[174]

3. New Settlements to Reshape Jerusalem

One of the most consequential developments during the Gaza war was Israel's advancement of major settlement projects that had long been deferred within a gradual strategic framework. Israeli leaders increasingly came to view the war in GS as a favourable opportunity for decisive action, particularly after the resumption of the war between 18/3 and 10/10/2025. Consequently, Israel moved forward with major settlement projects that had previously faced US and European opposition, such as E1. It also advanced projects that had long been postponed because of their political sensitivity and potential impact on relations with Jordan, including the Atarot settlement project on the site of Qalandia Airport. By 2025, these projects had entered either the approval or implementation stage. The most prominent included:

a. The Atarot Settlement on the Site of the Closed Qalandia International Airport: Planned over 1,234 dunams and comprising 9 thousand housing units, the project, together with the Atarot Industrial Zone and the Qalandia checkpoint, would complete the geographic isolation of Jerusalem from Ramallah. It would sever territorial contiguity between Jerusalem's Arab neighbourhoods within the Separation Wall and Ramallah, while further entrenching the effective separation of Kafr 'Aqab from Jerusalem within the Separation Wall, despite its formal inclusion within the municipal boundaries declared by Israeli authorities.

Map 6/3: The Atarot Settlement Plan on the Lands of Qalandia Airport Completes the Separation of Jerusalem from Ramallah[175]

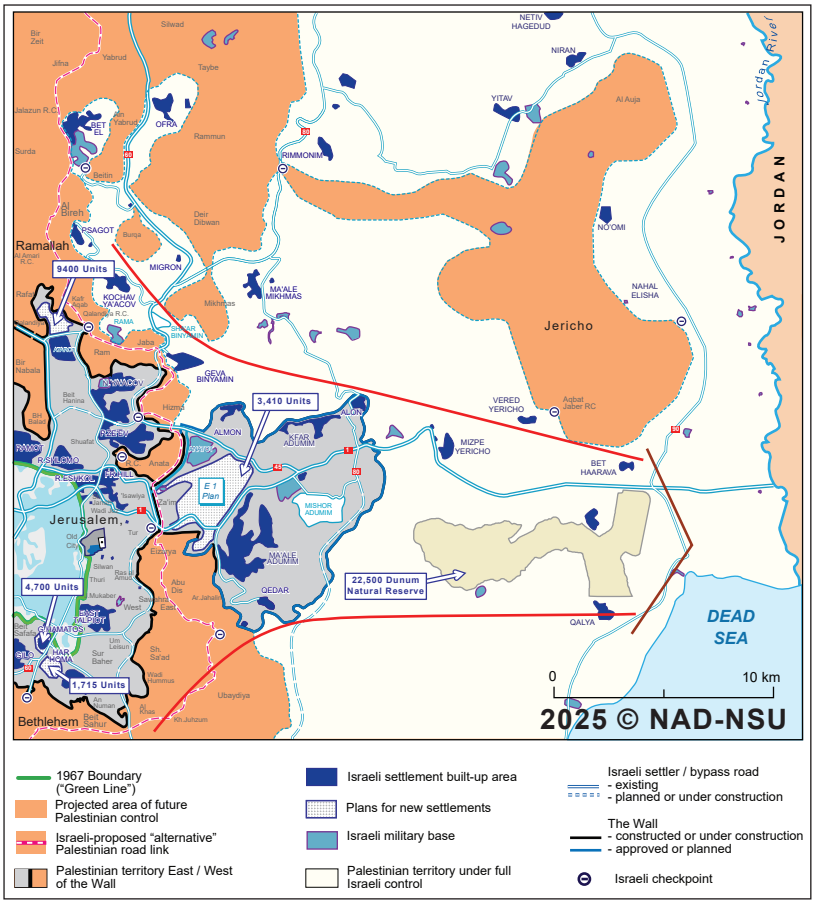


b. The E1 Project: This long-standing settlement plan aims to connect Jerusalem with the Ma'ale Adumim settlement bloc to the east. It has faced US and EU opposition for decades due to its implications for disrupting territorial contiguity between the northern and southern WB. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich advanced the project toward final approval on 14/8/2025,[176] and the Israeli government formally approved it on 20/8/2025. The plan envisions approximately 3,400 housing units and would consolidate the territorial link between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim,[177] which is itself undergoing significant expansion expected to further increase its scale over the coming years.

c. Expansion of the Giv'at HaMatos Settlement in Beit Safafa: Originally comprising 2,610 housing units, the settlement was expanded in 2021 with an additional 300 units, followed by a further 1,200 units approved on 20/4/2023, with implementation beginning in 2024. The project would bring the total to over 4,100 units.[178] If realized, it would consolidate two layers of separation: Isolating Beit Safafa and Sharfat from surrounding Jerusalem neighbourhoods, and severing geographic contiguity between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, disrupting what would otherwise be a continuous urban and spatial connection absent Israeli occupation.

d. Eastern Expansion of the Har Homa Settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim: This expansion advances at the expense of the adjacent Jerusalem neighbourhood of Umm Tuba. According to the Negotiations Affairs Department, it would add about 1,700 housing units to the settlement.[179]

Map 7/3: Major Settlement Expansions in and Around Jerusalem[180]



Sixth: Israeli Aggression on Palestinian Land and Property

1. Displacement of RCs in the Northern WB

The Jenin Battalion emerged in the aftermath of the "Freedom Tunnel" jailbreak on 6/9/2021, when six Palestinian prisoners escaped from the heavily fortified Gilboa Prison. Its formation was also shaped by the broader momentum generated by the May 2021 Sword of Jerusalem Battle, during which the resistance in GS established an unprecedented deterrence equation with Israel since 1948. This model subsequently diffused to other RCs in the WB, particularly Nur Shams RC and Tulkarm RC, as well as Tubas and Far'a RC.

In parallel to the emergence of this resistance model, which was widely seen as signalling the potential for a renewed uprising in WB, the Israeli authorities launched a prolonged military campaign in the northern WB RCs in March 2022, known as Operation Break the Wave.[181] The operation involved sustained raids, targeted killings and field executions, including the first use of airstrikes in WB since 2004. It also incorporated "mowing the lawn" tactics under Israeli security doctrine, and quickly expanded into broader, systematic destruction of RCs, their entrances, and surrounding areas, alongside efforts to reshape their spatial and security configurations. These operations generated intermittent armed and popular responses. This was evident in the raid on Jenin RC, during which Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed on 11/5/2022.[182] Likewise, the arrest of Bassam al-Saadi, a senior PIJ figure in Jenin RC, triggered escalation with GS in the Unity of the Arenas Battle led by the PIJ on 5/8/2022.

Israeli operations against RCs in WB intensified, culminating in a large-scale military campaign launched on 3/7/2023, titled Operation Home and Garden.[183] The designation reflected an explicit framing of the WB as a backyard to the "secure Israeli home," and led to the partial displacement of residents from Jenin RC, alongside efforts to reshape its entrances and their security structure. Following the rupture of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent shift in Israeli security doctrine from deterrence to pre-emptive, destructive warfare against all perceived sources of resistance, as well as efforts to implement the "Generals' Plan" in northern GS by rendering it uninhabitable, the Israeli army launched a broader assault on the three principal RCs, Jenin RC, Tulkarm RC and Nur Shams RC, on 21/1/2025 under Operation Iron Wall. The operation involved systematic

house-to-house incursions, demolitions and forced displacement, and by May 2025 resulted in declared Israeli control over the RCs, alongside extensive demolition and reconfiguration, with residents still barred from returning as of the time of writing.

The total number of displaced persons from the three RCs reached 33,362 by 31/12/2025, as follows:

Table 7/3: Palestinians Displaced from Northern WB RCs as of 31/12/2025[184]

RC	Jenin RC	Tulkarm RC	Nur Shams RC	Total
No. of Displaced	12,557	11,862	8,943	33,362

As Israeli forces continued to bar access to the three RCs and designate them as closed military zones, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHA-oPt) conducted, in October 2025, a satellite-based assessment of the damage sustained by the three RCs in cooperation with the UNOSAT. The assessment found that Israeli forces were carrying out an ongoing process of spatial reconfiguration of the RCs, including the opening of wide roads across their areas, alongside the excavation of these routes and the removal of water and sewage infrastructure, as well as the stripping of asphalt. This also included the restructuring of RC entry points. The operations resulted in the demolition or damage of 1,460 structures, averaging 45% of buildings across the three RCs (see table 8/3). Satellite imagery further indicated that demolition activity and the deployment of Israeli military bulldozers were still ongoing.

Table 8/3: Destroyed Structures in Northern WB RCs According to UNOSAT Satellite Imagery Analysis as of 16/10/2025[185]

RC	Destroyed	Severely damaged	Moderately damaged	Total	% of RC structures
Jenin RC	201	117	358	676	52
Tulkarm RC	254	52	96	402	36
Nur Shams RC	147	37	198	382	48
Total	**602**	**206**	**652**	**1,460**	**45 (Average)**

Although Israeli authorities have not formally declared a policy toward these three RCs, *Al-Akhbar* newspaper reported conditions attributed to the US security coordinator between Israel and the PA, General Michael Fenzel. These conditions included:[186]

- Preventing UNRWA's return to the three RCs.
- Reclassifying them as urban neighbourhoods and changing their names.
- Transferring administrative and service responsibilities to municipal authorities in nearby cities.
- Making the return of the RCs' population contingent on individual Israeli security clearance.

2. Decision on "Settlement of Land Title" in WB

On 11/5/2025, the Israeli security cabinet approved the process of land registration or settlement of land title in WB. Formally, the measure concerns the registration of land in the land registry and the adjudication of ownership claims. In practice, however, it constitutes a step toward the annexation of the WB through the gradual transfer of land records from the Jordanian and Palestinian land authorities to the Israeli Land Registry (Tabu), thereby establishing Israeli institutions as the authoritative body over land ownership in WB.[187] This direction was further reinforced on 23/7/2025, when the Israeli Knesset approved a non-binding motion urging the government to annex the WB. The resolution declares that WB is "an inseparable part of the Land of Israel, the historical, cultural and spiritual homeland of the Jewish people" and that "Israel has the natural, historical and legal right to all of the territories of the Land of Israel." It called on the Israeli government to "apply Israeli sovereignty, law, judgment and administration to all the areas of Jewish settlement of all kinds in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Rift Valley."[188]

A coalition of human rights organizations petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court against the Israeli cabinet's WB decision on 11/9/2025, but the Court rejected the appeal on 27/1/2026. Shortly thereafter, on 8/2/2026, the Israeli government authorized the direct registration of WB land to settlers through the Land Registry (Tabu), bypassing the settlement council (Yesha Council), Ministry of

Construction and Housing and the Ministry of Defense. This effectively opened the WB real estate market to individual settlers. These measures culminated on 15/2/2026 with the resumption of the settlement of land title procedures in WB following the removal of the legal impediment. The government set a target of settling 15% of unregistered WB land by 2030, about 109 km², or 1.6% of the WB's total area within four years.[189] The decision carries significant implications for the gradual de facto annexation of the WB. It shifts the "burden of proof" onto Palestinian landowners whose properties were never formally registered under Palestinian or Jordanian administration, while positioning Israeli occupation authorities as the final arbiter of ownership claims.[190]

3. Settler Attacks

According to OCHA-oPt, the years 2023–2025 recorded the highest levels of settler attacks in WB since documentation began in 2006. During this period, settlers carried out 4,575 attacks, resulting in the killing of 50 Palestinians and the injury of 4,618 others. The attacks also led to the uprooting or destruction of 69 thousand trees and saplings, and damage to 2,200 vehicles.[191] As shown in table 9/3, settler violence escalated steadily over the three-year period.

Table 9/3: Settler Attacks in the WB 2023–2025[192]

Year	2023	2024	2025
No. of Settler attacks	1,291	1,449	1,835
Incidents resulting in displacement	1,638	621	1,659

The geographic distribution of these attacks was as follows:

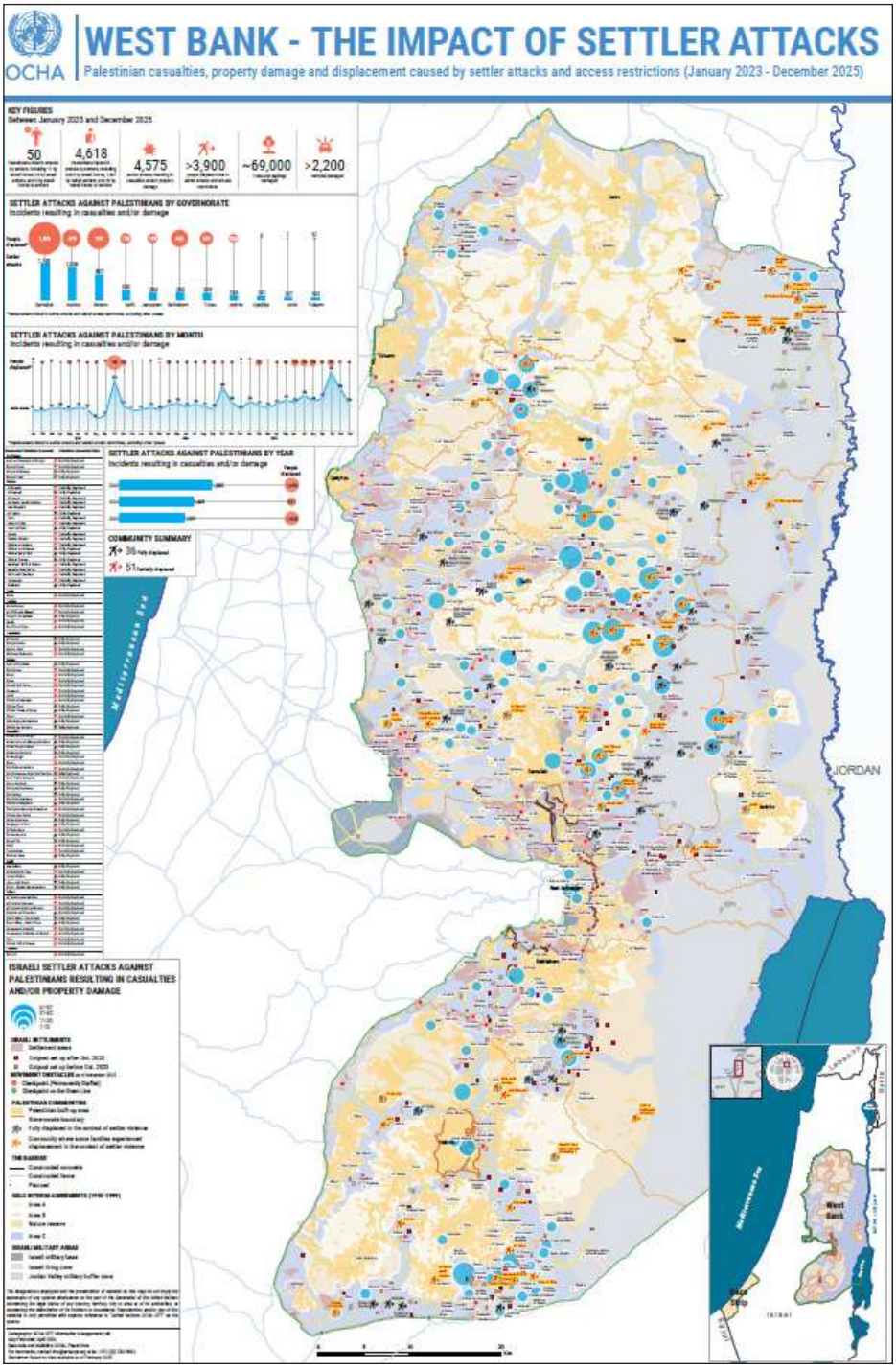
Table 10/3: Settler Attacks in the WB 2023–2025, by governorate[193]

Governorate	No. of Settler attacks	Percentage (%)
Ramallah	1,152	25.2
Nablus	1,028	22.5
Hebron	807	17.6
Salfit	332	7.3
Jerusalem	254	5.6
Bethlehem	253	5.6
Tubas	235	5.1
Jericho	163	3.5
Qalqilya	141	3.1
Jenin	107	2.3
Tulkarm	103	2.2
Total	**4,575**	**100**

An analysis of the table 10/3 shows that nearly two-thirds of settler attacks (65.3%) are concentrated in three governorates: Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron. By contrast, the three northwestern governorates, Qalqilya, Jenin and Tulkarm, record the lowest share, collectively accounting for just 7.6%. This is notable given that Jenin and Tulkarm have been central targets of Israeli military operations, as noted earlier, while Qalqilya has effectively become an isolated enclave from the rest of the WB.

Map 8/3 further indicates that settler violence in Tubas is confined to its eastern perimeter toward the Jordan Rift Valley. In Nablus, it is concentrated in the southern belt, with a slight eastward shift around the settlements of Yitzhar, Itamar and Bracha, which function as key hubs of settler violence. These attacks primarily target the southern village cluster; Burin, Madama, ‘Asira al-Qibliya, Huwwara, Beita and ‘Awarta, before extending southeast of Nablus toward Beit Furik and Beit Dajan, and intensifying further in Qusra, Jalud and Duma.

Map 8/3: Overview of Settler Attacks, Displacement, Settlements and the Separation Wall in WB[194]



Moving southward, attacks concentrate along the eastern belt of Ramallah's villages, running north–south from Turmus'ayya and Sinjil to al-Mughayyir and Ein Samiya, and further south toward Deir Dibwan and Burqa. In the Jerusalem area, they are similarly focused in Mikhmas, Bariyet Hizma, and the Khan al-Ahmar and al-Muntar area. In Bethlehem, incidents are split between the Etzion settlement bloc, which encircles the area from the west and southwest, and the eastern periphery, particularly Bariyet Tuqu' and Bariyet Kisan. In Hebron, they are concentrated in Masafer Bani Na'im and Masafer Yatta, as well as around al-Karmil and Susiya, extending southeast along Yatta.

On this basis, more than two-thirds of attacks are concentrated along two main axes: the Jordan Rift Valley corridor, encompassing villages and herding communities across the eastern WB, and the southern Nablus axis. Smaller, dispersed pockets extend westward into northwestern Nablus, as well as into Jerusalem and the southwestern outskirts of Bethlehem.

Combined with the Israeli access restrictions, particularly checkpoints and road gates, settler violence has contributed to the displacement of more than 3,900 Palestinians over the three years. Most are Bedouins and livestock herders living in settled communities while maintaining a Bedouin mode of production. They are distributed across 87 communities, of which 36 have been fully displaced and 51 partially displaced.

A closer look at displaced communities underscores their concentration in the Jordan Rift Valley and adjacent escarpments: 23 of the fully displaced communities (64%) and 33 of the partially displaced (about 65%) are located in this eastern corridor spanning the WB from north to south.

In sum, the analysis indicates that settler violence is systematic rather than random, and broadly consistent with the strategic vision first articulated by one of the earliest architects of post-1967 WB policy, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon. Despite apparent ideological divisions, Allon associated with the "Zionist left," and settlers largely aligned with the far-right, particularly Religious Zionism, the operational logic of a broader settler-colonial framework of territorial consolidation ultimately prevails. This produces a continuous settlement axis that cuts across ideological boundaries, concentrated in the Jordan Rift Valley and its surrounding slopes, and extending through the central corridor toward gradual encroachment on Jerusalem.

If this conclusion is correct, settler violence is likely to intensify in the Jordan Rift Valley, shifting from the small rural hamlets and peripheral sites (*khirab*) surrounding villages and towns to the towns themselves. In this pattern, it would first exhaust the *khirab* around Tubas before turning toward the town proper, with similar dynamics in Duma, al-Mughayyir, Mikhmas, Bani Na'im and Yatta. This also suggests an emerging frontline of popular resistance to settler violence, which could serve as a basis for sustained local resilience capable of disrupting settler expansion and limiting its deeper penetration into the WB.

4. Demolition of Structures and the Reconfiguration of Space in WB

According to OCHA-oPt, 2024 witnessed the highest level of demolition of Palestinian-owned structures in WB, including east Jerusalem, since records began in 2009. A total of 1,769 structures were demolished, resulting in the displacement of 4,265 Palestinians. In 2025, 1,659 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of 2,113 Palestinians.[195] These figures are distributed across the spatial categories established under the Oslo Accords:

Table 11/3: Israeli Demolition of Palestinian Structures in WB, Including East Jerusalem 2024–2025[196]

Year	Area C	Areas A & B	East Jerusalem	Total
2024	1,056	494	219	**1,769**
2025	1,320	82	257	**1,659**

The expansion of demolition activity into Areas A and B, designated under the Oslo Accords, began in 2023 and reflects a broader Israeli policy shift aimed at weakening the administrative distinctions established by the Accords. This trend effectively extends the scope of the Israeli Civil Administration, despite the Oslo Accords, which assigns administrative and security control of Area A to the PA, and administrative control in Area B alongside joint Palestinian-Israeli security control. The table below traces the evolution of demolition activity in Areas A and B in the WB since 2009. It excludes homes demolished during recent Israeli military operations in RCs across the WB:

Table 12/3: Israeli Demolition of Palestinian Structures in Areas A and B in WB 2009–2025[197]

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No. of Structures	1	6	3	16	1	13	12	28	11

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
No. of Structures	15	25	9	8	30	266	494	82

Overall, OCHA-oPt documented the demolition of 13,769 Palestinian structures across the WB, including east Jerusalem, between 2009 and 2025, resulting in the displacement of 21,862 Palestinians.[198] The distribution is as follows:

Table 13/3: Israeli Demolition of Palestinian Structures and Displacement in WB 2009–2025[199]

Area	Area C	Areas A & B	East Jerusalem	Total
Structures Demolished	10,277	1,020	2,472	**13,769**
Percentage (%)	74.6	7.4	18	**100**
Displaced Palestinians	11,899	4,850	5,113	**21,862**
Percentage (%)	54.4	22.2	23.4	**100**

Area C comprises 60% of the WB and includes 532 towns and villages, 241 of which lie entirely within Area C and remain, under the Oslo Accords, under full Israeli administrative and security control. While no official population data exist, estimates range between180–300 thousand residents,[200] with some sources placing the figure at about 340 thousand.[201] OCHA-oPt conducted partial surveys of these villages in 2008 and 2010, and in 2013 published its "Area C Vulnerability Profile," estimating the population at 297 thousand.[202] In 2014, this estimate was updated to 300 thousand,[203] an increase of 3 thousand. Extrapolating a comparable growth rate yields a current estimate of approximately 340 thousand. On this basis, it is reasonable to infer that roughly one in every thirty residents has been directly displaced as a result of demolition policies carried out by Israeli occupation authorities in their towns and villages over the past 16 years (2009–2025).

In Jerusalem, with a population of 401,400 at the end of 2024,[204] an estimated one in every 78 Palestinians has been displaced through demolition policies over the period 2009–2025. In Areas A and B, with a combined population of about 2.69 million,[205] the figure is roughly one in every 555 Palestinians.

In sum, the PA's framing of a "Palestinian National Project" has been largely confined to the 36% of the WB comprising Areas A and B, while Area C has been subject to a sustained pattern of demolition and displacement oriented toward de facto annexation, now entering an advanced stage. Jerusalem, by contrast, has experienced a slower process of demographic attrition aimed at consolidating de facto annexation, despite receiving significantly greater political and symbolic attention than Area C, where violence has been more intense but less visible.

The combined effects of Israel's unilateral control over Area C through demolitions, settler violence in these areas as noted earlier, the concentration of state institutions and development planning in Areas A and B, alongside the Separation Wall, checkpoints and other mobility restrictions (addressed in a later section), have produced a profound reconfiguration of space in WB. This arguably represents the most significant structural transformation to date. As a result, 78% of the WB population is concentrated in 36% of its territory. In practical terms, the viable space of the Palestinian National Project, as partially structured through the remaining Oslo Accords on the ground, is now largely confined to 2,035 km² out of 2,767 km², about 7.5% of historic Palestine. This distribution is illustrated in the following table:

Table 14/3: Distribution of the Palestinian Population Across WB

Geography	Area (km²)[206]	% of WB	Population	% of WB Palestinians
Area A & B	2,035	36	2,690,000	78
Area C	3,375	59.6	340,000	10
Jerusalem (Area J1)	71	1.2	400,000	12
Other*	179	3.2	–	–
Total	**5,660**	**100**	**3,430,000**	**100**

* Israel has designated 166.5 km² as natural reserves, while 8.3 km² are classified in Palestinian Authority statistics as " not specified," and 4 km² correspond to Hebron H2.

5. The Separation Wall: Construction and Impacts on the Palestinian Landscape

The Separation Wall in WB extends approximately 710 km, more than twice the length of the Green Line separating the WB from the 1948 occupied territories (323 km). Roughly 64% of the Wall (about 454 km) has been completed,[207] while the remainder remains in various stages of planning. Progress has been slowed in certain segments due to legal challenges[208] and implementation constraints. The planned route is designed to encircle major settlement blocs within the WB, effectively severing their connection to surrounding Palestinian areas. These include four key zones: the Kedumim Finger in northern Qalqilya, the Ariel Finger in Salfit, the Ma'ale Adumim bloc east of Jerusalem, and the Etzion bloc southwest of Jerusalem. Partial fencing has been installed at key access points to enable interim closure of movement pending final route determinations.[209]

6. Bypass Roads and Movement Obstacles

By December 2025, the number of movement obstacles imposed by Israel in the WB had reached 925, according to OCHA-oPt. This is 43% more than the annual average of 647 movement obstacles in the preceding 20 years. Half of this increase occurred between early 2023 and April 2024,[210] suggesting a sustained policy of spatial tightening that predates Operation al-Aqsa Flood on 7/10/2023 rather than a purely reactive response to it. Spread across the WB's 5,660 km², this amounts to about one obstacle per 6.1 km², compared to one per 8.7 km² previously. The change effectively illustrates a further contraction of Palestinian mobility, as the average unobstructed space available for movement has diminished from 8.7 km² to 6.1 km². To contextualize, this is roughly equivalent to about 30% of the municipal area of Beirut (19.8 km²), the smallest Arab capital by land area.

With the WB population reaching 3.43 million by the end of 2025,[211] this amounts to one movement obstacle for every 3,708 Palestinians. Over the past two decades, the proportion of permanent checkpoints has increased fourfold, rising from 15% in 2006 to 60% of all movement obstacles in the WB by the end of 2025.[212]

About half of these obstacles (459) block or hinder access to major roads connecting different parts of the WB, while 26% block access to Road 60, the main north-south artery in WB. This pattern significantly undermines territorial

contiguity and reinforces the separation between the northern and southern WB. Furthermore, the Separation Wall cuts off extensive agricultural land from its owners, as 85% of its route runs inside WB territory. Along it, 62 agricultural barrier gates have been installed, the majority of which are closed year-round. Around 26% are closed year-round, preventing any access, while 74% open only for a few days during the olive harvest season. This restricts farmers largely to seasonal access and severely limits year-round cultivation and maintenance of olive groves.[213]

Area H2 in Hebron, designated under the Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron (the Hebron Protocol), encompassing the Old City, Shuhada Street, and adjacent settlements, is the most heavily burdened area in terms of movement restrictions. In this compact zone, Israeli authorities impose 101 movement obstacles, accounting for roughly 11% of all such obstacles in the WB. Since 7/10/2023, access to the sealed section of Shuhada Street has been further restricted, with passage through checkpoints limited to 13 hours daily, between 7:00 and 20:00.[214] The area is home to about 7 thousand Palestinians and an estimated 800 settlers.[215]

In Jerusalem, over 3,500 Palestinians live in 18 communities on the East Jerusalem side of the Separation Wall, despite their status as WB residents. Access to their homes is therefore contingent on special permits issued by the Israeli military, as they fall within the "seam zone," including Beit Iksa, Nabi Samuel, and the Khalayleh area west of al-Jib. In September 2025, the Israeli military revised the criteria for issuing these permits,[216] requiring all residents to undergo the full administrative process anew to maintain or regain access to their homes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *al-Aqsa* Mosque and Jerusalem more broadly stand at a critical juncture, as Israel increasingly treats them as a focal point for strategic resolution and concentrates its efforts on achieving this through a range of instruments. At the same time, they have historically functioned as a site of constraint, repeatedly generating reversals and preventing such outcomes through diverse forms of resistance and defense. This dynamic has shaped the past two decades. While Israel has sought to terminate it through the genocide war, it remains susceptible

to renewal and reactivation. In this sense, the struggle over *al-Aqsa* and Jerusalem may serve as a potential entry point for reconstituting agency in the post-genocide phase and for re-engaging a broader regional role in confrontation, given that *al-Aqsa* Mosque is not the responsibility of Palestinians alone.

The Ibrahimi Mosque represents a parallel case of decisive transformation. Its limited size, the surrounding settlement structure, the 1994 massacre, and the 1997 Hebron Protocol collectively turned it into a testing ground for Judaization measures now increasingly replicated at *al-Aqsa* Mosque. Today, the site has moved beyond spatial division toward the consolidation of Jewish dominance, a trajectory that requires active resistance. Any reversal of the Judaization measures imposed there could likewise have positive implications for *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

At the same time, Israel continues its campaign of restrictions and hostility toward Jerusalem's churches, particularly during Easter. Churches, monasteries and clergy face recurring attacks, while the presence of Palestinian Arab Christians continues to decline. This represents a serious historical threat that necessitates reinforcing their presence and rebuilding ties with the Palestinian Christian diaspora.

Meanwhile, settlement expansion accelerated markedly in 2025, driven by an Israeli perception that the Gaza war had opened a window for decisive action. Long-frozen projects were revived, implementation accelerated, and settlement outposts multiplied, while being rapidly integrated into the framework of Israeli state support in coordination with settlers. At the same time, settler violence has likewise reached levels unprecedented since 1967, resulting in the displacement of large Palestinian communities. This violence is concentrated in the *khirab* and Bedouin or semi-Bedouin communities of the Jordan Rift Valley and its escarpments, reflecting the same strategic logic that shaped the Allon Plan following the occupation of WB in 1967. Accordingly, greater attention must be directed toward supporting frontline village communities exposed to these attacks and strengthening their popular mobilization, so as to prevent the Israeli occupation's territorial encroachment from advancing unchecked across the WB.

An analysis of house demolitions since 2009, and their distribution across the WB's colonial geography, underscores Israel's unchecked control over Area C and the deep structural damage inflicted by the Oslo Accords on the Palestinian National Project. What remained of that project was effectively confined to

just 7.5% of historic Palestine, thereby enabling Israel to extend demolition policies into Areas A and B as well.

At the same time, several WB RCs have been subjected to military assaults that displaced their entire populations and sought to reconfigure the camps following the destruction of large portions of their infrastructure, estimated at an average of about 45%. As Israel attempts to impose degrading conditions on residents seeking to return, the return of displaced refugees must be regarded as a critical first line of defense for the right of return and a means of preventing Israel from replicating this model across other WB RCs.

Endnotes

[1] For documentation on this state of historical exposure, see Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestine Strategic Report 2022–2023* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2024).

[2] Al-Qastal News channel | Jerusalem, Telegram, 17/9/2023, https://t.me/AlQastalps/122011

[3] See, for example, the recurrence of this on 24/9/2023 during the incursion on the eve of the Jewish "Yom Kippur" holiday in: Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 24/9/2023, https://t.me/AlQastalps/122624

[4] Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 17/9/2023, https://t.me/AlQastalps/122042

[5] The closure began on Yom Kippur, on 25/9/2023, and continued over the following days. See Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 25/9/2023, https://t.me/AlQastalps/122683; Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 30/9/2023, https://t.me/AlQastalps/123145; and Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 30/9/2023, https://t.me/AlQastalps/123174.

[6] The researcher tracked worshipper attendance during the first ten Fridays, based on figures released by the Jerusalem Islamic Awqaf and published by the Al-Qastal News website.

[7] Israel decides against Ramadan restrictions on Palestinians – Netanyahu, *The Jerusalem Post*, 5/3/2024, https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-790351

[8] *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 6/4/2024, https://edgs.co/w2nse

[9] Aljazeera.net, 27/3/2025, https://aja.ws/p1l1zv (in Arabic)

[10] *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 14/3/2024, https://edgs.co/ytlb5

[11] Aljazeera.net, 17/3/2024, https://aja.ws/ratbvb (in Arabic)

[12] Ziad Bheis, On the al-Aqsa Equation That Was Broken: No Prayer Under the Presence of Weapons, site of Al Quds International Institution (QII), 25/3/2025, https://qii.media/news/4416

[13] Ibid.

[14] Extending the hours of incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque: an advanced step in the trajectory of temporal partitioning and comprehensive Judaization, Al-Resalah.net, 22/12/2025, https://alresalah.ps/p/308897

[15] Aljazeera.net, 23/10/2024, https://aja.ws/42d9nu (in Arabic)

[16] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 5/6/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/38495

[17] PIC, 16/10/2025, https://palinfo.com/news/2025/10/16/978453/ (in Arabic)

[18] Safa, 23/12/2025, https://safa.ps/p/399249

[19] *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 24/7/2024, https://edgs.co/n6w7y

[20] Anadolu Agency, 5/6/2024, https://v.aa.com.tr/3241398 (in Arabic)

[21] Anadolu Agency, 27/6/2025, https://v.aa.com.tr/3614443 (in Arabic)

[22] Aljazeera.net, 30/12/2021, https://aja.me/r8ugj3 (in Arabic)

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[24] Anadolu Agency, 2/1/2024, https://v.aa.com.tr/3097550 (in Arabic)

[25] *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 1/1/2025.

[26] *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 1/1/2026.

[27] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 31/12/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/45004?single

[28] Site of Al-Quds Albwsalah, 1/1/2025, https://www.alqudsalbawsala.com/download/ar/upload_file/documents/2025-01-01/1735715337_3_1735715337_XWU5CUFuMj.pdf

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[33] *Al-'Arabi al-Jadid*, 11/4/2025, https://edgs.co/rk8ho

[34] The definition of the religious and national significance of each holiday in this discussion is based on: 'Abdel Wahab El-Messiri, *Mawsu'at Al-Yahud wa Al-Yahudiyyah wa Al-Sahyuniyyah* (Encyclopedia of Jews, Judaism and Zionism), vol. 5 (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, 1999), pp. 260–276.

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[36] The Gregorian–Hebrew calendar correspondence for these dates, and elsewhere in this chapter where necessary, was verified through the site of Hebcal, https://www.hebcal.com/

[37] Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 28/2/2021, https://t.me/AlQastalps/19837

[38] Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 17/3/2022, https://t.me/AlQastalps/64514

[39] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 8/3/2023, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/27601

[40] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 25/3/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/37359

[41] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 16/3/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/41972

[42] According to figures from the Administration of Jerusalem's Awqaf, the average number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque in 2024 was 220 per day, calculated over 243 days of incursions. On this basis, Temple groups recorded nearly double the annual daily average during the seven days of the Festival of Lights (*Hanukkah*). Taken together with several qualitative escalations, this suggests that *Hanukkah* was effectively incorporated in 2024 into the core annual calendar of incursions into *al-Aqsa* Mosque.

[43] Figures for settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 3–4/12/2018: Ali Ibrahim, Weekly Review of Developments and Positions in the City of Jerusalem: 28 November – 4 December 2018, Research and Information Department, QII, 5/12/2018, https://qii.media/index.php?s=8&cat=65&id=1129; Figures for settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 5 and 10/12/2018: Ali Ibrahim, Weekly Review of Developments and Positions in the City of Jerusalem: 5–11 December 2018, Research and Information Department, QII, 12/12/2018, https://qii.media/index.php?s=8&cat=65&id=1130; and Figures for settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque on 6 and 9/12/2018: Key Israeli Violations Against al-Aqsa Mosque in 2018, WAFA, https://info.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/32002 (in Arabic)

[44] Days 29/11, 1/12, 2/12 and 6/12 are based on Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, https://t.me/AlQastalps; while 30/11 and 5/12 are based on Key Violations Against al-Aqsa Mosque During 2021, WAFA, https://info.wafa.ps/pages/details/32005 (in Arabic)

[45] Al-Qastal News | Jerusalem channel, Telegram, 17/3/2022, https://t.me/AlQastalps/64514

[46] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 14/12/2023, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/35165

[47] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 2/1/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/41202

[48] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 22/12/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44933

[49] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 29/4/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/38031

[50] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 22/4/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/37934

[51] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 23/4/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/37945

The exchange rate of the dollar against the Israeli shekel was based on the Bank of Israel data in April 2024, which was 3.7433.

[52] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 28/4/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/38022

[53] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 29/4/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/38027

[54] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 25/4/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/37980

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[62] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 20/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40358

[63] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 20/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40367

[64] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 20/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40368; and Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 21/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40376

[65] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 17/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40327

[66] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 17/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40326

[67] Alasimaa News channel, Telegram, 24/10/2024, https://t.me/AlasimaN/33805

[68] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 24/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40437

[69] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 24/10/2024, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/40436

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Site of Russia Today (RT), 12/9/2022, http://arabic.rt.com (in Arabic)

[74] Bait al-Maqdis News channel, Telegram, 1/1/2025, https://t.me/JnewsA/46777

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[77] This holiday consists of two observances: the Fast of Esther on the eve of *Purim*, followed by *Purim* itself. According to the Book of Esther, however, the Jews of *Shushan* fought their enemies for an additional day beyond those in other towns, leading *Shushan* to celebrate on the following day. In Jewish tradition, Jerusalem likewise observes the holiday one day later as *Shushan Purim*, in accordance with the status accorded to historically walled cities. When *Shushan Purim* coincides with the *Sabbath*, its observances are distributed across three days in an arrangement known as *Purim Meshullash* (Triple Purim). This exceptional circumstance, which effectively extended the holiday period, may have contributed to the unusually large number of settlers storming *al-Aqsa* Mosque during that time. period. For more, see Purim Meshulash 2025, site of Hebcal, https://www.hebcal.com/holidays/purim-meshulash-2025

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[84] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 15/4/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/42273

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[86] Alasimaa News channel, Telegram, 14/4/2025, https://t.me/AlasimaN/49594; and Alasimaa News channel, Telegram, 16/4/2025, https://t.me/AlasimaN/49755

[87] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 16/4/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/42287; and Alasimaa News channel, Telegram, 17/4/2025, https://t.me/AlasimaN/49825

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[90] Alasimaa News channel, Telegram, 26/5/2025, https://t.me/AlasimaN/53166

[91] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 26/5/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/42654

[92] Eliav Breuer, Ben-Gvir bucks status-quo, announces prayer permitted on Temple Mount, *The Jerusalem Post*, 26/5/2025, https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-855460

[93] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 26/5/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/42646

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[97] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 26/5/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/42640

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[112] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 1/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44048

[113] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 2/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44067

[114] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 13/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44202

[115] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 8/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44120

[116] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 8/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44125

[117] Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 9/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44137; and Al-Quds Albwsalah channel, Telegram, 9/10/2025, https://t.me/alqudsalbwsalah/44141

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In relation to the total population of Palestine, including Jewish settlers, the Jewish population stood at 7,176,000 at the end of 2024. Applying the average growth rate for the past two years, estimated at 1.15%, places the Jewish population at about 7,258,500 by the end of 2025. This brings the combined total of Palestinians and Jewish settlers to about 14,658,500, of whom Palestinian Christians constitute roughly 1.5%.

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The Palestine Strategic Report 2024 – 2025

This Report

Al-Zaytouna Centre is pleased to present The Palestine Strategic Report (PSR) 2024–2025, now in its 14th consecutive edition. This report provides an academic, objective and comprehensive analysis of developments related to the Palestine issue across various dimensions. It offers up-to-date and accurate information and statistics through the end of 2025, complemented by analytical insights and forecasts.

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