

# Settlement Monitor

*This section covers items—reprinted articles, statistics, and maps—pertaining to Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. They are reproduced as published, including original spelling and stylistic idiosyncrasies.*

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## **JOINT VENTURE: THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AND ITS SETTLERS**

### **“IMMINENT NEW SETTLEMENT ENCLAVE IN SILWAN”**

*This article highlights plans for a new settlement enclave in the Batan al-Hawa area of Silwan, East Jerusalem, analyzing the legal constructs that have made it possible for settlers to acquire Palestinian property. The Israeli government consistently places settlers above the law and displaces thousands of Palestinians through illegal confiscation and selling of land. Tactics employed to displace residents include joint government-settler building permit submissions, collusion between settlers and the custodian general, government-funded property takeovers and evictions, and abuse*

*of the Absentee Property Law. Published by Terrestrial Jerusalem on 13 August 2015, the article is available online at [t-j.org.il](http://t-j.org.il).*

The [Israeli media is reporting today](#) on settler plans for major new construction in the heart of a densely-populated Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem. Here are the full details behind that story.

Under the cover of a temporary, partial lull in East Jerusalem settlement activities, a new and extremely dangerous development is taking place: the creation of a new, large settlement enclave in an area of Silwan—Batan al-Hawa—that, until now, was only sparsely penetrated by settlers.

To date, settlement activity in Silwan has been largely limited to the Wadi Hilweh area of Silwan, on the [alleged] site of the Biblical City of David. In many ways, the Wadi Hilweh/City of David settlement has been the flagship of the ideological settlements in East Jerusalem. Today, approximately 400 of the 4000 residents of Wadi Hilweh are settlers, and the Government of Israel has vested control over much of the public domain in the area in the Elad settler organization.

The area under threat today is on the ridge immediately to the east of Wadi Hilweh—a neighborhood of Silwan known as Batan al-Hawa. Until now, Batan al-Hawa has been subject to only limited incursions by the settlers, principally in the illegally built Beit Yehonaton building (discussed below) and another couple of structures that have been inhabited only sporadically.

Not unlike the residents of Wadi Hilweh, and Um Haroun and Shimon Hatzaddik in Sheikh Jarrah, the Palestinian residents of Batan al-Hawa have been targeted by government-backed settlers. This is a community at grave risk. More broadly speaking, the creation of this new settlement enclave would have highly detrimental ramifications that go well beyond the fate of one Palestinian family, with a potentially devastating impact on both the stability of Jerusalem and the possibility of future political agreements.

### ***Why Is This Urgent?***

In recent days, one family living in Batan al-Hawa, the Abu Nab family, has received an eviction order, compelling them to leave the home in Silwan in which they have lived for decades. While the initial eviction date has expired, it may be renewed and implemented in short order. The eviction order is based on a Jerusalem District Court judgment that was handed down in February 2015, under circumstances detailed below. While only the Abu Nab family is in immediate danger, legal proceedings have been instituted against tens of other Palestinian families in the area, for whom the eviction of the Abu Nab family would serve as a dangerous precedent.

### ***Why Is This Important?***

The eviction of the Abu Nab family signals the beginning of a major campaign to transform Batan al-Hawa into a large settlement enclave similar to the one in Wadi Hilweh/City of David. Legal proceedings have been filed against twelve Palestinian families, and an additional twenty are at risk of eviction proceedings. In short, we are witnessing the inception of the first new ideologically driven settlement neighborhood in years. The Shepherd's Hotel in Sheikh Jarrah

(with occupancy expected in a matter of months) is also a new and problematic settlement, but the Batan al-Hawa settlement is far more damaging, for the following reasons:

- The creation of Batan al-Hawa entails the displacement of hundreds of Palestinians.
- Even with the currently limited settler presence, Batan al-Hawa has already become the location of some of the most violent intercommunal skirmishing in East Jerusalem. The new settlement will create an additional Hebron-like flashpoint, implanting extreme settlers in a densely populated Palestinian area.
- The Batan al-Hawa settlement will have a significant impact on the potential border in any future political agreement. Until now, the settlement enclaves ringing the Old City have been discontinuous [*sic*], and any claims of encirclement required one to find a way to “connect the dots.” Batan al-Hawa will change this, creating a contiguous ring of settlements from Wadi Hilweh/City of David to the south of the Old City, to Ras el-Amud to the East (see [map](#)).
- The creation of the Batan al-Hawa settlement is based on invoking a Jewish “right of return” to Palestinian areas, while denying such a right to Palestinians. In doing so, the settlement touches on the two most sensitive exposed nerves of the conflict—Jerusalem and the right of return/refugees.
- The settlement will be created by means of selective imposition of the rule of law, by which legal action is a weapon used against Palestinians at a time when the settlers are above the law (see our comments on Beit Yehonatan, below).

### ***What Is the History Here?***

The ideologically driven settlers of East Jerusalem are motivated by a sort of thermal map: that is, they do not seek to settle everywhere in East Jerusalem, but target those areas which “glow” with Jewish history. Such is the case with Wadi Hilweh/City of David. While the Wadi Hilweh ridge is indeed the site of Biblical Jerusalem, from which the city as we know it emerged, with one sole exception (the Meyuhas’ house at the very fringe of Wadi Hilweh), until the onset of the modern settlement projects, Jews had not resided there for two thousand years.

The case of Batan al-Hawa is different. This is the site of the small area that was inhabited by Yemenite Jews who, arriving in Palestine in the latter half of the 19th century, were rejected by the established Jewish Yishuv and were consequently compelled to live outside the Old City. The Yemenite Jewish population dwindled in the area after the Palestinian uprising in 1929, and abandoned the area entirely after the Arab uprising in 1936–1939. The area was home exclusively to Palestinians from that time until the settler incursions of recent years. Palestinian residents of the area, a small number of whom initially took possession of homes during the British Mandate based on the consent of the Jewish owners, have been living there for decades. Most of those living in the targeted properties received possession by means of the Jordanian Custodian of Enemy Property in the years after the 1948 war.

Most, but not all of the properties now being targeted by settlers in Batan al-Hawa were once part of the historical Yemenite settlement (two additional properties were purchased privately—our report on those takeovers is [here](#)). In addition, in July 2015, the settlers filed a request for a building permit for the construction of a new three-story residential building opposite Beit Yehonatan.

### ***What Legal Constructs Are Permitting This to Happen?***

At the heart of the campaign to take over targeted Palestinian properties in East Jerusalem is Israeli legislation from 1970, which allows Israelis who owned property in East Jerusalem prior to 1948 to recover that property. No such provision exists for Palestinians. Consequently, in a city with two national collectives, Jewish and Arab, both of which lost properties in close vicinity of one another in the same war, only one national collective is entitled to “a right of return.”

With a broader legal perspective, the picture becomes more sinister. One of the major vehicles whereby the settlers were able to take over Palestinian properties in Silwan was based on a systematic abuse of the Absentee Property Law (our full report on the use and abuse of this law in Jerusalem is [here](#)). This law allowed the government to seize targeted Palestinian properties based on claims that these properties were “abandoned” by Palestinians who fled (claims often made on the basis of false or flimsy evidence). These properties were then turned over, en bloc, to the settlers. In juxtaposition with the 1970 legislation, the following principle emerges: any property purportedly abandoned by Palestinians will be seized by the government of Israel and turned over to the settlers, while any property ever in possession of Jews will be “reclaimed” and also turned over to the settlers.

In the years following the 1967 war, little interest was displayed by Israel in Batan al-Hawa. But since the 1990s, the Custodian General, a governmental official responsible for the management of properties [whose owners] are not present, has been acting in active collusion with the settlers to “recover” properties in Batan al-Hawa. The Custodian General is not to be confused with the Custodian for Absentee Property. The task of the former is to recover properties which belonged to Jews in the past, thereby reestablishing their property rights; the task of the Custodian for Absentee Property is to negate the property rights of the Palestinian property owners such that these properties become property of the State of Israel.

Both of these functionaries have exercised their authorities in service of the settlers, in a manner that has been found to be highly irregular and often illegal, by both the courts and the impartial government board of inquiry, the Klugman Committee, which in 1992 conducted an in-depth investigation into Israeli settlement policies. Following that Committee’s report, those policies stopped. They have now been revived in Batan al-Hawa.

Two of the properties that are currently targeted in Batan al-Hawa derive from a family trust, the Benvenisti Endowment. The term “family trust” is misleading, since by means of legal machinations, the settlers now control the endowment and there is no connection to the Benvenisti family. The Custodian General has “restored” two properties (including the Abu Nab house) to the settler endowment.

These legal machinations are illuminating. While the settlers invariably invoke the “right of Jews” to return to their homes, neither the settlers in Batan al-Hawa nor those of Wadi Hilweh have any historical personal connection to the homes in question. Rather, we are dealing with the mythical attachment of the Jewish people to these areas, and in this context, the settlers are invariably the sole representatives of the Jewish people.

The actions of the Custodian General are even more nefarious in regard to a number of other properties in the area. In at least four cases, the Custodian General sold properties under his

control to the settler-controlled Benvenisti Endowment—properties to which the endowment had no claims. Sale of properties in this manner—without any public tender process (which among other things would allow Palestinians to take ownership of homes they have resided in for decades)—has in the past been ruled illegal.

### ***What about the Settlement Already in Batan al-Hawa (Beit Yehonatan)?***

We have reported in depth on the case of Beit Yehonatan in the past, and the story of this house is pertinent to the recent developments.

Until now, Beit Yehonatan (so named in honor of the convicted spy, Jonathan Pollard) has been the major settler foothold in Batan al-Hawa, and in blatant defiance of the law. Beit Yehonatan was built in the early 2000s, and has been occupied since 2005. The construction took place without a building permit. Deflecting massive political pressure, then-Municipal Legal Adviser Yossi Havilio indicted the developers, who were convicted in judgments that were upheld by both the District and Supreme Courts. These verdicts compel the settlers to vacate the premises and compel the Municipality to seal the building.

However, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat has systematically refused to carry out the Court verdict, in spite of being given direct and binding orders by the Attorney General to do so. When Legal Adviser Havilio insisted that the verdict be carried out, Havilio found himself forced out of office. And in the meantime, the settlers residing in Beit Yehonatan, in defiance of Israeli court rulings, are guarded not only by a permanent Border Patrol post at the house, but by private security guards hired and paid for by the Ministry of Construction.

Among the pretexts invoked by the Municipality purporting to justify this flouting of the law is the claim that carrying out the verdict poses a threat to public order. Such concerns will apparently not be an obstacle that will prevent the eviction of the Abu Nab family.

It consequently should come as no surprise that Beit Yehonatan has come to symbolize for the Palestinians of East Jerusalem one of the cruel facts that impacts their daily lives: the settlers are above the law.

### ***Is the Government of Israel Implicated in Developments in Batan al-Hawa?***

Yes, and emphatically so. During one of the last rounds of settlement takeovers in Silwan, Prime Minister Netanyahu argued that these were merely private purchases and that opposing them would be “un-American.” Even then the claim was disingenuous in the extreme. None of these purchases could have taken place without the massive support of [the] Government of Israel, whether materially or by means of the government-funded paramilitary presence by which these settlements houses are secured.

The case of Batan al-Hawa is even more blatant. With rare exception[s], none of these takeovers could take place without the active collusion between the Custodian General and the settlers. For example, the settlers lost the case to evict the Abu Nab family when it was before the Magistrate’s Court. Only after the Custodian General weighed in on behalf of the settlers was the verdict reversed on appeal. This collusion goes back even further: In the 1990s, the settlers jointly carried out a survey together with the Custodian General, in search of properties they could target. And

as noted, the Custodian General has illegally sold properties exclusively to the settler-controlled “endowment” seeking control of properties in the area.

If all this were not sufficient to verify the existence of a Government of Israel/settler “joint-venture” in Batan al-Hawa, the application for the building permit for the new settler construction in the area—consisting of two “sub-permits,” provides additional and decisive proof:

- Sub-permit No. 2015/447/01, which deals with the construction of the new building, was filed by the settlers.
- Sub-permit No. 2015/447.00, which provides for expanding the road between Beit Yehonatan and the new building, was filed by the Moshe Merhavia, Director of the Jerusalem District of the Ministry of Construction (himself a settler and one of the major patrons of the settlers in East Jerusalem), in coordination with the Jerusalem Municipality.

The fact that the Government of Israel and the settlers have filed a joint request for a building permit incontrovertibly demonstrates just how blurred the distinction between the government and the settlers has become: the settler DNA now informs governmental decision-making, and the governmental authorities have been outsourced to the settlers.

Denial of Government of Israel complicity in all this can only be described as false innocence. What is happening today is the forceful displacement of an indigenous population under the auspices of the government.

### ***Can the Batan al-Hawa Evictions Be Stopped?***

Yes.

- The Government of Israel could stop the displacement of Palestinian residents of Batan al-Hawa by the settlers by refusing to provide resources—police or border patrol officers—to secure the evictions. The policy employed [by] Mayor Barkat to de facto prevent the removal of the settlers from Beit Yehonatan during the last six years—preventing court ordered evictions from being carried out—can be applied equally to Palestinians in this same neighborhood.
- At the same time, the Government of Israel can and should refuse to permit private security resources to be brought in by the settlers to secure the evictions. During [the settler takeovers in September 2014](#), the settlers secured the takeovers by means of private security firms that took on the trappings of a private militia—all financed by the government of Israel. If the Abu Nab family and others are displaced from their homes in this manner, the Government of Israel cannot deny complicity.
- Preventing the eviction of the Abu Nab family is a stopgap measure. It is vital that these policies of displacement be stopped in their tracks. This requires a thorough investigation into the irregularities and illegalities entailed in the policies that have placed the Abu Nab home and similar properties under threat.

### **“ISRAELI MINISTERS VS. THE RULE OF LAW”**

***On 29 July 2015, the Israeli government demolished two buildings in the Beit El settlement. Known as the Dreinoff buildings after their contractor, Meir Dreinoff, the structures were demolished after the High Court of Justice ruled that they had been built on privately owned Palestinian land.***

*Just hours after the buildings were demolished, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seeking to appease right-wing lawmakers and activists, approved the construction of 300 housing units in Beit El.*

*The following editorial was published by Haaretz on 29 July 2015, and highlights the ways in which Netanyahu and his right-wing cabinet undermine the High Court of Justice. The text is available at [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com).*

The two buildings in the West Bank settlement of Beit El that were the focus of Tuesday's disturbances by settlers were built on privately owned Palestinian land. A demolition order for the structures was issued as far back as 2010. After excessively prolonged deliberations, the High Court of Justice ruled that they must be razed by the end of July. In a country ruled by law, it's clear what would have happened next: the buildings would have been demolished, with the backing of the prime minister and his senior ministers.

But when the prime minister, the defense minister, the education minister and the justice minister are all in effect working against the highest court in the land, it sends the clear message that Israel is not ruled by law, certainly not when it comes to what happens beyond the Green Line. The incident in Beit El, as well as the one on the site of the former settlement of Sa-Nur yesterday, were testament to a new kind of separation of powers: the Knesset, that is the legislative branch, selects an executive branch—the cabinet—that stands in opposition to the law that the third branch, the judiciary, is authorized to interpret and to command its enforcement.

The outburst by Habayit Hayehudi chairman Naftali Bennett (“The defense minister has been dragged into the extremism and the agitation”) can be understood as part of his effort to demonstrate his loyalty to his settler constituents. But Bennett is also the education minister, and it is odd for the person responsible for inculcating democratic values in the younger generation to be openly undermining the law and the court. Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, in asking the court, on behalf of the state, to “prevent the destruction,” also makes a mockery of her title, emptying it of all content.

But make no mistake: Despite the plethora of condemnations hurled at Moshe Ya'alon from the right side of the political map, the defense minister is the one who has been working for weeks to try to legalize the buildings and get the court to reverse its ruling. In addition to the hasty permit issued for the buildings last Wednesday by the Civil Administration in the West Bank, which is under his authority, Ya'alon understood that an evacuation would merely increase the chances that the court would accept the contractor's petition to annul the demolition order.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as usual in such situations, is trying to walk a tightrope by repeating his well-known refrain, meant to curry favor with the settlers and their supporters (“We're working to strengthen the settlements”) without completely shattering the statesmanlike guise he likes to don (“and we're doing so while obeying the law”). But all of the government's activities over the Green Line, and certainly its embrace of the settlers, constitute an abandonment of its supreme obligation to uphold the law and enforce its authority.

It must be hoped that the High Court will once again make clear to the state that these buildings must be destroyed, and in addition, that the executive branch will implement the court's ruling. At a time like this, one would also expect the attorney general to make his voice heard loud and clear, position himself on the side of the law and take action against the ministers who are working against the court's ruling.

### "E. JERUSALEM (PARTIAL) SETTLEMENT FREEZE MAY SOON DEFROST"

*This bulletin, published by Terrestrial Jerusalem on 13 August 2015, illuminates the logic behind the latest lull in East Jerusalem settlement activity. According to this account, Prime Minister Netanyahu instituted a temporary settlement freeze in order to bolster the credibility of his campaign against the Iran deal and the Palestinian UN bid. However, Terrestrial Jerusalem predicts that this temporary freeze will end after the Jewish holidays in October. The bulletin is available at [t-j.org.il](http://t-j.org.il).*

For several months, we have pointed out that Netanyahu has not published even one new tender for East Jerusalem settlement construction since June 2014, nor have any new statutory plans been approved since the Givat Hamatos approval in September 2014. (Lest we be misunderstood, it is inappropriate to talk of a full settlement freeze, since construction of previously approved units is going ahead at a frenetic pace.) We have also admitted to being puzzled as to Netanyahu's motivations in this regard.

On July 31st, the dean of Israel's political commentators, Nahum Barnea, apparently solved this riddle for us, writing in *Yedioth Ahronoth*:

During the coalition negotiations, a secret understanding was reached . . . You will not find this understanding in the text of the coalition agreement, or in writing. Netanyahu made it clear to the Jewish Home Ministers, he is not compelled to expedite the planning or marketing of plans in Judea and Samaria, until after the Jewish holidays. In essence, he decided on a freeze for half a year. He explained this freeze as a result of diplomatic considerations—the campaign against the Iran deal, and against the Palestinians at the UN. The Jewish Home Ministers say they tried to dissuade him. They were compelled to swallow this . . .

There have been freezes in the past, but none have gone as quietly as this. The events in Beit El last week pushed Netanyahu to change course. His fear of internal turmoil in the Likud and in his coalition took precedence over the diplomatic damage [and he announced the construction of 300 units in Beit El and both planning and marketing of units in East Jerusalem]. In the battle over Netanyahu's fears, the settler lobby beat Obama, and beat Iran. Just as was the case on the eve of the elections, Netanyahu returned to his base . . . Netanyahu wanted to signal to the right: "I'm with you."

It is interesting to note just what happened with respect to the East Jerusalem settlement announcements made by Netanyahu after the Beit El evacuation. Just as Netanyahu had announced, on July 31st, the Israel Land Authority [ILA] published two "new" tenders for the construction of 91 units in Pisgat Ze'ev. These appeared as "new" tenders on the ILA website—but they weren't. Both were first published in mid-2012, failed, and were subsequently republished a number of times. This allowed Netanyahu to tell the settlers: "I have renewed settlement construction" while telling the international community: "There's nothing new in these tenders."

So what may we anticipate "after the holidays"—that is, starting in October 2015? Here are our predictions:

- An end to "restraint": It is unlikely that Netanyahu will continue his restraint on settlements after October 7. The more that Netanyahu is compelled to crack down on settler terror—as he is being

pressured to do following the recent settler arson/murder in the West Bank—the more he will likely seek to assuage the settlers with more new settlement construction. Likewise, the new Knesset session commencing in October will likely lead Netanyahu to try to bolster his coalition by means of new settlement construction.

- Focus on West Bank/Greater Jerusalem: There are only residual tenders that Netanyahu can publish in East Jerusalem (excepting Givat Hamatos). This leads us to believe that settlement expansion will focus on (1) the West Bank, and Jerusalem’s environs in the West Bank, and (2) the ideologically-driven settler enclaves within existing Palestinian neighborhoods. The latter prospect does not augur well for the Palestinian residents of Batan al-Hawa, discussed earlier in this report.
- Watch out for Givat Hamatos: If Netanyahu’s coalition begins to fall apart, we cannot rule out his bolstering it by issuing tenders at Givat Hamatos, which he can do at any time and without warning.
- E-1 still not likely: Netanyahu is not likely to give the green light for E-1, and if he does, there will be a “trip wire,” meaning that up to a year will pass between the resumption of planning and the publication of tenders.

#### “ADVANCEMENT OF 1065 HOUSING UNITS IN THE SETTLEMENTS”

*On 22 July 2015, the Israeli Civil Administration’s subcommittee for settlements convened to discuss 15 settlement plans. The subcommittee must approve all plans for West Bank settlements before construction can begin. In addition, the settlements subcommittee has the authority to retroactively approve settlements that have already been built. Its counterpart in Israel and East Jerusalem is the Ministry of the Interior’s Regional Committee for Planning and Construction.*

*Americans for Peace Now published a news flash summarizing the outcomes of the subcommittee meeting on 23 July 2015. The report also includes a table detailing the list of plans and is available at [peacenow.org](http://peacenow.org).*

Settlement	Plan No.	Planning Stage	Housing Units	Comment
Givon HaHadasha	216/7	Discussion for Deposit	22	Retroactive legalization of 22 existing housing units that have been built in the past.
Givat Ze’ev	220/23	Discussion for Validation	381	Housing units have not been built yet. Plan was already approved in the past. There was some technical problem in the plan that was fixed.
Givat Ze’ev	220/13/1/1	Discussion for Deposit	4	Plan for adding 4 new housing units was not approved.
Neve Daniel	402/6	Discussion for Validation		Approved. Yeshiva, religious school, called “Mekor Haim.”
Beit Arie	202/1/1	Discussion for Validation	179	Retroactive legalization of 179 existing housing units that have been built in the past.
Beit Arie	201/3/10	Discussion for Validation	27	3 housing units have already been built, the remaining 24 have not.

(continued)

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Settlement	Plan No.	Planning Stage	Housing Units	Comment
Psagot	222/2	Discussion for Deposit	24	Retroactive legalization of 24 existing housing units that have been built in the past.
Maale Adumim	420/1/7/26/1	Discussion for Deposit	0	
Maale Adumim	420/1/7/55	Discussion for Deposit	0	
Maale Adumim	420/1/16/4/1	Discussion for Validation	112	Housing units have not been built yet. Technical changes in a plan that is already approved.
Maale Adumim	420/2/8	Discussion for Deposit	0	
Beit El	219/12/1	Discussion for Validation	24	Dreinoff buildings that are supposed to be demolished by the end of the month.
Karnei Shomron	117/17	Discussion for Deposit	0	2 lots for industrial uses. Approved.
Beit El	218/18	Discussion for Validation	296	The plan was approved for development and infrastructure, and not for housing units. This plan is part of the State compensation to the settlers after the Ulpana case.

The subcommittee for settlements of the higher planning committee of the military's Civil Administration met yesterday to discuss 15 plans, at various planning stages and in different settlements. In total, the committee discussed plans that regard 1,065 housing units. Of these housing units, the plan approved 541 new housing units, retroactively legalized 228 existing housing units, and approved the development of infrastructure for a plan that consists of 296 housing units, while further approval will be needed before construction of the housing units can begin.

According to the committee, the plans that were approved were either for the retroactive legalization of housing units that have been constructed in the past, for corrected plans that were approved in the past but needed technical adjustments, or for plans that do not include residential housing units.

However, for four of the plans, that regard approximately 541 housing units, yesterday's approvals by the committee were necessary in order for construction to begin. Indeed, just as the committee claims, these plans received approvals in the past, but the plans could not commence without the further approvals that were granted yesterday by the committee. In other words, without yesterday's approvals these 541 housing units could not built.

Of these three plans that were approved, one was for 24 housing units, in two buildings, at Beit El settlement, commonly known as the Dreinoff buildings. These buildings are built on private Palestinian lands and are supposed to be demolished by the end of this month after a ruling by the Supreme Court, in a case issued by Yesh Din. In recent weeks settler groups have put heavy

pressure on the government, including numerous demonstrations throughout the West Bank, not to demolish the buildings. Following yesterday's approval of the plan, the State is expected to request the Supreme Court to reverse its ruling.

Two other plans that were approved were for 381 housing units at Givat Ze'ev and 112 housing units at Ma'ale Adumim. These plans received approvals in the past, in June 2014 and May 2013 respectively, however, construction did not go forward because the plans required some adjustments in order for construction to begin. A fourth plan that was approved regarded 27 housing units at Beit Arie. To the best of our knowledge, 3 houses of the plan have already been built and the remaining 24 houses required further approvals of their plans in order to commence. Approvals for these plans were given yesterday.

The committee also approved plans that retroactively legalize construction that has already been completed. These plans include 179 housing units at Beit Arie, 24 housing units at Psagot, and 22 housing units at Givon HaHadasha.

In addition, the committee also discussed an additional plan at Beit El that consists of 296 housing units. This plan is part of a compensation package that was given to the settlers after the demolition of several buildings at the Ulpana outpost in 2014. While the plan is not officially valid (publication of the validation is still needed), nor is it ready for construction (archaeological digging is taking place), the committee approved to proceed with construction for parts of the plan that regard development and infrastructure at the site. Construction of the 296 housing [units] will need further validation. The reason behind this procedure is pressure by the Ministry of Defence to commence with the plan.

The committee also approved the construction of a religious school (yeshiva) near Neve Daniel, a settlement near Bethlehem, and 2 industrial structures at Karnei Shomron, a settlement West of Qalqilya and East of Nablus. In addition, the committee also approved a winery at Kiryat Arba settlement.

Finally, recent media publications [reported](#) that last week the Finance Minister, Moshe Kahlon, approved the construction of two new roads that will bypass Hawara, a Palestinian town south of Nablus, and El-Aroub, a Palestinian refugee camp south of Bethlehem. The construction of both these roads will allow easier and much quicker travel to the settlements. Other bypass roads that were established in the past, like the bypass roads of Bethlehem (from the West of Bethlehem that leads to Gush Etzion settlements and from the East of Bethlehem that leads to Tkoa and Nokdim settlements, also known as the Lieberman road) have contributed significantly to the growth and development of the settlements. As such, settler groups have lobbied furiously for the approval of these two additional roads. [Last year](#) it was [revealed](#) that the settlers had introduced a document demanding the construction of these roads, among other demands. At the time, then the Minister of Finance, Yair Lapid, disapproved the demands claiming that they are too expensive. Now, with the new government at place, the approval for the roads has been granted.

#### "AMERICAN MILLIONAIRE IRVING MOSKOWITZ BEHIND PURCHASE OF WEST BANK CHURCH COMPOUND" (EXCERPTS)

*Presented below are excerpts from an article describing American millionaire Irving Moskowitz's secretive purchase of a West Bank church compound, and his subsequent transfer of the property to*

*right-wing settler Aryeh King. Although the Civil Administration decided to halt renovations on the compound and discuss the legality of the purchase following this report, Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon approved continued renovations on 20 June. The full article, authored by Chaim Levinson for Haaretz on 27 May 2015, is available at [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com).*

A nonprofit organization controlled by American millionaire Irving Moskowitz is the owner of the church compound near the Aroub refugee camp between Hebron and Bethlehem on the West Bank, which the buyers intend to turn into a new Jewish settlement, *Haaretz* has discovered.

Last Friday, *Haaretz* reported that right-wing activist Aryeh King had purchased the [abandoned church compound](#) and is refurbishing it ahead of establishing a new settlement outpost at the site. King, who specializes in buying Arab-owned real estate, purchased the property three years ago from its church owners. The 38-dunam (9.5-acre) complex is located on the main road between Jerusalem and Hebron. [ . . . ]

The massive reconstruction of the compound, which can house some 20 families, has been going on for the last few months to ready it for settlers to move in. There are several security guards on the site posing as workers. A new fence has been built, despite a stop-work injunction issued by the IDF's Civil Administration in the West Bank, since no building permit for the fence has been issued. But no permit is needed for the refurbishing because the buildings, which stand at the side of Route 60, were constructed long ago, in the late 1940s. [ . . . ]

The compound was built by Thomas Lambie, an American missionary who worked in Ethiopia before coming to Palestine in 1947. He established a hospital for people with tuberculosis at the site, at which he was buried after his death in 1954. [ . . . ]

The *Haaretz* investigation has revealed the sophisticated way the sale was carried out in order to cover tracks and hide the true identity of the new owners. [ . . . ]

In a telephone conversation from Pennsylvania, the head of the church involved, Pastor Keith Coleman, said the compound was sold to a Swedish company, Scandinavian Seamen Holy Land Enterprises. Coleman said the group was a church group based in Haifa, and had planned to renew the use of the church. The Swedish church group was represented in the sale by a Jerusalem lawyer, Shlomo Ben Menachem, who did not respond to inquiries from *Haaretz*.

The Swedish group was established in Stockholm in 2007, and seems to have been used as a cover for transferring the ownership of the compound to the settlers. The group does not seem to have any offices.

A representative of the group who signed the contract for the purchase is named Bruno Wenske. Wenske's wife, Gro Faye-Hansen Wenske, is a veteran activist for Israel. In 2007, she accepted the Righteous Among the Nations Award given to her father Per-Faye Hansen for saving the lives of Jews in Norway during the Holocaust. She runs a Norwegian nonprofit organization that operates trips to the Holy Land.

A source in the Norwegian Christian community in Israel described her as a very impressive woman who can raise a lot of money—and she gives money to the settlements. She certainly would have no problem with raising money for such a project, said the source. [ . . . ]

After registering the purchase with the Civil Administration in 2012, the Swedish company announced its dissolution. The group had no offices or assets except for this church compound.

The liquidator of the company, Swedish attorney Gustaf Cardelius, declined to provide details on the liquidation process, saying he was bound by confidentiality requirements. [ . . . ]

In 2012, the Swedish company passed to new ownership. The nonprofit organization American Friends of the Everest Foundation reported in its American tax returns that it now owned the Swedish group.

Despite its name, the Everest Foundation does not operate in Nepal, but in East Jerusalem. Its only contributor is Moskowitz, whose son-in-law, Oren Ben Ezra, runs the organization.

Moskowitz is the main funder behind King's activities and the purchase of properties in East Jerusalem. The Everest Foundation owns a number of properties in East Jerusalem, valued at \$12 million, and now it also owns the Swedish company that controls the church compound. [ . . . ]

King has not yet decided when to populate the compound, say sources. Even if settlers move in without coordinating the move with the army, sympathetic politicians are expected to quickly exert pressure to recognize King's ownership of the site and allow the newcomers to remain. Such a process took place at a building in Hebron in 2007 and led to a long legal battle, with Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon ultimately granting approval for permanent settlement of the site.

The compound's location is of strategic importance to settlers, since there is only one settlement, Karmeit Tzur, amid numerous large Arab villages between the Etzion Bloc and Hebron. Populating the compound would enable the settler movement to consolidate its hold on the southern part of the bloc.

The new settlement at the complex will also allow the settlers to spread out from the site, since there are over 500 dunams (125 acres) of land nearby that were given to nearby Kibbutz Migdal Oz in 2005. On the other side of the highway are Jordanian state lands belonging to an agricultural school. The land is in use by Palestinians, but the Civil Administration did some mapping there in 2008, and plans for the area are unclear. There are also plans to build a road to bypass the refugee camp, which would enhance access to the compound.

## ILLEGAL EXPULSION IN SUSIYA

### "A CHRONICLE OF DISPOSSESSION: FACTS ABOUT SUSIYA"

*This fact sheet, produced by the Israeli nongovernmental organization B'Tselem, explains the modern history of Susiya, beginning with a 1982 Israeli legal opinion recognizing it as a Palestinian village and outlining Israel's illegal expropriation of the land. Published on 29 July 2015, the fact sheet is available at [www.btselem.org](http://www.btselem.org).*

- **The Palestinian village of Khir Susiya has existed for at least a century.** It appears on maps as far back as 1917—decades before Israel began occupying the West Bank. Aerial photographs from 1980 show cultivated farmland and livestock pens, indicating the presence of an active community there. In his book *Expansion and Desertion: The Arab Village and Its Offshoots in Ottoman Palestine* [in Hebrew], geographer David Grossman wrote that some 25 Palestinian families were living in caves in the village in 1986.

- **An internal opinion written in 1982 by Atty. Plia Albeck, head of the Civil Division in the State Attorney's Office, recognized the Palestinian village of Susiya and acknowledged that its residents own the land on which the village was built. According to the opinion:** "The [synagogue](#) is located in a place called the lands of Khirbet Susiya, and it is surrounded by an Arab village that lies amid ancient ruins. The land of Khirbet Susiya is listed in the Land Registry as an area of some 3,000 dunams [300 hectares] in the private possession of many Arab owners."
- **In 1986 Israel expropriated the land on which the historic village of Susiya was located, expelled its residents,** declared the area an archaeological site, and appointed settlers from Susiya—an Israeli settlement established nearby in 1983—to manage the site. Archeological excavations found remains in the area that have been identified as part of a [synagogue](#) in use on that site until the eighth century. Subsequently, a mosque was constructed atop the ruins of the synagogue. Some of the expropriated land was incorporated into the jurisdictional area of the settlement. Later, an illegal outpost was established on the original site of the village and is now home to settler families.
- **After they were expelled from their village, the residents moved into caves or tents on their privately-owned farmland,** in an area called Rujum al-Hamri, close to the settlement of Susiya and the original site of the village. In 1991, the Israeli military expelled them from this area as well. The military had no official warrant for this action nor did it provide the residents with any explanation as to why they were being uprooted a second time.
- **After the second expulsion, the residents went to live elsewhere on their cultivated farmland, in a location further away from the settlement of Susiya and the original site of the village. They still live there today.** They lived in caves and tents, as aerial photographs taken in 1999 clearly show. In 2001, the Israeli authorities tried to expel them a third time, as "penalty" for the killing of settler Yair Har Sinai by Palestinians (who were not residents of the village of Susiya). Over the course of several days, the Israeli military, the Civil Administration (CA), and settlers from the area sealed off the residents' caves and wells and demolished their tents and livestock pens. On 26 January 2001, leading Israeli news website [Ynet](#) quoted the IDF Spokesperson as saying that the OC Central Command had ordered an internal inquiry into the evacuation of the residents, which had been carried out in breach of regulation.
- **The residents were forced to leave their homes for a short while; after they petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ), the Court ordered that they be allowed to return, that no further structures be demolished,** and that there be no further attempts to displace them. The residents went back to their farmland and erected temporary structures for their community.
- **Since 2001, settlers from the surrounding area have frequently prevented the residents from accessing some 3,000 dunams (300 hectares)** of land around the settlement, using threats or physical violence. Most of the police files opened following complaints lodged by Palestinians in such cases had no actual results. At the same time, the residents' land taken over by the state was used to expand nearby settlements. The land from which they were expelled in 1991 was later used to establish the settlement of Susiya North—a residential block of pre-fab homes. Other land

owned by the residents was used to establish the illegal outpost Havat Har Sinai and to expand the illegal outpost Mitzpe Yair.

- **In 2013, the residents submitted a master plan for the village to the Subcommittee for Planning and Licensing of the CA's Supreme Planning Council.** Their request was denied on the grounds that it failed to meet planning criteria—the same criteria that many settlements supported by the Israeli authorities throughout the West Bank do not meet, either. Citing planning considerations to reject the master plan is a cynical attempt to use expert arguments to mask the political objective of expelling Susiya's residents. The committee's decision to reject the plan was not made in good faith, and included arguments that the village does not meet planning criteria, even though this deficiency is the result of restrictions imposed by the authorities themselves. The twisted use of ostensibly valid planning considerations is merely another example of Israel's extensive citing of planning considerations as a means for taking over lands, as part of its policy in Area C of the West Bank. In February 2014 Susiya's residents petitioned the HCJ with the help of NGO [Rabbis for Human Rights](#), arguing that the Subcommittee for Planning and Licensing had made an unreasonable decision.
- **The planning regime in Area C, which constitutes 60% of the West Bank—including Susiya, is determined by the CA.** The CA uses its authority over all planning in Area C almost exclusively to prevent Palestinian construction, blatantly ignoring its duty to ensure planning, development, and construction for the local Palestinian population. To date, the CA has allowed Palestinian construction only in about 0.5% of the area (approx. 18,000 dunams = 1,800 hectares), while allocating hundreds of thousands of dunams to Israeli settlements. This planning stranglehold leaves Palestinians no choice but to build without permits. When they do so, the CA cites planning laws to declare the structures illegal and issue demolition permits for them. Israel appears to have an unofficial policy designed to reduce the number of Palestinian residents in Area C and for the purpose of expanding settlements there, thereby extending Israeli control over the area and its resources and annexing it de facto to Israel proper. Couching this policy in terms of planning considerations serves the state in two ways: (1) camouflaging Israel's clear advantage over local Palestinians and their representatives by creating a false show of professional, objective criteria—since the state holds all planning power; (2) masking the political nature of dispossession and land grab by framing the discussion in professional planning lingo (which ostensibly relies on universal progressive values). **Israel's use of planning measures is both cynical and paternalistic. It is not an attempt to create a fair and suitable planning policy for Palestinian residents of Area C.**

#### "ISRAEL, DON'T LEVEL MY VILLAGE"

*In this op-ed, Nasser Nawaja, a resident of Susiya village and researcher for B'Tselem, discusses his family's history of displacement and how the demolition of Palestinian homes in Susiya would set a dangerous precedent for future demolitions in Area C of the West Bank. This op-ed appeared in the New York Times on 23 July 2015 and is available at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).*

In 1948, as Israeli forces closed in on his village of Qaryatayn, my grandfather carried my father in his arms to Susiya, about five miles north, in the South Hebron Hills area.

“We will go back home soon,” my grandfather told my father. They did not. Qaryatayn was destroyed, along with about 400 other Palestinian villages that were razed between 1948 and the mid-1950s. My family rebuilt their lives in Susiya, across the 1949 armistice line in the West Bank.

In 1986, my family was expelled from our home once again—not because of war, but because the occupying Israeli authorities decided to create an archaeological and tourist site around the remains of an ancient synagogue in Susiya. (A structure next to the abandoned temple was used as a mosque from about the 10th century.) This time, it was my father who took me in his arms as the soldiers drew near. “We will return soon,” he said. We did not. Without compensation, we were forced to rebuild Susiya nearby on what was left of our agricultural lands.

If, in the coming weeks, the Israeli government carries out demolition orders served on some 340 residents of Susiya, I will be forced to take my children in my arms as our home is destroyed and the village razed once again. I do not know if I will have the heart to tell them that we will soon go home; history has taught me that it may be a very long time until we are able to return.

In 2012, the Civil Administration branch of Israel’s Defense Ministry issued demolition orders against more than 50 structures in Susiya, including living quarters, a clinic, shop and solar panels. The reason given in these orders was that our village was built without permits from the Israeli military authorities.

The new Susiya was built on Palestinian villagers’ private agricultural land, but that is no safeguard. In practice, it is virtually impossible for a Palestinian living in what is known as Area C—the 60 percent of the West Bank under both civil and security control of the Israeli military—to receive a building permit. According to Bimkom, an Israeli nonprofit focused on planning rights, more than 98 percent of Palestinian requests for building permits in Area C from 2010 to 2014 were rejected.

The threat has now become immediate. Following the initial distribution of demolition orders, there was a political and legal campaign spearheaded by the residents of Susiya that had support from Palestinian, Israeli and international activists and rights groups. The village was not demolished, our case returned to the courts and the pressure let up.

But this past May, a few months after the reelection of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Supreme Court justice Noam Sohlberg, who himself lives in an Israeli settlement that is considered illegal under international law, caved in to pressure from right-wing and settler organizations and ruled in the High Court that the Israeli military could go ahead with demolitions in the village—despite the fact that the higher-ranking Supreme Court had scheduled a hearing for our case on August 3.

Earlier this month, I learned from lawyers working against the demolition of Susiya that representatives of the Israeli military had stated their intent to demolish parts of our village before the August 3 hearing. Since the May ruling, we in Susiya have been grateful for an outpouring of support and solidarity. Last week, the State Department’s spokesman, John Kirby, made a strong statement on the issue.

“We’re closely following developments in the village of Susiya, in the West Bank,” he said, “and we strongly urge the Israeli authorities to refrain from carrying out any demolitions in the village. Demolition of this Palestinian village or parts of it, and evictions of Palestinians from their homes, would be harmful and provocative.”

That was a step in the right direction, but we need more than mere declarations now. If the Israeli government demolishes all or part of Susiya once again, it will be for no other reason than that we are Palestinians who refused to leave, despite immense pressure and great hardships of daily life under occupation.

The situation in Susiya is only one of many such situations in Area C of the West Bank. Several villages near ours have pending demolition orders as well. If Susiya is destroyed and its residents expelled, it will serve as a precedent for further demolitions and expulsions through the South Hebron Hills and Area C of the West Bank. This must not be allowed to happen.

This story is not a story of Jews against Muslims, or even a story of Israelis against Palestinians. We're grateful for the many messages of support our village has received from Jewish communities around the world, and the groups and activists working by our side include many Israelis. This is simply a story of justice and equality against dispossession and oppression.

## JERUSALEM DAY 2015

"WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM JERUSALEM DAY 2015" (EXCERPTS)

*This bulletin discusses the events of Jerusalem Day 2015, analyzing Israeli leaders' rhetoric on settlement expansion and the future of the city. It was published on 22 May 2015 by Terrestrial Jerusalem, and it is available at [t-j.org.il](http://t-j.org.il).*

On May 17, Israel marked the 48th anniversary of the "reunification" of Jerusalem, or in the eyes of the city's Palestinians, the anniversary of the occupation of East Jerusalem.

### ***Marking the Day: Actions/Provocations on the Ground***

Jerusalem Day celebrations in Jerusalem have in recent years been co-opted by right-wing religious-nationalists aligned with the settlements and the Greater Israel enterprise. East Jerusalem Palestinians are now subjected to the annual Jerusalem Day "March of Flags," an event characterized by crowds of Israeli youths parading through the Muslim Quarter (en route to the Western Wall), singing and carrying signs making clear that Jerusalem—all of it—belongs exclusively and forever to Jews, and often chanting racist, anti-Arab, anti-Muslim slogans, including in recent years "death to Arabs" and "Mohammed is dead." Notwithstanding the open incitement seen in previous years (much of which is on video), and notwithstanding the hardships the march imposes on Palestinians living in the area (who for their own safety must [shutter their shops](#) and stay inside), Israeli courts [rejected a plea](#) by Israeli civil society NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] to compel the marchers to adopt a less provocative route. This year, Israeli police hav[e] publicly declared a long overdue zero-tolerance policy for incitement, vandalism, and hooliganism associated with the march. In addition, pro-peace Israeli groups organized a countermarch intended to defuse the racist message of the day. In the end, [there were some clashes](#), predictably, outside the Old City, at Damascus Gate (photos [here](#)).

### ***Marking the Day: Rhetoric***

Every year, Jerusalem Day is an occasion for Israeli political leaders to declare their fealty to the Jerusalem mantra—Jerusalem as “the-eternal-capital-of-Israel-that-will-never-be-re-divided.” This year was no different. Speaking at a Jerusalem Day event, perennial Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [promised](#) that “We will forever keep Jerusalem united under Israeli sovereignty,” and [asserted](#) that, “Jerusalem was only ever the capital of the Jewish people, not of any other people . . . Here our path as a nation began, this is our home and here we shall stay.” The following day, during a Knesset session marking Jerusalem Day, Netanyahu [made clear](#) his intention to continue settlement construction in East Jerusalem, stating, “I have a clear position—we build in Jerusalem . . . We don’t build to clash with the international community, we do this responsibly and judiciously because this is our natural right. . . .” Netanyahu also used the day to goad opposition leader Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni over their own commitment to undivided Jerusalem. It should be noted that on May 19, it was announced that the Prime Minister’s office was [taking over responsibility for Jerusalem affairs](#) (in the last government, the Office of Jerusalem Affairs was under the authority of Minister Naftali Bennett).

Responding to Netanyahu, a spokesman for Palestinian President Abbas, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, [told the media](#) that “There shall never be peace or stability in the Middle East without East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state.” It is worth noting that media reporting this statement appeared to universally treat Rudeineh’s statement as a mirror image of Netanyahu’s, when in fact, as has long been the case, Netanyahu is claiming ALL of Jerusalem for Israel (a position that is wholly incompatible with the two-state solution), and the Palestinians are claiming only East Jerusalem for a future state of Palestine (a position that is widely understood as the basis of a negotiated agreement over the city).

Netanyahu’s new Minister of Construction Uri Ariel, a longtime champion of the settlement movement, used Netanyahu’s words to [taunt](#) U.S. President Barack Obama on Twitter, [tweeting](#): “@POTUS welcome! Happy Jerusalem Day! in case u didn’t hear PM Netanyahu: ‘Jerusalem won’t be divided again, we build all over the city.’” Ariel also seized the day to make [his own statements](#) on the issue, including when he said: “Will Jerusalem will be divided? No. Will Jerusalem be built? Yes. We are all united in continuing the rebuilding of Jerusalem.” He went on, saying, “. . . beyond the Jordan to the west there will only be one state and that is the State of Israel. All the rest is rubbish. It should be clear that there is only one Jerusalem and it belongs to the people of Israel. We will continue to build our country. Your spirit and the spirit of the people of Israel are impossible to defeat.”

In addition, two of Netanyahu’s most dangerous potential challengers, [Gideon Sa’ar and Gilad Erdan](#), took advantage of Jerusalem Day to publicly challenge Netanyahu over his readiness to build in East Jerusalem. Sa’ar stated, “This is the day to say in a clear voice that we should build massively and significantly in all parts of Jerusalem . . . This is the time to do it. I call upon the prime minister. Talking about building is not enough. Enough talking. Let’s build.” Erdan said Israel should build in all areas of Jerusalem, “without being deterred by or afraid of international pressure.”

Israeli President Rubi Rivlin struck a more conciliatory note, [stating](#), “As a Jerusalemite and a lover of the city, I ask today about peace in my united Jerusalem, which stands above all

bargaining. My Jerusalem is Zion and Zionism, and yet it does not belong only to its history, it belongs first and foremost to its people, and to all its residents: secular, religious and Haredi, Arabs and Jews. And in my united Jerusalem there is west and there is an east and there are no secondary sons, there are no secondary Jerusalemites.”

### ***Marking the Day: Making Plans***

In addition to stating his intention to build in Jerusalem, the Prime Minister’s office used the occasion of Jerusalem Day to [announce plans](#) (on May 19) to move forward with an ambitious plan to “develop” the Western Wall area. The plan involves major changes to the status quo on the ground in the area surrounding the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif, and is thus guaranteed to spark controversy and protest. [ . . . ] Also, new Minister of Culture and Sports Miri Regev [announced](#) that her first move as minister would be to move the ministry’s headquarters to Jerusalem; she also announced that the ceremony in which she would take over the ministry would be held not in Tel Aviv, but in a little-used ministry facility in Sheikh Jarrah.

### ***The State of East Jerusalem, 2015***

In honor of Jerusalem Day, the Israeli civil society group ACRI [Association for Civil Rights in Israel] released its annual report on the state of the city’s eastern part: [East Jerusalem 2015: Facts and Figures](#). The report covers the socioeconomic data (income, employment, schools, housing, etc.), data related to arrests and violence, data related to Israeli government policies, including investment in the eastern part of the city, and more. The report was [challenged](#) by a representative of Jerusalem Mayor Barkat’s office, who suggested that for political reasons ACRI was trying to hide “huge investments” and ignore “specific budgets.” This same representative reportedly also strong[ly] rejected the accusation that Palestinian residents of the city have a hard time getting permission to build legally. She reportedly insisted that housing permits are allocated based on “One thing and one thing only . . . legal ownership of land.” [ . . . ]

#### **“FOR JERUSALEM’S PALESTINIANS, A CITY OF POVERTY AND DIVISION” (EXCERPTS)**

*This article, published by +972 Magazine on 17 May 2015, was written by freelance journalist Natasha Roth, who covers Palestine and Israel. In it, Roth discusses the current state of Jerusalem’s Palestinian residents. The full text is available at [www.972mag.com](http://www.972mag.com).*

Three-quarters of East Jerusalem’s 300,200 Palestinian residents live below the poverty line, including 83.9 percent of children, according to a [new report](#) published by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). The state of affairs is attributed, in large part, to a lack of investment by the state as well as the fact that more than 25 percent of Jerusalem’s Palestinian residents live on the [other side of the separation barrier](#).

The report was released in the run-up to [Jerusalem Day](#), an annual celebration of what Jewish Israelis view as the reunification of Jerusalem, which occurred when the Old City was captured by Israeli forces on June 7, 1967. This reunification—or annexation—was illegal under international law, and Israel’s sovereignty over East Jerusalem is not recognized by a single member of the international community. Nonetheless, Israel refers to Jerusalem as its “undivided capital.”

The capital, however, is very much divided—not only along ethnic and (consequently) socioeconomic lines, but also physically divided by the separation barrier.

Since 1967, approximately 26,300 dunams of land have been expropriated by Israel in order to build government offices and [Jewish residential neighborhoods](#), according to ACRI. Israel has revoked the [permanent resident status](#) of—effectively exiling—14,416 East Jerusalem Palestinians since 1967. Last year, Israeli authorities revoked the residency of 107 Palestinians, including 12 minors. Between 2011 and 14, authorities demolished 302 structures in East Jerusalem, 98 in 2014 alone. As a result, 208 residents were displaced from their homes. The rate of such incidents has increased since the [return of punitive home demolitions](#) last year.

The neighborhoods on the other side of the wall—Ras Khamis, Ras Shehada, Dahiyat Al-Salam and Shuafat refugee camp—are worst-hit by the uneven provision of municipal services and basic utilities. A [water crisis](#) hit all four neighborhoods for much of last year, and residents of Shuafat Refugee Camp suffer from an almost [total lack of services](#) from the Jerusalem Municipality and the Israel Police.

Nigerian-American writer [Teju Cole](#) has [termed](#) the measures employed against Jerusalem's Palestinian residents as “cold violence . . . slow violence.” The continual encroachment, dispossession and outright expulsion of East Jerusalem Palestinians—at the hands of both state actors and [settler groups](#)—give weight to the impression that the Nakba is [an ongoing process](#); the situation in East Jerusalem, then, is in part a cold and slow catastrophe.

Of course there is also “hot” violence to match the structural violence imposed by the legal system. Israeli police arrested over 1,180 Palestinians, including more than 400 minors in the second half of 2014 during protests and clashes, according to the report. Only 338 of them have been indicted. The [introduction and use of black “sponge-tipped” bullets](#) (which are actually made out of a heavy, synthetic rubber compound) by Israeli police has led to the death of one Palestinian teenager and at least [five Palestinian children have lost sight](#) in one eye from these. The projectiles have also fractured arms, jaws, and ruptured one person's spleen. Police have [targeted journalists](#) with the weapons, including [an Activestills photographer](#).

The civil rights group notes that authorities have used collective punishment over the past year, including [road closures](#), the use of [putrid “skunk” water cannons in residential neighborhoods](#) and against schools, and the harassment of Palestinian residents on “blacklists” with increased enforcement for minor municipal code and tax violations.

There is at least one piece of good news—plans to construct what will be one of the first official residential projects for Palestinian residents, the Arab al-Sawahra neighborhood. Local and regional planning and building committees approved plans for development a 1,500-dunam (370-acre) area for the neighborhood—the largest such plan approved in East Jerusalem.

As Israeli Jews celebrate the “liberation” of Jerusalem, it is worth remembering how exclusionary that definition is. The annexation of East Jerusalem has engendered inequality and repression—a situation that is only deteriorating. This is on public display in Jerusalem Day festivities, which consistently [descend into racist violence](#), above all during the “March of the Flags.”

This parade, which winds through the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, forces Palestinians to shutter their shops and hide in their homes. A [petition filed by two Jerusalem NGOs](#) to change the route of the march was unsuccessful, although the High Court emphasized in its decision that the police must act against expressions of racism. [. . .]

## EAST JERUSALEM 2015—FACTS AND FIGURES

Less than a week before Jerusalem Day, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) released a report outlining the state of Palestinian human rights in Jerusalem. Along with the report, ACRI released an infographic summarizing the disparities between Jerusalem's Jewish and Palestinian residents. Published in May, the full report and infographic are available at [www.acri.org.il](http://www.acri.org.il).

