



Jerusalem Chronology

(June - September 2003)

May 29

During Israeli celebrations marking "Jerusalem Day", the Israeli celebrations of its occupation of East Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that the State of Israel would never relinquish the city. "As prime minister of the State of Israel, I am proud of the honor granted to me to be the protector of the eternally unified Jerusalem. I will respect and honor this duty without compromise," he said. Palestinian shopkeepers in Jerusalem's Old closed their stores early that day as right-wing Israelis marched flamboyantly through the narrow city streets guarded by soldiers and policemen (al-Ayyam, al-Quds).

June 4

The right-wing Israeli political party Moledet, which advocates the transfer of Palestinians, established new offices in a Palestinian home just across from the United States Consulate in East Jerusalem. On the same day that United States President George W. Bush was meeting in Aqaba, Jordan with new Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Moledet activists entered the property, left empty as the Israeli courts decided a dispute between the Palestinian owners and Israeli settlers that had claimed the house several years ago. "They waited until the Aqaba Summit, and on that same exact date, for political reasons, they decided to take over the property," tells Muhammad Dahleh, a lawyer representing the Palestinian family that owns the building (Palestine Report).

June 15

Jerusalem's mufti and the highest Muslim cleric in the city, Sheikh Ikrama Sabri, was called in for questioning at the Jerusalem district police headquarters about his alleged links with the Islamic movement within Israel. According to the Israeli police, the Islamic movement is suspected of transferring funds to Palestinian "terror" groups and Sabri is suspected of actively aiding the movement in money transfers. Sabri arrived at the police headquarters with his two lawyers (Haaretz).

June 30

The Israeli government informed residents of Beit Iksa village northwest of Jerusalem that 14,000 dunams of the village land would be expropriated for the construction of a new settlement. An Israeli civil administration officer and a Beit El official visited the village that day to tell villagers that their land was now in the hands of the settlers and Israeli authorities. The new Israeli settlement is to be called "Alona" (al-Quds).

July 2

The Islamic Higher Commission and the Waqf Council issued a statement rebuking the Israeli government for its decision to allow tourists and Jews to enter Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque compound. The statement condemned the government's interference in the affairs of the mosque. It also said that the political tensions that pushed the Waqf to halt tourist visits in September 2000 are still present, which means that it is not yet time to return to a situation of normality (al-Quds).

There are an estimated 6,000 drug users among Palestinians living in East Jerusalem and many of these are concentrated in the Jerusalem-area neighborhood of al-Ram, according to

Palestinian social workers. "The young people of al-Ram are frustrated," says Majed Aloushi, head of the As Sadiq At Tayeb Society for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts. "There is continuous violence in the streets and an unhealthy and unsafe environment." The absence of athletic clubs or cultural centers for young people leads to loitering in the streets and hanging out with the wrong crowd, he believes (Palestine Report).

An extremist Jewish group calling itself the "Lions of Jerusalem" distributed postcards to Israelis in West Jerusalem requesting information about Palestinian homes that might be bought, occupied or demolished and any information about Arabs living in predominately Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem. Knesset member Azmi Bishara called the distribution of these cards "a criminal act," and likened it to methods adopted by the Nazis against the Jews. "We are talking about a racist group and rats that are trying to impose new realities by frightening the people," commented Palestinian Legislative Council member Hatem Abdel Qader, who played down the provocation. "I believe this is only a media ploy and a psychological war" (Palestine Report).

July 3

The Center for Jerusalem Studies held a conference, *Capturing 19th Century Jerusalem in Photography*, at the al-Quds University Campus (see conference review). Presenters at the conference included American scholar Ruth Hummel ("Biblicizing Jerusalem."), the *Jerusalem Quarterly File's* own Issam Nassar, ("Early Palestinian Photography Between Local and Western Influences"), French scholar Jean Michel de Tarragon ("Photographic Workshop of the Ecole Biblique"), Palestinian historian Yusef al-Natsheh ("Historical and Architectural Transformations in 19th Century Jerusalem"),

and Palestinian Armenian historian George Hintlian ("Essayi Garabedian & the Armenian Workshops"). The photos shown at the conference have since toured Jerusalem cultural centers.

July 15

Eliayahu Gorel, an Israeli cabdriver abducted in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Hanina was rescued by an Israeli commando unit from the Ramallah-area town of Beituniya after being reported missing four days earlier. Security minister Mohammed Dahlan said on 13 July that Palestinian security forces were searching for Gorel, but added that Israel could not hold the Palestinians responsible for his disappearance as Israel still controls security in the West Bank (al-Ayyam).

July 20

Yabous held its 12th annual music festival over ten nights at the Tombs of the Kings. This year's festival was called, "Songs of Freedom," and featured musicians and singers from countries that went through the trials of their own revolutions, that were in turn reflected in their music. The participants hailed from South Africa, Europe, and Latin America, as well as Palestine. Preceding Yabous festivals have emphasized Arabic music, jazz, religious music and theater.

July 22

Israeli authorities at the Lod Ben Gurion Airport denied entry to Palestinian-Austrian artist Marwan Abado, who was scheduled to perform with his group "Misk wa Anbar" at the Songs of Freedom Festival in Jerusalem. Both the Austrian Consulate and the United Nations Development Fund intervened on Abado's behalf, but the artist was ultimately denied entry and sent back to Austria. Abado,



who was born in Beirut, holds Austrian citizenship and had received an entry visa from the Israeli Embassy in Vienna prior to his arrival (al-Quds).

July 27

The right-wing Moledet Party submitted a draft law to the Israeli Knesset explicitly requesting the expulsion of over 200,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. A party spokesperson said it proposed that a referendum be conducted on "evacuating" Jerusalem's Arab residents. In response, the left-wing Meretz Party asked the Knesset to reject the draft law, saying it is a call for ethnic cleansing (al-Quds).

July 28

Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres proposed that the Old City of Jerusalem be placed under United Nations supervision, while the rest of the city is divided between Israel and the future Palestinian state. In an interview with a Greek newspaper, Peres said the Old City would be placed under the supervision of two mayors - one Palestinian and one Israeli. He also proposed that a joint Arab-Israeli police force protect the Old City. Palestine Liberation Organization political department head Farouq al-Qaddoumi welcomed Peres' proposal, calling it a "change in the Israeli position" (al-Quds).

August 3

Suleiman Abu Ghalia, 27, from al-Jeeb village near Ramallah, was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers on August 3 at the Qalandiya checkpoint between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Israeli police claim Abu Ghalia failed to heed their orders to stop his car. Eyewitnesses say police opened fire after Abu Ghalia disembarked from the car (al-Quds).

August 12

A new plan was proposed by right-wing Israeli housing minister Efi Eitam to increase the size of loans by NIS100,000 (approximately \$25,000) for Israelis who want to buy houses in settlements in East Jerusalem. Israelis who want to buy houses in the western part of the city would not be eligible for this loan. Peace activist Uri Avnery said the scheme is proof that the Israeli government does not accept the roadmap, a United States plan to return to bilateral talks, and does not believe in two states for two peoples (al-Hayat al-Jadida).

August 18

A 73-year-old Palestinian woman from the Ramallah-area village of Qarawet Bani Zeid died after being barred from crossing a Jerusalem checkpoint by Israeli soldiers. The woman, who suffered from heart problems, was made to wait in the sun for an hour and a half. She had reportedly told the soldiers that she had an appointment at a Jerusalem hospital, but was still blocked from crossing into the city. The Israeli military says that soldiers have orders to allow Palestinians needing medical care to pass checkpoints for humanitarian reasons (al-Quds).

August 19

At least 20 people were killed in Jerusalem when a suicide bomber detonated a bomb he was carrying in a packed bus in the ultra-orthodox Jewish neighborhood of Har Nov near East Jerusalem. Some 80 people were wounded in the blast (News agencies).

August 20

Despite warnings from Jerusalem's mufti and head of the Islamic higher council, Sheikh Ikrama Sabri, over 300 Jewish tourists were allowed by Israeli police to enter the al-Aqsa

Mosque compound on August 20 under heavy security guard. Sabri said that al-Aqsa is a Muslim shrine and must be administered by Muslim authorities without interference from other parties. Sabri added that responsibility for any harm done to the sanctity of the site resulting from such visits would fall to the Israeli police and government (al-Quds).

August 23

Approximately 30,000 Muslims from inside the Green Line and Jerusalem attended a festival held at the al-Aqsa compound on August 23 in support of Muslim sovereignty over the shrine. The participants raised banners, green flags and pictures of Sheikh Raed Salah, head of the Islamic movement inside the Green Line, who was recently jailed. Salah delivered a speech by mobile phone to the rally from his prison cell, calling on Muslims throughout the world to unite and defend al-Aqsa from threats (al-Quds).

August 25

Israeli bulldozers began leveling ground in the Abu Dis area of Jerusalem and confiscating swathes of land to make room for the barrier that is being built to divide the eastern half of the city from the west. Israel has declared that 25 percent of the "separation wall", which stretches along the Palestinian population centers near the Green Line, has been completed at this time (Palestine Report).

Palestinian filmmaker from Haifa Saleem Dou has completed his first film, *Keys*, about the tragedy of deserted Palestinian villages inside Israel. The film tells the story of Palestinians who still carry the keys to the homes they were forced to flee during the 1948 War. The film depicts a number of families who live close to their original villages but are not allowed to

return. It will be shown in theaters inside Israel and Jerusalem (Palestine Report).

September 1

The wall that Israel is building to separate the eastern half of Jerusalem from the west will cut straight across al-Quds University's main campus in Abu Dis, which extends across the municipal line dividing Jerusalem from the West Bank. One-third of the university's grounds or 63 dunams is slated for confiscation. The university is planning a series of non-violent protest activities against the wall's construction, including holding classes outside on the campus grounds, holding 4-5 football games a day on the football field, where Israeli construction machinery is currently parked, and hosting theater and music events in the evening on the same spot (al-Quds University).

September 3

A deep rift between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas was cause for 217 Palestinian public figures to submit a written appeal to the two leaders not to allow their dispute to undermine national unity in the face of Israeli aggression, "We call upon you to prevent any attempts to manipulate our internal [politics] by the enemies of our people, namely the Israeli government, which is all the while working on consolidating the occupation, the settlements and the racist wall, Judaizing Jerusalem and arresting thousands of Palestinians" (Palestine Report).

September 8

About 40 percent of classrooms in East Jerusalem do not meet minimum standards, and are located in rented facilities not designed to be used as schools, according to a report prepared for the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality.



The number of sub-standard classrooms in ad hoc rented facilities rose to 400 during the last school year, despite a spurt of construction of educational facilities in East Jerusalem in recent years, said the 200-page report by Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. Crowding in East Jerusalem's public school system derives both from demographics, and also from an influx of pupils who have stopped attending more costly private institutions. The researchers urged the municipality to adjust land zoning designations, which currently bar the construction of educational facilities (Ha'aretz).

September 9

A Palestinian kills himself and seven Israeli civilians when he detonates a bomb in West Jerusalem. Thirty others are wounded. Hamas spokesman Abdel Aziz Rantisi calls the suicide bombing "retaliation" for the crimes of the occupation, and warns that any forcible deportation of Palestinian president Yasser Arafat will be costly. The attack came on the heels of another suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv hitch-hiking post that killed eight Israeli soldiers; together, they were the first bombings in three weeks and followed a series of successful and failed Israeli attempts to assassinate key Hamas leaders (News agencies).

The Sarandaj family in the Old City of Jerusalem is filing suit against Jewish settlers who took over their family house near the Chain Gate of al-Aqsa Mosque. According to neighbors, settlers had been digging a tunnel towards the house for months before finally entering the house a few weeks ago. The family is seeking to evict the settlers from the home (al-Quds).

Israeli forces uprooted 2,000 trees from the Sheikh Sa'ad, Sawahreh and Wadi Nar regions in southeast Jerusalem. The bulldozers were

clearing the path for the construction of the barrier that is to separate Israel from the West Bank (VOP).

September 17

The French Cultural Centre hosted the opening of "End of Days," an exhibit of photographs taken by Palestinians photographer Steve Sabella.

A Guide to the Trees and Bushes of Palestine, was published by the Center for Environmental Research and Biological Diversity, a Palestinian organization. The book acquaints readers with Palestinian plant life, and suggests ways to protect it from potential dangers. The book was co-authored by researchers Mohammed Shteyeh, Rana Jamous and Ali Hamad and includes 52 illustrations of different trees and bushes found in Palestine, their natural habitats and their geographic distribution, as well as environmental significance and health, agricultural and industrial importance (Palestine Report).

Action by Churches Together (ACT) reports on the massive peripheral programs required to support health care in the Palestinian territories due to the Israeli closure. Not only are patients prevented or delayed from traveling to the hospital, but staff are also unable to get to work. "So the hospital has to expend enormous amounts of funding to try and cover for them, to transport them back and forth," said Tawfiq Nasser, the executive director of the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem. "All of a sudden the hospital is carrying out all kinds of peripheral programs in order to ease the emergency situation that is precipitated by these decisions of collective punishment," Nasser said. Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives is run by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), a member of ACT (ACT).

September 18

A group of Israeli researchers have used radiocarbon and other radioactive isotope testing to determine the age of a tunnel under Jerusalem's walls. The testing shows that the "Siloam Tunnel" was that dug by King Hezekiah to discourage the Assyrian Empire from laying siege, as described in the Bible, according to research published in the journal *Nature*. According to the researchers, the tunnel was dug around the year 700 BC. "It is the first well-known Biblical structure to be radiographically dated," Frumkin told the *Washington Post* (Israelinsider).

September 19

The 2003 IFP Market, a film awards ceremony held in downtown Manhattan, distributed more than \$130,000 in prizes. Among the honorees was Annemarie Jacir, who won a \$5,000 prize in the short film category for her movie, "Like Twenty Impossibles." The film is reviewed as "a visual poem and a narrative (that) focuses on a group of Palestinian artists attempting to reach Jerusalem while living with the rigors of military occupation" (IFP).

September 27

Jewish settlers purchased a five-dunam plot of land and one floor of a building next to Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem through a foreign broker, according to Israel television. The plot of land is located in Area C, which falls under Israeli civilian and security control according to the Oslo peace agreements. But recent municipal decisions have annexed the land in the Rachel's Tomb area to the Israeli Jerusalem municipality. According to a television report on September 21, the person behind the purchase is Irving Moscovich, the American-Jewish millionaire who previously purchased Palestinian land in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis. In recent weeks, the site has been used to hold Torah classes.

Extremists were said to be planning a Jewish settlement on the site (al-Ayyam, Haaretz).

Israelis authorities ruled to "deport" Ali Amin Salem Shqeirat, 42, a resident of the Jabal Al-Mukabber neighborhood south of East Jerusalem to the city of Bethlehem. The authorities have cited "illegal residency" in the city as the reason for the decision. The Jerusalem Center for Social & Economic Rights strongly condemned the deportation and warned that the move sets a dangerous precedent that could affect thousands of Palestinians married to Jerusalemites who live in Jerusalem without Israeli authorization as they await the Israeli Interior Ministry's approval of their application for family reunification. Since 31 March, 2002, the Israeli government has frozen the granting of all applications on the basis of marriage for Israeli citizenship or Jerusalem residency (JC SER).

Visit our new web site

Welcome to The Institute for Palestine Studies
 أهلا بكم في موقع مؤسسة الدراسات الفلسطينية
 Bienvenue sur le site de l'Institut des études palestiniennes

Access the largest library in the Arab world specializing in Palestinian affairs, Judaica, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Review and purchase hundreds of books on Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Peruse and purchase quarterly journals in English, French, and Arabic on Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

www.palestine-studies.org