

Jerusalem Chronology

1 November 1999 - 30 January 2000

3 November

The Jerusalem Center for Legal Assistance and Human Rights advises Palestinian residents to continue residing in the city according to their previous practices, despite Israel Interior Minister Natan Sharansky's announcement on 18 October that the government would stop confiscating IDs of Palestinians. According to the Center, the existing law has not yet changed and may still be used to confiscate IDs. (WR)

Christian Churches announce that while they recognize the need for an additional gate in the Holy Sepulchre Church in the Old City, they will not allow Israel to undertake the construction. The Churches declare that they consider the Old City occupied territory and suggest that allowing Israel to open the gate would set a dangerous precedent. (AYM)

4 November

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem announces that it is seriously considering cutting off water to the 25,000 Palestinians living in Shu'fat Camp in Jerusalem unless its residents pay their water bill, estimated at a million New Israeli Shekels. (AYM)

8 November

Final status negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis begin. Odeed Eiran, head of the Israeli delegation, reasserts that his government will not give up any part of Arab Jerusalem and that the majority of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza will remain in settlements under Israeli sovereignty. (AQ)

The Israeli government announces that 300 new housing units will be constructed in the Israeli settlement of Anatot, erected on lands of Anata village, north east of Jerusalem. (AQ)

The Israeli High Court ratifies a plan to connect the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim with occupied East Jerusalem. (HJ)

10 November

Jordanian Prime Minister Abd al-Rauf Rawabdeh declares that Jordan will lift its control over the holy sites in Jerusalem when the occupation ends and Palestinians are ready to assume their responsibilities as custodians. (AYM)

The Israeli Minister of High Education releases a report on deteriorating standards of education in government schools in East Jerusalem under the Likud administration. (WR)

14 November

After meeting with Israeli Housing Minister Yitshak Levy, Israeli Prime Minister Barak states that the government will demolish all Palestinian houses built without licenses. Palestinian sources say that the measure aims to appease the Israeli right-wing following the dismantling of the settlement site in Hebron a few days earlier. (AQ)

15 November

The Israeli Jerusalem Municipality demolishes a house belonging to Waleed Jabari in Sawahreh and a house owned by Muhammad Badrieh in Jabal al-Mukaber in East Jerusalem. Both houses were built on land that Israel has expropriated for construction of roads connecting Ma'ale Adumim to Israeli occupied areas of East Jerusalem. (AQ)

16 November

PLO Secretary Mahmoud Abbas announces that the Palestinian leadership will not sign a final peace agreement with Israel before Israeli withdrawal from occupied East Jerusalem, which will be the capital of the Palestinian state. (VOP)

Palestinian negotiators in the final status talks request that the 6.1 percent redeployment stipulated as part of the third phase of the

second redeployment include the villages of Abu Dis, Ezariyyeh, and al-Ram, which should be transferred from Zone B to Zone A. (AYM)

Jewish settlers take over a Palestinian house in Sheik Jarrah belonging to Kamel al-Kurd. (WR)

22 November

Palestinian residents of Sheik Jarrah conduct a sit-in near the houses raided by Jewish settlers in the neighborhood at the end of last year and protest the recent occupation of another house in the area. (VOP)

Israeli Interior Minister Sharansky announces that he has given official orders to stop confiscating IDs from Jerusalemite Palestinians, orders which the Interior Office will receive in a few days. (AQ)

Israel starts construction of a tunnel beneath Mt. Scopus in occupied East Jerusalem in order to connect West Jerusalem with the Jewish settlement of Ma'ale Adumim through a broad network of roads and tunnels costing 250 million New Israeli Shekels. (AYM)

23 November

Israeli bulldozers demolish two houses in al-Isawiah, a village north of Jerusalem, claiming that the owners, Nasr Saed and Muhamad Issa Abu Rialeh, did not possess a construction permit. The Israeli authorities imposed a siege on the village early in the morning to prevent the residents and the media from approaching the houses. (JMCC; WR)

25 November

Faisal Husayni, PLO Executive Committee member and holder of the Jerusalem portfolio, protests the decision of the Israeli Ministerial Committee to proceed with the construction of a bypass road around Jerusalem, charging that it violates existing agreements and poisons the final status negotiations. (AYM)

King Abdullah II declares that Jerusalem can be

two capitals, one Palestinian and one Israeli. (AYM)

27 November

Israel rejects King Abdullah's call for dividing Jerusalem into two capitals. (HJ)

28 November

Israel proceeds with the construction of two tunnels under the Mt. of Olives to link Jerusalem with outlying Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank. (AYM)

1 December

The Israeli High Court declares it illegal for the National Insurance Institute to cancel the medical insurance of any Jerusalemite Palestinians unless it first sends them a notice and takes action within 45 days of issuing the notice. (AQ)

2 December

The Center of Studies and Civil and Social Rights at the Orient House confirms that the Israeli Ministry of Interior and the Israeli National Insurance Institution are continuing their previous policies of confiscating ID cards despite recent official announcements to the contrary. (WR)

One hundred and sixty Israeli thinkers, novelists, artists, and university lecturers sign a letter addressed to the Israeli Ministry of Interior and the mayor of Jerusalem calling for an end to the policy of demolishing the houses of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The letter notes that 2,200 Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have been demolished since 1988. (WR)

7 December

Israeli bulldozers begin leveling land for a new settlement in the areas of al-Walajah and Beit Jalah villages in Bethlehem. The settlements will complete the encirclement of Jerusalem from the southwestern side. (WR)

10 December

Hundreds of thousands of Muslim worshippers

come from all over Palestine to al-Aqsa Mosque to pray on the first Friday of Ramadan. (AQ)

Israeli Radio announces that during the month of Ramadan the Israeli government will ease restrictions on the number of Palestinians allowed to enter Jerusalem. (AQ)

13 December

Israel announces tight new security measures for the Old City in preparation for the new millennium, including more undercover security agents and the installation of 200 video cameras to be monitored from the Israeli police center in the Old City. (AQ)

26 December

The PNA Ministry of Civilian Affairs announces that Israel will allow Palestinian Christians to enter Jerusalem without permits during Christmas and will permit Muslims to pray in al-Aqsa Mosque without permits until the third day of al-Fitr feast. (AQ)

30 December

The Israeli authorities release seven prisoners from occupied East Jerusalem. Faisal Husayni, the minister in charge of the Jerusalem Portfolio, says the step reflects a significant change in Israel's position concerning East Jerusalem, constituting a tacit acknowledgment of Palestinian national claims in the city. A high-ranking Israeli security official says the release operation does not change the status of Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem, but merely constitutes a humanitarian step on the occasion of the month of Ramadan. (AQ)

1 January

An Israeli report issued by the Ein Shalom organization reveals that 60 percent of Palestinian families and 70 percent of Palestinian children in Jerusalem live under the official Israeli poverty line. Moreover, the report finds that 62 percent of Palestinians in the city live in overcrowded conditions, with two or more persons living in a single room. According to the report, since 1967, only one

housing unit has been built for every 9.7 Palestinians. It adds that 94.8 percent of non-professional laborers in Jerusalem are Palestinians. Commenting on the report, Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, notes that while constituting under 70 percent of the population of the city, Jews receive 90 percent of the municipality's expenditures. (WR)

5 January

The Executive Committee of the Arab Orthodox Congregation organizes a demonstration outside Jaffa Gate in the Old City to let the visiting Patriarchs and official guests know the grievances of the local Palestinian Arab members of the church. They call for greater inclusion of local Arabs in the Church hierarchy and more responsiveness on the part of the Church to the needs of the local Palestinian Orthodox community. (WR)

6 January

Israeli security sources say that the government will agree to the proposed Across Palestine Road so long as it passes through regions under PNA jurisdiction. To be financed by the U.S., the road would connect Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron, with exit roads to Jerusalem and neighboring areas. The road is needed to alleviate traffic congestion on the narrow West Bank roads. The first phase of road construction is scheduled to begin after 20 January 2000, the date for implementing the third phase of the second redeployment. (AQ)

10 January

After two years of deliberations, the Israeli High Court cancels twenty demolition orders against homes in al-Ram and Jaba', north of Jerusalem. (AYM)

12 January

The Israeli paper *Hatsofeh* reports that Palestinian security men guarded the churches in Jerusalem throughout the Christmas period without interference from the Israeli authorities. (AQ)

16 January

Ha'aretz reports that the Israeli Interior Ministry Office in East Jerusalem continues to confiscate IDs from Jerusalemite Palestinians. (AQ)

17 January

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem resumes its plans to build a Jewish settlement for a thousand settlers in Abu Dis after freezing the project for several years. The move comes in the wake of recent PNA demands that the Zone B area in Abu Dis be transferred to Zone A, which would bring it under full Palestinian civil and security control. (HJ)

Ha'aretz reports that Israel is considering operating Qalandia airport just outside occupied Jerusalem in cooperation with the PNA as an alternative to allowing the PNA to construct an independent airport in Jericho. The issue has been raised as part of the final status talks. (HJ)

18 January

Israeli Interior Minister Natan Sharansky announces that a new office for the Interior Ministry will be opened in East Jerusalem next May. (AQ)

22 January

Researchers at an academic conference on the future of Jerusalem sponsored by the Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution Center at Oklahoma University release a position paper calling for the city to be placed under joint Palestinian-Israeli administration. (HJ)

23 January

Commenting on the recently released proposal on Jerusalem, Palestinian Legislative Council member Abdel Qader observes that the official Palestinian position on the city's future rejects the principal of joint sovereignty, calling instead for complete Palestinian sovereignty in an open but not united city. (WR)

24 January

The Office of the Israeli Prime Minister denies reports that the Israeli negotiating team was

considering transferring areas in the vicinity of Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority as part of the next stage of redeployment. The Office also denies that there was any discussion about granting the PNA civil control over Arab neighborhoods within the municipal boundaries, such as Beit Hanina and Shu'fat. (AQ)

26 January

The Israeli newspaper *Ma'areve* says that Israeli Prime Minister Barak has made a final decision not to transfer to the PNA any regions in the vicinity of occupied East Jerusalem as part of the third phase of the second redeployment. (AYM)

30 January

In an interview program on Israeli TV Cannel One, Efraim Sneh, the deputy defense minister of Israel, says that Israel is open to the idea of sharing the city so long as it remains unified under Israeli sovereignty. In his comments Sneh identifies three dimensions to the Jerusalem question, the municipal, the religious, and the political. To address each aspect he suggests that Israel should 1) cede control over municipal functions in Arab areas to the Palestinians, 2) continue to respect the status quo arrangement regarding holy sites, and 3) extend the city's borders to include Palestinian suburbs to the east of the current municipal boundaries and grant Palestinians some form of political sovereignty in these areas. On the same program Likud MK Michael Eitan concedes that "If the Palestinians are willing to establish the center of authority outside the borders of united Jerusalem, why should we oppose it?" (AQ)

Chronology Source Abbreviations

AQ	(<i>al-Quds</i> , Jerusalem)
AYM	(<i>al-Ayyam</i> , Ramallah)
HJ	(<i>al-Hayat al-Jadida</i> , Gaza)
JMCC	(Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, Jerusalem)
VOP	(Voice of Palestine Radio)
WR	(Wafa Report, Jerusalem)