

“CAVING” UNDER THE PRESSURE: ISRAELI POLICIES IN **EAST JERUSALEM**

& THE PROSPECTS OF PEACE



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Twenty years have passed since the signature of the Oslo Agreement and the reality on the ground is clear: Israel has used decades of negotiations to further colonize Palestinian land.

The effects of Israeli policy are particularly dramatic in occupied East Jerusalem, where thousands of Palestinians have been forcibly displaced through several calculated methods, such as: home demolitions; evictions; ID revocations; restrictions on building permits; Israeli military checkpoints and construction

of the annexation Wall; and expansion of rings of settlements which are designed to physically annex East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

Last month, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) took a difficult decision to resume negotiations based on international assurances, including action against settlement construction. The environment created by the efforts of Secretary Kerry convinced many that the Israeli government would take

the 9-month process as a true opportunity for peace. However, on the ground things have only changed for the worst. The fears of those skeptical about negotiations have been realized following clear Israeli actions aimed at destroying the chances for peace.

This FACT SHEET describes Israel's illegal settlement and forced displacement policies in occupied East Jerusalem during the first month of the current round of peace talks.

Illegal Settlement Expansion/Infrastructure in East Jerusalem



Since the resumption of negotiations, Israel has escalated its settlement activities 1930% compared to the month of July, during which no negotiations took place. Approvals in settlements in and around occupied East Jerusalem include:

- (1) Advancement of a plan to build 21 residential units plus public buildings and a synagogue in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City
- (2) 24 units for the settlement of Beit Orot (Mount of Olives)
- (3) 63 units for a new settlement in Jabal Mukabber (south – east of Jerusalem)
- (4) 183 units in the settlement of Pisgat Ze'ev (between Jerusalem and Ramallah)
- (5) 210 units in the settlement of Har Homa (between Jerusalem and Bethlehem)

- (6) 1288 units in the settlement of Gilo (between Jerusalem and Bethlehem)
- (7) 1500 units in the settlement of Ramat Shlomo (separating the neighborhoods of Beit Hanina and Shuafat from Jerusalem's Old City)

Ramat Shlomo was one of the first settlements built by Israel after its 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Built mainly on Shufat village land, it is part of a ring of settlements, including Ramot Allon, French Hill, East Talpiot and Ramat Eshkol, aimed at isolating Palestinian neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem from the Old City.

In addition, Israeli occupation authorities are currently building Bypass road 21, linking the settlement of Pisgat Zeev to Bypass Road 1. There are also plans to connect road 21 with road 20 according to the Israeli Jerusalem municipality. These steps will strengthen the connection between West Jerusalem and the settlements in and around East Jerusalem, while fragmenting Palestinian neighborhoods in that area, thus paving the way for further settlement activity and jeopardizing the two-state solution.



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The Demolished Al-Kaabneh Bedouin Community (Tal Al-Adassa area)

Demolitions and Evictions

Since the beginning of this round of negotiations, Israel has escalated its deliberate policy of home demolition in occupied East Jerusalem. Between August 16th and August 27th, Israel has demolished 31 Palestinian homes, animal shelters (among other structures). This policy is a direct attack against Palestinian presence in the city, while illegal Israeli settlements continue to grow all over the occupied city. The effects of such Israeli actions are illustrated here through two stories:



Mohammad Hussein lived in Al-Kaabneh Bedouin Community for more than 40 years.

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Kaabneh Bedouin Community (Tal Adassa area)

When visiting the demolished residential site of the Kaabneh community, you will find remnants of scattered structures. On 19 August 2013, the Kaabneh community awoke to the sound of military jeeps and the roar of bulldozers. The military came that day to demolish the modest homes and animal shelters of the Kaabneh community, who were ordered to evacuate their homes. They sealed the area, detained the men, women and children and prevented media crews from approaching the area. The Kaabneh community is made up of 53 people who have lived in the same area for more than 40 years, since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. These people's livelihoods depend entirely on raising and herding animals. The Israeli occupation forces began their harassment campaign against the community in the mid-1980s.

In the mid-1990s the community resorted to the Israeli legal system, through which they managed to achieve little more than an acknowledgment of their existence as a community.

In 2007 al-Kaabneh became fully isolated due to the completion of the Israeli annexation wall, meaning that the people could no longer reach services in Bir Nabala, a matter of 20 meters away. The community has since faced tremendous difficulties in accessing education, health and water services. Between 2010 and 2011, about 33 people including 22 children were forced to leave the area due to intense restrictions by the Israeli military. The community was gradually forced to move to Jaba and Bir Nabala villages.

Therefore, after a 30 year legal battle in the Israeli courts and expenses of thousands of US dollars, the community has been forced to surrender to Israel's ethnic cleansing policy. On 25 August 2013¹, the people of al-Kaabneh were forced permanently from their location and were split into two different places. The fragmentation of this small, close-knit community is the result of a systematic policy applied by the Israeli occupation authorities.

The case of the Kaabna community is among thousands of cases and people in occupied East Jerusalem, who end up being uprooted and forced from their lands and homes. The goal of Israel's policy of home demolition in occupied East Jerusalem is simply to steal Palestinian lands. Human Rights Watch's recent report, on Israel's home demolition policy, affirmed that there was a sharp increase in home demolitions in the occupied State of Palestine. **Since the beginning of 2013, Israel has destroyed 420 Palestinian homes and displaced 716 people.** 71 homes were completely destroyed in occupied East Jerusalem alone. In addition, OCHA has documented that Israeli home demolitions have displaced 3799 Palestinians since the beginning of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's term on March 31, 2009.

“Israel destroyed our home so we moved into a cave”



On August 20th 2013, the Israeli occupation authorities demolished the home of the Alzier family in the Abasia neighborhood of Silwan (west of the Old City in occupied East Jerusalem). The family consists of seven, among them 5 children ranging in age from four to twelve years old. The family was forced out of their home on the pretext that the house was built illegally.

According to Khaled Alzier, his family owned the land before 1948. Harassment from the Israeli occupation authorities against the family began about 18 years ago. The Israeli authorities have been consistently trying to push the family off of their land, in order to create a "national park" for Israel. In the Silwan neighborhood as a whole, Israeli occupation authorities have announced the demolition of hundreds homes including 88 homes in the al-Bustan quarter alone.

According to the Wadi Hilweh Information Center in Silwan, the so-called “Israel Nature and Parks Authority” has recently been active in clearing areas within the neighborhood in preparation for turning the area into parkland.

Khaled has confronted the Israeli occupation authorities several times. He and his brothers were detained and put in an Israeli prison few years ago for resisting a demolition order.

Today, the family of seven is living in a cave where their animals used to live. Khaled stated that he is preparing the area where he will be buried. He said: ***"I want my children and their children to know that this is their land; my tombstone will serve as a reminder and a testament to this fact."***

Selected Israeli Violations in Jerusalem (from the Resumption of Peace Talks until 27 August 2013)

SUN 31	MON 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5	SAT 6
RAID On Al-Izariya village ATTACK On Shu'fat residents using rubber coated steel bullets and tear gas grenades	DETENTION Of two residents in Al-Izariya ATTACK On residents near Bab Al-Amood using stun and tear gas grenades	TEMPORARY DETENTION Of a National Security Officer and resident of Jericho	BLOCKADE Continued to deny civilian access to a hill between Biddu and Beit Ikra	SETTLER VIOLENCE Israeli settler vehicle ran over and injured Ahmad Fashafsha from Jenin as he was heading to Al-Aqsa Mosque for prayer.	ATTACK On residents near Be'er Ayoub area in Silwan. Random fire and use of stun grenades against residents.	RAID On Qalendia Refugee camp CLASHES with residents and DETENTION Of Nael Bazi'
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
CONTINUED RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF WORSHIP At Al-Aqsa Mosque	RAID On Abu Dis, and CLASHES with residents.	CONTINUED RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF WORSHIP At Al-Aqsa Mosque	CONTINUED CLOSURE Of Ras Khamis checkpoint near Shu'fat	SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY 790 tenders issued for settlement units in Pisgat Zaev, Harhoma C, Harhoma B & Gilo West	SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY 891 settlement units announced and published for validation in Gilo South	DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY Demolition of a car wash owned by Eyad Barakat in Al-Nabi Samuel
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
RAID On Abu-Dis	PROVOCATION Group of settlers accompanied by Israeli forces entered the vicinity of Al-Aqsa mosque compound	DEMOLITION Ziyad Mustafa forced to demolish his home in Sur Baher.	CONTINUED RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF WORSHIP At Al-Aqsa Mosque	ASSAULT On Al-Aqsa Mosque, as Israeli settlers stormed its compound under the protection of Israeli forces	DEMOLITION Of Al- Kaabneh Bedouin community. All 10 homes destroyed in addition to 11 animal shelters (among other structures) ¹	DEMOLITION Of three homes in Silwan, in addition to five other structures.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
LAND LEVELLING Of approximately 20 dunums (5 acres) of Khalit Al-Ein section of At-Tur. Land is located next to the Ghaith and Shala'an family homes demolished last May, in the area of the proposed Mount Scopus Slopes "National Park" ²	RAID On Anata ASSAULT On Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israeli settlers stormed its compound and provoked worshippers.	HOUSE ARREST Israeli court sentenced 15 year old child, Nur Shallabi, to four days under house arrest	INJURED Mohammad Za'tara as he was passing through Shu'fat checkpoint gate which fell on his right foot leaving him hospitalized	SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY Budget approval for the construction of 1,500 settlement units in Ramat Shlomo	KILLED Rubin Zayed, Jihan Asslan and Yunis Jahjouh during raid on Qalendia refugee camp DEMOLITION Of Zakariya Abu-Sabatin's home in Al-Tur.	SETTLER VIOLENCE At dawn. Israeli settlers stormed Al-Tantour area in Beit Safafa. Slashed tires of 6 cars, as well as writing racist graffiti on the vehicles



The focus of this fact sheet is Jerusalem, but major violations continue to take place throughout the occupied State of Palestine. Recent attacks by Israeli military forces on innocent and vulnerable people in refugee camps in Jenin and Qalandia, among others, have resulted in the death of four people and injury of seventeen (six severely) from these two attacks alone. Between January and August this year, 2930 men, women and children have been arrested by foreign Israeli forces in their own homeland. Israeli settlers, living illegally on land stolen from Palestinian families, have mercilessly attacked people, homes, cars, places of worship, burned farmland and slaughtered livestock in 655 separate acts of terrorism. These horrific acts are aimed at forcing the Palestinians from yet more of their own land through sheer intimidation. Meanwhile, Israeli authorities have demolished 116 family homes and structures since the beginning of this year. The list goes on.

Needless to say, these terrible acts are things that no human being should be made to suffer. On a political level, it is also clear that these violations on the ground are in no way conducive to peace and damage the atmosphere required for positive and progressive negotiations.