



State of Palestine
PLO Negotiations Affairs Department

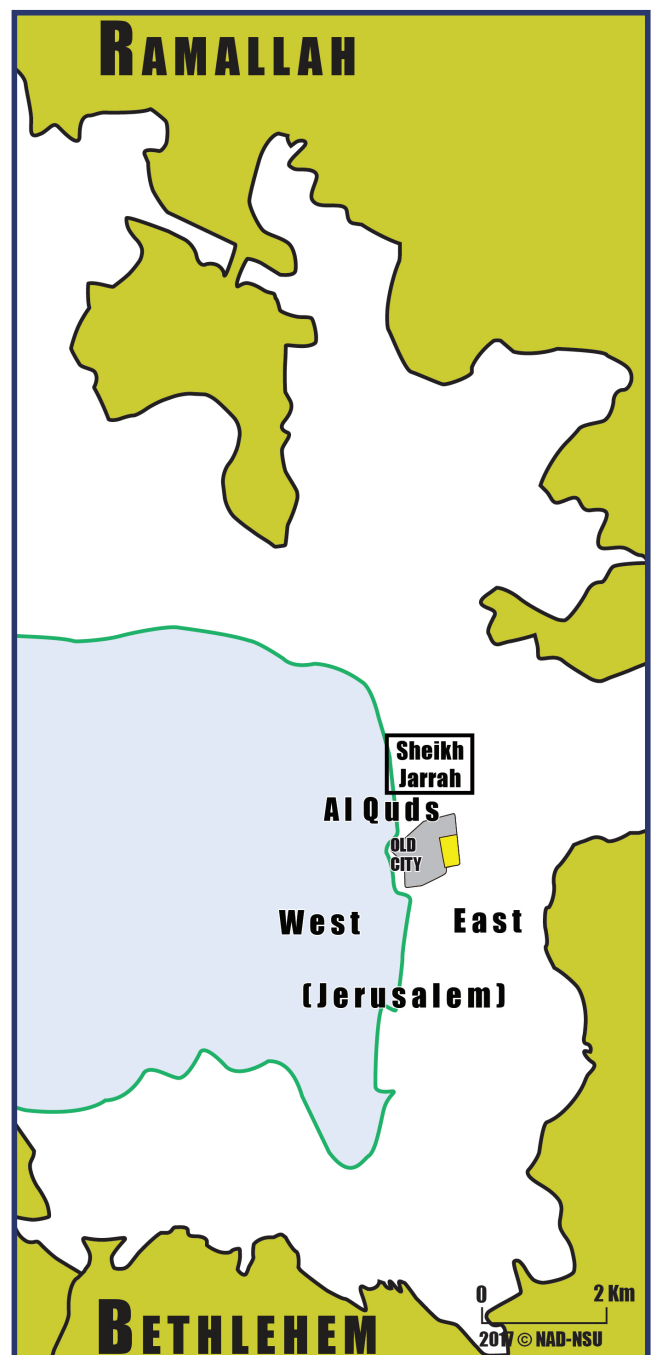
FRAGMENTATION OF THE **SHEIKH JARRAH** NEIGHBORHOOD AND ITS ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM

August 2017

Sheikh Jarrah is located to the north of the Old City of Jerusalem, and home to around 3000 Palestinians. It is a Palestinian neighborhood which includes such landmarks as the Orient House (the PLO Headquarters in Jerusalem, forcibly closed by Israeli occupying authorities since 2003) and the Palestinian National Theatre, as well as the headquarters of many diplomatic missions.

Since 1967, Israeli policies in occupied East Jerusalem have extended from two central strategies. The first is to create a Jewish majority in the city through the establishment of “Jewish only” settlements, while the second pursues the same goal by reducing the Palestinian population, using policies that either forcefully evict Palestinians from Jerusalem or impede their growth and development as a community. This includes a policy of spatial segregation: i.e. reducing the visibility, if not the demographic ratio, of Palestinian presence in their home city.

One of the main elements of the first strategy is the insertion of Israeli settler outposts in key strategic points within Palestinian neighborhoods. Successive Israeli governments have supported settler organizations in their intensive efforts to seize Palestinian land and property in the neighborhood, using methods such as: Transfer to settler groups of ownership of land or property confiscated by the



Israeli authorities under the Absentee Property Law, and transfer of ownership of land classified as public or state land due to its ecological, historical, or religious importance.

In order to achieve the two central strategies and to justify unfounded claims for sovereignty in this area, the government of Israel, together with settler organizations, is aiming to create territorial contiguity from West Jerusalem to the Hebrew University by taking control of Sheikh Jarrah – from the Israeli Border Police headquarters, through Kabaniyat Am Haron, Shimon HaTsadiq, the Shepherd Hotel, the Israeli Police Headquarters, and the Israeli Interior Ministry, all of which are located in occupied East Jerusalem . Sheikh Jarrah is therefore a very strategic location in terms of Israel's overarching aim. (see map)

FRAGMENTATION OF THE SHEIKH JARRAH IN OCCUPIED EAST JERUSALEM



For the Palestinian families living in Sheikh Jarrah, and 'impeding' Israel's plans, their reality is one of forced eviction from their homes and with the threat of violence from settlers and Israeli occupation forces. In many instances, these evictions take place in the middle of the night, not only dispossessing people of their homes but also creating an atmosphere of fear and terror for the indigenous Palestinian population. Further details on some of these Israeli measures in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood can be found below:

- Since November 2008, Israeli authorities have forcibly expelled five Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem, in which they had lived since the 1950s, after becoming refugees in 1948 (following the war and creation of the State of Israel). These houses are the first of 28 Palestinian houses similarly slated for eviction and confiscation, to make way for a new settlement known as "**Shimon HaTsadiq**".
- A plan for the settlement, consisting of 200 housing units on 18 dunams, has already been submitted to the Israeli "Jerusalem Local Planning and Building Commission". There remain over 500 other individuals in the area who are threatened with expulsion from their homes.
- In 2011, Israeli bulldozers demolished the **Shepherd Hotel** and started the construction of two residential buildings to include 20 housing units and associated amenities, as a first stage. The original plan was submitted to the Israeli Jerusalem municipality to obtain permission to build a new Jewish settlement consisting of 90 housing units to include six buildings of 8 floors each, as well as a synagogue, a kindergarten and a park for children. Once completed, the Shepherd Hotel will mark a major new Israeli settlement in the heart of a Palestinian neighborhood. The settlement will act as a bridge between the Shimon HaTsadiq settlement, the nearby Israeli Police headquarters and the French Hill settlement.
- One of the most recent and controversial settlement plans in Sheikh Jarrah is another residential settlement known as the **Kabaniyat Am Haron**. Currently, four planning schemes are in different approval stages in that neighborhood: **TPS14029**: A five-story building for 12 housing units. Construction entails the demolition of homes and eviction of 4 Palestinian families, including Shamasneh family. **TPS 14151**: A three-story building for 3 housing units. Construction entails the demolition of a home of a Palestinian family. **TPS 68858**: A nine-story (seven above ground) Yeshiva campus named, "Or Shameach" that includes student accommodation. **TPS 499699**: A six-story office building. If approved, 45 Palestinian homes will be demolished leaving 500 Palestinians homeless.

In order to attain the goal of creating Jewish settlements, Israeli occupying authorities find pretexts under which to forcibly evict families, with the help of obliging courts that usually deliver. In Sheikh Jarrah, this process began approximately 30 years ago, initiating a long succession of rental demands and subsequent legal actions against Palestinian families. The affected Palestinian families are awaiting Israeli court appearances and rulings to decide their fate.

Israeli settlements inside Palestinian communities in the Old City and its environs inhabited by radical Jewish settler groups are illegal under international law: The Fourth Geneva Convention prevents the transfer, by the Occupying power, of parts of its civilian population into occupied territory, while the International Criminal Court refers to forced displacement a war crime and a crime against humanity, when it is carried out as part of a widespread and systematic attack on a civilian population. Being set in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods, these settlements are also extremely provocative. Coerced property takeovers by these settler groups, daily harassment of Palestinians by settlers, and the constant presence of private security forces contribute to a militarization of the conflict and create a Hebron-like scenario where a few Israeli settlers control the movement and development of the majority Palestinian population.