



Report

SETTLEMENT EXPANSION IN EAST JERUSALEM BETWEEN OCTOBER 2023 – OCTOBER 2024: CREATING IRREVERSIBLE FACTS ON THE GROUND

The ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem poses a significant threat to the viability of a two-state solution. By creating irreversible facts on the ground, these settlements undermine the possibility of a contiguous and independent Palestinian state.

A recent surge in Israeli settlement activity has further accelerated this trend. Between October 7, 2023, and October 20, 2024, the Jerusalem Center for Human Rights documented more than 19 settlement expansion projects that were initiated in East Jerusalem. This rapid expansion, unprecedented in recent years, demonstrates a clear intent to solidify Israel's control over the occupied territory.

These 19 projects alone account for the approval of 19,287 new housing units, which could accommodate over 100,000 new Israeli settlers. This would bring the number of settlers in East Jerusalem from the current 252,000 to more than 350,000 in the coming years. Furthermore, 2,607 dunams of land have been confiscated and designated for settler use, drastically altering the urban and demographic landscape of the area.

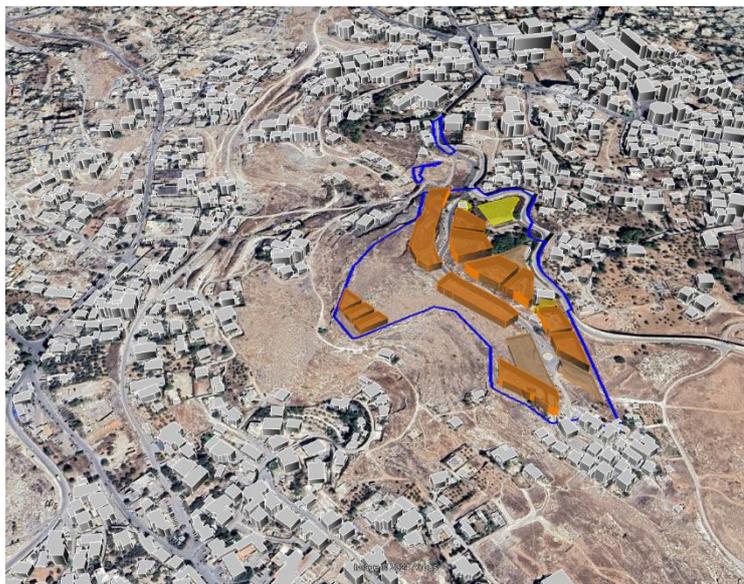
The data presented above highlights a concerted effort to expand settlements in various areas of East Jerusalem. These projects involve the construction of new housing units, commercial and industrial complexes, and infrastructure development. By expanding settlements and altering the demographic landscape, Israel aims to solidify its control over East Jerusalem, occupied territory according to international law, and make it an integral part of its territory.

The implications of this expansion are far-reaching. The construction of new settlements fragments Palestinian towns and villages, isolates Palestinian communities, and limits their access to essential services. Additionally, the expansion of settlements can lead to the displacement of Palestinian families, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the region.

This report will present these 19 new settlement projects in chronological sequence of their deposit or approval, providing detailed insights into their scope and impact.

1) Kedemt Zion Settlement between Jabal Al Mukaber and Abu Dies

On October 11, 2023, the District Planning Committee received plans for the construction of a new settlement between Jabal Al Mukaber and Abu Dies. The project includes 1,584 housing units, with an initial phase of 384 units and the potential to add 1,200 more. The proposed settlement will span an area of 78 dunams¹.



Plan No.: 0120709/101

2) **Sha'ar Dokhavet Settlement Complex - Pisgat Ze'ev Settlement**

As part of the expansion of the Pisgat Ze'ev settlement, built on the lands of Beit Hanina, Shu'fat and Hizma, on November 2, 2023, the Israeli District Planning and Building Committee approved plans for the construction of 920 new housing units in nine towers, each with 22 to 23 floors. The project also includes 150,000 m² designated for industrial and commercial purposes. The expansion will span an area of 131 dunams.

Plan No.: 0759894/101

3) **Wadi Majli (Zimiri Valley) Natural Park Project**

On November 3, 2023, the Local Committee of the Jerusalem Municipality approved a plan for the development of an urban nature park spanning 726 dunams, on the lands of Beit Hanina and Hizma, near Hizma checkpoint. The plan includes designated complexes within the park, such as a visitor center covering an area of 2,485 m².



Plan No.: 0781963/101

4) **Commercial and Residential Building, French Hill Settlement²**

On November 10, 2023, the District Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of 27 new housing units in a six-story mixed-use building in the French Hill area. The project will span an area of 0.75 dunams.

Plan No.: 1039684/101

5) **Two new commercial and residential buildings at Har Homa Settlement**

On November 10, 2023, as part of the Israeli authorities' plans to expand Har Homa (Jabal Abu Ghneim) settlement³, the District Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of two new commercial and residential buildings. The project will consist of 76 new housing units and will span an area of 2.15 dunams.



Plan No.: 1109594/101

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² The French Hill settlement is one of the first areas confiscated by Israeli authorities to establish new settlements in East Jerusalem in 1968, with construction of the settlement beginning in 1969. The confiscated lands originally belonged to the villages of Al-Issawiya and Shu'fat

³ Har Homa settlement was built on Jabal Abu Ghneim; these lands were confiscated from Palestinians from Sur Baher and Beit Sahour.

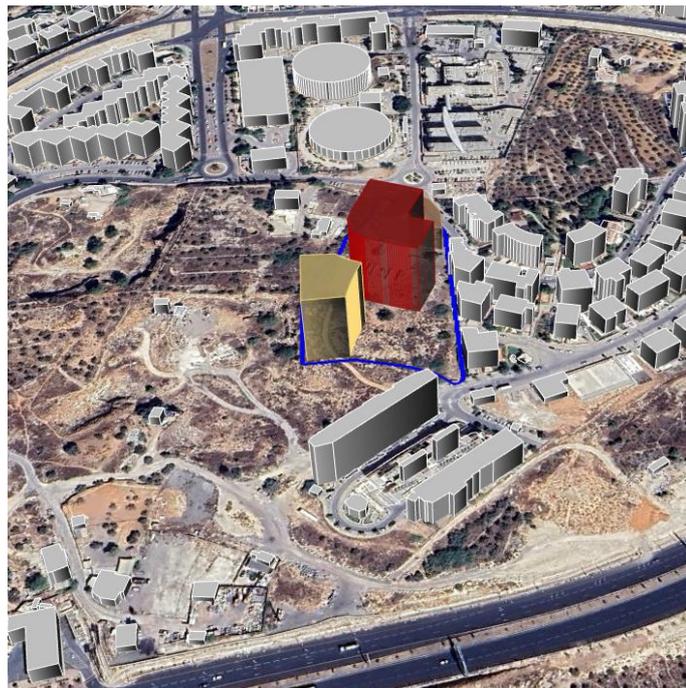
6) Industrial and commercial zone project on lands of Al-Issawiya

On November 18, 2023, the District Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of a new industrial and commercial zone on the lands of Al-Issawiya. The project covers a total area of 66,000 m², designated for industrial structures, commercial areas, light industries, and an engineering facility, spanning 40.1 dunams.

Plan No.: 0737171/101

7) Doga Street Project: Expansion of Gilo Settlement

On December 15, 2023, the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of a new residential complex in the Gilo settlement. The project includes three residential buildings, each consisting of 16 to 17 floors, with additional space allocated for public needs. The project spans a total area of 13.6 dunams.



Plan No.: 0739912/101

8) Construction of a commercial and industrial complex, Atarot Industrial Settlement

On December 22, 2023, the District Planning and Building Committee approved a plan for the construction of a commercial and industrial complex in Atarot industrial settlement, north of East Jerusalem. The project includes 36,000 m² designated for industrial buildings and structures, covering an area of 26.7 dunams.

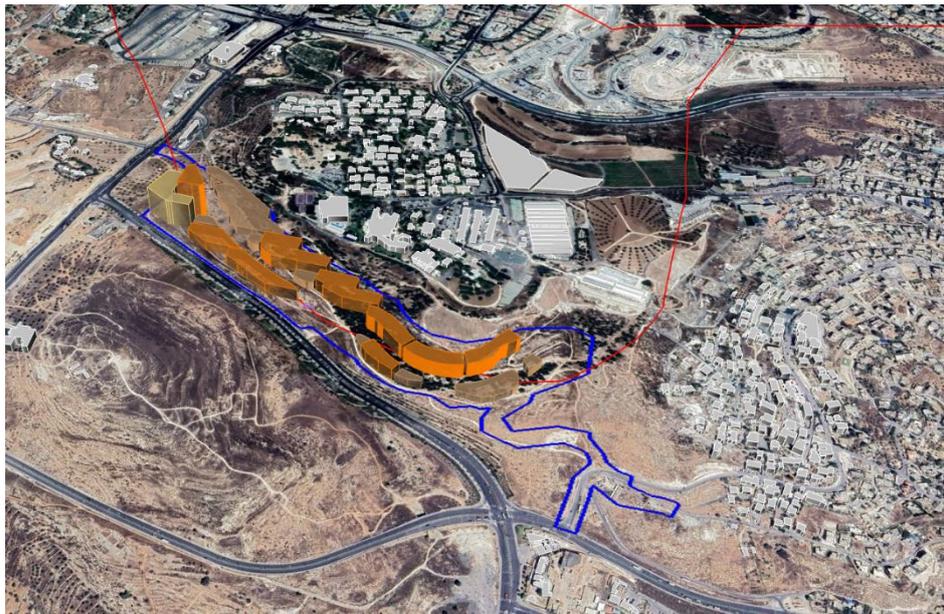
Plan No.: 0459560/101

9) Lower Canal Settlement

On December 26, 2023, the District Planning Committee approved a new settlement project known as the Lower Canal settlement, located between Beit Safafa and Umm Tuba. This settlement spans 186 dunams, with part of it situated beyond the Green Line in East Jerusalem, and the remainder within the Green Line. The plan is noteworthy for several reasons:

1. **Scale of the Project:** The Lower Canal settlement is the largest settlement project approved in East Jerusalem since the approval of the Givat Hamatos settlement in 2012. It includes 1,792 new housing units across 186 dunams.

2. **Strategic Location:** The settlement occupies land above the Green Line and the no-man's land that separated Jordan and Israel



between 1948 and 1967. This placement aims to erase the Green Line and establish facts on the ground, contravening UN resolutions 242 and 338, which classify East Jerusalem as occupied territory.

3. **Direct Proposal by the Israel Lands Authority:** For the first time, the Israel Lands Authority⁴ directly proposed and presented the project. Typically, such plans are submitted by other entities, such as the municipality, the Ministry of Housing, or private companies, and then approved by the authorities. This unprecedented move may set a precedent for more settlement plans initiated directly by the Israel Lands Authority.

4. **Impact on Palestinian Connectivity:** This project blocks the last remaining corridor connecting the Palestinian towns of Beit Safafa and Sharafat with the rest of East Jerusalem. It severely undermines the possibility of establishing a Palestinian urban continuum in East Jerusalem and disrupts almost all urban connections between Bethlehem and East Jerusalem.

Plan No.: 0808840/101

10) **Lerner Complex – French Hill (Mount Scopus)**

The Lerner Complex is a mixed-use residential project located in the French Hill area. On December 27, 2023, the Ministry of Housing and Lands approved the construction and issued announcements for tenders to build 1,509 housing units. The project will cover a total area of 84 dunams.



Plan No.: 0896225/101

11) **Brosh Project: Expansion of the French Hill Settlement**

On January 5, 2024, the District Planning and Building Committee received a new plan to expand the French Hill settlement. The project aims to construct 328 new housing units, increasing the total number of units to 628. The new units will be built in three towers, each consisting of 23 to 27 floors, covering an area of 54.6 dunams.

Plan No.: 1025519/101

12) Binui Hatzof Street Project: Expansion of Gilo Settlement

On January 26, 2024, the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee approved a project in Gilo Settlement that involves demolishing 182 housing units to construct 800 new housing units. The project includes three residential towers and will span an area of 12.3 dunams.



Plan No.: 0701391/101

13) Bronfman Complex: Expansion of the Mount Scopus Settlement

On March 1, 2024, the District Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of a new residential complex comprising 630 housing units in the Mount Scopus (French Hill) area. The project will cover a total area of 26.6 dunams.

Plan No.: 0890442/101

14) Givat Hashaked Settlement - Beit Safafa

On February 16, 2024, the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee approved the establishment of the Givat Hashaked settlement located west of the Palestinian towns of Beit Safafa and Sharafat. This plan involves the construction of a new residential neighborhood covering 38.7 dunams and includes 473 housing units.

The approval process for this project was notably expedited following the events of October 7, 2023, with the Ministry of Justice taking the lead in advancing construction plans for Orthodox Jewish communities beyond the Green Line.

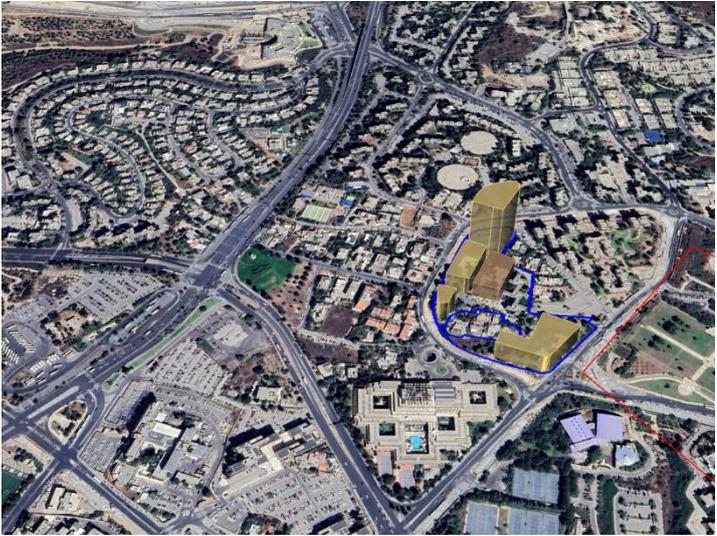
The land designated for Givat Hashaked settlement was initially considered a potential area for the residential expansion of Beit Safafa. However, it has been redirected toward the construction of a new ultra-Orthodox settlement in East Jerusalem, further limiting the urban development opportunities for Palestinian communities.



Plan No. 0969162/101

15) Urban Renewal Project: Expansion in Bar Kochva Street, French Hill

On March 1, 2024, the District Planning and Building Committee received a plan for the construction of 212 housing units in the French Hill area. The project will cover a total area of 5.24 dunams.



Plan No.: 1074848/101

16) **The U.S. Diplomatic Complex Project**

On April 17, 2024, the Jerusalem Municipality approved plans to establish a U.S. diplomatic complex on the lands of Jabal Al Mukaber. The complex will include embassy buildings, offices, the ambassador's residence, staff residences, parking facilities, and security and protection structures, spanning an area of 75.5 dunams.

Plan No.: 0823922/101

17) **Expansion of the Building Area in Atarot Industrial Settlement**

On May 2, 2024, the Jerusalem District Local Committee approved a project to allocate additional plots in Atarot industrial settlement for industrial zones and the construction of restaurants. The project also includes plans for 9,623 housing units, spanning a total area of 1,047 dunams.

Plan No.: 1259126/101

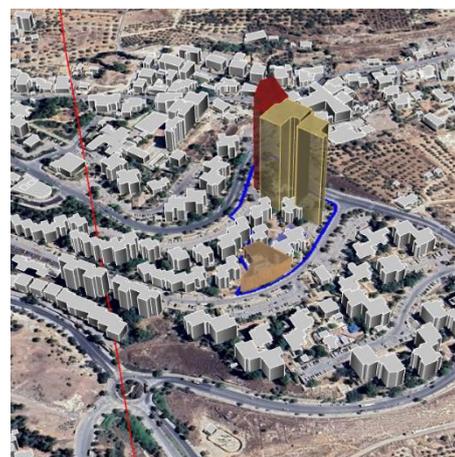
18) **Industrial Zone Project (East of At-Tur)**

On July 23, 2024, the Jerusalem Municipality received plans for the establishment of an industrial zone east of At-Tur. The project includes 52,000 m² designated for light industries and 42,700 m² for commercial areas, public buildings, and engineering facilities. The entire project is proposed to span an area of 45 dunams.

Plan No.: 0731455/101

19) **Expansion of Armon Hanatziv (Governor's House) Settlement**

On October 6, 2024, the District Planning and Building Committee received plans for the construction of 635 new housing units in three towers, each with a height of 36 floors, on the lands of Jabal Al Mukaber. The proposed project spans an area of 13 dunams and includes the demolition of five existing buildings containing 106 housing units to make way for the new development.



Plan No.: 0817742/101



Conclusion

The escalation in settlement expansion projects in East Jerusalem, particularly in the year following October 7, 2023, underscores a concerted effort by the Israeli authorities to solidify their control over the occupied territory. This rapid acceleration in settlement construction has severe implications for the viability of a two-state solution and the rights of Palestinians to have an independent state, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The approval of numerous large-scale settlement projects, including the Lower Canal settlement and the expansion of the French Hill settlement, demonstrates a clear intent to create irreversible facts on the ground. These projects fragment Palestinian communities, limit Palestinian access to resources, and undermine the possibility of a contiguous Palestinian state.

Recommendations

To address the ongoing violations of international law in East Jerusalem, it is crucial to emphasize that international law prohibits the transfer of the occupying power's own citizens into occupied territories. **Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention** explicitly states, "*The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.*" This cornerstone of international humanitarian law aims to prevent demographic manipulation that undermines the rights and livelihoods of the indigenous population.

Since occupying the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 1967, Israel has transferred approximately 252,000 of its citizens into East Jerusalem, with plans to accommodate an additional 100,000 settlers in the near future. This settlement expansion fundamentally alters the demographic and geographic character of East Jerusalem, not only limiting the natural expansion of Palestinian communities, but also creating irreversible obstacles to the establishment of a future Palestinian state.

The international community must take decisive action to address settlement expansion violations, safeguard Palestinian rights, and uphold international law. Among the tools of international law, imposing sanctions on Israel stands as a critical measure to pressure its government to halt settlement activities and support efforts toward a just and lasting peace.

In this context, the Jerusalem Center for Human Rights calls on all stakeholders to act collectively to mitigate the far-reaching consequences of settlement expansion and to advance a resolution rooted in justice and international legality. The following recommendations aim to uphold international law, protect Palestinian rights, and support a just resolution to the conflict.

1. **International Pressure:** The international community must exert significant pressure on Israel to halt settlement expansion and adhere to international law that has different tools such as imposing sanctions and diplomatic measures.
2. **UN Security Council Action:** The UN Security Council should adopt strong resolutions condemning Israeli settlement activities and demanding their immediate cessation.
3. **Independent Investigations:** Independent international investigations should be conducted to document Israeli settlement activities and their impact on Palestinian rights.
4. **Accountability:** Individuals involved in planning and implementing settlement expansion projects should be held accountable for their actions under international law.

By taking action and upholding international law, the international community can help to stop the devastating consequences of settlement expansion.