

# Jerusalem: The Cost of Failure

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## Summary points

- Despite the lack of progress in negotiations over the future of Jerusalem, the situation on the ground is not static. Dynamic developments are creating grave new realities which risk becoming irreversible.
- The settler-driven entrenchment of the Israeli government in East Jerusalem is reaching the point at which a peaceful division of the city between Israel and a future Palestinian state may no longer be possible.
- Current Israeli policies of segregation and exclusivity are leading to the 'warehousing' of Palestinian residents of the city and the abandonment of neighbourhoods. Further restrictions on housing, employment, residency rights and mobility are also causing the gradual expulsion of Palestinians.
- The prospects of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem are receding while any withdrawal by the Israeli state would entail grave political risks for the Israeli polity.
- The cost of failure in Jerusalem is high. In addition to the resulting insecurity on both sides of the city and among the wider communities, further decline could ruin international efforts to revive peace negotiations.

## Introduction

The intermittent and fragile peace process between Israel and Palestine has become notorious for both its longevity and its lack of progress in reaching a definitive solution to the underlying conflict. In principle, both sides are seeking a two-state solution, based above all on a negotiated agreement over the borders between what would eventually be two sovereign states. One of the main stumbling blocks to reaching such an agreement is the status of Jerusalem, different and overlapping parts of which are claimed by each camp as its national capital. However, many in the region and further afield do not appreciate that the situation in Jerusalem is not static, but is becoming increasingly tense and fractured. Many of the trends now occurring in Jerusalem could seriously prolong the current political stalemate between the two sides, allowing the city to slip into a downward spiral of violence and misery affecting all of its inhabitants.

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While politicians jockey for advantage, it is clear that the failure to reach an agreement over the future of Jerusalem in the short to medium term will have very high costs for all parties concerned. In this context, the

international community, already alerted to the current situation in Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> needs to be aware of the wider risks to efforts to restart the peace process highlighted by the trends identified below.

This paper examines the dominant conditions of urban life for both Israelis and Palestinians who reside in the city or have been expelled from it. How do people cope on a daily basis with the consequences of the failure to reach agreement? Such an approach also guides the five-year UK research project on ‘Conflict in Cities and the Contested State’.<sup>2</sup> The project has provided valuable insights into what patterns may or may not be drawn from divided cities, and where relevant these are applied to Jerusalem.

An assessment of the cost of failing to reach an agreement over the city’s future status was also the focus of two roundtable discussions held in Jerusalem in October 2009 and January 2010.<sup>3</sup> Much of the discussion concentrated on policy decisions by government bodies and other authorities. Participants tried to determine how far the unfolding events on the ground affected international attempts to restart negotiations, the extent to which a peaceful division of the city was still feasible, the risks the current situation posed to both Israeli and Palestinian aspirations and how the activities of settler groups were causing instability not only in the Old City but also in the wider Middle East.

## A negotiated settlement

The impact of the Arab–Israeli conflict on the city of Jerusalem has been profound. Partitioned in 1948 into an Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem and a Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem, it remained divided by the ‘Green Line’ for 19 years. Following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, an enlarged East Jerusalem has

1 For example, see the 2009 EU Heads of Mission Report on East Jerusalem. Available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/23721677/EU-heads-of-mission-reports-on-East-Jerusalem-Jerusalem-and-the-Middle-East-peace-process>.

2 The project, of which the roundtable and this briefing paper are a part, is based at the University of Cambridge, the University of Exeter and Queen’s University Belfast and is supported by the ESRC’s Large Grants Programme. Other cities of the project include Belfast, Berlin, Brussels, Mostar, Nicosia, Beirut, Tripoli and Kirkuk. See [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org) for further details and working papers.

3 The roundtable discussions were held in Jerusalem on 21 October 2009 and 12 January 2010. Participants included Ray Dolphin, UN-OCHA, Jerusalem; Danny Seideman, Ir Amin; Rami Nasrallah, International Peace and Cooperation Centre; Menachem Klein, Bar Ilan University; Fouad Hallaq, PLO Negotiations Support Unit (participating in his personal capacity); and Claire Spencer, Chatham House. The authors gratefully acknowledge the participants for their insights and ideas. This paper emerges from and was informed by these discussions, but the views expressed remain entirely the responsibility of the authors.

gradually been absorbed into West Jerusalem and the Israeli state, with many Israeli laws being applied. However, this has stopped just short of full annexation, and Israeli citizenship has not been imposed on the Palestinian inhabitants. At the same time, East Jerusalem has remained the focus of Palestinian national aspirations to end Israeli occupation and establish the historical and religious centre of East Jerusalem as the capital of the new Palestinian state.

Negotiations over the city's future revolve around three main issues. The first is how far an agreement should be based upon United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 which requires the withdrawal of Israel to the Green Line (the pre-1967 border) and the territorial exchanges subsequently suggested in the Clinton parameters.<sup>4</sup> The second is the extent to which the negotiations take into account the 43 years of urban development that have occurred in East Jerusalem since 1967 and Israeli aspirations to control the Jewish holy sites which mostly lie in East Jerusalem. If an agreement were to be reached on these issues, the third and final issue would be what kind of city governance might be constructed to protect the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians (and to a lesser degree the international communities with a presence and interest in Jerusalem, above all in accessing and safeguarding holy sites). A number of urban models might be considered here: re-partition; the establishment of separate but coordinating municipalities; limited internationalization; or an open city buttressed by levels of economic and security cooperation between the two parties.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear that a negotiated agreement between Israelis and Palestinians is contingent upon, on the one hand, the establishment of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem and, on the other, Israeli access to Jewish Holy Places and the addressing of Israeli security concerns regarding Palestinian access to the whole city. No peaceful agreement is possible without these prerequisites. In the

current stalemate, there has been some discussion of concrete steps which might be taken as a priority to signal international support for an agreement along these lines. Diplomatic positions which have consistently and unambiguously confirmed the illegal nature of the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem might, for example, be balanced by a clear commitment on the part of the international community (including the Arab states) to full recognition of West Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

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Consistent with this, external actors have been engaged in discussions over possible interim arrangements as a means of making progress towards an agreement which would be more palatable to both Israeli and Palestinian publics. External parties have explored ways in which they can assist by offering funding and technical support for a range of transitional arrangements (such as a Special Regime for the Old City, creating an extra-territorial status for an area known as the Holy Basin, and providing specialized security assistance for the holy sites, backed up by independent monitoring and verification).<sup>6</sup> Further

<sup>4</sup> The Clinton parameters outlined a territorial allocation in Jerusalem where areas of Palestinian residence would become part of Palestine and areas of Israeli residence would become part of Israel. See W.J. Clinton, 'Clinton parameters' (23 December 2000). Available at [http://www.cfr.org/publication/7736/middle\\_east.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/7736/middle_east.html).

<sup>5</sup> For a description of the various models which have emerged, see Menachem Klein, *The Jerusalem Problem: The Struggle for Permanent Status* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003).

discussion has also taken place on how this can be supplemented by technical and financial support for greater intelligence cooperation over potential ‘spoilers’ and violent groups emerging across Jerusalem.

Similar discussions have also taken place among the EU Heads of Mission in East Jerusalem over a set of parallel objectives. The first has been to explore the reinstatement of some form of PLO/Palestinian Authority (PA) presence and administrative capacity in East Jerusalem such as the reopening of the Palestinians’ national headquarters, Orient House.<sup>7</sup> On a more micro-level, also under consideration is support for the renovation of public facilities in the Palestinian city centre, and zoning plans in Palestinian areas to alleviate the worsening accommodation crisis as well as legal and other support for those affected by harsh Israeli residency criteria. A second set of objectives focuses on curtailing the activities of Israeli settler groups and Palestinian Islamists in order to head off the entry into the political discussions of radical and uncompromising groups from both sides. Thirdly, the need to reaffirm the traditional role of the current custodians of the Holy Places and guarantees of safe access to them by worshippers has been coupled with international offers of specialist policing units and logistical and financial support. Measures of this kind would go some way to addressing the concerns of the religious leaderships in the city.

Finally, discussions have also taken place over the kind of financial and technical support that the international community could offer to demonstrate concrete commitment to a reintegrated city. These include planning for the creation of cooperative interstate structures on the national and municipal levels to jointly oversee infrastructural and economic development, urban

planning, environmental and tourism management, security and policing.

However, the key argument of this paper is that these endeavours will be of no avail if the current trends in the city prevail, and if their ramifications are allowed to extend beyond the city to the Palestinian–Israeli negotiations themselves. A failure to re-engage the parties to the conflict will inevitably have an impact on the stability of the wider region.

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## Divided cities

Our research in other cities of Europe and the Middle East has shown that few if any physically divided cities have ever flourished.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, while the physical division of a city through walls and barriers may address the symptoms of a conflict, it does not solve the problems that engendered the conflict in the first place, and these problems often remain to fester and present themselves in new forms. Each divided or reintegrated city presents its own set of circumstances; yet precedents from other divided or contested cities and societies may be useful for seeing possible directions

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the Jerusalem Old City Initiative supported by the University of Windsor, Canada. <http://web2.uwindsor.ca/wsgcms/Projects/JerusalemInitiative/indexTpl.php>. Other examples include Swiss government support for the Geneva Initiative (see Article 6: Jerusalem at: <http://www.genevaaccord.org/mainmenu/english>) and the EU support for the Aix Group which has written on the economic dimensions of an agreement on Jerusalem (see <http://www.aixgroup.org/downloads.html>). The Holy Basin is a term of Israeli provenance for the area encompassing the Old City and its surrounding valleys. It has become the focus of particular friction owing to its concentration of holy places, historical associations, archaeological sites and tourist attractions (see Map 2).

<sup>7</sup> See 2009 EU Heads of Mission Report on East Jerusalem.

<sup>8</sup> See [www.conflictincities.org](http://www.conflictincities.org) for further details and working papers.

and avoiding pitfalls: after 35 years, divided Nicosia is finally finding ways to facilitate the crossing of borders. More extraordinarily, a future-oriented joint town plan has been developed even though the two sides of the city were completely severed. Mostar shows surface signs of reintegration, but these appear to be driven largely by international agencies and do not emanate from civil society. Hence the renewed co-existence of its communities is fragile and subject to external agendas and budgets. In Berlin too the wall was destroyed and its path obliterated very quickly, but the legacies of its divisions persist after two decades.

Cases such as this provide both a broad and a long view of the conditions in Jerusalem. For example, Jerusalem, whether physically divided or not, will remain a 'border town' in the sense that for the foreseeable future it will continue to mark a boundary between Israelis and Palestinians. For many who have grown up in monotheistic traditions that regard the city as the religious centre of the world, this is a disturbing notion. Nonetheless, some border cities have reinvented themselves and then thrived, such as the German-Polish border towns of Gubin/Guben and Gorlitz/Zgorzelec. Could it be possible for Jerusalem to turn its border status to its advantage – economically, culturally and iconically? The roundtable discussions held for this project reviewed a number of directions that could be regarded as positive for the city, such as being a site for mutual religious toleration, or a centre for Palestinian-Israeli cultural, political and economic exchange, as well as demonstrating how different aspects of modernity and antiquity can coexist. Nevertheless, it was agreed that a *sine qua non* of any

positive development is the cessation of the current levels of human and structural inequality and of exclusive Israeli rule over East Jerusalem.

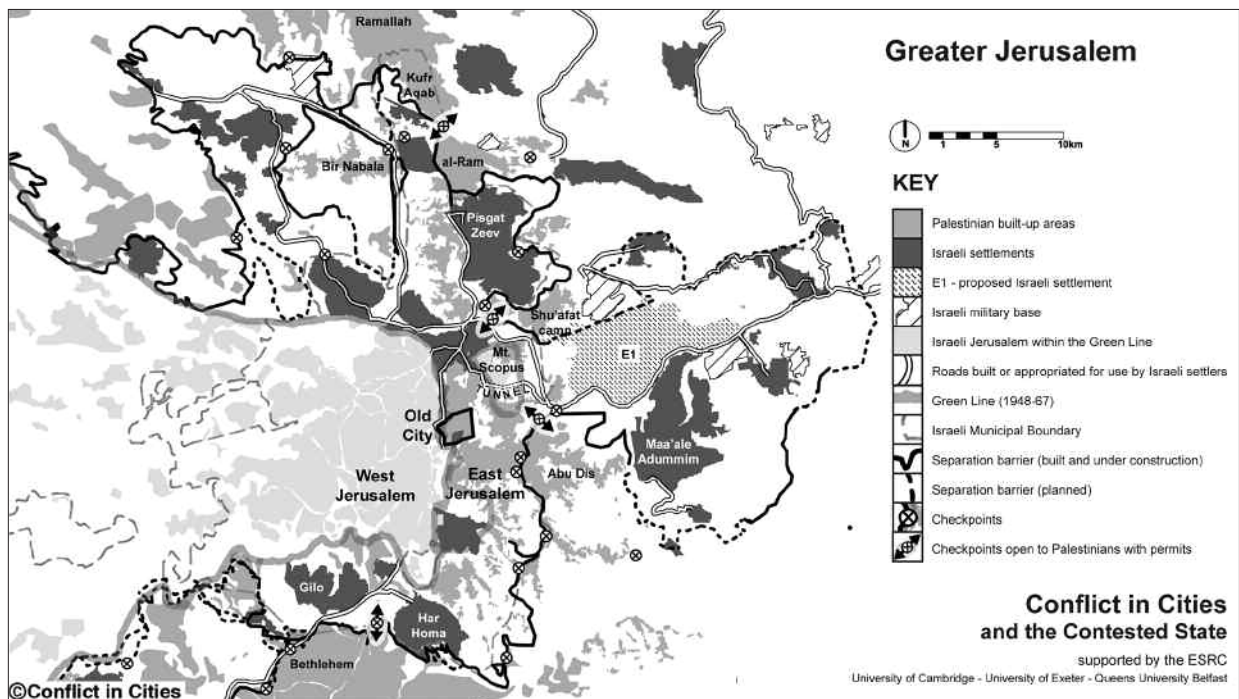
## Occupation: building the foundations of further conflict

The Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem has put in place a number of measures that are serving to provoke further conflict. These include a land acquisition policy, the fragmentation of Palestinian areas, restrictions of mobility and residency, and the incorporation of militant settler group activities into state policy. A one-sided land policy that has intensified in recent years has been at the root of Israeli Jerusalem's rapid expansion and the restriction of Palestinian Jerusalem. Over 70% of the Israeli settler population of the West Bank now reside in what has become known as 'Greater Jerusalem'.<sup>9</sup> Map 1 shows the situation very clearly: whereas pre-1967 West Jerusalem remains intact, Palestinian territory is studded with post-1967 Israeli settlements. These are built, at least in part, to shadow Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods, restricting their growth and limiting or barring their access to services, shopping facilities and trade. Furthermore, the separation barrier, constructed to counter the attacks on Israelis by Palestinian militants, has also been used to disconnect and isolate Palestinian areas. Along with the Israeli settlements and the segregated bypass roads that connect them, a system has been formed that simultaneously results in the separation of the two populations and the territorial intermingling of villages and suburbs. Most significantly, the existence of this complicated territorial system will make it very difficult to divide Jerusalem into two functioning capital cities.<sup>10</sup>

9 According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in 2008, 285,800 settlers were living in the West Bank and an estimated 193,700 settlers in East Jerusalem (around 68% of the total). For more details, see the statistical analysis of B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, <http://www.btselem.org/english/settlements/statistics.asp>.

10 One of the final and major pieces of the puzzle is the enormous E1 area, poised to link to Jerusalem the settlement of Maale Adumim (population 40,000) that stands considerably to the east of the city. With its extensive infrastructure already in place, E1 could speedily be completed with only the addition of architecture and residents. As the Israel-US cat-and-mouse game of freezing the settlements becomes increasingly ineffective E1 may become a reality; if so, this geographically critical extension of Israeli Jerusalem would divide in two parts not just East Jerusalem but also a significant portion of the West Bank. For more discussion of the E1 plan see the report by Jad Isaac and Fida Abdel Latif, ARIJ (Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem), 'Jerusalem: The Strangulation of the Arab Palestinian City', 9 July 2005. [http://www.arij.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=26&lang=en](http://www.arij.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=26&lang=en).

Map 1: Greater Jerusalem



Source: Conflict in Cities

### Mobility and residency restrictions

Although mobility restrictions on Palestinians began after the Oslo Accords signed between Israel and the PLO in 1993, other restrictions have added to the social, political and economic suffocation of East Jerusalem. The separation wall, checkpoints and more recent closure policies have, since 2005, prohibited Palestinians without Israeli-issued Jerusalem identity cards from residing in or even entering Jerusalem. Many Jerusalemite Palestinians who moved to the West Bank in search of better accommodation, but who retained their coveted permit to reside in Jerusalem, have returned to the inner core of the city, often

without housing or job prospects. This has resulted in overcrowding and poverty.<sup>11</sup>

Whether Israeli policy-makers expected the influx is debatable. They do acknowledge that given the higher Palestinian birth rate, recent demographic trends are working against an Israeli Jewish majority in the whole of Jerusalem and undermining the idea of an Israeli capital city reflecting the Zionist concept of a Jewish state.<sup>12</sup> Attempts to tackle this emerging problem include the confiscation of ID cards to prevent Palestinians residing inside the city. Over 4,500 cards were confiscated in 2008; this is 21 times the average over the previous 40 years of occupation.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Note 16 below.

<sup>12</sup> According to the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, the population of Jerusalem in 2008 stands as follows: total (Palestinian, Israel and Other) 763,600 inhabitants; Jewish and Other population 495,000; Palestinian Arab population 268,600 inhabitants. During 2007 Jerusalem's population grew by 1.9% (14,300 people), the Jewish population grew by 1.3% (6,100 people) while the Arab population increased by 3.2% (8,200 people). From 1967 to 2007 the population of Jerusalem grew by 181%, the Jewish population grew by 146% while the Palestinian Arab population increased by 280%. Further details are available on <http://www.jiis.org/upload/publications/facts-2008-eng.pdf>. Note that these figures refer to the municipal borders established in 1967 and not only those areas inside the Separation Wall.

<sup>13</sup> Nir Hasson, 'Israel stripped thousands of Jerusalem Arabs of residency in 2008', *Haaretz*, 8 December 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1132170.html>.

Fear and insecurity over their mobility and residency status have become dominant themes for Palestinians trying to navigate the changes in Israeli policies in East Jerusalem. Palestinian East Jerusalemites have been pushed into a grey area of indeterminate legal status.

#### The ascendancy of militant settler groups

A series of conservative Israeli governments and municipal councils since the late 1990s have supported extremist settler organizations who believe that they have a divinely sanctioned right and duty to occupy all of the biblical land of Israel, including Palestinian Jerusalem. The acceptance into the mainstream of militant Israeli settler activity in Jerusalem is particularly evident in an area known in Israeli circles as the Holy Basin. The residents of the area are mostly Palestinians, but the land is falling increasingly under settler control through a combination of the purchase of property (sometimes through intimidation and fraud); the practice of selective excavation at archaeological sites to emphasize and enhance Jewish content; and the declaration of areas as National Parks, consolidating Israeli holdings and often removing Palestinians from their cultivated land.

Subsequent site development ensures that the area is increasingly represented in terms of Jewish interests, forming one of the most strategic and powerful parts of the Israeli occupation of the whole city.<sup>14</sup> An important feature of these developments is the use of private security firms to patrol key sites. This appears to suit both the settlers and the Israeli government. The latter saves money while the former seem to be allowed to act as their own self-regulated authority, enjoying a relatively free hand in confrontational areas such as the Old City's Muslim Quarter. There, it is becoming common to see the

beige unmarked uniforms of the settlers' militia carrying out the functions of the Israeli army and police.<sup>15</sup>

Such developments are of increasing concern to those seeking a negotiated solution to the status of the city. They signify the continued uprooting and disenfranchisement of the Palestinians, and the tendency to further isolate and fragment Palestinian territory in East Jerusalem. The aspirations of such special groups with divisive political agendas seem to be privileged by the Israeli government over the needs and rights of long-time residents. Although the demolition of Palestinian property, the mobility and residency restrictions, the settlements and separation barrier continue to be sources of tension in all parts of East Jerusalem, the conflict now focused on the Holy Basin area is in danger of becoming the spark which could ignite the Jerusalem tinder box.

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#### The decline of Jerusalem as a functioning city

The policies described above were devised by successive Israeli governments to produce a strong and reintegrated Jerusalem under its control. In reality, the city has become fragmented and its residents – Israeli and Palestinian, secular and orthodox – are

14 See Ir Amim report, 'The Old City and the Historic Basin Issues of Concern and Recent Developments', March 2007; and OCHA, 'The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem: Understanding the Phenomenon of "Illegal" Construction', Special Focus, April 2009; <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2F8FB6437DB17CA5852575A9004D7CB4>; Wendy Pullan and Max Gwiazda, 'The Biblical Present in Jerusalem's "City of David"', in A. Webber, U. Staiger and H. Steiner (eds), *Memory, Culture and the Contemporary City: Building Sites* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

15 Conflict in Cities project fieldwork. Site observations in 2008 and 2009.

mutually suspicious; while parts thrive, as a functioning and integrated whole it cannot be deemed to be a success. East Jerusalem has been starved of basic infrastructure, services and opportunities for development; in the West, even large projects, including inner city motorways, shopping malls, housing projects and tourist infrastructure, have failed to stem an exodus of Israeli Jewish residents from the city or to reverse the status of its inhabitants as the poorest in Israel.<sup>16</sup> Planning has been based upon unequal access to resources and segregation, not only between Israelis and Palestinians but also between religious and secular Israelis. Present-day West Jerusalem, despite its advantages over East Jerusalem, is not a desirable model on which to base any sort of agreement and subsequent urban development for the city as a whole.

#### Unequal budgets

Decline has taken very specific forms on each side of the city. The policy of strategic neglect in East Jerusalem, described in considerable detail in a book by the former Israeli Mayor's Advisor on Arab Affairs, Amir Cheshin and his colleagues,<sup>17</sup> continues today. Despite housing 33% of the city's residents, East Jerusalem is allocated just 12% of the municipal budget.<sup>18</sup> The most basic services, such as rubbish collection and road maintenance, are sporadic or absent in East Jerusalem. In some cases, local residents have cooperated to provide their own private facilities

where they are able, but much of Palestinian Jerusalem is crowded, dirty, chaotic and badly under-served.<sup>19</sup> Sewage disposal is completely inadequate and Palestinian suburbs such as al-Ram, which have experienced rapid growth, suffer regular overflows of sewage from inadequate septic tanks.<sup>20</sup> Sewage, of course, does not recognize borders and will be just as likely to flow unchecked into Israeli homes and gardens as into Palestinian dwellings. The failure to address these types of health and environmental concerns by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities places all residents in the city at risk, and is a likely cause of conflict in the near future.

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Perhaps the most significant contribution to the decline of the city has been the inability of Palestinians to obtain building permits from the Israeli authorities.<sup>21</sup> The rare cases of building permits granted have taken years to procure in a process that is expensive and

16 According to the Jerusalem Institute of Israel Studies (JIIS) *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2008*, poverty in Jerusalem is higher than any other district of Israel. In 2007 the poverty rate among Jerusalem families was 34.5% (23.3 for Jews and 66.8 for non Jews/Arabs) compared to 18.2% in Haifa, 12.2% in Central districts, 12.1% in Tel Aviv and 19.9% in all of Israel. For more details see <http://jiis.org/?cmd=statistic.38>.

17 Amir Cheshin, Bill Hutman, and Avi Melamed, *Separate and Unequal: The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

18 A recent EU report in December 2008 suggested that as little as 5–10% of Jerusalem municipal budget is spent in Palestinian East Jerusalem. See Rory McCarthy's article in the *Guardian*, 'Israel is annexing East Jerusalem says EU', 7 March 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/07/israel-palestine-eu-report-jerusalem>.

19 Development in Palestinian Jerusalem and environs is increasingly prone to rumour and lack of regulation, and the haphazard and sometimes dangerous building stock is indicative of this. The case of the unchecked growth of the Palestinian suburb of al-Ram is one of a number of bizarre effects of the separation barrier and closure policy. Speculators believed that the area would be on the Jerusalem side of the wall near the checkpoint; as it turned out, it was left on the West Bank side, resulting in the immediate cessation of construction. Today, unfinished tower blocks loom over the top of the separation barrier.

20 B'Tselem report 'Foul Play: Neglect of wastewater treatment in the West Bank', June 2009. [http://www.btselem.org/Download/200906\\_Foul\\_Play\\_eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/Download/200906_Foul_Play_eng.pdf).

21 In East Jerusalem, the gap between housing needs based on population growth and the legally permitted construction is estimated to be at least 1,100 housing units per year. See OCHA, 'The Planning Crisis in East Jerusalem'.



humiliating. Most Palestinians have simply taken the situation into their own hands and built without official permission. The Israeli authorities may turn a blind eye, but they may also demolish structures, frequently leaving whole families out on the streets. In some cases, demolitions are the result of punitive action taken against one member of the household. Figures show that in the past ten years the Jerusalem Municipality has demolished 756 homes, and approximately 3,800 people – over 1.5% of the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem – have been made homeless.<sup>22</sup>

Lack of opportunity is a constant factor in the life of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. This is evident in a variety of ways and permeates most of urban life.<sup>23</sup> Jobs are limited, unemployment is high<sup>24</sup> and education is generally poor. Most of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) University now stands beyond the separation barrier in Abu Dis and access to it from the city is slow and uncertain. The system of checkpoints and barriers means that movement can also be difficult for Jerusalem's Palestinian residents.

Fractured mobility has contributed greatly to the fragmentation of the city and its surroundings, and this, in turn, has resulted in the breakdown of secular public space.<sup>25</sup> The centre of East Jerusalem in Salah a-Din Street is struggling to survive; political centres such as Orient House and cultural centres such as al-Hakawati Theatre have been repeatedly closed by the Israeli authorities. Very few channels are available to Palestinians to foster and participate in urban life. The occupation has continued for such a long time that it is very difficult for Palestinians to persuade themselves

that conditions will improve. The frustration and misery have caused many to leave, clearly driven by the belief that the situation is being engineered intentionally to force them out of Jerusalem.

#### Impact on Palestinian leadership

The policies designed to separate East Jerusalem from its West Bank hinterland have brought significant changes inside Palestinian Jerusalem. The Palestinian leadership – political, economic and cultural – now works or resides in Ramallah. This has created a vacuum in East Jerusalem, though it is filled in part by an assortment of NGOs and the revival of extended family structures and religious observance.<sup>26</sup> Similar developments in other cities such as Belfast and Mostar strongly indicate that such a vacuum in a divided city often leads to increased radicalization. In Jerusalem, where political activism is constrained by the Israeli authorities, the practice of religion is reasonably well tolerated, and as a consequence the mosque as an institution has now become a centre of resistance. Sheikh Ra'id Salah, the outspoken Islamic Movement leader from inside Israel (and, significantly, an Israeli citizen), has found fertile ground in championing Palestinian causes in Jerusalem. Under his movement's auspices up to 100 busloads of worshippers have been known to enter the city for a commemorative event such as al-Quds Day. Concurrently, he is managing not only to radicalize his own compatriots in the north of Israel but also to become the most popular leader in Palestinian Jerusalem. His ability to mobilize the street threatens to usurp the role of the PLO/PA in the city.<sup>27</sup>

22 These figures are based on statistics from the Jerusalem Municipality provided by B'Tselem (1998–2004), [http://www.btselem.org/english/Planning\\_and\\_Building/East\\_Jerusalem\\_Statistics.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/Planning_and_Building/East_Jerusalem_Statistics.asp), and ICAHD (2004–08), <http://www.icahd.org/eng/docs/East%20Jerusalem%20-%202004-08.pdf>.

23 Well illustrated in Omar Yousef, Rassem Khamaisi, Abdalla Owais and Rami Nasrallah, *Jerusalem and Its Hinterland* (Jerusalem: IPCC, 2008).

24 In 2004 the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics claimed that the unemployment rate in Jerusalem Governorate for Palestinians was 22.8%, compared with the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics figures of 7.6% for Jewish residents. One should note that the geographic areas of the two areas covered by the two bureaux are different, making a strict comparison difficult. See [http://pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_pcbs/PressRelease/quds072005E.pdf](http://pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/quds072005E.pdf) and [http://jiis.org/upload/yearbook/2005\\_6/shnaton\\_G0105.pdf](http://jiis.org/upload/yearbook/2005_6/shnaton_G0105.pdf).

25 Wendy Pullan, 'Contested Mobilities and the Spatial Topography of Jerusalem', in Louise Purbrick, Jim Aulich and Graham Dawson, eds, *Contested Spaces: Cultural Representations and Histories of Conflict* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 49–73.

26 On the revival of traditional extended family structures such as the *hamula* and clan, see International Peace and Cooperation Center (2007), 'Challenges for an International Administration of Urban Functions in the Old City of Jerusalem', Jerusalem Old City Initiative (unpublished report).

27 Mick Dumper and Craig Larkin, 'Political Islam in Contested Jerusalem: The Emerging Role of Islamists from within Israel', Conflict in Cities, Working Paper 12, 2009, <http://www.conflictincities.org/workingpaper12.html>.

### West Jerusalem

Parts of Israeli West Jerusalem are also in a state of decline, suffering at least to some degree from policies that favour the direction of resources to settlement-building in East Jerusalem. West Jerusalem has not yet recovered properly from the period of Palestinian suicide bombings between 2000 and 2003.<sup>28</sup> Security is still rigorously observed at the entrances of shops, cafés and public buildings, and those who can afford the attractive western neighbourhoods avoid the main café and retail area around Ben Yehuda Street centre. While bus travel has resumed, a light rail project languishes unfinished; insurance has been difficult to obtain and the disarray of construction continues to obstruct a number of the city's roads, which does not bode well for any further large public works. Other parts of the city are dominated by inner city motorways, built at least in part to service the surrounding settlements. These peripheral neighbourhoods dominate the landscape, yet all are dependent upon the centre of the city for major services; it is becoming increasingly common to find armed civilians in the markets and commercial areas.

The Israeli Jewish religious population continues to grow. It comprises large families, many of them dependent upon state assistance or support from their own communities. In many cases, the expansion of the Jewish orthodox population in Jerusalem has precipitated increasingly radicalized politicization. Secular Israelis are critical that government funds are being poured into either the religious neighbourhoods and settlements or tourist infrastructure, which itself is affected by the political and security situation. Young secular adults, in particular, no longer find Jerusalem attractive and many have decamped to Tel Aviv. Many of those residents who remain are increasingly fearful. This produces a

population that is becoming neighbourhood-bound and introverted. Hence policies designed to improve the Israeli Jewish demographic weight to counter the rise in the Palestinian Arab population have themselves increased the fragmentation of Israeli West Jerusalem urban life, inadvertently mirroring that of Palestinian East Jerusalem.

### Political impacts

The trends described above are undermining Jerusalem as a global, inclusive city both as a receptacle for the ideals of the members of the Abrahamic faiths and as a symbol of multicultural coexistence. The focus of the current Israeli government and the Jerusalem Municipality on Israeli and Jewish hegemony and Israeli and Jewish security, at the expense of Palestinian and Islamic and Christian participation in the city, excludes other contributions. The role of UNESCO, for example, in preserving the historic architectural fabric of the city, one of the world's major centres of culture, and of mediating between the different claims to sites and to interpretations of their significance, is relegated to the sidelines.<sup>29</sup>

The 1993 Oslo Accords, while leading to the gradual transfer of administrative powers to Palestinian bodies in the West Bank, deferred the issue of East Jerusalem until a later date. As a result, the political contest over the city has resembled the period leading up to a cease-fire between two warring protagonists, each side seeking to obtain some advantage or to consolidate a position before hostilities must cease. As the stronger party, Israel has been able to exploit this lead-up period and the ensuing truce much better than the Palestinians. On the one hand, Palestinians have prevented the wholesale erosion of their already weak position in the city by drawing on the support of international law. Embassies to Israel, for example, are

28 During the period 1989–2003, Jerusalem experienced 73 'terror' attacks with a total of 2,350 casualties. Transposed onto London with its far greater population, this would be the equivalent of over 23,000 casualties. Figures from H.V. Savitch, 'An Anatomy of Urban Terror: Lessons from Jerusalem and Elsewhere', *Urban Studies* 42(3)(2005): 371.

29 See Mick Dumper and Craig Larkin, 'The Politics of Heritage and the Limitations of International Agency in Divided Cities: The role of UNESCO in Jerusalem's Old City', *Conflict in Cities Working Paper 2*, 2008, <http://www.conflictincities.org/workingpaper02.html>.

located in Tel Aviv as a form of non-recognition of Israeli claims to the city. On the other hand, Palestinians have failed to use this advantage as a platform to project a convincing vision of their preferred option: that of an open city with two capitals and with shared municipal functions.

The prevailing Israeli vision of a predominantly Jewish city benignly tolerant of minority religious faiths and communities under the protection of the Israeli state has been more effectively projected. In this vision, Palestinians of East Jerusalem would receive religious and cultural autonomy but the land would be incorporated into the Israeli state in the ways described above. The wide acceptance of this vision by Israelis and by Israel's supporters in Europe and North America has helped to consolidate Israeli control over the city. Yet there remains a contradiction at the heart of Israeli policies in the city. The settler groups have made significant gains on the ground in the city, but their exclusivist and narrowly defined vision not only leads to the marginalization of non-Jewish communities who then look elsewhere for political and financial support, but also provokes resistance from powerful local and international interests. The failure of the Israeli authorities to co-opt the mainstream international Christian leadership is a case in point.

#### Less room for manoeuvre

A major result of these trends is that there is much less room for manoeuvre for a negotiated agreement than in the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, the reversal of the Israeli presence in East Jerusalem that is required is also so much greater – to the extent that the current prospects for negotiating a peaceful agreement have receded to an almost implausible degree. The Israeli entrenchment in East Jerusalem has crossed a threshold of such height that any withdrawal to a point that could be the basis of an agreement with the Palestinians would be likely to provoke major political instability at the highest levels within the wider Israeli state. It is currently extremely improbable that any Israeli government

will risk its own demise by offering a set of territorial concessions in East Jerusalem sufficient to meet Palestinian aspirations.

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Similarly, the Palestinian position has hardened. During the 1990s, the PLO/PA were open to considering a number of approaches encompassing various transitional arrangements, international supervisory regimes for the Holy Sites, or the ‘lease-back’ of certain areas of Jerusalem to Israel. However, the constant erosion of good faith in Israeli assurances by the continued Israeli settlement programme has effectively undermined both the ability and the willingness of the Palestinian leadership to make any concessions. The PLO/PA also has limited room for manoeuvre: on the one hand, it has called upon Jordan and Saudi Arabia to strengthen and support its diplomatic position, while on the other it has had to pay particular attention to the growing strength of Hamas in the West Bank and the Islamic movement in Jerusalem, and their more assertive defence of Palestinian rights in the city. These combined pressures have made the PLO/PA aware that offering too much flexibility on the question of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the city would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. For this reason, and across the political spectrum, no agreement on Jerusalem would be preferable to Palestinian leaders than an agreement which could portray Palestinians as having surrendered Arab, Christian and Islamic rights to the city.

## Prognosis: sleepwalking to 'Hebronization'

The damage that has been caused by Israeli policies and actions will have long-term effects on the city as a functioning urban entity; this underlying problem will come to the fore and last beyond any political settlement. The policies of control that have developed rapidly since the Oslo Accords in the 1990s remove from the city the middle-ground institutional activities in which ordinary citizens can be engaged. Instead of becoming a shared and pluralistic city, Jerusalem has begun to be recast as a dystopic vision of 'frontier urbanism', where civilian populations are wedged into enclaves to continually face each other but with no physical access and no meeting places. The separation wall may be the most visible marker of the present situation, but it is the settlements, supported by the segregated road system, that will be the most difficult to eradicate. Even if a negotiated division of the city between Israelis and Palestinians were eventually realized, the levels of antipathy might be so high that this separation would be extreme, based on very hard physical borders and no contact or interaction between the two sides.

### Unilateral withdrawal

But it is in the short to medium term that clearer scenarios are discernible. Trends that have been outlined in this paper can be seen as unfolding along the lines of an imaginary continuum which stretches from inter-communal breakdown at one end to urban warfare and the collapse of a shared city at the other.<sup>30</sup> At one end of the continuum, it is possible to see trends where the Israeli military presence, jurisdiction and services might be targeted on central areas of East Jerusalem around the Old City, while other areas of East Jerusalem to the north, east and southeast would be left in suspension or abandoned.

This form of unilateral withdrawal has already taken place and presages the possibility of further pull-backs. Areas which were formerly part of Jerusalem such as Kufr Aqab and Shu'afat refugee camp have been to all intents and purposes abandoned by the Israeli government.<sup>31</sup> Lying on the Palestinian side of the wall but not formally incorporated into the jurisdiction of the PA (see Map 2), they have poor access to services and employment, and the situation will deteriorate. The emergence of clan-based protection arrangements in Shu'afat camp is one indication of the descent into lawlessness that lies around the corner if action is not taken to address such isolation and uncertainty.<sup>32</sup>

### Urban warehousing

Further along the continuum we envisage a situation where the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem is recognized but heavily curtailed. Palestinians are becoming restricted to specific geographic areas and limited in their mobility and articulation of their interests. There is already evidence of the corralling of Palestinian residential areas into enclaves. The disparities in economic opportunities, access to health and educational facilities, municipal services and access to the levers of influence and power that currently exist have only to be supplemented with heavy policing, such as checkpoints, the fear of ID confiscation, electronic surveillance and informers, to create a sense of isolation, fragmentation and detachment from the Israeli city and to form the kind of warehousing that one can see in the refugee camps of Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

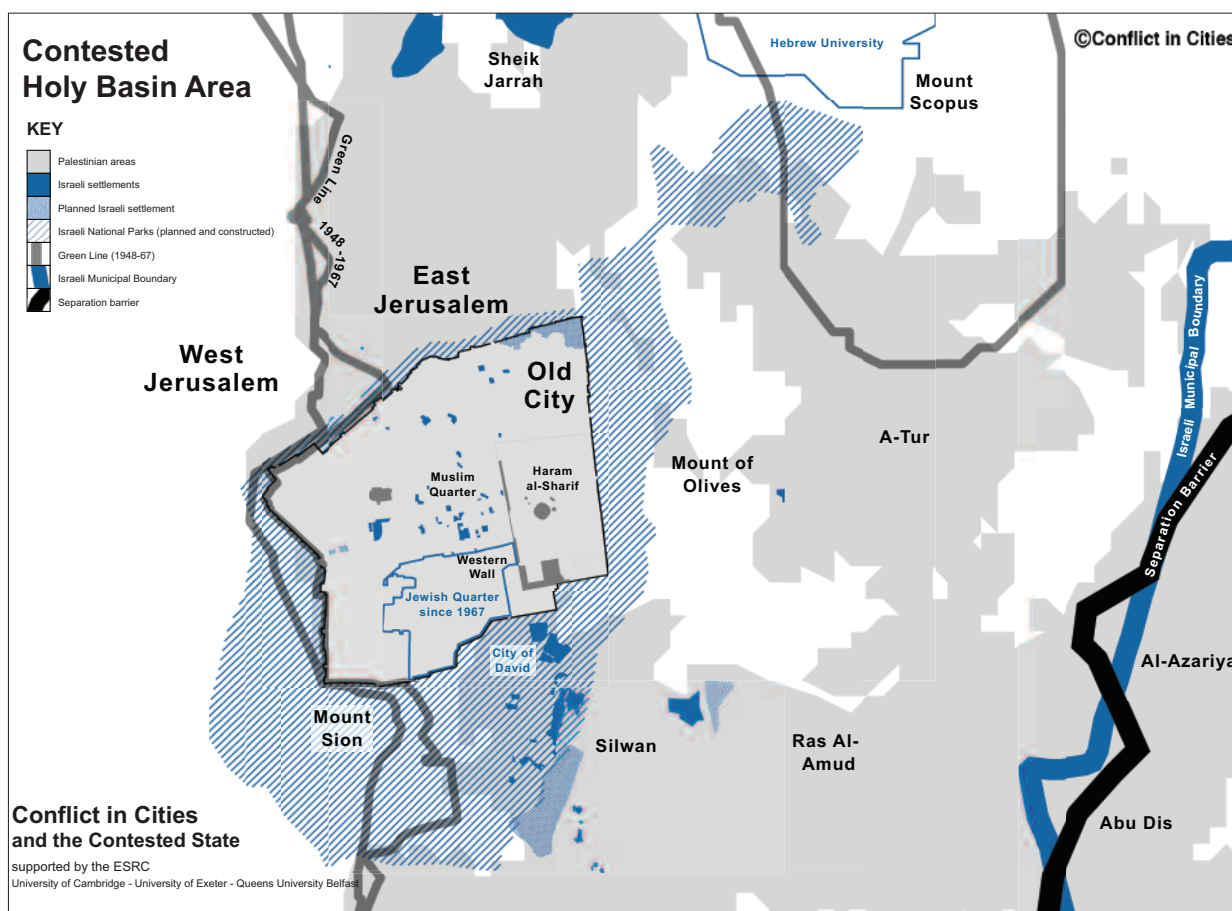
Moving along to the other end of the continuum, we envisage a scenario in which the Palestinian population is incrementally but systematically removed from large parts of the city. The demographic ratio of

<sup>30</sup> A similar spectrum has been devised by S.A. Bollens in *Cities, Nationalism and Democratization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 235.

<sup>31</sup> See statement by Yakir Seggev, holder of the East Jerusalem Portfolio in the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality, in which he declared that, 'The Jerusalem municipality has no hand in managing these neighbourhoods ... The State of Israel has given up, [the neighbourhoods] are outside the jurisdiction of the state, and certainly the municipality. For all practical purposes, they are Ramallah.' Quoted by Nir Hasson, 'Jerusalem Official: Areas east of the fence not part of the city', *Haaretz*, 8 January 2010. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1141313.html>.

<sup>32</sup> *Cities in Conflict* fieldwork. Interviews in Shu'afat camp, 27 June 2009.

Map 2: Holy Basin



Source: Conflict in Cities

Israeli Jews to Palestinians has already been set by the municipality at 2:1 and policies of house demolitions, ID confiscation, land confiscation and exclusivist zoning are already active to enforce this. Cumulatively the figures tell an alarming story which gives credence to the possibility of the next step: that of removal and expulsion. Not all the 1.5% of Palestinian Jerusalemites made homeless by house demolitions have left the city but it is clear that a policy of gradual expulsion is in place. This sits below the radar but can be brought to visibility at opportune moments.

### The Hebronization of Jerusalem

Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Israeli settlers in Hebron have acted with impunity and with increasing aggression and provocation in a city with an overwhelming Palestinian majority; it is very much a case of rule by the few with no regard for the consequences for the many.<sup>33</sup> The city, despite pockets of wealth, is now characterized by poverty, a lack of investment, increasing criminality, the breakdown of municipal services and the absence of any recognized national and local leadership. This is all largely due to the restrictions imposed upon the city

33 The Jewish population in the Old City of Hebron is estimated to be approximately 400 but receiving the protection of 2,000 Israeli soldiers. Close to the Old City is the Israeli settlement of Kiryat Arba with approximately 6,650 Israeli settlers. The Palestinian population of Hebron is approximately 130,000 (20,000 in the Old City and 110,000 in the remainder of the city). See [http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=facts\\_others\\_f13p](http://www.nad-plo.org/inner.php?view=facts_others_f13p) and <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/hebron.html>.

by the occupation and Israel's promotion of the settler presence in the heart of Hebron Old City.

It is hard not to conclude that without stronger intervention, the international community will be sleepwalking towards the 'Hebronization' of Jerusalem. The acceptance of the settlement movement in Jerusalem into the Israeli political mainstream, its capture of some of the city's key institutions and geographical locations, its support from the highest echelons of the Israeli bureaucracy, judiciary and army, its funding by wealthy US and other external sources all point to a culture of impunity which suggests more than a passing resemblance to Hebron. The creation of no-go areas for Palestinians in parts of Jerusalem and the closing of retail streets as a result of settler harassment has not occurred to the same extent as in Hebron, but the signs that this can happen all too easily are already discernible in Silwan and the area known as the City of David, in parts of Sheikh Jarrah, and in the Old City's Muslim Quarter.

This Hebronization of Jerusalem comprises a mixture of exclusion, neighbourhood abandonment and warehousing of Palestinian residents. Without any serious brake on current trends, the physical removal of much of the Palestinian population from the central parts of East Jerusalem might not be as unimaginable as it was ten years ago.

Despite the dire scenarios being painted, for the foreseeable future the Israeli government is in a strong enough position to contain the negative impact of these developments. Its neutralization of the PLO/PA, the quiescence of the traditional religious leadership and their Jordanian backers, and the marginalization of Hamas in the city have deprived the Palestinians of East Jerusalem of any effective and coordinated resistance. In the short to medium term (two to five years) Israel will have an almost free rein in the city. The one challenge to Israeli authority is Sheikh Ra'id Salah's Islamic Movement. As this is coming from within Israel itself, it is not something that Israel will be able to tolerate if it becomes a popular movement beyond its present community action and efforts to bring Palestinian Muslims from Israel into Jerusalem. The results could be violent.

‘Without any serious brake on current trends, the physical removal of much of the Palestinian population from the central parts of East Jerusalem might not be as unimaginable as it was ten years ago’

The one caveat in this prognosis is the role of the Holy Places within the wider Holy Basin. The critical issue which will lead to a spontaneous and grassroots reaction in the streets of East Jerusalem is an Israeli infringement of the Islamic rights to the Haram al-Sharif and associated places. As seen in October 2009, street protests and rioting have already broken out over perceived threats to the Haram al-Sharif, partially, but not exclusively, mobilized by the Islamic movement from inside Israel. A miscalculation by the Israeli government in this regard, or the flexing of muscles by a settler group, could well provoke a furious and possibly uncontrollable response. Thus the situation presents two equally alarming probabilities: the first is of a city sliding into greater internal division combined with the expulsion of the weaker community; and the second is of a city which is on the point of erupting into further and more widespread violence over developments centred around the city's Holy Places.

## Conclusion

This bleak prognosis can to some extent be avoided. By reaffirming the illegality of Israeli policy in East Jerusalem, the recommendations put forward in the EU Heads of Mission Report, if implemented, would go a long way towards halting the slide to both consolidating the Israeli presence and the further fragmentation of East Jerusalem. The recommendations include promoting the establishment of a PLO representative in East Jerusalem, the prevention of

financial transactions by EU member states, which support settlement activity or the export of products from settlements to the EU member states and the support of Palestinian civil society.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, by themselves, it is unlikely that these actions would be sufficient in the time available to prevent the scenarios outlined above.

The focus of diplomatic activity, therefore, should be on two key areas. First, the seriousness of the situation should be impressed upon the US State Department, the US Congress and the President's Special Envoy to the Middle East, Senator George Mitchell (as the key actors with any leverage on the Israeli government) and the Quartet. Further delays in addressing the situation in Jerusalem will not only destroy the fabric of the city as an urban entity, thus storing up serious social and political problems for the future, but will also render the prospect of a negotiated sharing of the city unfea-

sible. A significant point that could be made is that until the concerns of all those living in Jerusalem are addressed, Israel's security is as much at risk as the livelihood and well-being of the Palestinians.

Secondly, the international community, in the form of the Quartet, major donors, international civil society, international religious organizations and states in the region which support the Arab Peace Plan, need to convince the current Israeli government, the Municipality of Jerusalem and the Israeli political establishment that the activities of radical settlers in destabilizing the status quo of the Holy Places and acquiring strategic tracts of land will lead to further violence not only in Jerusalem but also more widely in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory and ultimately across the region. Policies in support of returning to a negotiated peace process and support for such groups are mutually exclusive.

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34 2009 EU Heads of Mission Report on East Jerusalem.

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Cover image 'The junction of Via Dolorosa and al-Wad street, Jerusalem's Old City'  
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