

A Pervasive Insecurity



Ammar Awad, Reuters

All Jerusalemites know that sense of dread. The hesitation, as you choose your seat on the bus or your table at a restaurant, the suspicious glances at the people around you.

In the past six years, 171 people have been killed in 38 suicide bombings in the city of Jerusalem. The random nature of these deadly attacks means security concerns are paramount. No Israeli city has been harder hit by terrorism. The city's inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic and national identity, have learned to fear for the worst.

Attacks aimed at civilians undermine all rules of morality and law. Whatever the circumstances, the intentional killing of civilians is considered a grave breach of International Humanitarian Law. It is in fact a war crime. Israel must protect its citizens from future attacks; the Palestinian Authority has a legal obligation to prevent such unjustifiable acts and to prosecute those involved in past attacks.

Mourners beside coffin
of suicide bomb victim,
Jerusalem, 2006



Jonathan Weitzman, Reuters



A Wall Cuts Through It

In 2002, the Israeli government decided to construct a Separation Barrier in order to prevent terrorists from entering Israel. In urban areas, the Barrier is a row of 25-foot high concrete slabs; other sections are comprised of an electronic fence, with electronic surveillance devices, a trench, barbed wire and a patrol road.

The route of the Barrier, however, defies all security logic and appears politically motivated. In Jerusalem, the Barrier roughly follows the municipal boundary, set when Israel annexed East Jerusalem. This boundary ignores urban planning considerations; it cuts through Palestinian neighborhoods, at times literally running down the middle of busy, urban streets. Leaving 220,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites on the Israeli side of the Barrier, it is hardly consistent with the State's own security logic: does the State of Israel consider Palestinians living on one side of the street dangerous, but not those on the other side?

The Barrier cuts East Jerusalem off from the rest of the West Bank, obstructing access to the city's hospitals and other services, separating families and disrupting normal social life. In addition, because of the geographic centrality of Jerusalem, the Barrier also makes travel between different parts of the West Bank extremely difficult.

Will this new reality actually achieve the longed-for sense of security, or will it only create additional suffering?

The Separation Barrier, allegedly designed to defend Jerusalem residents from deadly terror attacks, is built along a route that lacks all security logic and seems motivated primarily by political considerations.

Abu Dis



A Case Study

One continuous urban fabric of Palestinian neighborhoods connects the walls of the Old City to the town of Abu Dis. In fact, about one third of Abu Dis' 13,000 residents have Jerusalem resident status, but left the city due to the lack of housing solutions. Before 1967, Abu Dis was part of the Jerusalem district. When Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967, part of Abu Dis was included within the new city limits. Most of the town, however, was not annexed and is now considered part of the West Bank. It remained connected to Jerusalem in all aspects of daily life with strong commercial, social and familial ties. All of this has been disrupted by the Barrier.



Mahfouz Abu Turk, Reuters

Abu Dis is a commercial center for the surrounding areas. Now many shops have closed, as they are inaccessible to shoppers from Jerusalem. The Barrier has also caused high unemployment in the town, as many of those who worked in Jerusalem are now unable to reach their jobs. The hospitals of East Jerusalem, within walking distance from the town, are now out of reach. The one small clinic in Abu Dis cannot meet the needs of town residents. Women in labor and those requiring advanced medical care now drive all the way to the Jericho hospital. Many children from Abu Dis were enrolled in schools inside Jerusalem and teachers from the town worked inside the city. The Husni al-Ashab school, for example, employed 80 teachers from Abu Dis. Al-Quds University has its main campus in Abu Dis, with additional campuses in Jerusalem. Students and faculty - both those in Jerusalem and those in the West Bank - have now lost access to many university departments.

All of the hardships that result from the Barrier route have created a mass migration from Abu Dis and dozens of houses stand empty, as most of those with Jerusalem residency status have moved back into the city.

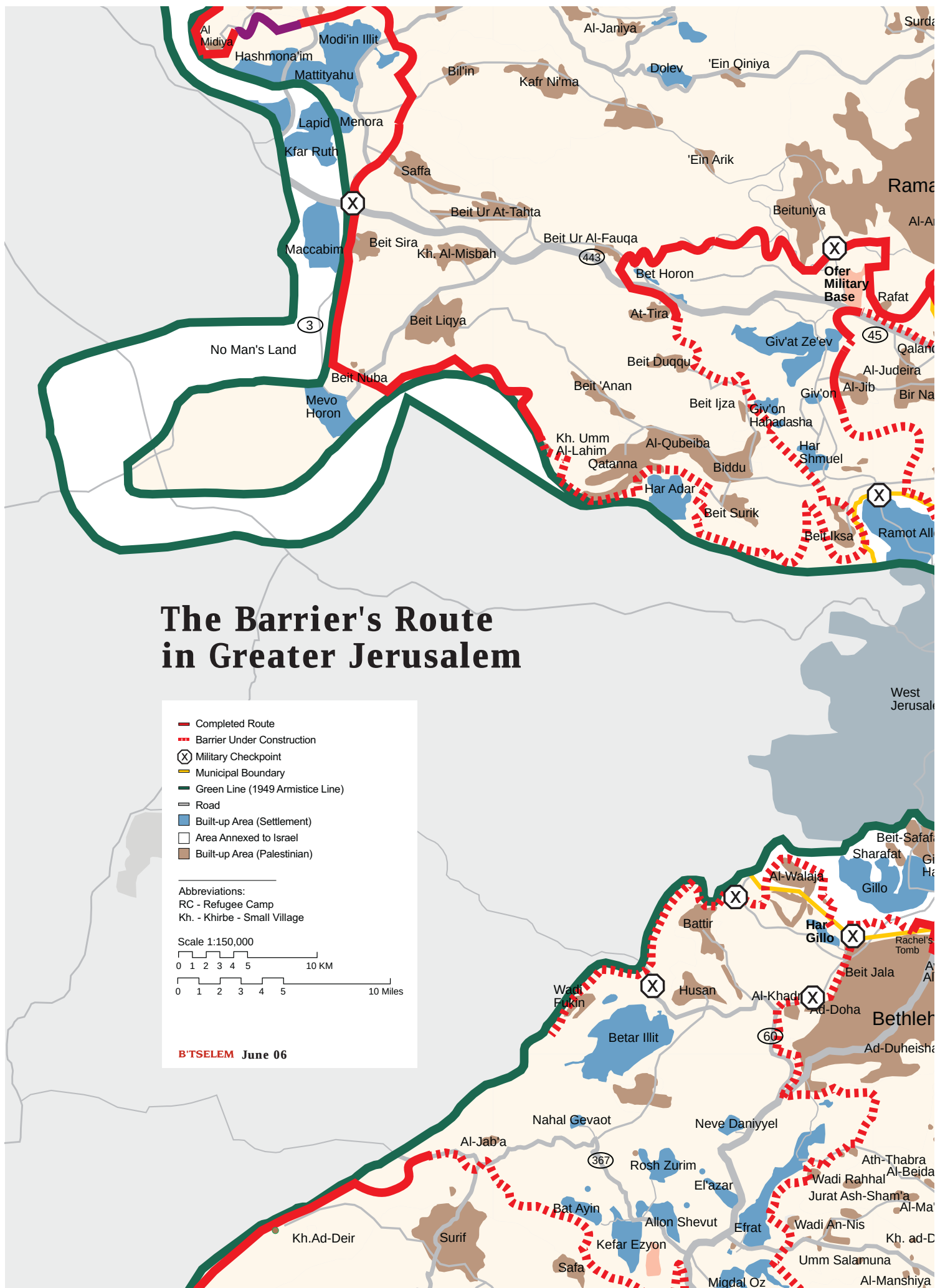
Moussa Al-Kunbar,
47, father to 14 children, unemployed,
resident of A-Sawakhra

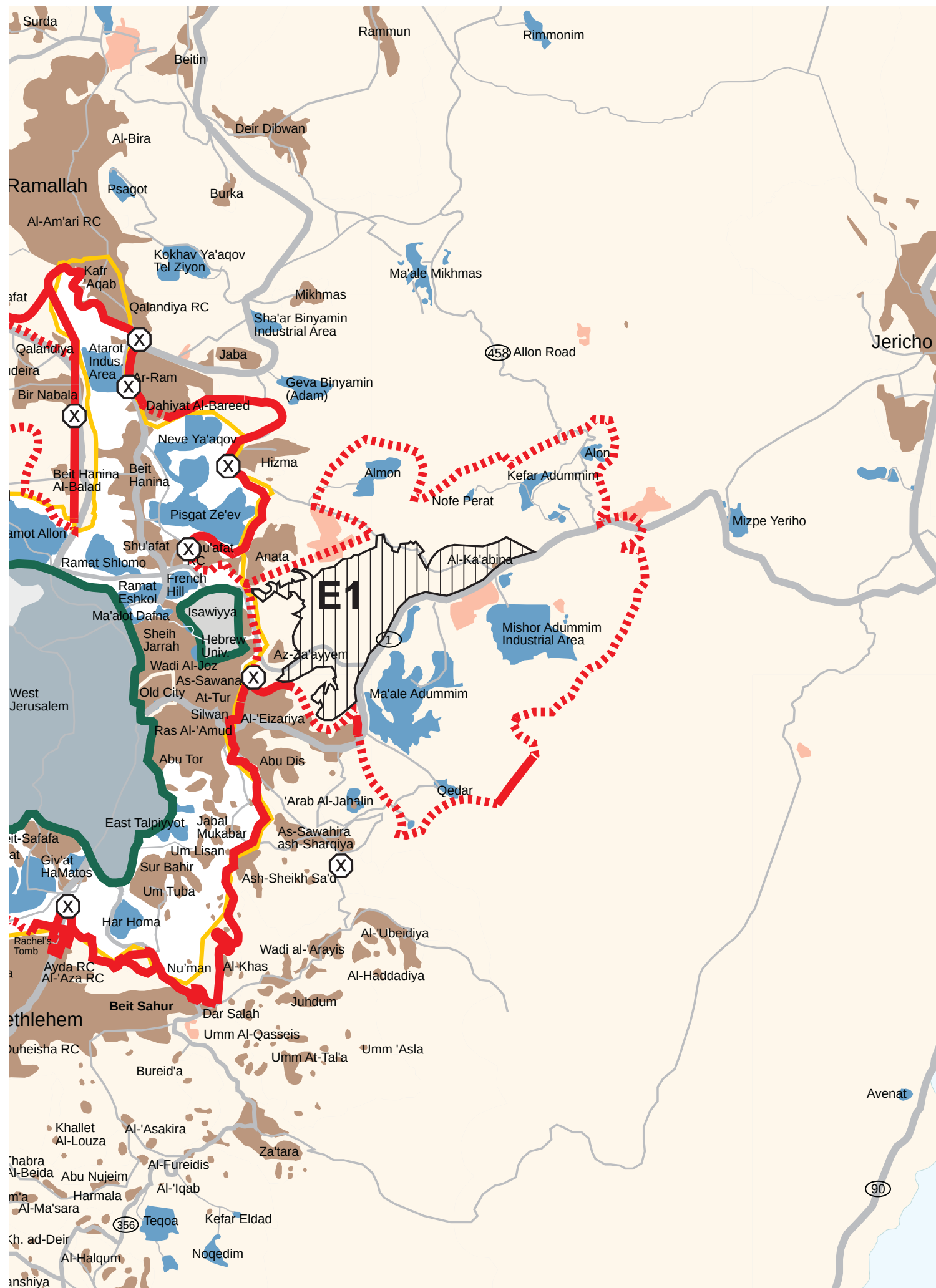
My extended family lives in a neighborhood of 14 houses, 150 people altogether, just next door to Abu Dis. We have lived in this area for generations. Although we are considered to be inside the city limits, we did not receive Jerusalem residency status in 1967. Now Israel has built the Barrier between our neighborhood and Abu Dis, causing us great hardship. The water pipes were damaged during the construction and now we rely on our small reserves. My children study in Jerusalem schools, but I cannot enter Jerusalem to take them. Only my wife has Jerusalem residency, so she takes them to school. Just recently, they closed the only opening in the Barrier, so now we are basically confined to our homes. We can no longer enter Abu Dis freely, which is a blow to work and trade. The only road open leads up the hill to Jerusalem, but it is forbidden for me to use it. I have a spine injury, and the only place I can get treatment is the Al-Makassed hospital in Jerusalem. Every time I need treatment, I spend hours waiting in line to get a special permit to cross the Barrier to visit the hospital. A week ago, my son was detained and fined for being in Jerusalem illegally - he was just 600 feet from home. I am afraid that the Israelis are trying to push us out in order to build the new settlement of Kidmat Zion.

Kareem Issa Jubran, B'israel



"Every time I need treatment for my spine injury, I spend hours waiting in line to get a special permit to cross the Barrier to get to the hospital."







Peace neighborhood, East Jerusalem, 2006

Gil Medalsy

Communities Divided in a City 'United'

Municipal budgets exacerbate social inequalities. Although Palestinians are required to pay taxes like all other residents of Jerusalem, the city invests meager sums in services and infrastructure in Palestinian neighborhoods.

In contrast to the claim that Jerusalem is the united capital of Israel, ethnic divisions in the city have remained largely unresolved. Israel has invested vast resources to build new Jewish settlements in areas of East Jerusalem expropriated from Palestinians. At the same time, Palestinian villages and neighborhoods incorporated into the city have turned into its new slums. Palestinians and Jews may now live side-by-side, yet inequality keeps them completely alienated from one another.



Independence Park, West Jerusalem, 2006

Ofir Feuerstein, B'Tselem

Inequality in the Distribution of Resources

Municipal Service*	Palestinian neighborhoods	Jewish neighborhoods
Public parks	12	1,423
Public libraries	3	36
Sport facilities	27	258
Overcrowding (more than 3 persons per room)	17.5%	2%
Cases per social worker	250	100

* Data is based on the Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem, No. 20 - 2002/2003, and B'Tselem research.

"I wouldn't be exaggerating if I said that the Salam neighborhood has been completely forgotten by the municipality. The city only remembers us on two occasions: the first is when they want to demolish our houses, and the second is when they come in a very organized manner to hand out the bills for municipal taxes. We pay thousands of shekels a year, without receiving even the most basic services."

Adel Taha,
unemployed father of three
from the Salam ('Peace') neighborhood,
Anata

Anata & Shuafat

A Case Study



In North-East Jerusalem, the municipal boundary runs between the Shuafat Refugee Camp and the town of Anata. Shuafat is part of Jerusalem; Anata is divided in two, with the Salam ('Peace') neighborhood annexed to Jerusalem and the rest of the town in the West Bank. Shuafat's 20,000 residents have Jerusalem residency status. However, most of the 5,000 residents of the part of Anata that is inside Jerusalem carry West Bank identity cards. This has created an absurd situation, whereby while in their own homes, they are considered by Israel to be illegally present in Jerusalem.

Most of the streets in Shuafat and the Jerusalem part of Anata are unpaved. There are no sidewalks and no streetlights. In some cases, having given up hope that the municipality would pave the streets, residents collected money to pave their own street. The city does not supply garbage dumpsters in the neighborhood. Instead, residents are given plastic garbage bags, which are piled up at the side of the street for collection, leaving garbage strewn along the streets.

The neighborhood has no post-natal clinic, no community center, no park or playground. The city has not built a single school or established a kindergarten. Instead, residents must attempt to enroll their children in the already-overcrowded schools in Shuafat and other East Jerusalem neighborhoods.

The Barrier in this area is planned to run west of Shuafat, separating it and the Salam neighborhood from the rest of Jerusalem. To access the city, residents now must pass through a military checkpoint. A long line of cars forms each morning, and residents wait hours to get to work or take their children to school.



Kareem Issa Jubran, B'Tselem

Separate and Unequal

A walk through Jewish and Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem reveals striking inequalities. Jewish neighborhoods enjoy all the amenities of a modern western city. Most Palestinian neighborhoods lack even the most basic infrastructure, such as sidewalks and street lamps. Many are not connected to a sewage system. An examination of the municipal budget reveals that the disparities are not an accident; they are clearly the result of official policy. In each section of the municipal budget, the Jewish population receives the lion's share of investment, while the Palestinian population is allocated much less than its fair share. Palestinians constitute a third of the city's population, yet in no budget item do they receive a third of the allocations. The discrimination is even more severe when you consider that in some spheres, Palestinians should receive more than a third of city investment: 42% of Jerusalem's children under the age of 10 are Palestinian; 67% of Palestinian families in Jerusalem live below the poverty line (compared with 29% of Jewish families).



The Municipality's Health Department invests only 20% of its budget in services to Palestinians. The allocations for Culture, Art and Neighborhood Renewal are even more skewed: none of these departments allocate more than 2% of their budget to Palestinians. While government officials proclaim their commitment to Jerusalem as a unified city, the budget allocations only perpetuate the divisions.