

◆ Ras Al-Amud

Ras Al-Amud is located southeast of the Old City on a ridge overlooking Al-Haram Al-Sharif, Silwan, Abu Dis, and Al-Izariyya.



Ras Al-Amud with the Police Station (A) & Ma'ale Zaytim settlement (B)

The **Ma'ale Zaytim** (or Ma'ale HaZayit - 'Olive Heights') settlement was established on land used by the Al-Ghoul family since 1837. The family, however, did not comply with the 1859 Ottoman rule regarding land registration and it was therefore possible for two Zionist movements (Chabad and Wollin) to register the same plot - about 15 dunums - with the British Mandate authorities in 1928, without even informing the Al-Ghoul family, who continued living on and from the land. After the War of 1948, the land - then under Jordanian rule - was registered at the Department of 'Custodian of Enemy Properties,' which representatives of the Al-Ghoul family sued. The case was held up in the courts until 1962 when the family's ownership of the land was finally recognized and it was officially registered in their name. After the War of 1967 and the subsequent Israeli occupation, Chabad and Wollin - using their registration decree of 1928 - succeeded in having the Israeli Central Court cancel the Jordanian registration and in reclaiming the land, which they sold to US Jewish millionaire Irving Moskowitz in 1990 (ARIJ, *Ras Al Amoud Neighborhood: A Hot Spot in Occupied East Jerusalem*, June 2003). Moskowitz developed a plan for a 132-unit settlement, which was approved by the Jerusalem Municipal Planning Commission, with the agreement of then Mayor Teddy Kollek. Although then Interior Minister Haim Ramon froze the plan because of its sensitive nature, his successor, Ehud Barak, submitted it to the Jerusalem District Zoning Commission, which issued its final approval on 10 Dec. 1996.

Ma'ale Zaytim was the first major settlement development in the inner circle of East Jerusalem aimed at creating Jewish continuity with the cemetery outside the Old City and the Bet Orot Yeshiva (also owned by Moskowitz)



Ma'ale Zaytim settlement

on the Mt. of Olives and, thus, to eventually pre-empt any idea of dividing Jerusalem. Construction on 14.5 dunums started in 1998 and the first settlers moved there in April 2003, when the attention of the world was focused on the war in Iraq. Later that year, the initial 132 units were completed and construction continued on facilities such as a commercial center, a synagogue, a kindergarten, and a clinic.

It is worth noting that prior to 1998, the West Jerusalem Municipality had refused to endorse a Master Plan for Ras Al-

Amud on the grounds that part of the land belonged to Jews and that it had made its approval conditional on Palestinian residents agreeing to the construction of a Jewish complex in the heart of their neighborhood. The settlement, however, was eventually forced on the Palestinians, who were only allowed to build on 55-65% of the total area of land and then, with a maximum of only two floors per unit (as compared to the settlers who were allowed to build on 115% of the total area with a maximum of seven floors) (ARIJ, *The Geopolitical Status of the Jerusalem Governorate*, Dec. 2006).

In July 2005, the rightwing 'Bukharan Community Committee' and the Israeli Police (through National Police Commissioner Moshe Karadi) signed an 'exchange deal' according to which the Committee agreed to build the new police station in the E1 area and receive, in return the current police building, located in **Ras Al-Amud**, to use for residential purposes, i.e., incorporate it into the adjacent Ma'ale Zaytim settlement, which is expected to at least double in size (there are currently 52 residential units). (*Ha'aretz*, 26 April 2006).

◆ Jabal Mukabber

Jabal Mukabber is a heavily populated Palestinian residential area located on a hill south of the Old City and Ath-Thori and adjacent to Sawahreh Al-Gharbiyyeh (West).

The Jabal Mukabber settlement project was initially approved in 1993 but subsequently postponed because of its sensitive nature and questions pertaining to land ownership. In May 2002, the Israeli Dugal Investment and Holdings Co. - accompanied by Israeli forces - fenced off the area involved, located on a slope below the 'Goldman Promenade' north of East Talpiot, and began razing the land and establishing military observation posts. Construction of the '**Nof Zion**' (formerly **Nof Zahav** or **Golden View**) settlement began in 2004 and was approved a year later by the Israeli Committee for Planning. The project - run by private entrepreneurs (Jacques Nasser and Abie Levy) - is slated to cover some 115 dunums, part of which belonged to Jews, and part of which was expropriated from several Arab landowners. It includes the construction of some 400 housing units, a five-star hotel, a synagogue, a Jewish ritual bath, a kindergarten, a school, parks, a shopping center, a country/sports club, and other amenities suited to the needs of the targeted US buyers. The first stage of building, which



Nof Zion: Completed settlement as advertised on the project's website (Jabal Mukabber in the background); small photo: ongoing construction at the site.