

◆ Safdie Plan

The plan, named after the man behind it, the architect Moshe Safdie, was initiated during Ehud Olmert's tenure as West Jerusalem Mayor by the Israel Land Administration and the Jerusalem Development Authority. It called for the construction of some 20,000 housing units on hills stretching over 24,200 dunums to the west of Jerusalem as well as the building of additional roads to serve the new neighborhoods. After harsh opposition by environmentalists, the National Planning and Building Board decided in Oct. 2006 to appoint an independent investigator (Tomer Guthalf). On 6 Feb. 2007, the Board then voted to cancel the plan following the presentation of Guthalf's report on land reserves in Jerusalem, which estimated that some 45,500 housing units could be built on existing land reserves in Jerusalem in order to meet the city's housing demands until 2020 (forecasted at between 33,500-45,500 units).

Although the plan is not directly linked to Palestinian issues of concern in the city, its cancellation is expected to have major consequences in regard to Palestinian development since Jewish expansion and construction will now occur even more at the expense of Palestinian land, the expansion of settlements such as Har Homa being a good example.

◆ The Separation Barrier, Checkpoints & Terminals

On 20 Feb. 2005, the Israeli Government confirmed the **route** of the separation barrier in the Jerusalem area based on the declared intention of providing security to the residents of Israel. In reality, the barrier serves to redefine Jerusalem's



Part of the Separation Barrier at Abu Dis

borders and its demographic makeup by maximizing the number of Palestinian Jerusalemites living behind the wall while maximizing the amount of Palestinian land on the 'Israeli' side of it. On 30 April 2006, the Israeli Cabinet approved a **revised route**, with revisions in the Jerusalem area including the moving of **Beit Ikse** and its lands from the Jerusalem side of the barrier to the Biddu/Beit Surik group of West Bank villages and the encirclement of **Walajeh**, with its consequent isolation from its farmland.

The length of the planned separation barrier is approx. 760 km, of which an estimated 150 km (18%) will be built in and around Jerusalem (referred to as the '**Jerusalem Envelope**'). There is no exact figure for the 'envelope's' length as final approval of all sections of the route is still pending. Clear, however, is the fact that the area enclosed by the barrier will measure approx. 164 km² (the current municipal area of Jerusalem is 70 km²) and that Palestinian residents will be separated not only from the city, but also from each other. In Walajeh, Kufr Aqab/Semiramis, and the Shu'fat Refugee Camp, the route of the barrier severs either the entire neighborhood or a significant portion of it from the city (Ir Amin, *Beyond the Wall*, Jan. 2007).

There are currently 12 **routes and crossings** available for entering Jerusalem from the West Bank. Palestinian traffic into Jerusalem is limited to using only four barrier crossings: (1) **Qalandia** from the north, (2) **Gilo** from the south, (3) the **Shu'fat Refugee Camp** from the east and (4) **Ras Abu Sbeitan** ('Mi'bar Hazitim in Hebrew) between Al-Izzariya and At-Tur (for pedestrian residents of Abu Dis and Al-Izzariya). The eight other routes and crossing points into Jerusalem, now closed to West Bank Palestinians, will remain open to residents of Israel and non-Israelis with valid visas, and are as follows: **Ar-Ram**, the **Beitunia** commercial crossing, **Hizma**, **Az-Za'im**, the **tunnels** on north-south bypass Road 60, **Ein Yalow** near Gilo, **Ramot Alon**, and **Bir Nabala-Atarot**. An additional four more crossings are planned: one near Bethlehem (the Mazmura Trade Passage), one in Ras Al-Amud, one in Nabi Samwil, and one in Sheikh Sa'ad/Jabal Mukaber (UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Update*, Feb. 2006).



Qalandia checkpoint

In 2005, it was estimated that some 55,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites (e.g., residents of Kufr Aqab, Salam, Ras Khamis, Anata, Qalandia, and the Shu'fat Refugee Camp) would be transferred to the West Bank, while an additional 60-80,000 Palestinian Jerusalem ID card holders - unable to afford the housing prices in Jerusalem - were already living outside the Jerusalem municipal boundary (e.g., in Ar-Ram) and would therefore be cut off from the city (Ministry of State for Jerusalem Affairs, *Out of Gaza, Into Jerusalem: Israel's Threat to the Two-State Solution*, Aug. 2005).