

continuity with the cemetery outside the Old City and the Beit Orot Yeshiva on the Mount of Olives and, thus, to eventually pre-empt any idea of dividing Jerusalem. Construction on 14.5 dunums started in 1998 by the “Kedumim 3000” Co. (which states on its website its “ideological desire to build specifically in Judea and Samaria” and to “employ only Jewish labor”) and the first settlers moved there in April 2003, when world attention 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. Today, an estimated 250 settlers live in Ma’ale HaZeitim.

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 - despite international protests - eventually forced on the Palestinians, who were only allowed to build on 55-65% of the total land area and no more than 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 E-1 area and receive in return the current police building, located in **Ras Al-Amud**, to use for residential purposes. By doing this they were able to incorporate the building into the adjacent Ma’ale HaZeitim settlement, which is expected to at least double in size. In January 2008, construction begun on another 60 housing units in the settlement, where 51 settler families already lived, and in April 2008, settlers moved into the vacated police building to mark the founding of a new neighborhood - **‘Ma’ale David’** - which will eventually comprise of 110 housing units over 10 dunums of land.

### ◆ **Jabal Mukabber**

Jabal Mukabber with an estimated 17,000 inhabitants 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, located on a slope below the ‘Goldman Promenade’ north of



*Jabal Mukabber*

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, after a petition by the Palestinian landowners to the Israeli High Court of Justice was rejected. 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 over 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 prospective US buyers. The first of four stages of the construction (91 apartments) was completed in 2008 and the Dugal Co. now awaits the final approval from the government to start the second and third stages.



*Nof Zion*

While the El ‘Ad settler group claims that all the land in question was acquired legally, it is clear that at least half of the land was confiscated by the West Jerusalem municipality from Arab landowners. The landowners subsequently appealed to the Jerusalem District Court on the grounds that the confiscation was illegal and that only Arab-owned land had been expropriated and designated as ‘green areas.’ Not surprisingly, however, the court ruled in favor of the West Jerusalem municipality. The settlement’s infrastructure is to be built on land confiscated from residents of Jabal Mukabber in return for which they were promised better water, electricity, and sewage services. However, their request to be connected to Nof Zion’s sewage system has been turned down and they remain without a sewage system. It is worth noting that the site is the only space left for future urban development in the area and that while Nof Zion has received permission to build five- and six-storey buildings, construction in Jabal Mukabber is limited to two storeys.

The Jabal Mukabber settlement project is clearly a key link in an evolving chain of settlements being built inside Arab areas to break up Arab continuity and establish Israeli domination over East Jerusalem, thus making it virtually impossible to have a viable Palestinian capital.

### ◆ **Abu Dis**

Abu Dis is situated just east of the Jerusalem municipal border.



*Abu Dis*

Between 1920 and 1930, the Agudat HaDayarim Jewish Cooperative Society was created in Jerusalem in order to establish Jewish neighborhoods for its members. In 1928, the Agudat purchased 598 dunums of land in the area known today as Abu Dis - due to its proximity to the Old City - in order to build a ‘Garden Community’ (homes with agricultural fields). Despite acquiring the legal title to the area, the increasingly tense relationships between Arabs and Jews during the time of the Arab revolts in Jerusalem resulted in the initiative being abandoned.