

After the War of 1967, Abu Dis came under the jurisdiction of the General Custodian of the State of Israel. When the Israeli government annexed areas of land to municipal Jerusalem, some 10% of the Abu Dis territory remained inside Jerusalem proper, with the rest being located beyond the Green Line. About 60-70 dunums of that land is owned by the Agudah and designated for a settlement project.

The seizure of Abu Dis land began in June 2000, when a group of right-wing MKs and Jerusalem yeshiva students erected a barbed wire fence and planted olive tree saplings on confiscated property in Abu Dis. On 22 May 2000, the Israeli Ministry of Housing endorsed plans for a new settlement in the area to house - initially - some 200 settlers. In early 2004, the West Jerusalem municipality approved the construction of the new 'Kidmat Zion' settlement - to consist, eventually, of 400 housing units, a kindergarten, a school, and a synagogue on some 64 dunums. On 1 May 2004, four settler families from the Ateret Cohanim movement, equipped with generators and personal items, moved into two homes in the area ('Bet Ha'Achim' and 'Bet Sara'). The land in question - most of which is said to have been purchased by Jewish American millionaire Irving Moskowitz - is located next to the separation barrier, opposite the unfinished Palestinian parliament building.



Kidmat Zion "settlement"

However, due to US pressure construction at the site was put on hold. In March 2008, Shas Chairman Eli Yishai demanded that then Prime Minister Olmert immediately unfreeze the construction ban and proceed with the settlement plan. As Jerusalem's new mayor, one of Nir Barkat's first acts was to resume the construction of 230 apartments in late 2008. However, on 24 March 2009, the West Jerusalem municipality's legal adviser, Yossi Havilio, froze the plan in response to a request by Meretz city councilman Pepe Alalo and attorney Danny Seideman of Ir Amim on the grounds that there had already been illegal construction on the part of the settlers which cannot retroactively be approved. However, it is more than likely that Ateret Cohanim will use all their contacts and strength to push for the revival of the project.

In addition to the settler activities mentioned above, there is also, of course, the Israeli government's ongoing settlement policy in the wider metropolitan area.

### BUILDING NEW AND EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES

At least 66% of Jerusalem today is territory that was seized by force (5% being former Jordanian Municipality territory, and 61% former West Bank territory). Within this area, Israel has expropriated over 23,380 dunums of mostly Palestinian-owned land, over one-third of East Jerusalem - for the construction of Israeli settlements since 1967 (FMEP, *Report on Israeli Settlement*, May-June 1999). The settlements form two rings around the city with the **inner ring** running within the municipal boundaries

and the **outer ring** ('Greater Jerusalem') reaching far into the West Bank. The 'Greater Jerusalem' plan is a political rather than geographical concept that follows Israel's vision of a metropolitan Jerusalem stretching from Ramallah (north) to Hebron (south) and from Jericho (east) to Bet Shemesh (west) and covering some 30% of the West Bank. The total area involved amounts to 440 km<sup>2</sup>, of which less than a quarter lies within pre-1967 Israeli borders.

Contrary to Israel's obligations under international law, the Road Map, and the Annapolis Conference, settlements are also being expanded, constructed or planned at an unprecedented pace within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, where some 190,000 Israeli settlers currently live. This is part of Israel's overall plan to form a Jewish urban belt around Palestinian East Jerusalem and secure Israeli sovereignty over the entire region.

The following is an overview of the projects or plans currently underway in this region (see Map p. 12-13).

#### ♦ Sha'ar Mizrahi in the Shu'fat-Anata Area

In August 2008, settlers made their first attempts to establish a new outpost ('Sha'ar Mizrahi' or 'Shaare HaMizrah' - Eastern Gateway) on a hill located between French Hill and Anata, near the Ras Shehadeh neighborhood of Shu'fat Refugee Camp and Bypass Road #1, which links Ma'ale Adumim to Jerusalem. The plan is to establish some 2,000 housing units on the estimated 180 dunums, currently defined as agricultural property, which is the only open space available in the area between Shu'fat Camp, Anata and Al-Issawiyya.

The idea of a settlement at the site is part of the larger Ma'ale Adumim Bloc project and was first raised over nine years ago. In September 2008, Israeli police evicted settlers from the site, but in mid-October Jerusalem mayoral candidate Nir Barkat, who later won the municipal elections and is an outspoken supporter of a greater Jewish presence in East Jerusalem - expressed support for the project. If realized, the plan will prevent the territorial contiguity of a future Palestinian state while adding to the establishment of a permanent Jewish presence between Ma'ale Adumim and Jerusalem. In early February 2009, the West Jerusalem municipality gave the green light to Aryeh King to proceed with the Plan. King is an Ateret Cohanim member who represents the alleged Jewish landowner Eliyahu Cohanim, who claims he has held the title deed to the property since 1970, when he bought it from another Jew, who had purchased it from an Arab. King has also campaigned hard to have the route of the separation barrier in the area changed as the current path will leave the planned Jewish settlement on the "Arab" side of the barrier. A Tel Aviv court is scheduled to hand down its ruling on the matter soon.



Site of the planned Sha'ar Mizrahi settlement