

alize following the decision made by Attorney General Menachem Mazuz in February 2005 that it is forbidden to apply the Absentee Owners Property Law within the boundaries of Jerusalem. The West Jerusalem municipality's Master Plan 'Jerusalem 2000' finally points to the expansion of Har Homa by 28% (some 1,410 dunums) so that it will eventually spread over some 2,500 dunums of land (ARIJ, *The Geopolitical Status of the Jerusalem Governorate*, Dec. 2006).



Har Homa advertisement

Shortly after the Annapolis Conference, on 4 December 2007, Israel issued tenders for the construction of 307 new homes in Har Homa, and at the end of that month Peace Now revealed that Israel's 2008 budget included NIS 50 million for the construction of 500 new homes in the settlement. Israeli Housing Minister Ze'ev Boim demanded in February 2008 approval for the construction of another 360 housing units in Har Homa and in early June 2008 he announced tenders for 121 housing units. On 9 July 2008 the **Har Homa C** plan to build 910 new homes to the south and east of the current construction line was submitted for public review. A related issue of concern is that - in direct contradiction to the Attorney General's order - large parts of the lands slated for further construction in Har Homa belong to Palestinians from the Bethlehem-Beit Sahour area who were declared "absentees" after the 1967 War.

As of 2008, Har Homa housed some 4,000 families as well as kindergartens, day care centers, schools, clinics, and shopping centers. According to a report by the Negotiations Affairs Department (Dec. 2008), Town Planning Schemes for 2,653 housing units in Har Homa have been approved in the period between the Annapolis Conference and November 2008 alone. And in February 2009, the municipality approved 14 new housing units and a public structure (*Ha'aretz*, 12 Feb. 2009).

◆ Other developments in brief:

Ramot:

On 28 January 2008, a Town Planning Scheme was released for public review, indicating construction plans for some 1,300 residential units, 105 of which beyond the Green Line. The aim of this plan is to fill



Ramot settlement

the "gap" between Ramot and Beit Iksha village. According to a report by the Negotiations Affairs Department (Dec. 2008), Town Planning Schemes for 338 units have been approved in the period between the Annapolis Conference and November 2008, while 1,600 units were awaiting final approval. Added to this on 12 December 2008, *Yediot Aharonot* reported on plans by the Housing Ministry and the Israel Land Administration to issue 745 tenders in 2009 for Ramot.

Ramat Shlomo (also known as Rekhesh Shu'fat):

The West Jerusalem municipality's Regional Committee for Housing and Planning agreed on 13 June 2008 to construct 1,300 new housing units, all on a plot originally designated as "green area" to preserve its ecological diversity.



Ramat Shlomo settlement

Pisgat Ze'ev:

In April 2008, the Israeli government announced plans for at least 600 new apartments and, according to a December 2008 report by the Negotiations Affairs Department, Town Planning Schemes for 759 units have been approved in the period between the Annapolis Conference and November 2008.



Pisgat Ze'ev settlement

East Talpiot:

According to a report by the Negotiations Affairs Department (Dec. 2008), 620 units have been approved between the Annapolis Conference and November 2008, while 104 units were awaiting final approval. In February



Construction in As-Sawahreh

2009, Israel began construction - initially approved in 2000 - on over 60 new housing units in three 7-8 storey buildings for Orthodox Jews. The project is marketed as part of the development of East Talpiot, but the 3.5-dunum building site is surrounded on three sides by the Palestinian neighborhood of **As-Sawahreh**. It should be noted that in contrast, construction for As-Sawahreh residents is restricted to three apartment structures and two floors per dunum.

Givat Hamatos:

In February 2008, the West Jerusalem municipality's city manager Yair Ma'ayan revealed construction plans for Givat Hamatos, a caravan village housing Ethiopian Jews since 1991. The issue of ownership



Caravans at Givat Hamatos

is complex involving Israeli, Palestinian, and church property and it seems unlikely that the plans will be implemented soon. However, building plans for a total of 3,150 of the total of 4,000 units were submitted for public review in March and May 2008. In July 2008, construction of 2,500 housing units was approved. The proposed neighborhood, drawn up by the Israel Land Administration, envisages high-rise buildings and a bypass road connecting to nearby Gilo and Har Homa settlements and will effectively cut Beit Safafa off from other Palestinian areas.