

In March 2006, settlers succeeded in acquiring property on the far end of the **At-Tur** neighborhood, taking over two four-story buildings (called "**Choshen**") not far from the Seven Arches Hotel overlooking the Old City. The circumstances of the takeover, which represented a new effort on the part of settlers to create outposts in East Jerusalem, are currently the subject of legal proceedings. The former owners, Abu Al-Hawa and Kiswani families, insisted that they had not sold the buildings to Jews but to Palestinian buyers (who, in turn, sold the property to a Jordanian investment company), and that signatures on the settlers' alleged contract had been forged. Today, approximately 30 settlers live in the two houses.



"Choshen"

NIS 47,876 million - This was the amount paid in 2008 to secure the settlers of East Jerusalem! (Peace Now, May 2009).

In addition to governmental support of the private construction being carried out by settler organizations in and around the Old City, the Israeli government also provides **private security services** to protect the settlers. Funding for the guards is provided by the Ministry of Construction and Housing.

Construction is also underway to renovate an old house in the **Mount of Olives Cemetery**, adjacent to two other houses, where about 15 settlers currently live.

Most recently in March 2009, the West Jerusalem municipality handed 29 letters to families living in 10 buildings in the **Sahel neighborhood** of At-Tur. The letters were either demolition orders or notifications that legal complaints have been filed against them in the Municipal Court for building without a permit. In June 2008, ten homes were destroyed in the same neighborhood and one house in February 2009. Moreover, in January 2009, the municipality placed a sign in the area reading "Entry prohibited. State Lands", claiming the plot in question has no owner. In the nearby Hardoub area, land was seized for the purpose of the construction of buildings used for "the benefit of the public."

In addition, several isolated buildings have been occupied by settlers or used as offices, including buildings located in **Ath-Thori** (Abu Tor) and on **Nablus Road** (opposite the US Consulate / near the YMCA building). Connecting all these cases shows that the motive behind this policy is to create a Jewish continuum and cut the Old City and its immediate environs off from the Palestinian neighborhoods to the north, thus thwarting any chance of a future agreement based on the division of Jerusalem.

Linked to this is the case of some 400 people in **Wadi Yasul** (between **Ath-Thori** and **Jabal Mukabber**) that have been threatened with the demolition of 55 homes on the pretext that the houses were built in an area zoned as a "green area". A plan submitted by the residents in 2004 to save their neighborhood, was rejected in November 2008 by the District Planning Committee on the grounds that it interferes with the Local Outline Plan for Jerusalem 2000, which keeps it a "green area," forbidding any development.

THE "HOLY BASIN" AREA BEYOND THE OLD CITY

Further evidence that Israeli planning and building laws in East Jerusalem are aimed at reducing Palestinian living space are the infiltration by settlers of the wider "Holy Basin" area - Ras Al-Amud, Jabal Al-Mukabber and Abu Dis (see also map on page 2).

◆ Ras Al-Amud

Ras Al-Amud, home to over 15,000 Palestinians, is located southeast of the Old City on a ridge overlooking Al-Haram Al-Sharif, Silwan, Abu Dis, and Al-Izzariyya.



Ras Al-Amud with the Police Station (1) & Ma'ale Zaytim settlement (2)

The **Ma'ale HaZeitim** (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 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.



Ma'ale Zaytim settlement

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 reclaimed 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 December 1996.

Ma'ale HaZeitim was the first major settlement development in the inner circle of East Jerusalem aimed at creating Jewish