



**Amin Al-Majaj**  
Acting Mayor of Jerusalem, 1967-1999

After the Palestinians rejected the dismissal of the Arab Municipality by Israel in June 1967 and continued to function at the Gloria Hotel in the Old City, council members elected Dr. Majaj as acting mayor. In June 1995, a Palestinian Authority ministerial committee decided to re-activate the Jerusalem Arab Municipal Council, and appointed Dr. Majaj as mayor (until his death in 1999) while all living members of the pre-1967 council became deputies.



Window of Al-Aqsa Mosque

## Israeli Municipal Policies

**NB: Palestinian Jerusalemites are considered Israeli residents - not citizens - and are subject to Israeli law, police and courts.**

### Municipal Budget, Taxation and Infrastructure

According to the Israeli CBS, the over 208,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites (32% of the city's total population) receive less than 12% of the municipal budget; on average, the city invests seven times as much on a Jewish resident as on a Palestinian resident. In addition, Palestinians are exposed to an unfair tax system (e.g., arnona tax), which requires them to pay the same rates as their Israeli counterparts whose per capita income is approx. 8 times higher.

The gap in the infrastructures between East and West Jerusalem is huge. The sewage system in East Jerusalem is inadequate and insufficient; about half of the water network needs replacing, and repairs and maintenance work on street lighting and roads are urgently needed.

	West Jerusalem	East Jerusalem (excl. settlements)
Sewage pipelines (in km)	650	76
Kilometer of sidewalks	700	73
Public gardens	1,079	29

(Source: Al-Quds, 1 June 2000, quoting a WJM Monitoring Dept. Report on the difference between East and West Jerusalem.)

The following table underlines the discrepancy in spending:

#### Allocation of Municipal Budgets, West and East Jerusalem

Department	Percentage of total Budget allocated to East Jerusalem
Welfare	12.5
Education	16.6
Health	6.2
Projects	3.5
Culture	2.6
Sport	8.1
Trade	2.2
Youth	5.9
Religious Affairs	0.0

Department	Percentage of Budget allocated to East Jerusalem
Sanitation	11.5
Beautification	7
Development Budget	12

(Source: Meir Margalit, "A Chronicle of Municipal Discrimination in Jerusalem," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 2001).

In Aug. 2001, the Israeli Govt. authorized the transfer of NIS 200 million to the WJM, which demands an extra NIS 300 million over the next three years to be used for urgent infrastructure projects in East Jerusalem (construction of roads, sewage, new classrooms, kindergartens, and parks). The Netanyahu administration had promised NIS 400 million for this purpose and under Barak NIS 250 million were waved, but hardly any funds have been actually allocated). The money will come from several sources, for different types of development:

- NIS 65 million for the multi-year project for improving city services to East Jerusalem
- NIS 40 million from the Housing and Construction Ministry, for infrastructure
- NIS 25 million from the Transportation Ministry, for roads
- NIS 40 million from the Education Ministry, for classrooms
- NIS 10 million from the Tourism Ministry, for support for tourism
- NIS 20 million from the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, for welfare services.

### Closure

In March 1993, the Rabin government imposed a **general closure** denying Palestinians from the WBGS entrance to Israel, free movement between the southern and northern part of the West Bank, and access to Jerusalem, thus depriving thousands of Palestinians from reaching their workplaces and holy places as well as accessing medical, educational and economic services. Those Palestinians who enter the city 'illegally' risk imprisonment and high penalties.

In addition to the general closure, Israel imposes **total closures** - usually after attacks or to prevent attacks at sensitive times, such as Israeli holidays - in which all entry permits are cancelled, and **internal closures** - mostly imposed after a Palestinian attack on Israeli civilians or security forces - which blockade West Bank towns and villages by de facto isolating them.

The closure policy disregards international law, according to which East Jerusalem is an integral part of the West Bank, and the Oslo Accords, which view the WBGS as 'one territorial unit'.

The closure has had a devastating impact on the economy of East Jerusalem and thus, on the Palestinian economy in general; it is estimated that the lifting of the Israeli closure (i.e., the opening of Jerusalem) would add some 20% to the overall GDP of Palestine.

