



UNITED NATIONS

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
occupied Palestinian territory

SETTLEMENTS IN PALESTINIAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN EAST JERUSALEM

APRIL 2012

KEY FACTS

- Nearly 200,000 Israeli settlers reside in settlements established in occupied East Jerusalem, which has been unlawfully annexed to Israel; 35% of the annexed areas were expropriated and allocated to settlements.
- About 2,000 settlers live in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods, in houses which have been taken over by various means, including the application of the Absentee Property Law and the processing in Israeli courts of claims over properties allegedly owned by Jews prior to 1948, among others.
- Such settlements are concentrated in the so-called 'Holy Basin' area – comprising the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, At-Tur (Mount of Olives), Wadi Joz, Ras al-'Amud, and Jabal Al Mukabbir.
- Beit Hanina, a Palestinian suburb in the northern part of East Jerusalem, has most recently become the target for such settlement activities, which include a plan to build around 60 new housing units for settlers (Peace Now).
- In April 2012, two Palestinian refugee families (comprising 13 people) were forcibly evicted by the Israeli authorities from their houses in Beit Hanina, following a court case brought by an Israeli citizen, supported by a settler association, claiming ownership over the property. The houses were subsequently handed over to settlers.
- In Sheikh Jarrah, nine Palestinian families were evicted in 2008-9 and their homes handed over to settlers. Another 500 residents are at risk of forced eviction and displacement for the same reason. Similar incidents have taken place in the Old City, Jabal Al Mukabbir and Ras Al-'Amud.
- Since the beginning of 2009, one Palestinian was killed and at least 430 have been injured in the context of settler attacks and clashes with Israeli forces and private security guards in and around settlements in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah alone.

1. Similar to the rest of Israeli settlements in the oPt, settlements in East Jerusalem are illegal under international humanitarian law (IHL), as they violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of the occupying power's civilian population into occupied territory.
2. The establishment of settlements in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods commonly entails the forced eviction and displacement of Palestinians. In addition to depriving families of their homes, this has often resulted in disruption to livelihoods and access to basic services such as education and water/sanitation. This inevitably leads to reduced standard of living and increased dependency on humanitarian aid. The impact of displacement on children can be particularly devastating, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety and reduced academic achievement.
3. This settlement activity has also led to increased tensions, restrictions on public space, residential growth and freedom of movement. The continuous deployment of private security guards and police forces to protect the settlements, particularly in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah, has also led to frequent clashes, which undermined the physical security of Palestinian residents.
4. Israel, as an occupying power, has an obligation to protect the Palestinian civilian population. International law prohibits the forced displacement of civilians and the transfer of settlers into occupied territory, as well as confiscation or destruction of private property, except when such destruction is absolutely necessary for military operations. The application of the Israeli legal system to accommodate claims over property rights in an occupied territory is also unlawful under international law, and it involves discrimination against Palestinian refugees, who are not allowed to reclaim their property in Israel.



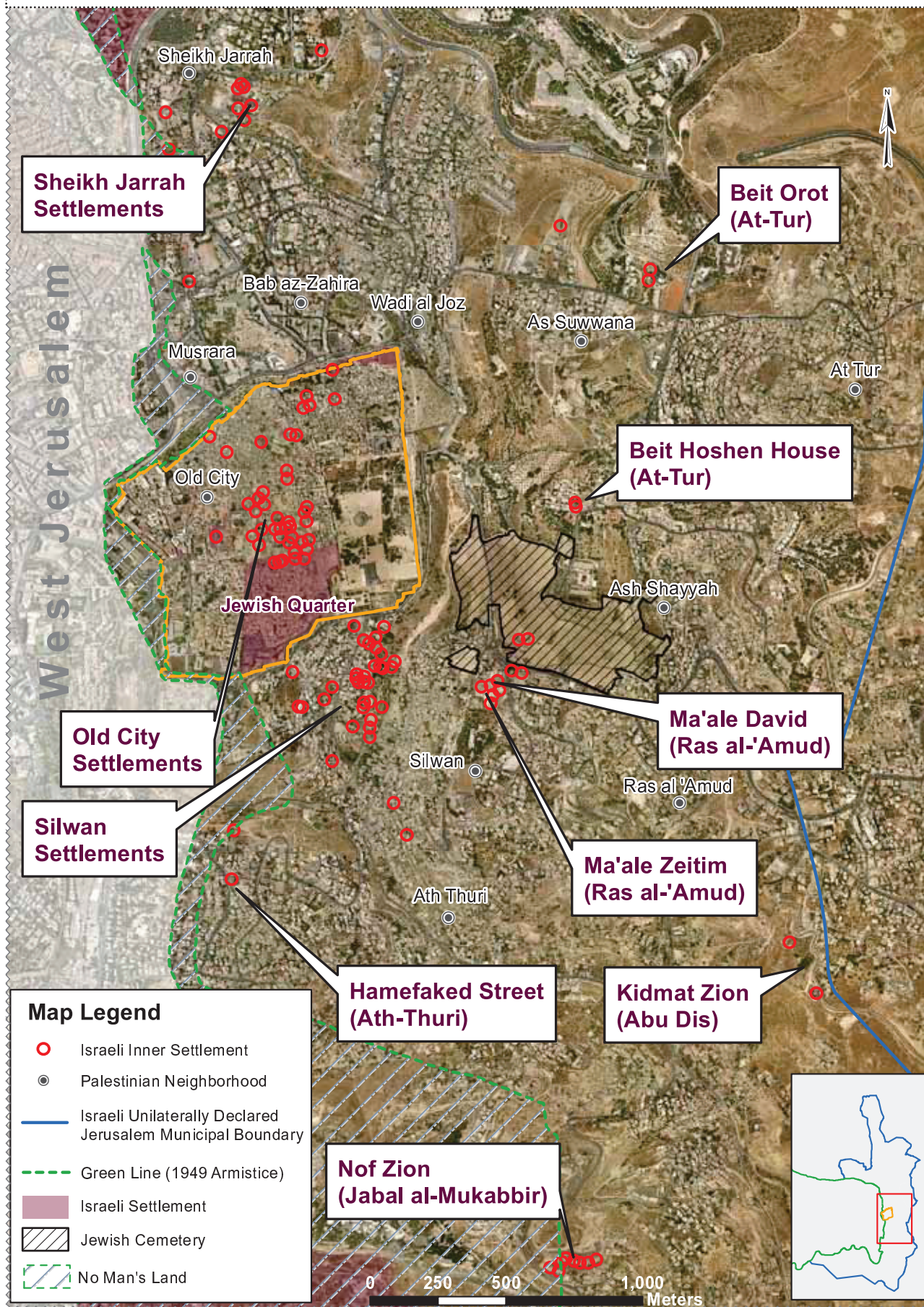


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East Jerusalem: Settlements in Palestinian Residential Areas

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