

The Geopolitical Status of Sharafat Town



Prepared by



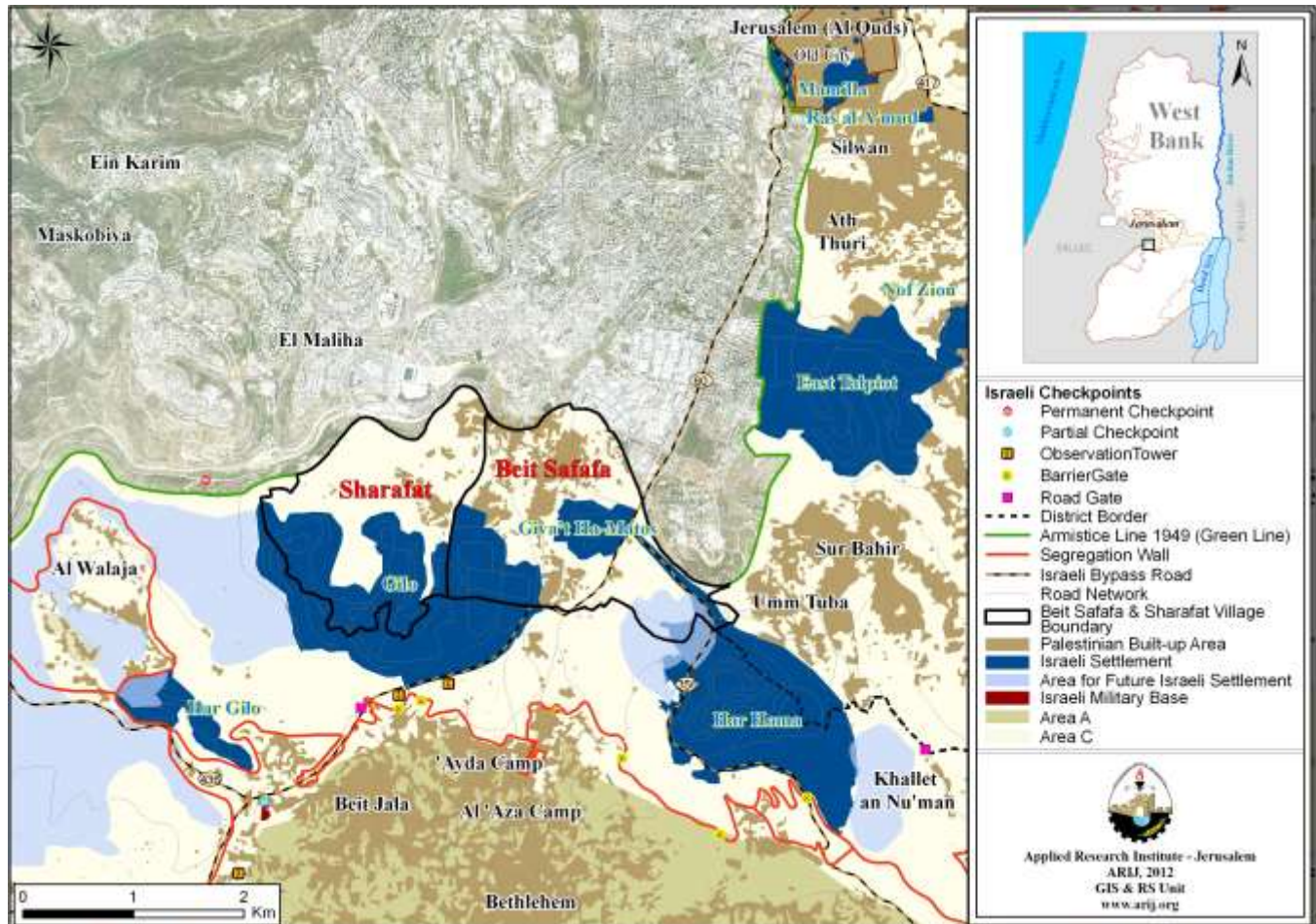
The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem

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Sharafat Town Profile

Sharafat is a Palestinian town in Jerusalem Governorate and located to its southwest. It is bordered by Beit Safafa and the settlement of Giv'at Hamatos to the east, Western Jerusalem to the north, Al Walaja village to the west, Beit Jala city and the settlement of Gilo to the south (ARIJ, 2022). The population of Sharafat town has exceeded 3,000 Palestinians in 2020 (Bimkom¹). (See map 1).

Map 1: Beit Safafa & Sharafat location and borders



Source: ARIJ - 2022

Geopolitical Status of Beit Sharafat Town

The entirety of Sharafat town, covering an area of 2,725 dunums is located under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality, which was illegally and unilaterally expanded following the 1967 after

¹ Survey of Palestinian Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem – Sharafat
http://bimkom.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/3.6_sharafat.pdf

the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, in addition to Gaza Strip and other Arab lands. Jerusalem Governorate was divided into two main regions. J1 area is located inside the borders and under the control of Jerusalem Municipality, and includes many Palestinian communities from the Old Town and Jerusalem City (Beit Al Maqdis), in addition to Sharafat town which is located in (J1) area from its southern side. The other region is J2, which is located outside the borders and control of Jerusalem Municipality. It is noted that the Israeli Occupation Authorities have used the segregation plan which is represented by the construction of the Segregation Wall to redraw the boundaries of Jerusalem Municipality illegally and unilaterally, aiming to create a *de facto* situation in favor of the Jewish presence in the city. The Segregation Wall has separated the whole area of J1 from Jerusalem Governorate, except for Kafr ‘Aqab and Shu’fat Camp Refugee camp.

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28th September 1995, the West Bank was classified into areas “A,” “B” and “C.” The town of Beit Safafa & Sharafat was not subjected to this classification, but remained as it was before this agreement, under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality.

Israeli Occupation Practices in Sharafat Town

Sharafat town has been subjected to a number of Israeli confiscations for the benefit of the various Israeli targets, represented in; the construction of Israeli settlements on the town territory and its surroundings, the construction of Israeli bypass roads, in addition to the Israeli segregation plan. That which follows is a breakdown of Israeli confiscations in Sharafat town lands:

During the years of the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli government confiscated 1187 dunums in Sharafat town (44% of the total town’s area) to establish part of Gilo Settlement. “Gilo” settlement was established south of Sharafat town, on the lands that were illegally and unilaterally annexed to Jerusalem from the neighboring Palestinian communities following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in 1967. The settlement of Gilo separates the territorial contiguity of Sharfat town and the city of Bethlehem and disrupt their long physical, spiritual and cultural connection. (Table 1).

Table 1: Israeli Settlements constructed on Sharafat Town lands

Settlement Name	Year of construction	Area confiscated from Sharafat (dunums)	Population of settlers (2018)
Gilo	1971	1187	31,570
Total		1187	31,570

Source: ARIJ,

Israeli Bypass Roads on lands of Sharafat Town

Along with launching a vigorous settlement program following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, the consecutive Israeli governments adopted a separation concept based on the creation of an Israeli controlled road grid system, which will work to facilitate the construction of Israeli settlements and the Israeli settlers movement between occupied territory settlements and Israel and eventually incorporate the Israeli created and controlled road grid system in the occupied territory with the road grid system in Israel.

The Israelis built these roads under the pretext of 'security needs'; a term that presented the Israeli Army with legitimate excuse to expropriate Palestinian lands; a procedure that proved its efficiency before when the Israeli Army would expropriate Palestinian lands under the 'security needs' pretext to establish an Army base, which later on is turned to Israeli settlers control who would turn it on their part into a civilian inhabitant area.

For Israel, that was the only available option or the only loop to bypass the international law, which considers, expropriating land for any purpose other than military use a 'grave breach'. Israel also argued the military role of the settlements and the bypass roads to its security, which allowed the Army to expropriate private Palestinian lands to build settlements and its roads; Israel also argued that the roads it is building will also benefit the local Palestinian population who would be allowed to travel on these roads. Furthermore, the Israeli built roads on confiscated Palestinian lands contributed immensely to stimulate the habitation of the Israeli settlements, which encouraged the Israeli settlers to take initiative and construct roads on their own, but would later on be endorsed and adopted by the Israeli Army to cast a shadow of legitimacy on these roads. In addition to its role in connecting settlements, the Israeli built roads worked to restrain the development of the Palestinian communities in the West Bank by creating de-facto obstructions to areas designated for development.

In this regard, the Israeli occupation Army (IOA) have confiscated more lands from Sharafat town to construct the Israeli bypass road number 4 (50) in order to link Israeli settlements in the area with Jerusalem city and Israeli settlements in the southern West Bank and with those inside the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line). It is worth mentioning that the real threat of bypass roads lies in the buffer zone formed by the IOF along these roads, extending to approximately 75 m on the roads' sides.

In 2013, the Israeli Moriah Jerusalem Development Company along with the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the Israeli Ministry of Transportation commenced the work to extend the Menachem Begin Road (Also known as Road 50) to penetrate deep inside the 1967 borders, on lands of Beit Safafa and Sharafat towns south of Jerusalem city. The Israeli Bypass road No. 50, extends from Golomb² Intersection inside the 1948 lands and heads south towards Sport Beitar Agodat, passing by Teddy Stadium³ and the Railway station in Al Malha town inside the 1948 lands. The road continues to extend southwards to Al Malha Shopping Mall to connect with Road No. 39 (Yetzhaq Modia⁴ Road), which is the last connection point inside the 1948 lands. From this point (Road 39), the road extends towards the south, penetrating deep inside the lands of Beit Safafa and Sharafat south of Jerusalem city, inside the 1967 borders, and heads towards the Israeli settlement of Gilo, to finally connect with the Israeli Bypass Road No. 60 which is the main connection point between Israeli settlements in southern Jerusalem (Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates) and those in the north and inside the 1948 lands.

The Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem claimed that the main goal behind constructing the Bypass Road No. 50 is to ease and improve the flow of traffic in the southern outskirts of Jerusalem while the construction of the road was mainly to benefit Israeli settlers living in settlements in southern Jerusalem (mainly Gilo, Giv'at Hamatos and Har Homa) and those of the Gush Etzion settlement Bloc, so that settlers will be able to drive to Jerusalem and to areas inside the 1948 lands without having to stop at any single traffic light.

² It was named after Eliyahu Golomb, the chief architect of the Haganah, between 1920 and 1948.

³ Teddy Kolek served as the mayor of Jerusalem from 1965 to 1993

⁴ etzhaq Modia was an Israeli politician, who served five terms in the Knesset for Likud.

The construction of the road was implemented on three stages; whereas the overall budget of constructing the road No. 50 is USD 1.1 Billion. The construction of the Israeli bypass Road No. 50 created a bitter and irreversible reality on the Palestinian population of Beit Safafa and Sharafat as the road separated between the town towns, which were on a permanent geographical connection over the past years, and both depend on each other in all the services.

The Israeli planned Bypass Road No. 39

Israel also plans to construct another bypass road on lands of Sharafat town, Israeli Bypass Road No. 39. The Road is designed as a new access (or national highway) road for Israeli settlements to Jerusalem from the southwest (2-3 lanes in each Direction). The road will connect Jerusalem city with with the south of the country. At this stage, the road has been approved for detailed planning and will change the landscape it is planned to cross at. The Israeli “Moriah Jerusalem Development Company” along with the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the Israeli Ministry of Transportation will implement the road. It is planned to extend from the northern side of Sharafat town, branching from the Israeli bypass Road No. 50, and then heads westwards, passing by the northern side of Gilo settlement to finally connect with the Malha Road. The road, as planned, will cause the confiscation of 642 dunums of Palestinian land in the area and will extend a length of 3 km.

Israeli Settlement plans on lands of Sharafat Town:

1- The “Giv’at Yael” Settlement Plan:

A private building initiative by Israeli Givat Yael Company plans to build 14,000 residential units to house more than 40,000 Israeli settlers to the west and southwest of Sharafat town lands. The plan dates back to 2003 and will confiscate more than 2,976 dunums of Bethlehem Governorate lands, belonging to Al Walaja, Battir and Beit Jala communities, north-west of Bethlehem Governorate. 1,126 dunums are located within Al Walaja village lands, 1,279 dunums are located within Battir village lands and 571 dunums are located within Beit Jala city lands.

This settlement will physically complete the ring of settlements separating Jerusalem and encircling Bethlehem; starting at Har Homa, north-east of Bethlehem city, extending to Gilo and “Giv’at Hamatos” north of Bethlehem city, to Har Gilo west of the city, linking with the planned Giv’at Yael and continuing towards “Gush Etzion” bloc in the southwest. The new settlement plan intends to create an Israeli settlements chain between Jerusalem and Gush Etzion settlements Bloc (southwest of the Bethlehem Governorate) as part of the “Jerusalem Envelope” plan (ARIJ, 2022). This plan aims are two-fold; **i**) to encompass as much open Palestinian land as possible and, **ii**) to increase the number of Jews within Jerusalem’s illegal boundaries in order to alter the city’s demographic status of the city and influence the outcome of the future negotiations.

It is noted that the area designated for construction is marked on the Jerusalem 2000 Master Plan as "Green Reserves." This designation was cited as one of the reasons for rejecting a master plan of Walaja residents who sought to expand the village’s built-up area via retroactive approval of houses built without permits. Changing the designation of this land from "green reserves" to land for residential use

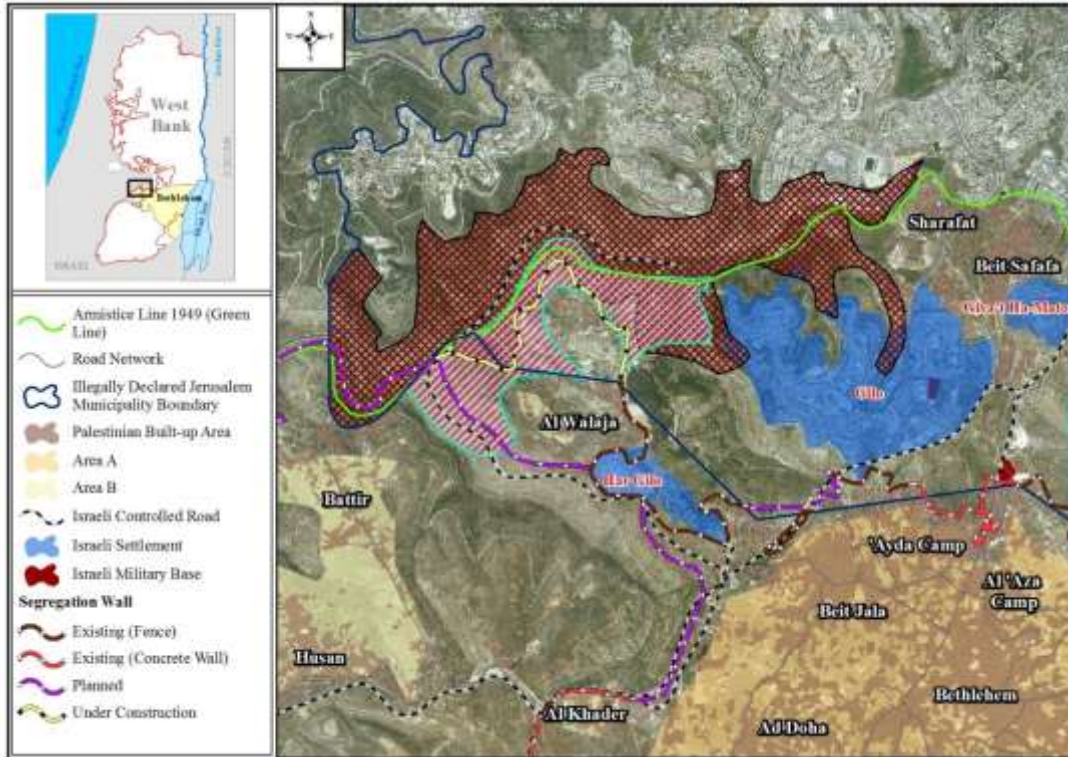
suggests once again that political considerations trump professional considerations when it comes to the decision-making of the planning authorities; with no regard for the wellbeing of local residents.

The Refayem Park plan – Israeli Town Planning Scheme 12222

In July 2013, the Israeli District Planning and Building Committee related to the Israeli Ministry of Interior approved the town plan scheme No. 12222 to establish “Refayem Metropolitan Park” in the southern parts of the city of Jerusalem, on lands of Sharafat, Al Walajah, Beit Jala and Battir. The plan was developed by the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the so-called “Israeli Development Authority” and aims to fill in the “public” spaces between the expanding settlements on Jerusalem’s southern side, further erasing the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) and contributing to the “buffer” between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Additionally, the Refayem Valley Park plan will occupy an area of 5,649 dunums, of which, 2153 dunums beyond the Green Line (Armistice Line of 1949), on lands belonging to Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Battir, Sharafat and Al Walajah, where a total of 1178.5 dunums will be annexed from Al Walajah village lands. See Table 2:-

Table 2: Refayem Park plan – TPS No. 12222		
Palestinian Locality	Governorate	Area (Dunums)
Al Walajah – Bethlehem	Bethlehem	1178.5
Battir – Bethlehem	Bethlehem	1.9
Bethlehem- Bethlehem	Bethlehem	1.2
Beit Jala- Bethlehem	Bethlehem	136.6
Sharafat – Jerusalem	Jerusalem	834.7
Total Area		2152.9
TPS Source: Israeli Land Administration, Retrieved March 2022 Analysis of Plan: Geo-Informatics Department, ARIJ – 2022		

The Refayem Park is part of three large metropolitan “parks and green areas” being developed by the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Development Authority in Jerusalem city. Two of these parks, Arazim and Motza, are entirely within the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) in the western parts of the city Jerusalem. The overall budget of constructing the Refayem park is NIS 250 million, and is funded by the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister’s Office, Jerusalem Development Authority, and Ministry of Environmental Protection. See Map 2



Map 2: Israeli Settlement plans in Al Walajah Village – Northwest of Bethlehem city

The Segregation Wall plan in Sharafat Town

The construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall has had a negative impact Sharafat town. According to the last amendment of the plan that was published on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry (30th April 2007), the Segregation Wall isolates all lands of Sharafat from the remaining Palestinian Territory in the West Bank. This is significantly difficult for the people of Bethlehem Governorate, which have historical relations with this town. The isolated lands include the whole Palestinian residential area of the town, agricultural lands, open spaces, Israeli settlements built on the town’s territory and others (Table 3).

Table 3: Land classification of lands isolated west of the Segregation Wall in Sharafat Town - Jerusalem Governorate

No.	Land classification	Area (dunums)
1	Israeli settlements	1,187
2	Agricultural areas	363
3	Palestinian built-up area	136
4	Forests & Open spaces	858
	Artificial Surfaces	181
Total		2,725

Source: ARIJ, 2022

The Segregation Walls Negative effects on Sharafat Town Residents

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, the citizens of Sharafat south of Jerusalem City have lost their association with Bethlehem city and other Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The city of Jerusalem along with surrounding towns including Sharafat were separated from lands of the West Bank, as the Segregation Wall was constructed to isolate Jerusalemite towns from the Palestinian body. The citizens of Jerusalem who hold the Jerusalemite identity (the Blue Identity) can enter the West Bank areas through the Israeli terminals, which often witness huge congestion, while being subjected to inspection from Israeli soldiers, thus restricting Palestinian's freedom of movement.

On the other hand, Palestinian citizens of the West Bank who hold a Palestinian Identity (Green Identity) are prohibited from entering Jerusalem city and its surrounding towns due to the Segregation Wall. This resultantly isolates them from health, education, social and economic services, such as hospitals, schools and medical centers, in addition to their places of work in Jerusalem. None of those holding the Green ID are able to reach the city except if holding special Israeli permits which are rarely issued to Palestinian citizens. These citizens must also pass through military checkpoints where they are inspected on a daily-basis, causing humiliation and the suffering of Palestinians in terms of movement and the breaking of family and social bonds between West Bank and Jerusalem residents. This distressing scenario occurs for many Palestinian families, especially in the case where one in a couple holds a Palestinian identity (Green Identity Card) and the other holds the Jerusalemite identity (Blue). Moreover, the Segregation Wall has prevented Palestinians from reaching places of worship in the Holy City and has also deprived them from practicing their religious rituals in Jerusalem.

The Segregation Wall plan, which was published, on the webpage of the Israeli Defense Ministry in 2007 showed that lands of Sharafat town are isolated from neighboring Palestinian towns and villages since the Segregation Wall along with the Israeli settlements' belt around Jerusalem City, isolated East Jerusalem area from the rest of West Bank. The existing Segregation Wall is located south of the town and is currently isolating the town inside Jerusalem city illegally and unilaterally redrawn boundaries, which became off access to Palestinians living in the West Bank territory.

Parallel to the establishment of the Segregation Wall, Israeli Occupation Authorities constructed a settlement belt around Jerusalem city which aims at founding an isolation area in addition to preventing of urban expansion in the towns of Jerusalem. Israeli Occupation Authorities constructed these settlements close to the urbanized areas in Jerusalemite towns, which have led to the increase of total area confiscated in these towns, and have minimized the area available for future Palestinian urban expansion. This move will create a new reality on town residents that will be difficult to reverse.

Israeli policies and plans particularly in Jerusalem, and the remaining Palestinian Territory, have led to the creation of high population densities due to the lack of lands needed for urban expansion, thus forcing people to adopt internal and vertical expansion. This has caused Jerusalem and its surrounding towns to have one of the highest considered population densities in the world. The population density in Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is approximately 13,500 person/ km² compared to 9,000 person/ km² in the settlements of Eastern Jerusalem and 8,300 person/ km² in Western Jerusalem.

The Dilemma of Lands and Building's Licenses in Beit Safafa & Sharafat Town

The problems of lands and building's license are considered one of the most difficult problems in Sharafat town and in the other Jerusalemite towns in East Jerusalem. The reason for this is two-fold; the high prices of lands and the very high cost of licenses for construction in Sharafat town. According to citizens of Sharafat, land price (one dunum) in the town ranges between JOD 100 and 200 thousand, which is equivalent to half a million Israeli shekels in order for a Palestinian to own a piece of land in this town, especially within the area of the Municipality of Jerusalem; This applies to all Jerusalem towns and even doubles in price in other places near the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding neighborhoods

The Israeli Occupation Authorities have used the money as an effective tool to buy Palestinian lands in Jerusalem in an attempt to Judaize the area and settle Jewish settlers instead. Individual Jews or Jewish organization offer Palestinians open cheques (price of land or property to be set by the property owner himself (the Palestinian) (Leninology, 2009). For anyone in Jerusalem who has a land, and wants to build a house, has to take the authorization and permission of the Municipality of Jerusalem, which puts obstacles in the way of Palestinian Jerusalemites who want to get a license for the building, in an attempt to expel Palestinians out of Jerusalem city and change the demographic balance for the benefit of the Jews, thus making Palestinians in Jerusalem a minority. One of the main obstacles that comes in the way of obtaining a building license is that one has to prove the ownership of the land. The Israeli occupation Authorities require that Palestinians seeking to build a house/structure, must prove their ownership of the land, which is considered a political problem related to the occupation since 1967.

According to a report prepared by Bimkom Organization (Planners for Planning Rights), approximately 50% of the East Jerusalem lands are unregistered in the archive of ownership such as the town of Kafr 'Aqab and the area extending from Al 'Isawiya town in the north to Sur Bahir in the south. Additionally, 25% of the lands in East Jerusalem are in the process of survey and registration (such as Beit Hanina and Shu'fat towns); and only 25% of the lands in East Jerusalem are officially registered and include parts of Al Bireh, Qalandiya, Beit Hanina, Hizma and 'Anata, Ash Sheikh Jarrah and Beit Safafa (Bimkom, 2004).

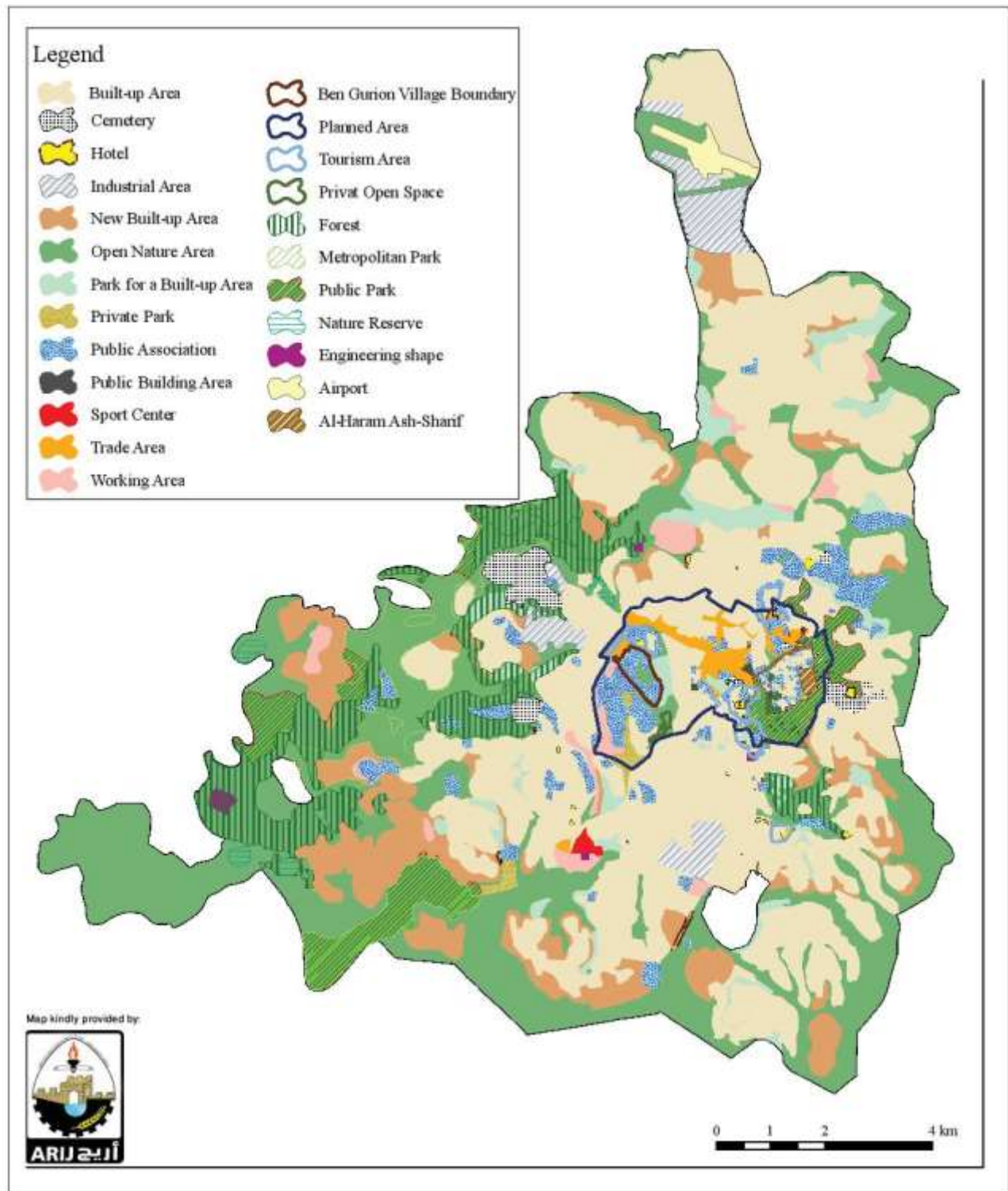
According to the testimonies of Palestinians in the town of Sharafat town, any Palestinian applying to the Israeli Authorities to get a building license, the licensing procedure is lengthy (sometimes lasting years) and carries a very high cost depending on the land area and type of building, and ranges between NIS 250,000-500,000. Moreover, due to the high cost imposed on Palestinians acquiring building permits and the Israeli lengthy licensing procedures, Palestinians tend to build without waiting for the Israeli Authorities license approval, to meet their housing needs. Because of the political problem of land registration and ownership, the unreasonable prices of licenses, in addition to the lengthy time it takes to secure licenses many citizens because of humanitarian needs and the natural family growth resort to building without licenses. In this case, the Israeli Occupation Authorities usually demolish the property and force the Palestinian owner to pay for his own demolition and submit for a new building application with new fees and time procedure. On top of this, the majority of Palestinian people in Jerusalem are living in difficult conditions because of high poverty rates, which is a consequence of the Israeli Occupation closures, which restrict the movement of the Palestinians, thus preventing them from reaching their work places. These Israeli restrictions and harassments against the Palestinians in east

Jerusalem, along with the housing problems, lack of lands for building and increase of unemployment rate, force many Jerusalemites to migrate outside the borders of the Municipality towards the West Bank or even travel abroad to find better living standards.

According to the ‘Civic Coalition for Defending Palestinian Rights’ in Jerusalem, (CCDPRJ, 2009), the Israeli Authorities adopted many policies that aim at enacting pressure on Jerusalemites; for example, in the case of the demographic status and urban growth in Jerusalem, the area that is allocated for the development of Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and lies under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality is estimated at approximately 9,200 dunums, which represents only 13% of the total area of east Jerusalem; whereas the remaining area (East Jerusalem and under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality) is classified as Israeli settlements, green areas -which are off use to the Palestinian urban growth-, public buildings, roads and others.

Furthermore, the Israeli Authorities often don’t prepare the needed Master Plans for the Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem which are necessary for the urban planning process, and in case of preparing such plans for Palestinian neighborhoods, the Israeli Authorities usually put restrictions and give limited of areas for Palestinian urban expansion, below the needed areas for natural urban growth which varies between 25%-75%. If one compares these percentages with the percentage of lands used for Israeli settlements, it is clear that urban growth varies between 75%-120%. In Sharafat for example, Israeli Authorities determined the urban growth percentage to be 50%, whereas for the neighboring settlement of “Gilo” which was illegally constructed on Beit Safafa and Sharafat land, this percentage was set at 75% (CCJ, 2009) .

It is further noted that Jerusalem Municipality has classified some areas within its boundaries, including areas from Sharafat, as “Green Areas”, which the Occupation Authorities have used as a way of controlling and confiscating more lands in Jerusalem. Moreover, the Occupation Authorities have demolished houses in Jerusalem under the claims that these houses were built on “Green Areas”, as seen in the ethnic cleansing process in “Al Bustan Neighborhood,” Silwan, which is very close to Al Aqsa Mosque’s southern side. The process of land confiscations in Al Bustan came after the Municipality announced on February 20, 2009, a plan to relocate more than 1,500 Palestinian citizens living in the 88 houses of Al Bustan neighborhood in Silwan town to alternative locations. Here they are planning to demolish all 88 houses to establish what they called “King David Garden” as part of the “Biblical Gardens” around the Holy City. Furthermore, the Israeli Authorities under the name of “Green Areas” have built many settlements in Jerusalem such as Rekhesh Shu’fat (Ramat Shlomo), and Jabal abu Ghneim (Har Homa) which were built on areas that were classified as “Green Areas”. One should note here that there are some areas within Sharafat classified as “Green Areas,” which will remain for use in future plans of the Israeli Authorities in Jerusalem. **See Map 3**



See Map 3: Jerusalem Master Plan 2020

The right of adequate housing is laid out in international treaties and international humanitarian law, which has called for respect of human dignity through everyone's right to adequate housing. However,

Israel through –its aggression against Palestinian housing rights, as demonstrated above considers itself to be above international laws and treaties.

A Dangerous Escalation in Jerusalem Housing Demolitions.

During the past years, Israeli Occupation Authorities have escalated their attacks against houses of Palestinians living in Jerusalem by targeting them through housing and other building demolitions under the pretext of “unlicensed construction”. According to ARIJ violations database, more than 2,000 Palestinian homes were demolished in occupied east Jerusalem since 1993, in addition to thousands of other constructions (ARIJ, 2022). Thousands of homes and other structures are also threatened by demolition under the pretext of “unlicensed construction”, despite the fact that residents fulfill the needed procedures for the license. The Municipality of Jerusalem however typically procrastinates in granting the license and finally they refuse the request under non-justified pretexts.

The Municipal Tax (Arnona) negatively affects the living status and economic situation of Palestinians in Jerusalem

The Municipal tax which named in Hebrew as “Arnona” is imposed by the Jerusalem Municipality on the holders of buildings and lands in Jerusalem. This tax is considered one of the greatest that burdens Palestinian residents of the city, including the residents of Sharafat. The Israeli Authorities use this tax as an instrument to put pressure on Palestinians to force them to leave the city.

The “Arnona” tax, which is imposed on Jerusalemites by the Municipality, is calculated based on criteria that take in consideration the classification of area and land-use classification of the master plan (residential areas, commercial, industrial, agricultural, public buildings, parking... etc). They also consider the zone type, the type of use and the area of building or land (Jerusalem Municipality,). Regarding the residential areas for instance, they classify them into four categories (A, B, C and D)⁵, and based on this zoning, along with the area of building, they determine and calculate the amount of tax that must be paid for the municipality. For example, the tax tariff in the residential areas varies in the four zones between 40-113 NIS/m² which is equivalent to approximately 12-34 US\$/m², meaning that a small house with an area of 120 m² will cost its owner around 12,000 NIS yearly for the “Arnona.” At the time of writing this was equivalent to approximately 3,400 US\$.

In terms of economic impact the segregation plan which has focused on the isolation of Jerusalem city from the Palestinian Territory had a huge negative impact on the economic situation of the Palestinians living in Jerusalem in general and on the commercial sector particularly, which has also suffered from global recession. Much of the trade in Jerusalem is largely dependent on the Palestinian visitors of the Holy City from the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Palestinians from the occupied land in 1948, but Israeli closure of the city has negatively affected the economic situation of the city and its residents. Despite these difficult situations, the Occupation Authorities impose taxes without taking into consideration the situation of the Jerusalemites, who represent the poorer class in the Holy City. Moreover, the Municipality by the beginning of 2020 decided to increase the “Arnona” by approximately 3%, which increases the burden on the Palestinians of Jerusalem.

⁵ Tariffs for Residential Assets

<https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/en/residents/arnona/arnonarates/>

It is further noted that Palestinians are forced to pay these taxes in order to preserve their presence in the city without receiving a decent level of Municipal services. The planning process in the Municipality of Jerusalem focuses on the political-demographic dimension that aims to judaize the city more than planning for the purposes of prosperity and well-being of its citizens. Furthermore, the Palestinian neighborhoods and communities in Jerusalem are deliberately neglected in different services provision. For instance, the Municipality rarely makes the needed maintenance for the infrastructure of the Arab neighborhoods, including; roads, water and wastewater networks, solid wastes and others. The most obvious problem that the people of Jerusalem suffer is the lack of cleaning service and the accumulation of solid wastes despite their commitment in paying the taxes for the Municipality. This can be easily understood if we compare the situation of the Palestinians in Jerusalem with the situation of the illegal settlers living in the occupied city who get all the facilities and services in order to stay in the Holy City.

Rachel Crossing (Gilo 300) separates the town of Sharafat from Bethlehem City

On 15 November 2005, Israeli Occupation Forces established Rachel's crossing (Gilo 300) on the southern entrance of Jerusalem city near Beit Safafa and Sharafat towns. This terminal was established on the path of segregation wall that separates Jerusalem from Bethlehem, which contributes to the Israeli isolation plan in the area. Palestinians in Sharafat, and Beit Safafa who have been isolated by the effect of the wall and the terminal, have historical social relations and economic interests with Bethlehem city; However, following the construction of the segregation wall in the area, the interaction between the aforementioned towns and the city of Bethlehem became difficult, especially for citizens living in the West Bank side of the barrier and holding the Palestinian identity (Green Identity) who cannot reach the isolated areas inside Jerusalem. This crossing allows the passage to Jerusalem for Palestinians holding special permits issued by the Israeli Civil Administration, in addition to touristic, religious and diplomatic delegations. All persons crossing through this terminal are subjected to security and personal inspection by Israeli soldiers who are permanently present on the checkpoint.