

# **The Geopolitical Status of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**



**Prepared by**



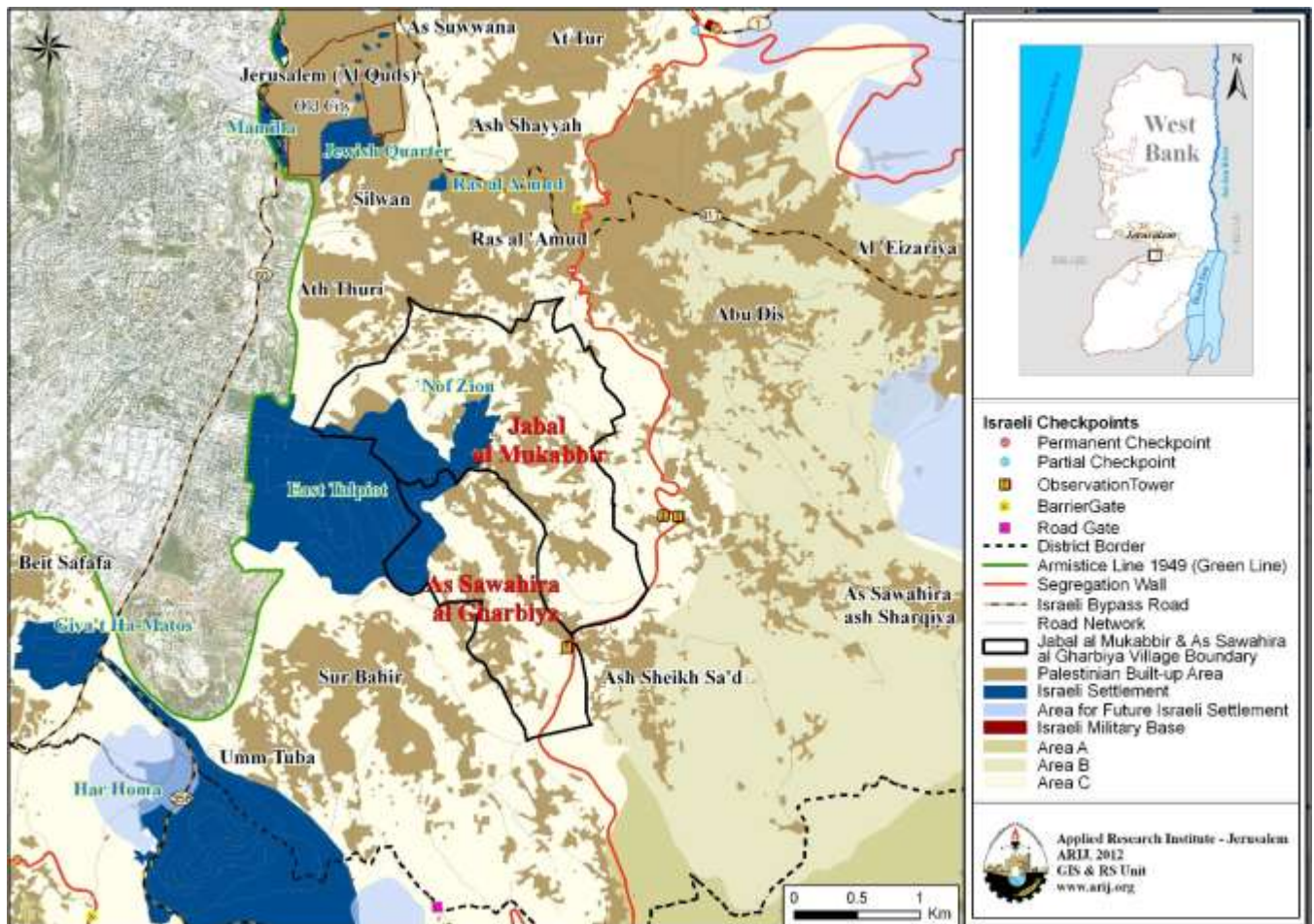
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## Location

Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya is a Palestinian town in Jerusalem Governorate, to the south of the city. It is bordered by Abu Dis and As Sawahira ash Sharqiya to the east, Silwan and Jerusalem city to the north, the settlements of Telpiot and Nof Zion to the west, and Ash Sheikh Sa'd and Sur Bahir & Um Tuba to the south (ARIJ, 2022). The town of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya is home to 26,140 Palestinians (JIPR)<sup>1</sup> and the majority are Jerusalem Identity card holders.

**Map 1: Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya location and borders**



**Photo 1: Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town**

Source: ARIJ, 2022

<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research  
[shnaton\\_C0522.pdf\(jerusalemstitute.org.il\)](http://shnaton_C0522.pdf(jerusalemstitute.org.il))

## **The Geopolitical Status of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town covers an area of 5,021 dunums and is located under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality, which was illegally and unilaterally redrawn in 1967 after 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 Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town which is located in J1's southern area. The other region is J2, which is located outside the borders and control of Jerusalem Municipality. The eastern and western parts are under the control of Palestinian Authority's where the central part of the Governorate remains under Israeli Occupation control.

It is noted that Israeli Occupation Authorities have used their separation plan which is represented by the construction of the Segregation Wall to again redraw the boundaries of Jerusalem Municipality illegally and unilaterally, which aims to create a *de facto* situation in favor of the Jewish presence in the city. The Israeli Segregation Wall has separated the whole area of (J1) from Jerusalem Governorate except for Kafr 'Aqab and Shu'fat Camp towns.

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995, the West Bank was classified into areas "A," "B" and "C." The town of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya was not subjected to this classification, and remained as it was before this agreement under the control of Jerusalem Israeli Municipality. This is except for a small area estimated at 47 dunums and located in the valley that separates As Sawahira al Gharbiya and Ash Sheikh Sa'd towns. This area is located outside the Israeli segregated zone and Jerusalem Municipality control, and is classified as area "C" under the Oslo II Interim Agreement.

### **Israeli Occupation Practices in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

Jabal Al Mukabbir & As Sawahira Al Gharbiya town has been subjected to various Israeli confiscations for the benefit of settlement activities, represented in the establishment of Israeli settlements and settlement outposts on the town's territories and its surroundings, in addition to the Israeli Segregation plan which has confiscated most of its lands. That which follows presents a breakdown of Israeli confiscations of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town territories:

#### **Establishment of Israeli settlements and settlement outposts**

During the years of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli government confiscated 265 dunums in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town (5.3% of the total town's area) to establish two Israeli settlements: "East Talpiot" settlement west of Jabal al

Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya, and "Nof Zion" settlement in the heart of the town (Table 1).

**Table 1: Israeli Settlements constructed over Jabal Al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya lands**

Settlement Name	Year of construction	Area confiscated from Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya (dunums)	Population of settlers (2020)
East Talpiot	1973	221	14,820
Nof Zion	2004	44	450
<b>Total</b>		<b>265</b>	<b>15,270</b>

Source: ARIJ, 2022

Source (JIPR Statistical Year Book, 2022 – Statistics of 2020)

### **Israeli settlement plans on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

Over the years of occupation, Israel continued its settlement activity in the oPt with great focus on Jerusalem; this was exemplified in the publishing of building plans and tenders and even mapping lands as “Green Areas” or “military or firing zones” to preserve them for future settlement urban expansion and development. This policy further fragmented the occupied West Bank, and most specifically the occupied city of Jerusalem and negatively affected its demography for the favor of the Jewish presence in the city of Jerusalem, in order to “Judaize” it. In Jabal Al Mukkabir town, several settlement plans were published for the expansion of the aforementioned settlements in addition to declaring an area to its northwest as “Green Area” to prevent Palestinians from utilizing it in the future. Below is a breakdown of some of the settlement plans that were approved to be built on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town

- **The Ya’ar Hashalom Forest**

In June 2009, Israel approved the deposit of TPS No.10188 which states a change in the zoning area of a public green space to the north of East Telpiot settlement (which is actually an existing planted forest named (Ya’ar Hashalom – Peace Forest) to establish a public park and recreation area (National Park) for active recreation forest. The plan targets almost 551 dunums (which is the area of the forest) and will benefit the settlement of East Telpiot and settlements in Jerusalem. Recently, in April 2020, construction commenced for a large Israeli visitors’ center by the name (Beit Shatz) in the Peace Forest area on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town - on behalf of Elad Jewish organization.

- **The Expansion of Nof Zion Settlement**

In 1994, the Jerusalem Israeli Municipality revealed for the first the publication of Town Planning scheme (TPS) Number 4558 /מב which states the confiscation of 140 dunums of Palestinian lands of Jabal al Mukabbir and As Sawahrah Al Gharbieh town for the construction of 395 settlement units to the east of Telpiot of Settlement under the name “Nof Zion Settlement”. The plan stated some changes in the set of land designations in the area which included change of designation of open public space to roads, public buildings and residential area. The plan received its first ever approval in 2004. In 2005 Palestinian land owners submitted an appeal to the Israeli High Court of Justice to prevent construction of the settlement on their land, but this appeal was rejected. The construction of Nof Zion settlement comes in four phases, a hotel (with 150 rooms), a kindergarten, a shopping center, a sports club, a park, and a synagogue. The first phase of construction began in 2004 and was completed in 2008 with 91 housing units made available to Jewish settlers.

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Israeli settlers laid a cornerstone marking the beginning of the second phase of construction, which includes 105 new housing units. These housing units have been advertised and marketed by Digal Investments & Holdings Ltd, a Tel Aviv-based company, in the interests of attracting wealthy international Jews. Later in April 2012, the Israeli government decided to go ahead with the implementation of Phases 3 & 4 of the Nof Zion settlement plan, by approving the construction of additional 217 new housing units (out of 270 units) under plan number 8815. The plan is slated to have 38 dunums confiscated from lands of Jabal Al Mukkabir.

- **Establishment of a hotel complex north of East Telpiot settlement**

In August 2011, the Israeli Government deposited a plan to construct a Hotel complex that will serve as an extension to the existing East Telpiot settlement. The plan holds No. 4711, and states the construction of 6 hotel buildings with 1330 rooms and a resort in addition to road network and open areas on 73 dunums of land.

- **A Permit to Build a Zipline on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir and As Sawahrah Al Gharbieh**

In January 2018, the Jerusalem Israeli Municipality awarded a permit to the Elad settler Jewish organization to build an 800 meters long Zipline connecting two Israeli tourist sites in occupied East Jerusalem, the Armon Hanatziv settlement neighborhood and the Peace Forest on lands of Jabal Al Mukkabir town. Coming in at 2,570 feet, this will be Israel’s longest zipline and will travel over the Palestinian neighborhood Jabal al-Mukaber.

- **The Shatz House Tourist Complex on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir and As Sawahrah Al Gharbieh**

An Israeli tourist structure called the “Shatz House”, illegally belongs to Elad Jewish settler organization, is undergoing restorations to turn it into a tourism compound which will serve as the starting point for the zipline that the Municipality of Jerusalem has permitted to be constructed. The Ministry of Tourism and the Jerusalem Municipality have invested 43 million shekels (NIS) for the project while the remainder fund is provided by Elad.

- **A New neighborhood for Elad Jewish organization on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir and As Sawahrah Al Gharbieh**

The Israeli planning and construction committee affiliated to the Jerusalem Israeli municipality approved on the 30th of March 2016 the deposit of Town Planning Scheme No. 152552 to construct 18 settlement units in Al Farouk neighborhood in the Palestinian town of Jabal al Mukabbir in occupied Jerusalem. The construction is actually an extension to an existing building claimed to be bought by Elad Jewish organization back in 2013, an entity that works to increase the Jewish presence in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The plan also called for the retroactive legalization of previous construction that took place in the site during the last years without proper building authorization from the Municipality of Jerusalem – four out of five stories – in addition to the construction of a new building in the area, raising the number of settlement units in the area to 18.

- **178 New Housing Units on lands of Jabal Al Mukkabir**

The Israeli High Planning Council of the Jerusalem Israeli Municipality approved on October 25, 2017 the construction of 178 settlement units (construction of 13 new buildings) on lands of Jabal Al Mukkabir, an additional neighborhood to the settlement of Nof Zion which was established on the lands of the town back in 2004. The new settlement units will triple the size of the Nof Zion settlement, making it the largest of its kind in occupied East Jerusalem.

### **The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

The construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall has a negative and destructive impact on Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town. According to the latest amendment of the plan that was published on the webpage of the so-called “Israeli Defense Ministry” (30<sup>th</sup> April 2007), the Segregation Wall isolates approx. 98% (4,899 dunums out of its total area 5,021) of lands of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya from the remaining Palestinian Territory. Particularly devastating is the fact that the Wall segregates the town from the West Bank in addition to East Jerusalem localities such as Abu Dis, As Sawahira ash Sharqiya and Ash Sheikh Sa’d, which have historical relations with it. A small area estimated at 122 dunums and located outside the path of the Segregation Wall is excluded from the isolated area. The isolated lands contains all Palestinian residential areas in the town, in addition to agricultural lands, open spaces and Israeli settlements established on the town’s land (Table 2).

**Table 2: land classification of areas isolated west of the Segregation Wall in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town - Jerusalem Governorate**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Land classification</b>	<b>Area (dunums)</b>
1	Palestinian built-up area	1557
2	Agricultural areas	1499

4	Israeli settlements	265
5	Forests & Open spaces	1497
7	Construction sites	57
8	Wall zone	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,899</b>

Source: ARIJ, 2022

## **The Segregation Wall's effects on Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Residents':**

Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, the citizens of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya have lost their association with the city of Jerusalem along with surrounding towns such as Beit Safafa & Sharafat which have been separated from lands of the West Bank. The citizens of Jerusalem who hold the Jerusalemite identity (the Blue Identity) can enter the West Bank areas through 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 such residents. 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 scenario occurs for many Palestinian families, especially in the case where one in a couple holds a Palestinian identity (Green) and the other holds the Jerusalemite identity (Blue). Moreover, the Segregation Wall has prevented Palestinians from reaching places of worship in the Holy City thus depriving them from practicing their religious rituals in Jerusalem.

According to the Israeli Segregation Wall plan of 2007 and implemented on ground years after, lands of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town are already isolated from neighboring Palestinian towns and villages (such as Abu Dis, El 'Eizariya, As Sawahira Ash Sharqiya and Ash Sheikh Sa'd). In fact, the path of the Segregation Wall in East Jerusalem area along with the Israeli settlements belt are set to isolate occupied East Jerusalem area from the rest of West Bank.

Note that the Israeli Occupation Authorities constructed a settlement belt around Jerusalem city to prevent the Palestinian urban expansion in the towns of Jerusalem since these settlements were built in close proximity of Palestinian Urban areas, which in turn, increased the areas confiscated from these Palestinian communities for Israeli interests, At the same time, minimized the area available for future urban expansion. This move created a new reality on town residents that is difficult to reverse. Israeli policies and plans particularly in Jerusalem, and the remaining

Palestinian Territory, have led to the creation of high population densities as a result of 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 13,517 person/ km<sup>2</sup> compared to 16,000 person/ km<sup>2</sup> in the settlements of East Jerusalem.

## **The Dilemma of Lands and Building's Licenses in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

The problems of lands and building's licenses is considered one of the most difficult problems in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town and in the other Jerusalemite towns in East Jerusalem. This is due to the enormous prices of lands, and the very high cost of license.

According to citizens of Jerusalem, land prices (price per dunum) in East Jerusalem area, most specifically land located within the borders of the Jerusalem municipality -which is rarely available- is relatively higher than land located outside the borders of the municipality, and are even doubled in places closer to the city center and surrounding neighborhoods.

The Israeli Occupation Authorities have used the money as an effective instrument to buy the Palestinian lands in Jerusalem for enormous prices to Judaize these lands and settle Jewish settlers in the city. They have offered Palestinians very high prices for such lands and houses especially in the city center and its neighborhoods. For anyone in Jerusalem who has a land and want to build a house on it or want to buy a land, he has to take the authorization and permission from the illegal Municipality of Jerusalem which put very difficult conditions in front of the Palestinians who want to get a license for the building.

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 Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya, 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 150,000-300,000. 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 a better living standards.

Over the years of the Israeli occupation, 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 (CCDPRJ), which represents only 13% of the total area of east Jerusalem; whereas the remaining area (of East Jerusalem and under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality) is classified as Israeli settlements, green areas (national parks) -which are off use to the Palestinian urban growth-, public buildings, roads and others. Furthermore, Israeli Authorities often don't prepare the needed Master Plans for Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem which are necessary for the urban planning process. In cases when the Israeli Authorities do prepare master plans for Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, Israeli Authorities usually put restrictions and give limited percentages of areas designated for Palestinian urban expansion which are below the needed percentages for natural urban growth, which is between 25% and 75%.

If one compares these percentages with Israeli settlements, it is found that the urban growth varies between 75%-120%. In Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya for example, the Israeli Authorities determined the urban growth percentage to be 25% according to plan #. 2691, whereas this percentage in the neighboring settlement of Nof Zion which was illegally constructed on Jabal al Mukabbir land, was set at 142.5% (according to plan #. 4558) (CCJ, 2009).

It is also worth mentioning that Jerusalem Municipality has classified some areas within its boundaries including areas from Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya, as "Green Areas." Occupation Authorities have used these areas as a way of controlling and confiscating more lands in Jerusalem for the purpose of colonization activities. Moreover, the Occupation Authorities have demolished houses in Jerusalem under the claims that these houses were built on "Green Areas", like the ethnic cleansing process witnessed in "Al Bustan Neighborhood" in Silwan, (More than 1,500 Palestinian citizens living in the 88 houses in Al Bustan neighborhood in Silwan town are threatened to be evacuated to alternative locations, as the Municipality) is planning to demolish the 88 houses to establish what they called "King David Garden" as a part of the "Biblical Gardens" around the Holy City. Also, Israeli Authorities under the name of "Green Areas" have established many settlements in Jerusalem like 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 that there are some areas within Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya classified as “Green Areas”, and they will remain for the future plans of the Israeli Authorities in Jerusalem.

The right of adequate housing is considered one of the most prominent items which have been assured in the charters and international treaties and in the international humanitarian law, which have called to the respect of human dignity and his right of adequate housing. However, the Israeli Occupation state -by their aggression against the Palestinian human rights- classifies itself to be above the international laws and treaties.

## **A Danger Escalation in Houses Demolitions in Jerusalem**

During the past years, Israeli Occupation Authorities have escalated their attacks against the houses of Palestinians living in occupied East Jerusalem through targeting them with demolitions under the pretext of “unlicensed construction”. An estimation carried out by ARIJ shows that since 1993, the Israeli Occupation have demolished more than 2000 houses in occupied East Jerusalem in addition to thousands of other constructions (ARIJ, 2022). It is noted that there are dozens of houses that are threatened by demolition in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya 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 the economic situation of Palestinians in Jerusalem**

The Municipal tax, named in Hebrew as “Arnona” which is imposed by the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality on the holders of buildings and lands in Jerusalem, is considered one of the greatest burdens faced by Palestinian residents of the city, including the residents of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town. The tax aims at exerting 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)<sup>2</sup>, 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/m<sup>2</sup> which is equivalent to approximately 12-34 US\$/m<sup>2</sup>, meaning that a small house with an area of 120 m<sup>2</sup> 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\$.

The segregation plan, which focused on the isolation of the city of Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian Territory, had a huge negative impact on the economic situation of Palestinians living

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<sup>2</sup> Tariffs for Residential Assets  
<https://www.jerusalem.muni.il/en/residents/arnona/arnonarates/>

in Jerusalem in addition to the commercial sector. Trade in Jerusalem was largely dependent on Palestinians visiting the Holy City from the West Bank area, the Gaza Strip and Palestinians living inside the 1948 borders; however, the Israeli military closure imposed on the city, negatively affected the economic situation of the city and its residents. Despite these difficult situations, the occupation Authorities impose tax on Palestinians in East Jerusalem without taking into consideration the difficult situations of the Palestinians who make up the poorest class in the Holy City. Moreover, since the beginning of the year 2020, the Jerusalem Municipality decided to increase the “Arnona” Tax by approximately 3%, which in turn increased the economic burden on Palestinians of East Jerusalem in particular.

It is worth mentioning that in the case of Jerusalem, Palestinians are forced to pay this tax in order to preserve their presence in the city without receiving the decent level of Municipal services. The planning process in the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem focuses more on the political-demographic dimension that aims to Judaize the city rather than planning for the purpose of prosperity and well-being of the citizens. Furthermore, Palestinian neighborhoods and communities in Jerusalem are deliberately neglected in the different services provided. For instance, the Municipality rarely makes the needed maintenance for infrastructure of Arab neighborhoods, including roads, water and waste water networks, solid wastes and others. This is seen in the many roads that haven't been rehabilitated, whilst West Jerusalem roads are in a good condition, as the Municipality does not put these neighborhoods on their priorities for many years. The major problem suffered by people of Jerusalem is the lack of cleaning service and the accumulation of solid waste and failure to provide services as required, despite their commitment in paying the taxes' fees to the Municipality. This can be easily understood if we compare the living situation of Palestinians in east Jerusalem with the situation of the illegal settlers living in the city who get all the facilities and services in order to stay in the Holy City, while Palestinians are living in poor conditions and lack city services and rights.

### **Ash Sheikh Sa'd – As Sawahira al Gharbiya Checkpoint**

Ash Sheikh Sa'd town is historically considered as one of the neighborhoods of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town. However, the Israeli Occupation Authorities have separated this neighborhood from Jabal al Mukabbir through the construction of the Segregation Wall in addition to the current military checkpoint/crossing which was established in 2006 after replacing the old earth-mound and road blocks which were imposed following the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000. This military checkpoint is used as a gate by Ash Sheikh Sa'd residents to move between their town and Jerusalem City through Jabal al Mukabbir town. These measures has forced thousands of citizens from Ash Sheikh Sa'd to move to live in areas located inside the wall like Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town, to protect their rights, residency, and Jerusalem Identities.

This checkpoint along with the Segregation Wall has isolated Ash Sheikh Sa'd town and geographically, socially, economically, and historically from the city of Jerusalem. This has caused suffering to the holders of the Blue Id's who are forced to walk on a daily basis through this checkpoint which is only permitted on foot.

## **Israeli Military Orders Issued in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

The Israeli Occupation Authorities have issued a set of military orders to confiscate lands in Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya town for different military purposes. The following are some of the main orders issued:

1. Israeli military order no. 22/03/T: Issued on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2003 to confiscate 173.4 dunums of Sur Bahir, Umm Tuba, Ash Shayyah and As Sawahira al Gharbiya towns for the Segregation Wall construction.
2. Israeli military order no. 19/07/T: Issued on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to confiscate 1,129 dunums from Abu Dis, As Sawahira ash Sharqiya and As Sawahira al Gharbiya towns for the establishment of the "Fabric of Life" Road.
3. Israeli military order no. 47/03/T: Issued on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2003 to confiscate 1.5 dunums of As Sawahira al Gharbiya town for military purposes.

## **Israeli Bypass Roads on lands of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town**

Throughout the years of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, the Israeli Government had constructed a vast network of by-pass roads in the occupied West Bank and with particular focus on Jerusalem city. The aim of these roads was to facilitate the establishment of Israeli settlements and other settlement installations and link them with each other and with those beyond the 1949 Armistice Line. Given the fact that these settlements and outposts are scattered across the occupied Palestinian territory, the reality on the ground is that this network of bypass roads has dissected the Palestinian territory into isolated areas, disconnected from each other, which in turn, denied Palestinians their right to move freely in the territory they live, in gross contravention of international law which highlights the Israeli policy against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

The construction of the Israeli bypass road network in the oPt has encouraged the control of more Palestinian land and also facilitated the establishment of settlements, outposts and settlement neighborhoods in the oPt and in occupied Jerusalem in particular, creating facts on the ground that are hard to change in the future. In total, some 1000 km of bypass Roads were constructed up until the time of this report, (ARIJ, 2022).

The town of Jabal al Mukabbir & As Sawahira al Gharbiya Town was also affected by the construction of bypass roads. In June 2020, Israel has commenced the construction of a new bypass road, namely the "American Road" in continuation with its plans to separate Jerusalem from the remainder of the West Bank. The construction of the new road will disrupt the town's territorial contiguity, cutting it in the middle (from north to south) and causing the confiscation of its agricultural lands; in addition to threatening tens of Palestinian homes in the town with demolition due to their location within the planned path of the road. The road was designed to connect Israeli settlements in the southern and southeastern parts of Jerusalem with those in the northern part, as well as connecting Jerusalem's settlements with the coastal area of Israel. This road will create a reality of political separation and territorial discontinuity because it was 'designed to prevent

territorial contiguity between Palestinian communities in east Jerusalem while keeping the Israeli settlements in Jerusalem all connected with each other. Note that the American road is only part of an extensive Israeli road network that physically encircles Jerusalem and separate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. The road plan holds No. 101-0379594 which was drafted in June 2018 and published in September 2019. The road is also part of the Town planning Scheme (TPS) No. 2683x for [As-Swahra](#) town, which was drafted in 1992 (and published in 1996). The road is planned to be 8.7 km long and 62-meters wide on average and will cause the confiscation of 386 dunums of Land of the community. The vast majority of the area on either side of the roads is residential and some open lands.