



FACTSHEET

ISOLATED AND CONGESTED: JERUSALEM COMMUNITIES BEHIND THE “SEPARATION WALL”

As the “Separation Wall” stretches over 712 km in the West Bank, it surrounds Jerusalem with a 168 km of concrete wall (6 – 9 meters height) cutting off and isolating two main neighborhoods: Kufr Aqab at the north, and Shu'fat Refugee camp at the east, which caused the separation of more than 121,000 Palestinians from their own fabric and people. Despite paying taxes to the Israeli authorities, they receive no public services in exchange.

Although both neighborhoods are governed by lawlessness and chaos, and a combination of over crowdedness, poor infrastructure, lack of basic services, and the “Separation Wall” itself, Jerusalemites can live without losing their permanent Jerusalem residency, and where West Bank residents are also authorized to live and enter without Israeli permits.

This led thousands of Jerusalemites married to West Bank residents to view these two neighborhoods as a last resort to establish their new families. Since the “Israeli Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law” bans Palestinian women from the West Bank under the age of 25 and men under the age of 35 from living with their spouses in Jerusalem, they are forced to look for alternatives. These are liminal legal spaces, governed by a condition of in-betweenness': they were annexed to the Jerusalem occupation municipality in 1967 but the construction of the annexation and expansion wall has isolated them from Jerusalem physically.

In addition, the threat to redraw the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem has hovered over the heads of their residents. So far, it has only been a threat, but

Jerusalemites have come to look at such threats with extreme concern. If implemented on the long-term, excluding these areas from the redrawn map of the Jerusalem municipal jurisdiction would entail the revocation of the residency of more than 100,000 Jerusalemites.¹

The area of Shu'fat refugee camp

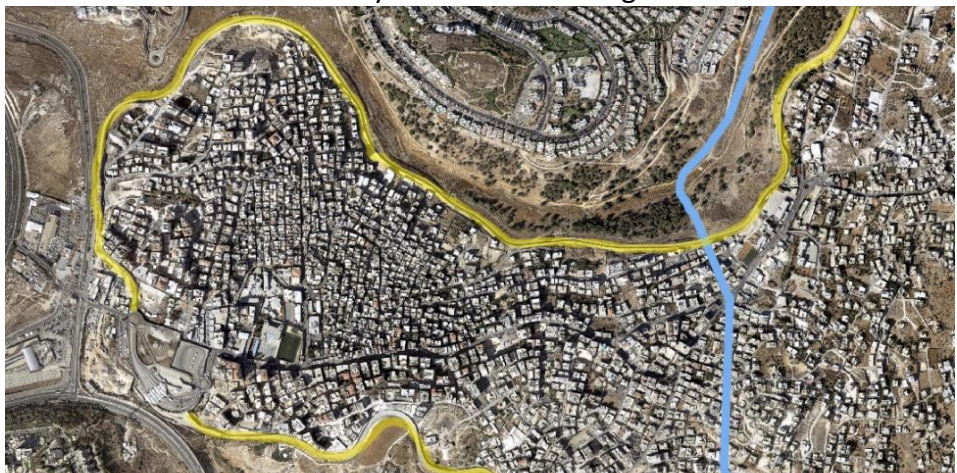
Almost 60,000 Palestinians are living in the area of Shu'fat refugee camp, which consists of four main residential neighborhoods; the refugee camp itself, Ras Khamis, Ras Shehadeh and Dahiet Al-Salam.

The refugee camp is one of two Palestinian refugee camps in the Jerusalem area (*the other being Qalandiya refugee camp*), but it is the only refugee camp within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. Located four kilometers to the northeast of the Old City, the camp was established in 1965 on a small plot of land leased by the Jordanian government to the United Nations Refugees Work and Relief Agency (UNRWA). The original purpose of its establishment was to house thousands of Palestinian refugees who were displaced from the Western part of Jerusalem in the wake of the 1948 Nakba. Nowadays, though, only a miniscule percentage of the camp's residents are registered refugees in UNRWA's records, while the majority are Jerusalem residents who moved to the camp because it is one of those places

where "mixed families" can live together; it is estimated that one third of the families in the camp have one West Bank spouse and one Jerusalemite. Compared to other places in Jerusalem, Shu'fat camp is also much more affordable for those who want to avoid Israel's heavy construction costs.

It is estimated that 25,000 people are living inside the refugee camp, while 34,360 are living in the adjacent neighborhoods of Ras Khamis, Ras Shehadeh and Dahiet Al-Salam. All of them are located inside the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem municipality, meaning that they have liminal space of in-betweenness. Isolated from Jerusalem by the "Wall" and governed by extreme lawlessness, these spaces suffer from systematic neglect and marginalization, internal violence, extreme poverty, lack of personal safety, and drug abuse.

Encircled by the "Wall" from three sides, the area is also blocked by a military checkpoint at its entrance. Both the "Wall" and the checkpoint are tools of isolation and control. They isolate the neighborhood



Shu'fat refugee camp surrounded by the Separation Wall (Yellow line), while the blue line shows the municipal boards.

¹ The estimated number of Palestinians living in both neighborhood is 121,000, while the estimated number of Jerusalemites with a permanent residential status (*Palestinians holding the Blue ID*) is 100,000.

from Jerusalem, and they heavily control the movement in and outside the camp. The only entrance of the camp that is not encircled by the “Wall” is its eastern entrance, which connects it to the Jerusalemite village of Anata.

For some residents, this creates a reality that is unlivable, places them between two equally difficult choices: look for a safer destination where they can raise families in relatively humane conditions or stay in those squalid conditions. The first choice means that they would risk losing their Jerusalem residential status; the second would mean risking the loss of any semblance of a safe future for them and for their children.

Once just outside the area, you would clearly spot the entrance of the settlement Pisgat Ze’ev, built on the lands of Beit Hanina and Shu’fat. The difference could not be starker. While the settlers enjoy public services, can build houses, have parks and public spaces, Shu’fat camp cannot. **Its narrow streets, waning infrastructure, and chaotic construction testify to the extent Israel has continued to marginalize and discriminate against Palestinians in Jerusalem in all areas from education to sanitation.**

Kufr Aqab

More than 61,000 Palestinians live in an area of 1.8 km² at Kufr Aqab, at the

northern part of Jerusalem creating an overcrowded neighborhood.

To say that Kufr Aqab lies on the outskirts of Jerusalem is not merely a descriptive statement. Being on the “outskirts” is an existential condition for this neighborhood and its residents. The map says that they are part of Jerusalem, but reality mocks the map: the **Qalandiya checkpoint** puts Jerusalem at bay, and the wall encircles the neighborhood, separates residents from their agricultural lands, and separates them from Jerusalem.

Kufr Aqab was an epicenter of one of Israel’s most notorious strategies across historic Palestine: confiscating Palestinian land, designating the land as state land, and allocating that confiscated land for the construction of an illegal Jewish settlement. In Kufr Aqab’s case, the settlement that was built on its land is Kochav Ya’akov (*Jacob’s Star*), which has eaten some 1,415 dunams of Kufr Aqab’s agricultural lands when it was established in the 1980s. More land was later confiscated for the purpose of expanding the settlement.

In fact, this is the effect of the construction of the “Wall” on all of the areas located at the outskirts of Jerusalem: **it created a new physical, economic, and psychological reality where the outskirts**, regardless of whether they fall under the municipal jurisdiction of Jerusalem or not, are slums totally separated from Jerusalem.

Shu’fat refugee camp and Kufr Aqab are two illustrations of these liminal spaces under Israeli control, but out of any civil order. Palestinian authority security services cannot enter. Neither can any other public or municipal service under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority. “*The only service we receive from Israel,*” one resident says, “*is home demolitions and Israeli police raids.*”

Total area of East Jerusalem **75 km²**

	Area	Percentage
Kufr Aqab neighborhood	1.8 km ²	2.4 %
Shu'fat refugee camp neighborhoods	1.3 km ²	1.7 %
<i>Total</i>	3.1 km²	4.1 %

One third
of Palestinians' population in East Jerusalem lives on less than **5%** of the area.

Total Palestinians populations in East Jerusalem **362,000**

	Population	Percentage
Kufr Aqab neighborhood	59,360	16.39 %
Shu'fat refugee camp neighborhoods	61,500	16.98 %
<i>Total</i>	120,860	33.4%

In addition, these neighborhoods witness massive and constant construction booms, but the condensed and dozens of high-rise apartment blocks that were built without enforcement of construction or regulations, **do not conform to the required standards of safety and security, and will have catastrophic results in case of a natural disaster (such as an earthquake), (or a man-made ones (such as fire).**

In the meantime, residents of Shu'fat camp and Kufr Aqab endure a throttling reality of neglect, isolation, and oppressive density. Many of Israel's tactics of domination and oppression coalesce in those two areas from land confiscation, to settlement construction; from mass raids and arrests to systematic disenfranchisement; from physical encirclement to massive restrictions on the freedom of movement; from imposed poverty to state-sponsored chaos and lawlessness.

It is this toxic combination of all these elements that makes the two areas among the most heavily affected by building the "Separation Wall" in Jerusalem.

