



New buildings in Har Homa

## Factsheet:

# ILLEGAL EXPANSION: LATEST ISRAELI SETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN EAST JERUSALEM

Successive Israeli governments have been pursuing to establish new settlements in East Jerusalem over the last few years, aiming to create facts on the ground that will geographically lead for the separation of Palestinian villages and neighborhoods in East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. The new settlements that were announced recently are **Givat HaMatos** in the south, **Atarot** in the north, **Givat Shaked** in the West and adjacent to the “Green Line”, and **E1** in the East. The construction in E1 area and the expansion of Ma'ale Adumim settlement will lead to cutting off the West Bank into two parts; South and North, which advances the segregation of the Palestinian communities and will end any territorial contiguity between Palestinian communities within West Bank.

### Givat HaMatos:

It is located between Mar Elias Monastery in the East, Beit Safafa in the West, Tantur Ecumenical Institute in the south, and Talpiot (*Talbiya*) in the north. The land of Givat HaMatos (*about 285 dunums*) was confiscated in 1991 from Beit Safafa. In mid-November 2021, the Ministry of Housing and Israel Land Authority opened the tender to build 1,257 settlements housing units, and the construction activities started at the beginning of 2022. This is the first stage of construction, as the total number of apartments will be 2,610.

**It is worth mentioning that this settlement is the first colonial neighborhood to be established in East Jerusalem since 1996.**

### New approved housing units in illegal settlements in East Jerusalem

Qalandiya Airport	May 2021	9,000
Givat HaMatos	November 2021	1,275
E1 Area	November 2021	3,400
Har Homa West	December 2021	540
Givat Shaked	September 2022	700
<b>Total</b>		<b>14,915</b>

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## Har Homa West:



The Jerusalem District Planning and Construction Committee approved the building of a 540 settlements housing unit in Har Homa West, located close to Mar Elias Monastery in the south of Jerusalem on a hill that overlooks Bethlehem.

This settlement's construction expansion will cut Sur Baher and Umm Tuba from Beit Safafa and Bethlehem. The construction of 540 settlements housing unit is only the first stage of the construction since Jerusalem Municipality plan to build over 2,000 housing units in this area. The approved buildings will be established over 30 dunums, while the others are awaiting the approval of the neighborhood master plan.

Israel considers the land of Har Homa West a state land; thus, it does not require depositing for objections. However, the need for further study of the environmental impact might delay the final approval of the master plan.

It is worth mentioning that Har Homa settlement is a series of connected settlements “neighborhoods”, some established and others still under the planning process. This series of settlements “neighborhoods” uses an expansion strategy that started from Jabal Abu Ghunaym land in 1996, which will occupy the land near Mar Elias Monastery (south) at the central Jerusalem-Hebron Road till Mazmuriya military checkpoint at an Nu'man village in the

East. The “Separation Wall” already separates this area.

By the complete construction of Har Homa series, Bethlehem and Beit Sahour will be separated from Sur Baher and Umm Tuba in East Jerusalem, not only by the Wall, but also by Israeli colonial neighborhoods.

**The construction of Givat HaMatos and the expansion of Har Homa West settlements will cut off the territorial contiguity between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, as both illegal settlements surround the Jerusalem-Hebron Road (Road 60) from its two sides at the entrance of the city from its south direction, that is already controlled by a military checkpoint (checkpoint 300).**

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## Givat Shaked

On September 5<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Jerusalem District Planning and Construction Committee approved the building of a new settlement on the lands of Beit Safafa and Sharafat. The slated settlement will contain 700 housing units, including four 24 -story buildings. Givat Shaked (*The Almond's Hill*) settlement is abutting the Armistice Line of 1949 that crosses through Beit Safafa village; the part occupied in 1967.



*Plan showing Givat Shaked*

The land of Givat Shaked was confiscated by the Israeli government in 1995. It is 3,700 dunums that will contain, 700 apartments, schools, kindergartens, a community center, synagogues, clinics, and health facilities. This

land is the only piece of land left for Beit Safafa residents to develop their village.

Beit Safafa and Sharafat residents exceeded 20,000, and the two neighborhoods are highly crowded. Constructing Givat Shaked will segregate the two neighboring villages, Beit Safafa and Sharafat, from the Palestinian social extension in the Bethlehem area through the illegal settlement of Gilo to the South, a park to the West (*that will be replaced by permanent housing units shortly*), and Givat HaMatos in the East .

### Qalandiya Airport- Atarot settlement



Architects' plans for the a new settlement in Atarot Airport. (Jerusalem Municipality)

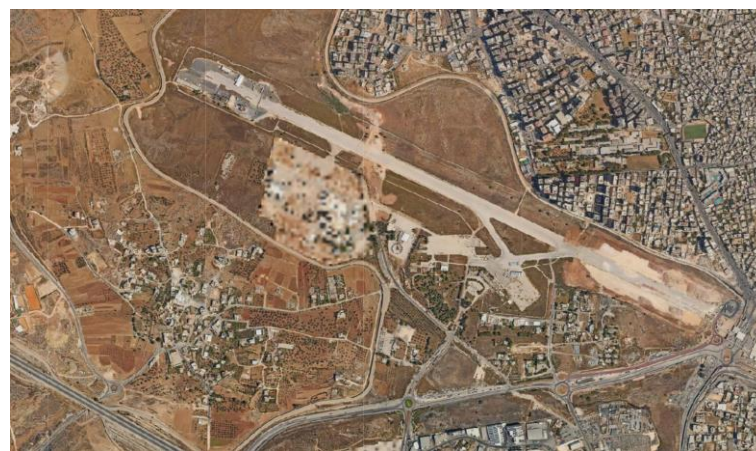
Israeli Ministry of Housing and the Jerusalem Municipality announced in May 2021 a plan to build a new settlement with 9,000 housing units in the center of the West Bank. The planning went further from just the government's usual declaration of intent, to allocating funds for actual planning that has been accomplished, and the plan became in the stage of the approval process. This illegal settlement is planned to house 50,000 ultra-Orthodox residents.

It is worth mentioning that this planned settlement is located at the site of the Qalandiya Airport (*Israel calls the place Atarot Airport*). The Airport land and its surrounding is historically part of Qalandiya village. The place is bordered by Kufur Aqab village from the North, Qalandiya Refugee Camp from the East, and Ar-Ram in the South.

The Western side of the Airport is abutted by the Atarot Industrial settlement, which was also established on land occupied in 1967. The construction of this illegal settlement will split the geographical contiguity between Jerusalem and Ramallah and entrench the segregation created by the Israeli separation Wall.

The land of the Airport was appropriated during the British mandate era to establish the Jerusalem Airport. When Jordan administrated the West Bank, it continued operating the Airport. The Airport was decommissioned by Israel in 1967 when Israel occupied the West Bank. The fact that the Government of Palestine appropriated the Airport land before 1948 allows Israel to go forward with building the settlement without the need to expropriate the land from their Palestinian owners. **However, the land surrounding the Airport, which is located within the airport seam zone, is privately owned by Palestinians.** Many Palestinians living in the seam zone built houses without getting building permits from the Israeli authorities. **These houses are subject to demolition orders to clear the area for settlement construction.**

In addition, Israel is awaiting suitable international conditions to start the construction, as it established the road infrastructure connecting the area with the Israel transportation grid through Route 45.



### E1 Area

The E1 master plan (*Plan No. 420/4*) was initially approved in 1999, covering

approximately 1,200 hectares of land (*most of which Israel declared as state land*) in the eastern Jerusalem periphery. The plan designates areas for residential, tourism, commerce, regional services, a regional cemetery, roads, etc. As a result of international pressure over Israeli successive governments, the implementation of the plan was frozen.

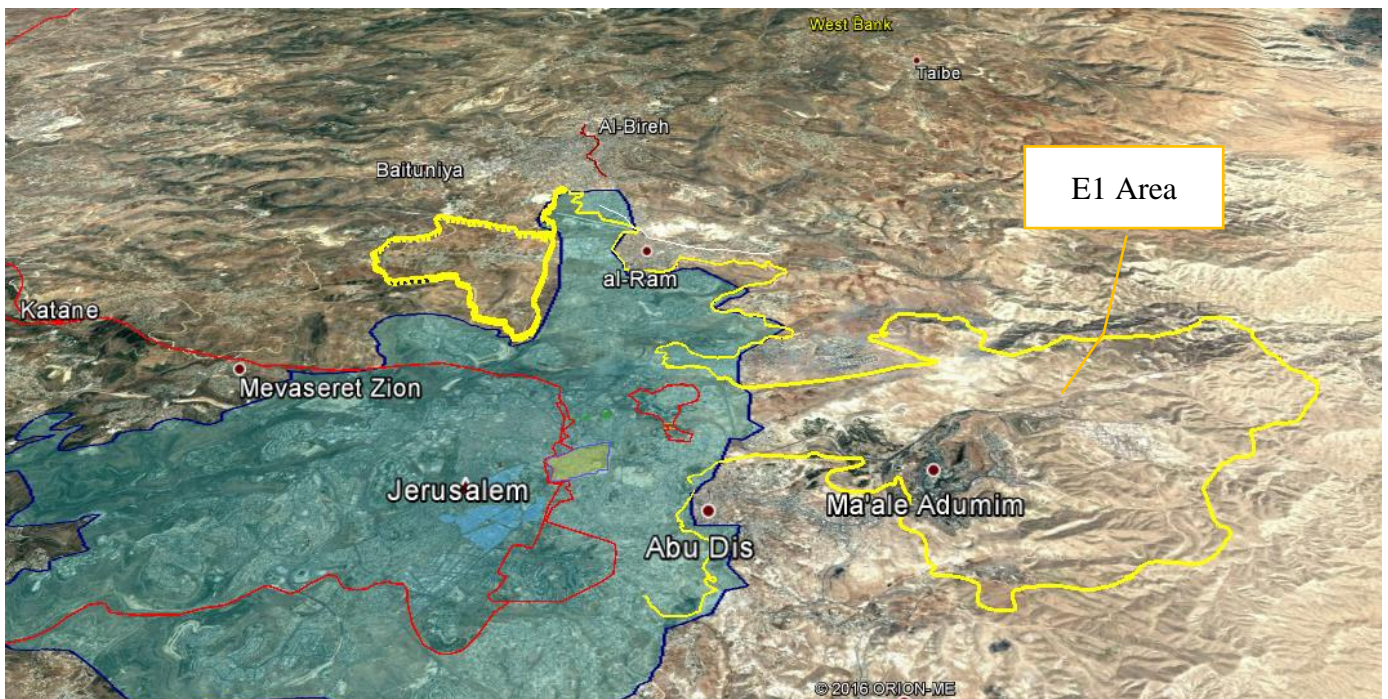
The Civil Administration's High Planning Subcommittee (*responsible for authorizing construction in West Bank*) met in November 2021 to discuss a planned extension of Ma'ale Adumim settlement to the E1 area. The Subcommittee discussed the construction of **3,400 housing units as part of 35,000** that will be built in a piecemeal strategy.

As part of the approval process, the Subcommittee scheduled a meeting to deal with objections against the construction.

However, due to the visit of American President Joe Biden to the region and pressure from his administration, the meeting was postponed to December 12, 2022.

Construction in the E1 area will connect Ma'ale Adumim settlement with the East Jerusalem settlements. It has actually started by building the complex compound for the Israeli police in Jerusalem.

Any housing construction by Israel in E1 will accelerate the separation of the northern and southern parts of the West Bank. What delays dividing of the West Bank territories is the slow development of the roads in the E1 area; thus Palestinian and Israeli colonial settlers have to use the same road grid. The construction of a road used by Palestinians is decisive in carrying out the illegal settlement construction in E1. Israel is awaiting conducive international conditions to pursue its plan.



*A google map that shows E1 area*

**In conclusion, the construction of these settlements will limit any prospect of settling the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the two-state framework. On the contrary, it will entrench the fact that Israel is a de facto "bi-national" state that segregates its Palestinian residents and enhances the domination of Israeli colonial settlers.**