



**The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
and
The State of Palestine**

Status Report on
**The State of Conservation of
the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Walls**

Presented to
The UNESCO World Heritage Centre

March 16th, 2015

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Introduction

In addition to the facts and illegal actions of Israeli Occupation Authorities that had been mentioned in the status report addressed to UNESCO World Heritage Centre by Jordan and Palestine in January 2014 (which shall constitute a supplement to the present status report as these facts and illegal actions have persisted), many further violations and aggressions have been implemented by the Israeli Occupation Authorities (IOA) against the authenticity, sanctity, identity, and integrity of the heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem during the period of January 2014 through February 2015. This Status Report is based on daily observations and reports of the Jordanian Awqaf (JA) and the Jordanian National Committee for World Heritage. Palestinian NGOs, Jerusalemite experts and domestic observers have, too, contributed to gathering information and documenting IOA's violations against the heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Walls, a site inscribed by Jordan on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1981, and on the UNESCO list of World Heritage in Danger in 1982. Israeli official and NGOs' reports were also used in this report, especially to obtain evidence and some details regarding the covert digging and tunneling. This report also updates and confirms the major concerns of Jordan and Palestine regarding many IOA's violations and aggressions, some of which have already been deplored by the UNESCO decisions of the 194th and 195th Executive Board Sessions in Paris and the World Heritage Committee 38th Session in Doha.

Chapter 1

Al-Aqsa Mosque and Its Environs

This chapter aims at presenting A- clear definition of Al-Aqsa Mosque, B- examples of the IOA's aggressions and violations against Al-Aqsa Mosque and the historic status-quo of Jerusalem Muslim and Christian Holy Sites, C- activities and projects undertaken by the Jordanian Awqaf for the conservation of Al-Aqsa and the Waqf properties in the Old City of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, violations and aggressions against Al-Aqsa were intensified during 2014 and they had damaging impact on the integrity, authenticity, and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls. The continuous Israeli violations against Al-Aqsa pushed the Jordanian Government to recall its Ambassador in Tel-Aviv for consultation, and asked its mission in New York to submit a complaint to the UN Security Council in protest of the Israeli continuous violations.

A- Historical and Religious Muslim Identification of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif

Al-Aqsa Mosque is a second name for Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem; both expressions have the same meaning and refer to the same Holy Site and its components;¹ it is the place, which Allah, Exalted be He, allocated to be Prophet Muhammad's home of *al-Isra'*, the Holy Journey at Night, and *al-Mi'raj*, from which the Prophet ascended to Heavens. It was during this journey that the Noble Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, led all other prophets and messengers in prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the name of the space and land (inclusive of constructions) that is surrounded by the wall on all its four sides, with a total area of more than

¹ In fact, the expression "Al-Haram Al-Sharif" is regarded as a description of the holy site, meaning it is sanctified by Allah as a mosque of a special religious rank, whereas the expression Al-Aqsa Mosque is the distinctive name of the site. Indeed, the expression "Al-Haram Al-Sharif" is equally used to describe Al-Masjid Al-Haram in Mecca, comprising al-Ka'abah, and the Prophet Mosque located in Al-Madinah Al-Munawara. Hence, the expression Al-Haram Alsharif is followed by the location "in Jerusalem", "in Mecca" or "in Madina" to distinguish each holy site from the other two holy sites also described as Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Through long history, it has also been called Al-Haram Al-Qudsi Al-Sharif.

144 dunams (one dunam=1000sqm) with lengths of 491m west, 462m east, 310m north, and 281m south. Al-Aqsa Mosque includes the Qibli Mosque (al-Jami' Al-Aqsa), the Marwani Mosque, the Dome of the Rock Mosque, al-Buraq Mosque, the lower Aqsa, Bab al-Rahmah, all grounds, prayer halls, corridors with all the historical buildings built on them, elevated platforms, water cisterns and waterways, all that which exists above and underneath its space, all the roads and ramps that lead to its gates, and the walls themselves, including Al-Buraq Al-Sharif Wall.

Al-Aqsa Mosque is located in the southeastern corner of the walled Old City of Jerusalem, which is a total area of about one square kilometer (1000 dunams), containing tens of Waqf properties, real-estate and structures endowed for the benefit of Al-Aqsa Mosque under the custodianship of the Hashemite King of Jordan in continuation of the status that has existed before the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967. Al-Aqsa Mosque and the pertinent endowments continue to be administered by the organs of the Government of Jordan under Jordanian law. This status has been confirmed in the Hashemite Custodianship of the Holy Sites Agreement signed by His Majesty King Abdulah II and the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas in Amman on March 31st, 2013.

Al-Aqsa Mosque is an exclusive and sacred holy site for all Muslims; it is associated with their religious creed; it is of equal importance to al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and the Prophet Mosque in al-Madinah al-Munawara.

It is the Mosque that God Himself, Exalted be He, named "Al-Aqsa Mosque" in the first verse of Surat Al-Isra': "*Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haram to al-Masjid Al-Aqsa; the environs of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.*" (The Holy Qur'an, Al-Isra' 17:1)

Al-Aqsa is Islam's First Qibla and it is the Mosque to which Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) ordered Muslims to make pilgrimage, as one of the three holiest mosques in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad said: "*Do not set out for pilgrimage except to three mosques; Al-Masjid Al-Haram [in Mecca], my Mosque [in Madina], and Al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem].*"

narrated by Bukhari and Muslim. Throughout Islamic history, Muslims from all over the world have constantly made pilgrimage to pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque and to safeguard it.

The above-set out identification of Al-Aqsa Mosque is established by Islamic religious and historical sources. History bears witness to this identification over fifteen centuries up-to the present, where Muslims strive to fulfill their duty towards Al-Aqsa Mosque and exercise their right to protect it. The Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf, Qadi Al-Qudah (the Supreme Judge), Public Ifta' Department, the Jerusalem Great Mufti, Jerusalem Awqaf Council, Islamic Supreme Commission, the Palestinian Ministry of Awqaf, Palestinian Qadi al-Qudah and the Muslim Scholars' unswerving consensus all around the Muslim World confirm the abovementioned right and identification of Al-Aqsa Mosque. They all reassure their rejection of the attempts to Judaize Al-Aqsa Mosque or any of its components by the Israeli Occupation Authorities, its various organs and the extreme Jewish organizations, which attempt interfering with its administration, preventing or disrupting Muslim worshippers from entering and praying, hampering its maintenance/renovation/repair, and attempts to befog the religious historic Muslim exclusive right and identification by forced use of un-Islamic names such as "The Temple Mount" as part of the Judaization policy enforced by the Israeli Occupying Power of the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

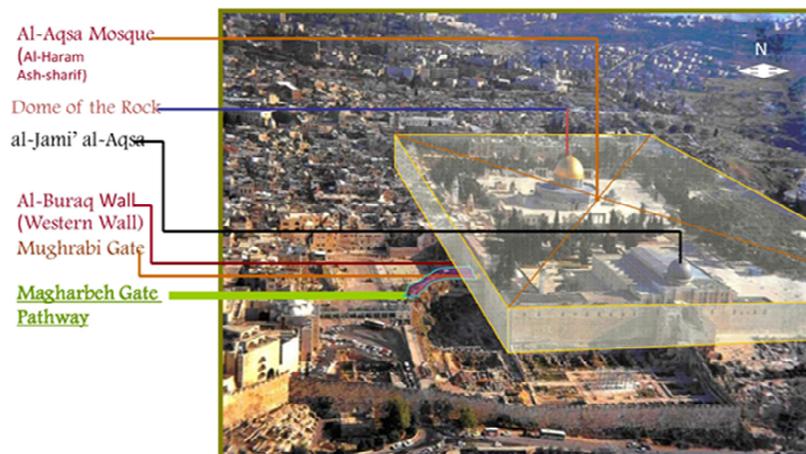


Figure 1: Definition of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif

B- Israeli Occupation violations against Al-Aqsa

In a flagrant violation of the International Law, International Humanitarian Law, Jordan – Israel Peace Treaty of 1994, Hague conventions and UNESCO decisions, Israeli Occupation Authorities' (IOA) aggressions against Al-Aqsa Mosque, worshippers and the staff of the Jerusalem Awqaf have escalated in 2014 and bluntly targeted the changing of the pre-1967 authentic status-quo of function and shape of Al-Aqsa Mosque and its surroundings. The IOA have imposed a persistent harsh siege on Al-Aqsa Mosque through most of the year 2014. Among the major violations against Al-Aqsa are the following:

1. **Jewish Extremists incursions:** Jewish extremists have been breaking into Al-Aqsa Mosque almost on a daily basis. These aggressions caused many injuries, abuse of Awqaf employees, physical damages of Al-Aqsa Mosque and, more significantly, the aggressions exposed the Israeli right wing policy and attempts to force “temporal division” of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Since the beginning of 2014, more than 12,000 extremists and about 3,000 soldiers unlawfully entered into Al-Aqsa Mosque against the will of the Jerusalem Awqaf.
2. **Aggressions against Muslim worshippers:** In facilitating the unlawful access of Israeli extremists to Al-Aqsa Mosque, the IOA were protected by severe Occupation military force deployed against Muslim worshippers. As a result of the forcible entry into Al-Aqsa Mosque, more than 2000 Muslims were injured and about 400 arrested by the IOA inside Al-Aqsa Mosque since the beginning of 2014.
3. **Access restrictions and Muslim victims during Ramadan 2014:** Muslims' attempts to reach Al-Aqsa Mosque on Laylat al-Qader (Ramadan 27th) and the Last Friday of Ramadan (July 24/25) were faced by Israeli Occupation's killing of 10 Palestinians and injuring more than 600 at the Jerusalem check points leading to al-Aqsa. The number of Muslim worshipers on Fridays of Ramadan decreased from 250,000-300,000 to 5000-7000 during 2014 as a result of the military siege and restrictions on Muslims' access to Al-Aqsa Mosque.



Figure 2: examples of Israeli military aggressions and threats against Al-Aqsa

4. **Obstruction of Al-Aqsa renovations:** the IOA are banning the implementation by the competent organs of Jordanian Awqaf of more than 19 restoration, consolidation and conservation projects in Al-Aqsa Mosque. This violation against Al-Aqsa included preventing some staff members of the Awqaf administration from reaching their offices within Al-Aqsa Mosque. The IOA have barred 12 Awqaf employees from accessing Al-Aqsa for long periods.

5. **Closure of Bab al-Rahmah (the Golden Gate):** The IOA continue to force the closure of the building of Bab Al-Rahmah and to obstruct its use or renovation without any acceptable justification, much less any legal basis since 2003. The hindrance by IOA of the Awqaf's renovation works at Bab Al-Rahmah threatens its integrity, especially because the building had water leak in its roof during the last two years.

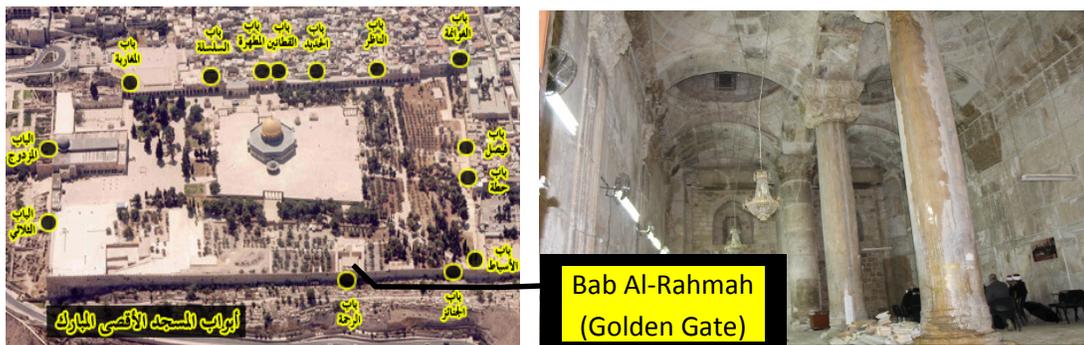


Figure 3: Left is the location of Bab AL-Rahmah; Right: Inside the structure of Bab Al-Rahmah (the Golden Gate)

- 6. Confiscation of Ribat al-Kurd:** The IOA have confiscated control on the Islamic Waqf of Ribat al-Kurd (western part of Al-Aqsa Mosque) next to Bab al-Hadid (Iron Gate) and converted it into a Jewish prayer place called “mini western wall.” IOA have banned Jerusalem Awqaf from practicing its legal and historic right to renovate the site.
- 7. Physical aggressions against Imams of Al-Aqsa:** After the Friday prayer of July 18th, 2014, the IOA police targeted (from a short distance) the head of Sheikh Salhab the chairman of the Islamic Waqf Council by a sound bomb; the Palestinian Jerusalem Minister Adnan Al-Husseini by another bomb. IOA police also targeted the Director of Al-Aqsa Mosque Sheikh Kiswani by rubber bullets.
- 8. Excavations and digging threats:** The IOA continued illegal archeological digging, excavations, demolitions and tunneling projects adjacent to the walls of Al-Aqsa Mosque, especially from the western side (under the Muslim Quarter) and southern side of the Umayyad palaces. Jordan is highly concerned regarding the increasing number of covert excavations that might breach or threaten to breach the walls of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Detailed explanations will be highlighted in the next Chapter 'excavations and tunneling in the Old City.' It is important to highlight that there are now about 20 excavations points capable of breaching the walls of al-Aqsa Mosque.
- 9. Al-Aqsa Magharbeh Gate Pathway (MGP):** Observers and Jerusalem Awqaf have documented IOA’s continued concrete constructions and irreversible demolition of major parts of the Magharbeh Gate Pathway (the Mughrabi Ascent). More details will be mentioned in the next Chapter.
- 10. Blatant damages of al-Jame’ Al-Aqsa (Al-Aqsa al-Qibli):** IOA extremists, police and army incursions into Al-Aqsa were accompanied by flagrant physical damages of 7 gates, windows, carpet, light system, sound system and historic columns inside al-Jame’ Al-Aqsa (Al-Aqsa al-Qibli) which is a southern component of Al-Aqsa Mosque.



Figure 4: Left: Umayyad column, carrying the dome of Aqsa Al-Qibli, fired by IOA bombs; Right: Gate of Al-Aqsa Al-Qibli (November 2014)

11. Cracks in the Dome of the Rock: IOA's frequent use of stun grenades caused serious cracks in the historic outside tiles of the Dome of the Rock, another well-known part of Al-Aqsa Mosque. This aggression occurred in 2013 and 2014.



Figure 5: Cracks in the outside gate of the Dome of the Rock

12. IOA resumed the forcing of Jewish names on Arab buildings, facades, yards and roads in the Old City of Jerusalem. The period of November 2014 through February 2015 has witnessed a shocking violation as IOA forced the “Temple Mount” name on signs at Al-Aqsa Gates of al-Asbat, al-Magharbeh, Al-Silsilah, al-Hadid and al-Majlis. The flagrant aggressive policy of Judiazation is manifested by the signs below which completely ignore mentioning the fact that Al-Haram Al-Sharif is Al-Aqsa Mosque.



Figure 6: 2014-2015 forcing Jewish names on Al-Aqsa gates and entrances

13. Tankaziyyah School/ the Court: IOA have converted the main hall of the Islamic historic Tankaziyyah School into a police station and another part of it into a Jewish synagogue in 2013-2014. Tankaziyyah school has been confiscated from Al-Aqsa Mosque and been occupied by the Israeli Occupation police since 1967. Jerusalem Awqaf has been denied access to the school.

Planting Jewish fake graves: In 2013, the Jewish extremists groups planted more than 3000 fake graves in the Waqf land next to the eastern and southern wall of Al-Aqsa. In 2014, the IOA continued to condone extremists' aggressions of planting fake Jewish graves around Al-Aqsa Mosque in Ras El-Amoud, Mount of Olives, and Sloudhah in Silwan. The main purpose of fake graves is to confiscate the land and to Judaize the Waqf properties.



Figure 7: Jewish fake graves down to al-Rahmah Cemetery east of Al-Aqsa

14. Most aggressive escalation was recorded on the 5th of November 2014, when about 700 Israeli special military forces stormed Al-Aqsa in the early morning; 200 of them broke (with their shoes and weapons) into Al-Aqsa Al-Qibli. The Israeli forces evacuated

the Mosque after they set fire near *minbar Salahuddeen* and they locked the doors sieging a number of the worshipers inside. The soldiers used rubber bullets, stun grenades and tear gas leaving many injuries that were also denied access to medical help. On the same day, the Occupation army also secured the incursion into Al-Aqsa by Jewish extremists, settlers and Knesset members.

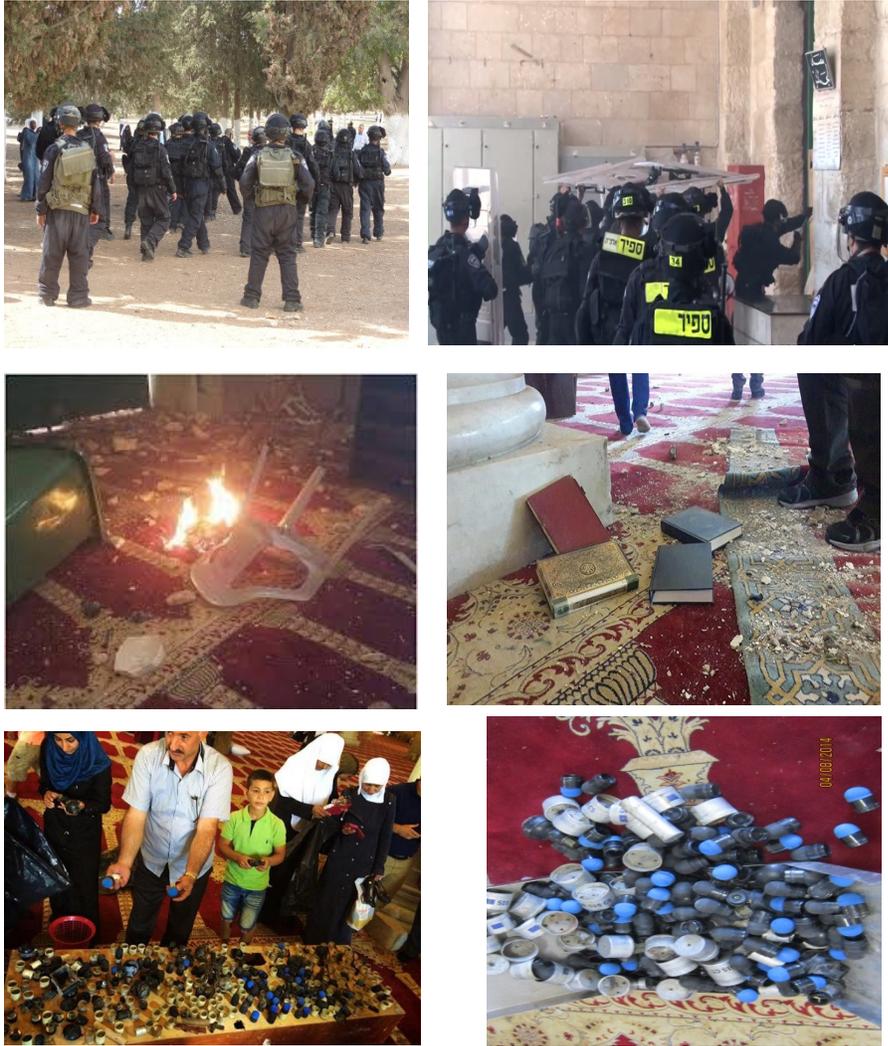


Figure 8: November 5 2014 storming of Al-Aqsa Al-Qibli, abusing the Holy Quran and throwing tens of stun and gas grenades inside the Mosque

C- Conservation projects undertaken by Jordanian Jerusalem Awqaf in the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Walls

1. Restorations of parts of the eastern wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque.
2. Two Mamluk wooden gates of Al-Aqsa Mosque out of seven gates damaged by the Israeli police have been restored.
3. Continuing the restoration work of the plastering and mosaic decorations inside the Dome of the Rock supervised by the Jordanian Restoration Committee of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock (RCAMD).



Figure 9: Hashemite restoration of the frescos of the Dome of the Rock inside

4. Covering the roofs of some buildings of Al-Aqsa Mosque with lead sheets.
5. Continuing marble restoration of the interior walls within the Dome of the Rock.
6. UNESCO retained Prof. Dr. Stefan Weber, a museum expert who finished a conceptual design for the Islamic Museum of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Jordanian Jerusalem Awqaf continues cooperation with UNESCO on other projects, such as the manuscript center and training of some employees.
7. Re-pointing of the stone courses of the seventh colonnade of al-Marwani Mosque.



Figure 10: seventh colonnade of the Marwani Mosque renovated.

Chapter 2

Israeli Occupation Authorities' Aggressions and Violations against the Historic Character of the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Walls

This chapter presents A- reminder of the illegality of all Israeli Occupation measures in Occupied Jerusalem, B- some of the continued illegal intrusive tunneling and underground excavations, C- new projects of Judaization of historic sites in the Old City of Jerusalem and its surroundings, and D- examples of demolition and change of status of historic remains in order to replace them with Jewish prayer places. One great risk is that the Israel Antiquities Authorities (IAA), which is part of IOA, has been illegitimately self-declared as having jurisdiction to conduct the excavations; and IAA writes their selective narrative in the Old City and in its environs from the Silwan Pool (south) to Bab el-Amoud (Damascus Gate) in the northern wall of the Old City. This risk is severely heightened by the fact that most of the recent excavations have been conducted at the initiative of some extremist settlers' organizations rather than the IAA.

During the year 2014 through 2015, excavations have been taking place within the area of the western wall of Al-Aqsa and in the spaces that extend westward to El-Wad Street, beneath the residential houses of the Muslim Quarter. Hundreds of square meters are under excavation, and the works involve piercing ancient walls and removing large amounts of historic remains (e.g., walls, rooms, graves, Mamluk and Ottoman baths and arches), only slight of which is methodically documented.

A- Reminder of the illegality of all Israeli measures in Occupied Jerusalem

Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank in the 1967 War. Since then, a number of demographic and physical changes have been imposed by the Occupying power on the ground. Both the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, in several resolutions, have

declared these measures taken by Israel to change the status of Occupied Jerusalem as invalid. Security Council resolution 252 (1968) considered “that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot change that status”. Israel was urgently called upon “to retract all such measures already taken and to desist forthwith from taking any further action which tend to change the status of Jerusalem”. The Security Council has reaffirmed these two positions many times. When Israel took steps to make a united Jerusalem its claimed capital, the Security Council adopted on 30 June 1980 the resolution number 476 (1980) urgently calling on Israel, the Occupying Power, to abide by this and previous Security Council resolutions and to desist forthwith from persisting in the policy and measures affecting the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. After Israel’s non-compliance with the resolution, the UN Security Council, on 20 August 1980, adopted the resolution number 478, in which it reiterated its position that all actions altering the status of the city were null and void, and called upon States that had established diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw them.

The General Assembly also considered Israel’s measures aiming to alter the status of Occupied Jerusalem to be a violation of international law that did not affect the continued applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This legal position of the UN, upheld by the UN General Assembly in December 1980, has been reaffirmed in subsequent years by all UN and most of other international organizations. The UNESCO was the most concerned organization to regularly monitor the IOA’s measures changing the physical status and historic character of the Old City of Jerusalem in particular and to call upon Israel to retract all illegal and unilateral measures taken by the IOA. The UN Security Council stated in numerous occasions that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies to Israel’s Occupation of the Palestinian Territories. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its July 2004 “the Wall Advisory” regarding the legal consequences of the construction of the separation wall has ruled that the Hague Regulations are part of the international customary law. This was recognized by all participants in the 2004 ICJ proceedings before the Court in the Wall case, including Israel.

B- Intrusive tunneling and underground excavations

- 1. Tunnels Network: Western Wall, Wadi al-Hilweh and al-Wad Street:** Underground covert and overt excavation activities continue in the area of the 'Ein Umm al-Daraj in Silwan at the request of the settler and extremist organization El'ad and the Israel National Parks Authority. The turning point came in 2004 when extensive covert excavations began on the southern slopes of Wadi Hilweh neighborhood of Silwan and went up from it toward Al-Aqsa Mosque with many extensions still unknown until today. Hundreds of Islamic period relics and Roman remains were removed without documentation or documented in a way that serves exclusive Judaization narrative.

In the middle of al-Wad Street, extensive excavations began under the so-called Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue, a newly construction adjacent to the western wall of Al-Aqsa. The covert excavations are very hazardous: they might remove a lot of the Islamic underground rooms, and more seriously they are capable of breaching the western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israeli extremist groups announced that they are planning to establish the largest underground synagogue adjacent to the wall of Al-Aqsa at the same site. This massive series of ancient buildings excavated by IOAarchaeologists and ideological companies is set to open to the public beneath the houses of Old Jerusalem's Cotton Market neighborhood just a few meters from Al-Aqsa Mosque. Hebrew sources say that the complex named "*Ahar Kotlenu*" — Hebrew for behind our wall - features a grand hall that is roughly 3,500 square feet (325 square meters) in size "whose cross-vaulted stone roof is held aloft by six reinforced pillars." It once served as the storerooms and stables of the Mamluk caravansary, or inn for caravans, built in 1337, next to the Cotton Merchants Market.

For knowledgeable observers, it seems likely that the idea was already proposed to link up with those old excavations, both in a physical sense (the rediscovery of old tunnels) and an ideological one (the renewal of the long-abandoned method of digging new tunnels and excavations). Since more than a decade ago, the IAA has joined forces with the ideological organizations that are changing the face and status of the area of the Buraq Plaza and Silwan

with the purpose of realizing their plan to connect Silwan to the Buraq plaza in an underground system. Sources mention that the system includes excavated galleries, ancient drainage channels, and large underground spaces that were cleared of their historic contents. It should be noted that the excavations in Silwan are funded by the extremist El'ad organization.

2. **The Kittan Cave:** This cave is located beneath the Sa'diyah neighborhood of the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and however access to it is from outside the old city from an area located between the Old City Gate of al-Amoud and the Gate of al-Sahira. A new exit gate had been dug up in the northern wall of the Old City near the Sahira Gate. Mysterious excavations are taking place inside the cave; it is likely to be connected to the tunnel network. The Kittan Cave served as a quarry for hundreds of years. An exclusivist narrative has been imposed on the location in order to undermine the historic significance of the location as the cave from which the building stones of the Ottoman Wall of the Old City were extracted, a project commissioned by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Great. A Jewish name has been imposed on the cave and it is now being referred to as "Zedekiah's Cave" in an attempt to advocate a claim that this is the cave from which the stones of the "First Temple of Suleiman" were extracted.

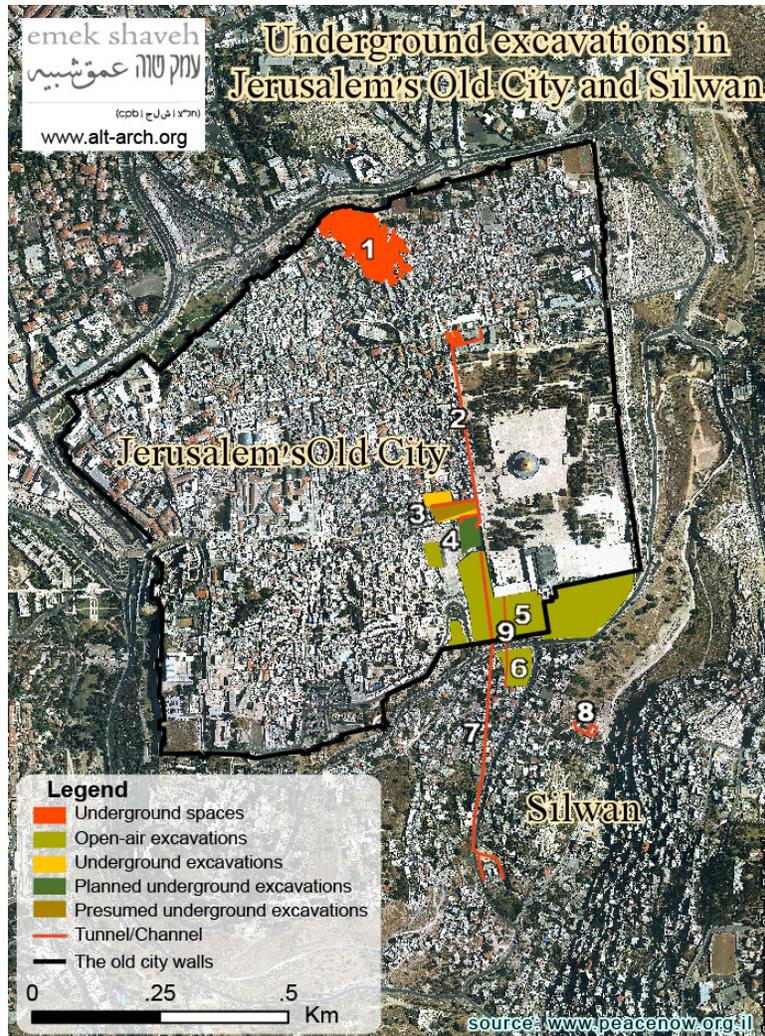


Figure 11: Old City and Silwan map - Number 1 is the Kittan cave, 3 and 4 al-Wad Street, 5 and 9 Ummayad Palaces, 6 Wadi Hilweh (Upper Silwan) and 8 Silwan

3. **Mamluk-era caravansary beneath western wall:** Part of the the tunneling in Al-Wad Street (see number 3 in the map above), Israeli media has recently reported that archaeologists recently dug up a Mamlukstructure just meters from Al-Aqsa Mosque in the area between the Cotton Market and the Buraq plaza. Observers, Israeli, Palesinain and Jordanian experts, have been banned from entering the area of the excavation several times during the years of 2012 through 2015.



Figure 12: Mamluk caravansary under the ground, next to the Cotton Market

4. **Qishleh excavations:** This building was constructed upon orders of Ibrahim Pasha Bin Muhammad Ali during his ruling over the city of Jerusalem (1831 to 1840). The Israeli Antiquities Authority recently completed excavations at the building's western courtyard, which is also located north of the Jerusalem Salahuddeen Castle found inside the Old City Walls near al-Khalil Gate. The building is now connected with the castle through a new gate that was intrusively opened in the wall. The location is now open for the public.

5. **Terra Santa (New Gate):** The Terra Santa excavations are located near the New Gate (Bab Jdeide) of the Old City. The excavations started in 2011 at the courtyard of the Terra Santa Monastery. The first report to be published on the excavation was released in 2014; in which it was stated that the excavations reached the depth of 6 meters and have uncovered Byzantine and Mamluk eras. Palestinian sources are very concerned for changing the historic face and function of the area of the Terra Santa and Bab Jdeide in purpose to transform flow of foreign tourism from the Damascus Gate and al-Wad Street to the new gate and the Terra Santa; the matter that will negatively influence historic Old City market in Khan al-Zeit and al-Wad streets.

6. **Upper Silwan excavations:** This is one of the most flagrant illegal excavations by the Israeli Occupation Authorities. In carrying out these excavations, IOA removed Muslim cemeteries, Roman layers and important historic rooms and walls without documentation. Access and participation in the excavation of Upper Silwan (Wadi Hilweh) was exclusively allowed to El'ad settlers' company and the Israeli IAA in a clear Judaization manner of imposing Jewish narrative on everything revealed or removing of every non-Jewish clear relics. The Upper Silwan (also called the Givati Parking Lot) is an open area at the north end of the Wadi al-Hilweh neighborhood of Silwan at a distance of twenty meters from the walls of the Old City. Intrusive

excavations, funded by Elad, have taken place at the site since 2003. These excavations started at first under the direction of Roni Reich and Eli Shukrun, subsequently extending under the direction of Doron Ben-Ami since 2007. The park is part of the open areas which were used by the original Arab residents of Silwan. An area of approximately 4000 square meters was confiscated by IOA for construction of a four-story building (The Kedem Compound) covering 9,000 square meters (see next section).



Figure 13: The site of the Wadi Hilweh excavation (so called Kedem compound)

C- Enforced Judaization construction projects in the Old City of Jerusalem

Many Islamic, Byzantine, Roman and Greek relics of history have been confiscated by IOA and removed in order to construct new Jewish religious and cultural institutions for the purpose of imposing an exclusivist narrative that undermines the authenticity, identity, integrity and cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and drastically alters the centuries-old *Status Quo*. Many of such IOA's actions are taking place in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque in a manner that negatively affects the function, visual view and skyline of Old City and, more importantly, contributes to isolating Al-Aqsa Mosque from its cultural surroundings and the Arab and Muslim community for whom it is unutterably holy. An example of these actions / violations is the increasing number of more than 60 synagogues, most of them newly created and enforced in the Old City of Jerusalem. Tens of Waqf properties and tunnels have been recently confiscated by IOA and converted into Jewish synagogues. Examples of Judaization projects are the following:

1. **Systematic Demolition of the Magharbeh Gate Pathway (MGP) 2004-2014:** The extensive aggressions against the MGP and its surroundings continued in 2014-2015. Demolition of the Magharbeh Quarter, an 800-year-old Muslim Waqf, started in 1967. The destruction of the MGP which has been ongoing for the last 11 years echoes, rather aims to complete, the terrible demolition of the entire ancient Magharbeh Quarter in 1967.



Figure 14: IOA demolition of the historic Waqf of the Magharbeh Quarter in June 1967

2010-2012 witnessed the most intensive demolitions and construction plans at the MGP site. Municipal plans were approved to extend the Buraq Wall / “Wailing Wall” Plaza at the expense of the extant parts of the authentic and historic MGP.



Figure 15: IOA demolishes historic room atop the MGP, August 2012.

Threats to construct a permanent MGP bridge, neglecting the calls of UNESCO and the international community to preserve the site’s heritage continued in 2014. Intense demolitions of the historic remains, including entire rooms and parts of the Afdaliyya Mosque were conducted in 2013-2014. Demolishing and erasing part of the MGP is an utter manifestation of the Judaization policy of the area, whereby the Jewish women’s prayer area is expanded. This expansion involved leveling and lowering large areas of the MGP and many new constructions and excavations are continuing through 2015. Of these constructions is the erection of a huge wooden platform for Jewish reform and conservative prayer place labeled as a new expansion of the "Western Wall," which constitutes an imposed change of Jerusalem status-quo, seriously indicating that other Judaization projects will gradually undermine all non-Jewish remains and practices.



Figure 16: Construction of a platform as a prayer room for Liberal Jews, September 2013

The Government of Jordan is deeply concerned about Israeli prohibition of the entrusted the Jordanian Awqaf from performing emergency restorations and stabilization measures to the Ummayyad, Ottoman and Mamluk walls at the site of the Magharbeh Gate Pathway. These historic treasures have recently been removed or covered with concrete and new walls erected by the IOA. The pictures below show the result of the Israeli Occupation Authorities' systematic demolition of the Magharbeh Gate Pathway.



Figure 17: systematic demolition of the Magharbeh Gate Pathway 2004-2015

2. Umayyad Palaces Area: destruction, misrepresentation and disfigurement of relics:

Umayyad Palaces have witnessed one of the largest and continuous exclusivist excavations in Jerusalem since 1967. Since the middle of 1990s, the protests against the IOA's excavations have become harsher because of the shift from exploring what is beneath the earth to flagrantly faking history of what has been revealed so far. Israeli archaeologists who excavated the Umayyad Palaces during the 1960s and 1970s are now shocked that the Umayyad Palaces have recently suffered systematic Judaization projects that are changing names, narrative and function of the area. The excavations extend the entire length of Al-Aqsa Mosque on its southern side, and along a substantial part of its western side, where very worrisome covert excavations have been running during the last two years 2013 through 2015. The archaeological location of clear Islamic history

was shockingly declared a Jewish national park at the end of the 1990s, and a few years later, as 2010 approached, the Davidson Center was constructed and the site was turned into an active museum of the so-called “First Temple and Second Temple”.



*Figure 18: Enforcement of Jewish history on the Ummayad Palaces
Left: West of Al-Aqsa, Right: South of Al-Aqsa*

IOA's purported justification could be that presentation of these excavations is merely a means of making Jerusalem's history over the ages known. In reality, however, upon contrasting the actual findings with the IOA's narrative reveals that IOA deliberately misrepresent them as exclusively reflecting Jewish history. Below are some examples of the recent significant exclusivist interventions and Judaization narrative of parts of the Ummayad Palaces:

- a- **A project that claims Islamic history remains are “Jewish Ritual Bath (Mikve) Trail”**. The trail features a number of ritual baths alleged recently by IOA to be from Second Temple Period although Israeli archaeologists, such as Professor Meir Ben Dove and others exposed them in the 1970s as Abbasi and Mamluk period water reservation places or Hammams, especially those in the eastern side of the Ummayad Palaces. Observers record that Israeli tour leaders and location signs completely ignore to mention that these ritual baths are scattered among remains from other periods.
- b- **A project that promotes and emphasizes a relationship between the so-called “City of David”, which has been well known as Silwan for decades and the so called “the Ophel”, which is at the core of the site of the Ummayad Palaces. The project marks exclusivist Juidaization narrative due to ideological aspiration to bolster a particular**

historical narrative and not according to the importance of the archaeological findings. In June 2011, the Ummayad Palaces site of the so-claimed “Ophel halls” south of Al-Aqsa was opened to the public. No scientific archaeological analysis is presented to prove that the remains dated to the 8th and 7th centuries BCE or, as claimed by the ideological explanations, that these remains refer to the "Kingdom of Judea". Forcing a specific narrative or emphasis of a particular layer (with few findings) in a multi-layer locus will lead other extremist groups in the Middle East to react in a violent behavior towards hundreds of excavations that reveal history of different cultures.

- c- **Digging a tunnel connecting Silwan to the western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque.** The Israeli Antiquities Authority, since 2007, has been excavating a tunnel from the Silwan pool/ al-Hamra pool towards the north. In 2012, the tunnel reached area of the Ummayad Palaces inside the Old City and new tunneling exits have been opened in 2014 adjacent to the western wall of Al-Aqsa, exactly south of the Maghrabeh Gate Pathway. The ongoing covert tunneling raises many fears of not only exclusivist Jewish narrative but more significantly a threat of breaching the western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque, a violation that would be an aggression against the Holiness of the Mosque, and carries a serious risk of weakening its walls, and would disrupt status-quo and security of the Old City of Jerusalem.
- d- **Confiscation of part of the Muslim Cemetery of Bab al-Rahmah** has started in 2012 for the so-claimed conservation and excavation work at the southeastern end of the Ummayad Palaces. The continuing excavations are undertaken at the site under the supervision of Dr. Eilat Mazar. Muslims have been prevented of Muslim burial at the site. The new excavation and digging works aim at finding OR claiming a finding of remains that refer to the "Kingdom of Judea" to match the new exposed remains to the area known for some Israelis as the “Ophel Walls.” This expansion in the Ummayyad Palaces excavations might be used as an excuse to confiscate remains of the eastern walls of Al-Aqsa and to impose on them a Jewish narrative.

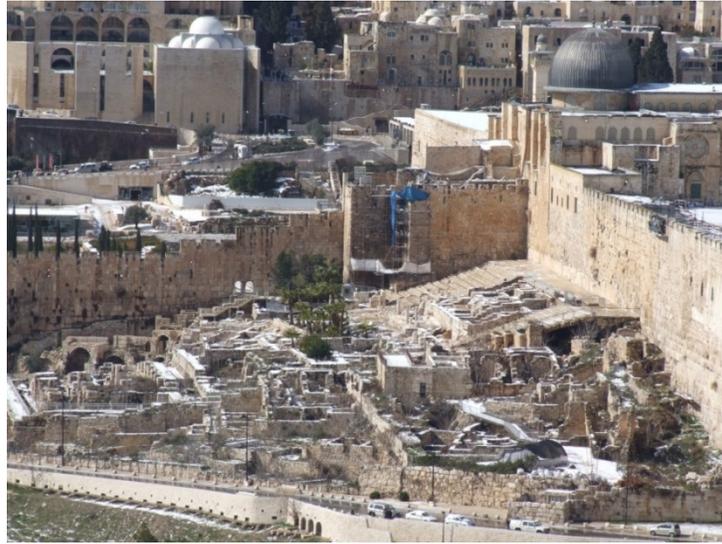


Figure 19: Umayyad Palaces so-claimed as Jewish ritual baths at the southern wall of Al-Aqsa

3. Beit Haliba in al-Buraq Plaza: In early February 2012, a plan for construction on the western section of the Buraq plaza was deposited for public review by the Jerusalem Building and Planning District Committee. The plan was put forth by the Western Wall Heritage Fund, an Israeli Occupation body responsible for the Buraq /Western Wall plaza. The structure, known as “Beit Haliba,” is planned to cover approximately 3,700sqm and to rise three stories above ground level and one and a half stories below ground level. The planned building will face Al-Aqsa Mosque. In 2004, the IAA began excavating on the western section of the Buraq plaza. The excavation was conducted almost non-stop between 2004 and 2015, on an area of approximately 1500sqm. The excavation of the Buraq plaza exposed remains of the Magharbeh neighborhood, which was destroyed by the IOA in 1967, as well as ancient remains from the Mamluk (13th–16th centuries C.E.), Byzantine (4th–7th centuries C.E.), and Roman (2nd–4th centuries C.E.) periods. A group of Israeli archeologists protested the construction plans for the so-called Beit Haliba on the basis that the construction would harm the archeological remains as the area was authorized for the construction of a multi-layered building that will change the facts (Figure 20 below), on the ground and the skyline of the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem.

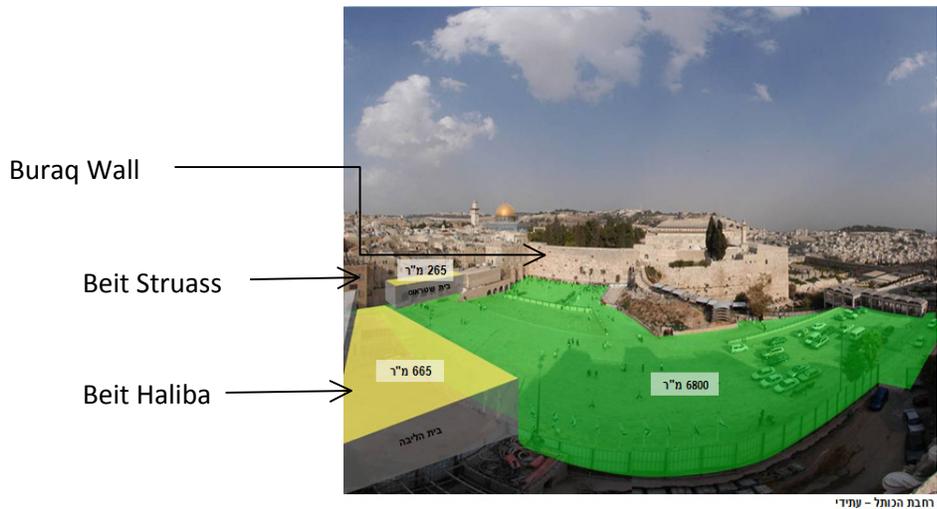


Figure 20: new constructions and Judaization of Al-Buraq Wall Plaza west of Al-Aqsa

4. Beit Strauss: Beit Strauss is a two-storey building that has been constructed by IOA through the year 2014 in the northern area of the Buraq Plaza. In September 2013, the Israeli Antiquities Authority began demolishing the appointed area without even doing the right excavation or documentation of the unearthed area. The place was part of the Magharbeh Quarter. The building is announced to include an Israeli police station that will be a center of rapid intervention into Al-Aqsa Mosque; a visitors' center, restrooms and a cultural center. Some Jewish sources say the building will house new ideological groups and activities and its construction purpose is only Judaization of every space inch in the area of al-Buraq Plaza. Other sources say it is also planned to be a passageway for a larger intrusive project of the planned highest synagogue on top of the roof of the Tankaziyah School.



Figure 21: 2013 demolitions for the construction of Beit Strauss on Muslim Waqf land

5. Excavations and construction of new levels beneath the Buraq Plaza: Israeli Occupation Authorities have been conducting one of the most massive underground covert excavations in the history of Jerusalem for different purposes. These excavations are highly likely to level most of the historic non-Jewish remains and to impose an exclusivist Jewish narrative on findings revealed in the excavations. One of the announced plans is to construct an underground level that will cover the entire area of the Buraq Plaza.



Figure 22: Covert excavations taking place beneath the Buraq Palza 2004-2015

6. Kedem Compound on Upper Silwan Wadi Hilweh: The Israeli Occupation Authorities are going ahead with plans to build the “Kedem Compound” on the site of the Upper Silwan “Givati Parking Lot” excavations, at the entrance of Silwan, and only a few meters from the walls of the Old City. According to the plan, the center will cover an area of about 16,400sqm (about 177,000 square feet), and will reach a height of seven stories. The building will contain lecture halls, classrooms, extensive commercial areas, and an underground parking lot, all devoted to the activities of the extremist Elad organization. As highlighted before in 'the Upper Silwan section' (Section B-6 above), the plan

contains no provision for the preservation of the antiquities that will ultimately be covered up by the building. The site has been under excavation by the Israeli Antiquities Authority since 2003, and since 2007 has represented the most extensive excavations in all of Jerusalem. The digging has uncovered the remains of a neighborhood from the early Islamic period (Abassid), part of a Byzantine structure, and an expansive structure from the late Roman period (third to fourth centuries C.E.). Most of these remains have been completely removed without any procedure of documentation. The placement of the building at the northern entrance to Silwan will cut off the Palestinian residents' direct connection to the Old City and to the Palestinian neighborhoods to the north and east of the village.

7. Plan to open a parking lot on the site of Nea Maria Church: The Nea Maria Church is located in the southern part of the Old City of Jerusalem a few meters away from the Nabi Dawoud Gate. The site was excavated by Israeli Occupation Authorities in the 1970s. This magnificent Byzantine church was constructed in the Sixth Century A.D. The location is not open for visitors and is highly neglected due to an Israeli municipality plan to establish a parking lot in its place. The Jewish neighborhood already has its own parking lot (as shown in the picture below) and expanding it, at the expense of huge parts of the Nea Maria Church remains, will only enhance Judaization plans.

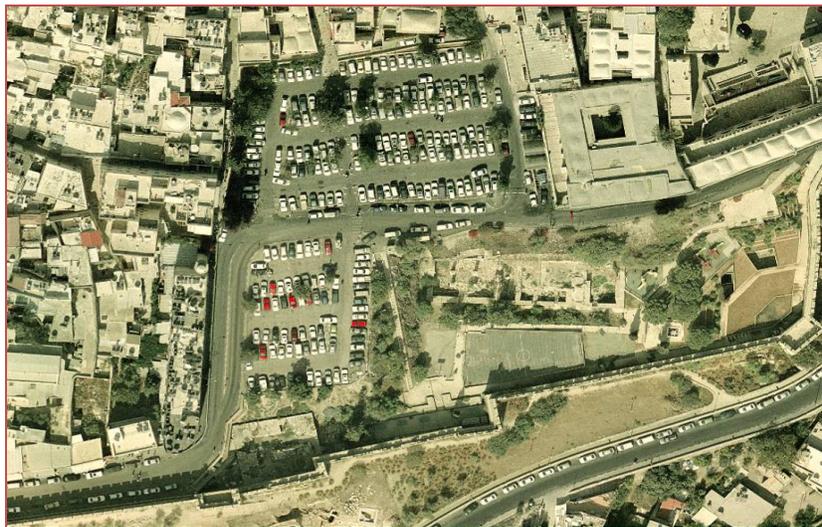


Figure 23: Nea Maria Church remains south of Jewish Neighborhood's parking lot

D- Demolitions and confiscations designated for establishing new Jewish prayer places

- 1. New plaza and prayer wall at the southern western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque:** Al-Buraq Plaza, the Western Wall Plaza, was 22 meters length by 3 meters width until 1967, when the Magharbeh Quarter was completely demolished and the plaza was expanded to become 70 x 60 meters. The demolition of al-Magharbeh Gate Pathway in 2004 through 2014 enabled the expansion of the plaza to reach about 90 meters length adjacent to the wall of Al-Aqsa to more than 100 meters width with new excavations and public service area towards the west. The period of 2014 through 2015 is witnessing a new stage of identification and practice of considering the 70 meters wall south of the Magharbeh Gate Pathway (MGP) as part of the Western Wall (or the Wailing Wall). Newly created prayer plazas have been erected inside the excavation area adjacent to the southern western wall of Al-Aqsa, at a level lower than the present northern Western Wall Plaza. Observers recorded a new practice of leaving Jewish prayer notes between the stones of the wall, in an attempt to Judaize it and to impose a de-facto status of it, as an extension to the Western Wall (Jewish prayer space).
- 2. Ribat al-Kurd / Hosh al-Shihabi:** This historic site is located near Bab Al Hadid (Iron Gate) of Al-Aqsa Mosque and is part in parcel of the western wall of Al-Aqsa. This property consists of a small plaza, an alleyway and a number of houses inhabited by several Palestinians, known as al-Shihabi Family. The property is an Islamic Waqf and dates back to the Mamluki Period. The site was confiscated by IOA and converted into a Jewish prayer place during the period 2006 through 2014. Israeli Occupation Authorities have recently imposed facts on the ground by banning the Awqaf from renovating the site, introducing a check point at its entrance and the Israeli municipality carried out restoration work at the site and installed surveillance cameras despite the continuous protests of the Jordanian Islamic Awqaf. In November 2015, the Israeli Occupation municipality has also fixed a new sign at the location claiming that the property is named the “small wailing wall”, frivolously and unashamedly claiming that it is a wall of “Temple Mount”. The property was also damaged several times due to tunneling taking place underneath it.
- 3. Biblical and Talmudic Parks:** The Israeli Occupation Authorities have recently been imposing changes in the status of some confiscated land properties by initially designating them as natural

parks, and subsequently declaring them as national parks, then as Talmudic parks in a final stage of Judaization. The municipality is issuing new jurisdictions of zoning and plans to transform historic areas in and around the Walls of the Old City of Jerusalem into national parks. Of great risk is the municipal's delegation of certain authorities to Israeli settlers' NGOs, such as the extreme El-Ad organization, whose official objective is to Judaize Jerusalem through guided tours, Judaization narrative and educational programs and confiscation of Arab houses to convert them into Jewish synagogues or settlement outposts.



Figure 24: Al-Bustan neighborhood: Projected to be land free of Palestinians and to be announced a Judaized area to be called Gardens of the King

Jordan and Palestine's concern is not only the properties confiscation but also the fact that these plans are meant to promote political agendas such as removing non-Jewish archaeological remains, enforcement of Jewish representation in Jerusalem, creating a contiguous bloc of land free of Palestinian residents and to announce them as Judaized archaeological areas, such as Wadi Hilweh in Silwan and the Ummayyad Palaces and al-Rahmah Cemetery among many other places such as the Nabi Dawoud Mosque (see below).

- 4. Nabi Dawoud Mosque:** Nabi Dawoud Mosque, an Islamic Waqf property, is located next to the southern wall of the Old City of Jerusalem. Israeli settler extremists and NGOs (mentioned above) continue to demolish and remove Ottoman and Mamluk tiles that decorated the walls of Nabi Dawoud Mosque and to damage the graves of the Dajani family members at the site. At the same time, these extremist groups have gradually confiscated parts of the Mosque and converted them into a Jewish synagogue inside the first floor of the building.



Figure 25: Demolition of Muslim cemetery and enforcement of new Jewish synagogue at the Nabi Dawoud Mosque

Chapter 3

Recommendations

Jordan and Palestine call on UNESCO to implement its decisions taken by the Executive Board 195 and the World Heritage Committee 38th Session in Doha concerning the Old City of Jerusalem and Its Wall and other previous decisions in this regard.

As highlighted at the beginning of Chapter Two of this report, the UN, UNSC and most UN members states and the international organizations do not recognize Israel's 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem nor Israel's 1980 Jerusalem Law and the proclamation of East Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Thus, Jordan and Palestine reiterate their request to the World Heritage Centre to refer to the legal status of each party according to Decisions & Resolutions of the UN bodies as well as the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1954. Therefore, in the working document of the World Heritage Committee, Israel should be designated as the Occupying Power. Jordan and Palestine demand that all UNESCO bodies use international legal language, which describes Israel as Occupying Power or Israel Occupation Authorities, in all UNESCO monitoring reports, briefings and decisions that are related to the IOA measures, violations and aggressions in Occupied East Jerusalem, as part of the 1967 Occupied Territories. Jordan and Palestine also request that the report submitted by Israel be clearly presented, as the report of the Occupying Authorities according to the UN and UNSC resolutions and decisions relating to the status of East Jerusalem under international law.

Jordan and Palestine call on Israel to comply with the relevant provisions on the protection of cultural heritage including the four Geneva Conventions (1949), the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954 and its related protocols, the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972, the Delhi UNESCO Recommendation of 1956 concerning excavations undertaken in occupied territories, the inscription of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls at the request of Jordan on the World Heritage List (1981) and on the List of World Heritage in Danger (1982) and related recommendations, resolutions and decisions of UNESCO

Jordan and Palestine urge the intervention of UNESCO and the World Heritage Center to resume monitoring reports and to use all possible tools to document the observations mentioned in this Status Report.

Jordan and Palestine call on Israel, the Occupying Authority, to comply with the relevant UNESCO decisions, most importantly to refrain from the attempts to change the *Status Quo* at Al-Aqsa Mosque and to urgently stop all excavations and other illegal measures taken against the heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls.

Jordan and Palestine insist on the demand that the IOA shall provide to the World Heritage Center all relevant information concerning all excavations and illegal works in the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls as stipulated in previous World Heritage Committee and Executive Board Decisions.

Jordan and Palestine request that the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies undertake an appropriate analytical study on the effects of the aforementioned violations and convey the results to the World Heritage Committee 39th Session, 2015 for its consideration and action.

Jordan and Palestine underscore the necessity that UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre continue their guidance and direction towards fulfilling the obligations of all parties concerned, including UNESCO, towards the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, as a site listed by Jordan in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1981 and in the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger in 1982.

Jordan and Palestine request presenting this Status Report in its entirety to all members of the World Heritage Committee and members of the UNESCO Executive Board and request this report to be reflected in the working document of the WHC's 39th Session, 2015.