

Jerusalem Chronology

2001

JANUARY

Jan. 3: PM Barak sends a letter to Sephardic Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron saying, "Israel has never conceded the Temple Mount to the Palestinians."

Jan. 4: Barak rejects a recommendation by his security services to allow Jews to visit the 'Temple Mount'

Jan. 7: Two former security officers send a public letter to Barak warning of security threats to the Temple Mount by extremist, messianic groups. They state "Exhortations to destroy the mosques and take vengeance for the murder of Binyamin Kahane [make] the [Haram Ash-Sharif and other Islamic sites] prime targets for attacks by Jews."

Jan. 8: Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem, issues a fatwa or religious edict forbidding non-Muslims from controlling the holy site of the Al-Aqsa compound: "Al-Haram Ash-Sharif, including the ground the mosques are built on, that beneath them, as well as the space above them, are all (belonging to) the Islamic Waqf and cannot be controlled by non-Muslims."

Jan. 13: The Mitchell Commission visits Haram Ash-Sharif without coordinating with Israel, angering Israeli officials while Waqf Dir. Adnan Husseini says that with Israeli presence the visit would have been canceled.

Jan. 14: Palestinians fire at Neve Ya'acov in northern Jerusalem for the first time. Dahiet Al-Barid is put under curfew in retaliation.

Jan. 21: PM Barak orders the police to halt excavation work by the Waqf at Haram Ash-Sharif.

- At the new round of talks in Taba Israel proposes a plan based on the US proposals and drafted by an expert team headed by Moshe Amirav, which preserves the status quo by leaving out the issue of sovereignty over Haram Ash-Sharif, while letting each side administer their own holy sites. East Jerusalem would be part of a demilitarized state, policed by Palestinians and with joint Palestinian-Israeli forces in mixed neighborhoods and around holy sites. Israel would annex Jewish and mixed neighborhoods in exchange for unpopulated land for the Palestinians, incl. Har Homa, ensuring territorial contiguity. There would be two separate municipalities with some shared and some separated infrastructure.

Jan. 22: As the Taba talks continue, the Israeli side presents plans on Jerusalem that extent areas under Israeli sovereignty beyond the Old City's Jewish Quarter to include Silwan, Wadi Rabab, Gethsemane and parts of the Mt. of Olives.

Jan. 24: The Israeli Construction and Organization Committee in Jerusalem discusses expansion plans for Har Homa towards Bethlehem and St. Elias Church; proposed are 400 new housing units in addition to the 1,500 units built recently.

- The Temple Mount Faithful petition the Israeli High Court of Justice, demanding punishment of those undertaking alleged illegal construction on the Haram Ash-Sharif.

Jan. 25: Waqf Dir. Adnan Al-Husseini says that 31,000 Palestinians live in the Old City, as well as 3,000 settlers, and that since 1967 Israel confiscated 168 dunums for its purposes.

Jan. 26: The Israeli Transportation Min. decides to open a new tunnel ('Eshkol Tunnel') under Road No.1, starting from Mt. Scopus road, through Shedrot Levi Eshkol and ending at the Police Headquarters in Sheikh Jarrah.

Jan. 29: Jewish settlers occupy a 20-sq. meter shop and an apartment in Al-Wad Street in the Old City's Muslim Quarter that were home to a Palestinian family for 13 years, claiming the property used to be owned by Jews in the past.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 2: A poll released by the American Committee on Jerusalem shows that 46% of Americans surveyed support a "shared" Jerusalem, while 23% prefer Israeli control; 55-62% disagree with moving the US embassy to Jerusalem.

Feb. 4: Sec. of State Powell says the US has no immediate plans to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem. But the next day, a White House spokesperson reasserts that Pres. Bush has not changed his view that the embassy ought to be moved.

Feb. 7: Sharon prays at the Western Wall, vows to keep Jerusalem under Israeli control: "I am visiting Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish people for the past 3,000 years and the united and indivisible capital of Israel - with the Temple Mount at its center- for all eternity."

Feb. 11: WJM mayor Olmert says during a meeting with the Jerusalem Planning and Construction Committee that 120,000 new residential units are needed in the city to maintain the demographic balance, adding that "The victory of Sharon in the elections has opened an opportunity, which we should make use of."

Feb. 13: A law passed in the Knesset allocates an extra grant of NIS 60,000 (for dwellings on privately owned land) to NIS 80,000 (on state land) to Israeli settlers eligible for govt. housing subsidies, who buy an apartment in Jerusalem.

Feb. 16: *Kol Ha'ir* reports the cancellation of a tender for the creation of a high-tech park in Pisgat Ze'ev due to lack of interest, due to "the security situation in recent months."

Feb. 18: New military checkpoints are placed on roads between Ramallah and Jerusalem.

Feb. 21: An extremist Jewish group has claimed in the Israeli Central Court ownership to 17 dunums of land in Sheikh Jarrah owned by Suleiman Hajari who has official documents to prove his ownership.

Feb. 23: The Mufti of Egypt Nasser Farid Wasel says the Al-Buraq (Western Wall) of the Haram Ash-Sharif is an Islamic site and that there must be no Jewish sovereignty over it.

Feb. 28: *Al-Ayyam* reports that according to Orient House the IDs of 458 Jerusalemites were revoked under Barak.

MARCH

March 1: *Ha'aretz* reports that the WJM Council has approved a plan for a new Jewish settlement in Abu Dis, near the site of the future Palestinian parliament building, consisting of 220 apartments on 63 dunums.

March 5: *Ha'aretz* quotes figures of the Israeli Interior Min., that put the settler population in 'Greater' Jerusalem (Efrat, Etzion Bloc, Betar Ilit, Givat Ze'ev, Har Adar and Ma'ale Adumim) at 70,317, which is some 35% of the total settler population in 2000.

March 8: A report published by the Israeli Interior Min. shows that the number of Jewish settler increased by 8% in 2000, reaching a total of 203,064.

March 9: The WJM Council approves plans for a new 220-housing unit settlement on 63 dunums of land in Abu Dis, opposite the University, known as 'Kidmat Zion'.

- The Israeli Min. of Construction endorses a plan to build 120 new housing units in Gilo.

- Settlers place three caravans near the Anata in an effort to connect it with Kfar Adumim.

March 12: As part of a new policy to block off Palestinian towns, side roads leading to Jerusalem as well as internal roads between the city's villages and neighborhoods are closed with cement blocks or sand piles and large numbers.

March 15: *Ha'aretz* reports that the WJM District Planning and Building Committee approved a plan to build the 15-km long "Eastern Ring Road" on land to be confiscated from Palestinian landowners in Issawiyya, At-Tur, Izzariyya, Abu Dis and Ras Al-Amud. Part of the area is the land PM Barak had intended to transfer to the PA.

March 19: The WJM planning board approves the construction of an additional 2,832 housing units in Har Homa.

March 22: Replying to Pres. Bush's comment concerning the transfer of the US Embassy to Jerusalem, Sec.-Gen. of the Arab League Ismat Abdel Majid says that the issue of Jerusalem is a red line that no state can cross and that the Arab position is that East Jerusalem is an occupied Arab land, based on UN Res. 242, which the US recognizes and supports.

March 23: 31 people are injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up in French Hill, Jerusalem.

March 27: A suicide bomber wounds over 20 people at the French Hill junction in Jerusalem. The Yesha Council calls for an expanded closure on the West Bank.

March 28: The concluding statement of the Arab Summit in Amman reasserts Arab support the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its

capital and states that all ties with any country that recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel or moves its embassy there from Tel Aviv will be cut.

March 31: *Kol Hair* reports that the WJM has made it even more difficult to obtain building permits for Palestinians and is increasing demolition orders for them. This year, already 22 such orders were signed, most recently three for homes in Ath-Thori, five in Ras Al-Amud and five in Um Tuba.

APRIL

April 2: *Ha'aretz* reports the restoration of residency rights to 818 Palestinian Jerusalemites in 2000 and to 100 in the first three months of 2001 (1999: 183).

April 4: Israeli forces demolish in Anata the houses of Salim Shawamra (for the third time after 1998 and 1999), Mohammed Karshan, Eid Karshan, and Daoud Karshan. Demolition orders are delivered to another 30 Palestinian families in and around Jerusalem for having built their homes "illegally."

- The Gluska Commission, appointed by former PM Barak, recommends the Israeli govt. work "secretly" to reinforce Jordan's role on the Haram Ash-Sharif, mainly to prevent further construction or digging by the Waqf and to put an end to PA violations and "incitement".

April 5: The Israeli High Court of Justice rejects a petition by the Temple Mount Faithful, asking to be allowed to pray on the Haram Ash-Sharif on Passover, to avoid more bloodshed. (The compound is closed to non-Muslims since the beginning of the Intifada). Israeli PM Sharon expresses his support of "visits by members of all faiths to the Temple Mount."

April 15: In a press conference, Faisal Hussein calls on Palestinians to protest the demolition of homes in Jerusalem, even if it means using their own bodies to block bulldozers. Hussein says Israel uses its house demolition policy as a way to deliberately uproot Palestinians from their land.

- The Israeli Housing Min. publishes data, showing that most of the thousands of units constructed in public housing projects in Givat Ze'ev and Ma'ale Adumim from 1994-2000 remain unsold: of 3,470 units offered in Ma'ale Adumim 1,610 (47%) remained unsold, and of 810 units offered in Givat Ze'ev 790 (97%). At Har Homa, 1,670 (76%) of the 2,200 housing units offered between 1999-2000 remain unsold.

April 20: The *Jerusalem Post* reports about plans by the Jewish Quarter Development Corporation to build hundreds of new apartments in the Jewish Quarter and dozens in the Muslim Quarter. The project, which is yet to be approved by the WJM, also plans to build a one-half kilometer long tunnel from the Jewish Quarter to the Western Wall. The aim of this plan is to create Jewish continuity from Yemin Moshe neighborhood in West Jerusalem to Al-Aqsa Mosque.

MAY

May 4: Local newspapers run an ad by the WJM Construction Committee, announcing the establishment of residential units in Sheikh Jarrah.

May 7-8: In Abu Dis, the Palestinian residents clash with Israeli forces for several hours in the night after Israeli forces tried to disperse a peaceful protest march against Israeli policies by firing bullets and tear gas at the crowd.

May 9: Israeli authorities close the road on Hizma junction, Shayyah road linking Al-Izzariyya and At-Tur and dig a ditch in the road leading to Al-Izzariyya, all measures to prevent the movement of cars into Jerusalem. Similarly, Wadi Nar road and all side sand roads and bypass roads to Jerusalem are closed.

May 12: The Israeli cabinet committee on Jerusalem Affairs reaffirms a decision taken under Barak's tenure to build an eastern ring road around the city.

May 15: Some 26 Palestinian students appeal to the Supreme Court against the WJM, saying the WJM rejects free education to thousands of Palestinian students, despite a law guaranteeing this to all Jerusalemites.

May 25: Israel's weekly *Yerushalaim* reports that the WJM intends to assign Special Forces patrols to locate illegal construction in East Jerusalem.

- *Ma'ariv* reports that Israel's Min. of Jerusalem Affairs Eliyahu Suissa, met recently with a group of foreign investors in Sheikh Jarrah, in east Jerusalem to convince them to buy property from Palestinians in the area for Jewish settlers.

May 28: Israeli Housing and Construction Min. Sharansky approves bids for building over 700 new housing units in settlements, incl. for 496 new units in Ma'ale Adumim.

May 29: Israeli soldiers fire teargas at Hizma High School while pupils are sitting their final exams (*tawjih*), claiming that rocks were thrown at them from the school. The attack is the second in less than 10 days.

May 31: Palestinian leader Faisal Hussein dies suddenly of a heart attack in Kuwait.

JUNE

June 1: Tens of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank, Jerusalem and from within Israel march, waving Palestinian flags and posters, from Ramallah to Jerusalem to bury Faisal Hussein at Al-Aqsa Mosque. During the funeral procession, checkpoints are left open and Israeli police retreated from East Jerusalem, diverting traffic from the route of mourners.

June 3: Mazen Joulani, 34, from Jerusalem, dies after being shot at Shu'fat RC Junction with a dum dum bullet.

June 11: Israeli bulldozers and forces demolish the house of Faraj Mohammed Harbawi, home to 15, in Wadi Kaddoum in the Ras Al-Amud area without prior notice and although Harbawi had accepted a fine of NIS 45,000 which he paid on monthly installments, for having built without license in 1997. The demolition will serve the purposes of a bypass road planned in the area.

June 12: A Greek priest is killed by snipers while driving on the Jerusalem-Jericho road.

June 13: Palestinian youth Awni Abdel Haddad is killed and three others are injured, when their truck is fired at near Hizma, while on their way home to Hebron. An Israeli settler group, 'Shalhevet Gilad', takes responsibility.

June 24: Israeli Min. of Housing declares a tender for the construction of 2,900 settlement units at Har Homa.

June 27: *Ma'ariv* reports that the WJM plans a NIS 100 million project to lower the level of Al-Buraq court by 6 meters so as to increase the height of the Al-Buraq (Wailing) Wall

to give greater appearance. The plan is presented to Tourism Min. Rehavam Ze'evi, who adopts it and promises to implement it.

June 28: East Jerusalem observes a general strike on the 34th anniversary of the illegal annexation. Mufti Ekrima Sabri warns of Israeli Judaization attempts, while an Orient House statement affirms that Jerusalem is part of the OPT and that Palestinians will never give up their right to independence and the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

June 29: *Kol Ha'ir* reports that the Central Court in Jerusalem instructed the 'guard of absentee property' to return a real estate in Al-Musrara Quarter to the Copt Church after the church and the patriarchy were declared absent without prior notification.

JULY

July 9: Dozens of workers on their way to work are caught in ambushes set up by Israeli forces at Gilo settlement. The workers are held under the heat of the sun for several hours as part of their punishment.

- In the largest demolition campaign in East Jerusalem since 1967, Israeli forces demolish 17 homes in Shu'fat RC leaving over 150 people without shelter. The houses were all located adjacent to Pisgat Ze'ev.

July 11: The WJM sends demolition and land confiscation warnings for two Palestinian houses and land nearby in Sheikh Jarrah. The confiscated land will help establish a train station to link Pisgat Zeev settlement with West Jerusalem. The WJM also announces plans to confiscate 15 dunums in Shu'fat for another such station.

July 12: The WJM prepares to execute a new settlement scheme near Shu'fat, incl. the confiscation of 170 dunums of land that is currently used as a slaughterhouse. The plan aims to construct 160 housing units on a 26,000-m² area.

July 16: Over 1,000 students leave from Orient House in a demonstration condemning Israeli measures against the Palestinian people and children and calling for the end of occupation.

- Salem Ad-Dar'awi, 20, and Ibrahim Wahabneh, 20, are killed in a car bomb near Beit Safafa, near a sports stadium, where the opening ceremony of the Maccabi Games are scheduled to take place.

July 17: Israeli Min. of Internal Security Uzi Landau issues an order banning the 40th day commemoration of Faisal Hussein's death.

July 21: Israeli forces besiege the Orient House and set up a number of roadblocks to search employees and visitors on their way into and out of the building.

July 25: Israeli army radio reports that the first residents of Har Homa settlement will enter their houses in Oct..

July 28-29: Palestinian inhabitants in and around Jerusalem march towards Al-Aqsa Mosque to prevent possible attacks by Jewish extremists who announced their coming to commemorate the destruction of the 'Temple'. Israeli forces raid Al-Aqsa Mosque, injuring 70 Palestinians and arresting 30 in the ensuing clashes.

July 30: Israeli bulldozers, under the protection of police and soldiers, bulldoze three Palestinian houses under construction and a water well in Shu'fat. In addition, WJM employees supervising the demolition process, confirm that there are another 13 houses to be demolished in Shu'fat.

AUGUST

Aug. 2: The WJM orders the destruction of eight Palestinian houses located on Ras Shihada opposite Shu'fat RC, handing demolition orders without any proper notification.
- The WJM declares the confiscation of over 100 dunums of land on Jabal Mukabber for a bypass road to connect Ma'ale Adumim and Har Homa.

Aug. 6: Israeli forces tighten the imposed military closure on Jerusalem and close the Ramallah-Jerusalem road.

Aug. 9: A Palestinian suicide bomber kills 16 people blowing himself up at the Sbarro Pizzeria on Jaffa/King George Road in West Jerusalem.

Aug. 10: Israeli forces raid and occupy Orient House, arrest 8 employees and seal off other Palestinian institutions allegedly linked to the PA, incl. the Arab Chamber of Commerce, the Prisoners Society, and the Higher Council of Tourism.

Aug. 11: The Qalandia checkpoint on the Ramallah-Jerusalem road is closed for the fourth day running.

Aug. 13: A new Israeli police headquarters is established in the Damascus Gate area.

Aug. 13: Claiming that Palestinians were carrying out illegal activities from the Orient House, Israel's PM Ariel Sharon decrees that it will be closed permanently.

Aug. 19: PLC Speaker Ahmad Qrei'a says that Palestinians reject meetings with Israelis until Sharon's govt. reopens and withdraws from the Orient House and other Palestinian institutions.

Aug. 20: Israeli forces demolish a future nursery school in Beit Hanina without prior warning.

- Israeli bulldozers also demolish the 4-storey building under construction of Ibrahim Al-Joulani, without handing him a demolition order beforehand.

Aug. 29: Israeli extremists open fire at a Palestinian car near Anatot military camp, near Anata, killing Haidar Kanaan Al-Khatib, 26, and injuring his father and brother.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 3: Three bombs explode in French Hill and another at Gilo settlement. Three people are slightly hurt. PFLP claims responsibility for the blasts.

Sept. 5: Israeli Army Radio reports that the army was - in an unprecedented decision - to declare areas along the Green Line as "closed military zones", in particular near Jerusalem.

Sept. 7: Israeli bulldozers dig trenches in the roads of Ras Khamis near Shu'fat RC, roads between Al-Izzariyya and At-Tur, and in roads connecting Beit Hanina with Beit Iksa.

Sept. 8: The Palestinian leadership requests the UNSC to intervene immediately in putting an end to Israeli plans to isolate Jerusalem and annex Palestinian territory.

Sept. 11: WJM bulldozers protected by Israeli policemen and border guards demolish three homes in Al-Ashkariyya in Beit Hanina without prior warning. Six more families are handed demolition orders.

- Israeli security forces scuffle with bodyguards of French FM Hubert Vedrine before a meeting with Palestinians, incl. Hanan Ashrawi and Sari Nusseibeh - at the American Colony Hotel. Vedrine stresses that East Jerusalem is an integral part of the OPT, that Israel's annexation is a flagrant violation of international legitimacy, and that the EU strongly rejects the illegal Israeli occupation of the Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem.

Sept. 14: Israeli forces arrest Mufti Sheikh Ekrima Sabri and interrogate him at the Russian Compound Detention Center for four hours about his recent participation in an Intifada conference in Beirut, where he also met with Hizbullah Sec.-Gen. Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, and about his Friday sermon in which he was quoted as saying that “Al-Aqsa is for Muslims only and therefore Jews have no right to enter it”.

OCTOBER

Oct. 15: Israeli police hands eviction notes to East Jerusalemite families in Sheikh Jarrah ordering them to leave their homes by 8 Nov., as a group of Jewish investors claims that the 18 dunums of land in question – owned by the Waqf and Sulaiman Hijazi - is rightfully theirs. The Jews are planning to build housing units for 40 families and a hotel there.

Oct. 16: The WJM raid vegetables vendors near Damascus Gate, in the Old City, in Salah Eddin and Sultan Street, confiscating their vegetables and threatening the farmers with arrest.

- WJM mayor Ehud Olmert, reveals a project to construct a new Jewish settlement and a large shopping mall in a car park at the entrance of Silwan, to be connected to the Wailing Wall by a tunnel.

Oct. 17: Gunmen from the PFLP assassinate far-right Israeli Tourism Mon. Rehavam Ze’evi at the Hyatt Hotel in East Jerusalem, stating that the act is in retaliation for the assassination of PFLP leader Abu Ali Mustafa in Aug..

Oct. 18: Israeli occupation forces place over 20,000 inhabitants of Izzariyya under curfew.

Oct. 30: Over 500 Israeli forces accompanied by four bulldozers demolish two Palestinian homes in Beit Hanina belonging to members of the Said, Shuman and Saif families, two homes in Shu’fat (adjacent to Rekhes Shu’fat settlement) belonging to Mustafa Abu ‘Al-Qam and Mustafa Abu Ne’a, and a cement wall and construction site in Beit Hanina.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1: Settlers from Beit Orot take over a Palestinian house - home to the family of Anwar Al-Kurd lived for 50 years - in Sheikh Jarrah.

Nov. 8: Israeli occupation authorities force the family of Wa’el Al-Quneibi out of their home in Sheikh Jarrah and hands evacuation notices to two other families, Al-Ghawi and Hanoun, nearby.

Nov. 14: Israeli authorities resume construction of a bypass road from Az-Za’im to Izzariyya and At-Tur, completing the ring around Jerusalem. In Izzariyya alone, 43 homes are slated for demolition for the road construction.

Nov. 15: The Palestinian leadership reiterates its appeal for the UNSC to forcibly intervene to end the on going Israeli military aggression and demands a clear UNSC resolution on the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Nov. 22: In the night, Israeli forces shut down three PA offices in a building in Izzariyya for operating “illegally”.