



East Jerusalem — Facts and Figures

June 2008

East Jerusalem in Numbers

Number of residents: Approximately 256,820 (34% of the Jerusalem population) [December 2007 data]

Families under the poverty line: 67% (as opposed to 21% of Jerusalem's Jewish families) [2006 data]

Children under the poverty line: 77.2% of the Arab children in the city (as opposed to 39.1% of the city's Jewish children) [2006 data]

Expropriated land: Since annexing East Jerusalem, the Israeli government has expropriated 24,500 dunams (over a third of the area), which were privately owned by Arabs.

Construction: By the end of 2007, 50,197 housing units for the Jewish population had been built on the expropriated land; no housing units had been built for the Palestinian population on the expropriated land.

Sewage line shortage: 70 kilometers of main sewage lines are lacking.

Lack of water connections: Approximately 160,000 Palestinian residents have no connection to the water network.

Shortage of school classrooms: There is a shortage of 1,500 classrooms.

School dropout rate: Currently stands at approximately 50%.

Average social worker caseload: 190 households per social worker (as opposed to 111 households per social worker in West Jerusalem).

Number of post offices: 2, plus 5 postal agencies (as opposed to 50 postal facilities in West Jerusalem).

Background: Annexation of East Jerusalem and its Residents

Jerusalem is Israel's largest city, in area and population. Approximately 10% of Israel's residents live in Jerusalem.

In June 1967, in breach of international law, Israel annexed territory in and around Jerusalem that it had conquered in the Six Day War, an area now referred to as East Jerusalem. **By doing so, it added approximately 70,500 dunams to the previous 38,000 dunams of land that falls under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality.** Following their annexation, these areas became subject to Israeli governance, law, and jurisdiction.

The annexation brought some 66,000 Palestinian Arabs living in the newly controlled territory within the city limits, and they constituted, at the time, 24% of Jerusalem's population. According to Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS] data, the East Jerusalem population has quadrupled since 1967: **At the end of 2007, Palestinians living in East Jerusalem constituted an estimated 34% of the total Jerusalem population of 746,300.**

For generations, Jerusalem was the urban hub for services, trade, and culture in the West Bank. **The recently constructed Separation Barrier completely severed Jerusalem from the surrounding area, and the impact on the economy and culture of East Jerusalem residents has been severe.**

Population Profile: Young and Poor

47% of East Jerusalem residents are children. The median age of Jerusalem's Palestinian population in 2006, according to CBS data, was 19.3 years old.

The Palestinian population of East Jerusalem lives in dire poverty. CBS data published in 2006 indicate that **67% of Palestinian families in Jerusalem (as opposed to 21% of the city's Jewish families) live below the poverty line.** The incidence of poverty among Palestinian residents of Jerusalem is also considerably higher than the rate of 48% among the Arab population in Israel proper. The poverty statistics for

children are even graver: **77.2% of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem are beneath the poverty line, as opposed to 39.1% of the city's Jewish children. Over 91,000 children in East Jerusalem live in a perpetual state of poverty.**

The Neglect of the Authorities and its Impact

As long as Israel remains in control of East Jerusalem and officially recognizes its inhabitants as residents of the State, it is responsible for their welfare and obliged to respect their human rights. Under Israeli law, in fact, these residents are entitled to the same services and rights granted to Israeli citizens. Nevertheless, since 1967 the Israeli government has not budgeted resources for strengthening and developing East Jerusalem—resources that are essential for meeting the physical needs of the area and the needs of the population at its natural growth rate. Israel's policy for the past four decades has taken concrete form as discrimination in planning and construction, expropriation of land, and minimal investment in physical infrastructure and government and municipal services. As a result, East Jerusalem residents suffer severe distress, and their conditions are worsening.

Discrimination in planning and building, expropriation of lands, and minimal investment in physical infrastructure and government and municipal services—these are concrete expressions of an Israeli policy designed to secure a Jewish majority in Jerusalem and push Palestinian residents outside the city's borders.

Life in East Jerusalem can be described as a continuing cycle of neglect, discrimination, poverty, and shortages. These, compounded by construction of the Separation Barrier cutting Jerusalem off from the West Bank, have led to the social and economic collapse of this part of the city. A large majority of East Jerusalem residents do not receive, and cannot afford to buy, the most basic services. The primary victims are the vulnerable populations: the aged, the disabled, and children. The chronic state of poverty has also had serious social ramifications, such as damage to family relationships; an increase in the rate of family violence; a decline in the functioning of children, reflected in high rates of school dropout and early entrance into the job market; crime; drug use; and health and nutritional problems. **The only logical explanation for this discrimination is that it is a deliberate effort by government authorities to**

push Palestinian residents of Jerusalem outside the city's borders as a means of maintaining a Jewish majority over the long term.

The Civil Status of East Jerusalem Residents

Following the Six Day War and the Israeli annexation, East Jerusalem residents were given the civil status of "permanent residents" of Israel. As such, the primary right they were granted was the right to live and work in Israel without the need for special permits. **Permanent residents are also entitled to social rights according to the National Insurance Law, health insurance, and the right to vote in municipal (but not national) elections.** Permanent residency status, unlike citizenship, is passed on to the children of residents only under certain conditions. A permanent resident who marries someone who is neither a permanent resident nor a citizen of Israel must apply for family unification on behalf of his or her spouse. In reality, Israel treats the residents of East Jerusalem as foreigners whose status can be revoked as a matter of course. These residents are forced to repeatedly prove their permanent residency status in the city to the Ministry of the Interior and the National Insurance Institute, which conduct investigations and inquiries designed to gather evidence for annulling this status. Residency status is sometimes revoked arbitrarily, with no opportunity for appeal, and with no notification to the resident, who learns of the action only when applying for services. The Ministry of Interior office in East Jerusalem, which serves only East Jerusalem residents, is notorious for its substandard service. **Its workload is overwhelming, and requests linger in files for months, even years, before being officially handled.** Residents are forced to wait in long lines (even after the move to new facilities), and those lucky enough to enter the office are sometimes turned away without receiving any services. **For basic services such as arranging and registering the status of children, residents must pay fees of hundreds of shekels and present a multitude of documents.** Many applicants for services are forced to hire attorneys for assistance or, against their will, turn to the courts for a ruling on their requests. ACRI works to remove bureaucratic obstacles and make Ministry of Interior services more accessible to East Jerusalem residents.

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Living just outside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries are many Palestinians who have no residency status in Israel and whose lives, over the years, have been centered in the West Bank. **The Separation Barrier has broken their vital connections with the West Bank and trapped them within the boundaries of Jerusalem with no recognized status.** In October 2007, the Israeli government established a policy that denies permanent residency to these individuals and allows them only temporary permits issued by the military authorities. The application procedures for these permits are costly and mired in bureaucratic red tape. Those who receive the permits are allowed to reside in their homes but are forbidden from working or driving in Jerusalem, and they are not eligible for educational, health, or social services. In essence, the Separation Barrier and the newly established policy have created ghettos of severe and unrelenting distress, populated by Palestinians who are foreign residents in their own homes. ACRI has petitioned the High Court of Justice on behalf of Palestinians who are trapped in Jerusalem by the Separation Barrier, demanding that the Israeli government take action to ease their daily lives. The petition is still under deliberation, and no action has been taken to address the plight of these individuals.

Discrimination in Planning and Construction

For decades, the legal possibility of issuing building permits for new construction in East Jerusalem has been practically non-existent. The complex interplay of factors that have led to this situation include: the expropriation of land (most of which was used to establish Jewish neighborhoods); problems concerning planning arrangements for the remaining land; and a protracted and exhausting series of bureaucratic procedures and requirements—which include high fees charged by the authorities for any request for a building permit in East Jerusalem. Some of these fees are charged to Palestinian residents only; others are identical to those required of West Jerusalem residents. Given their economic distress, however, most Palestinian residents are unable to afford any of the permit fees. Moreover, the building percentages (the percentage of land on which construction is permitted, including building height) for most

East Jerusalem neighborhoods are set at 25%-75%, as opposed to 75%-125% for West Jerusalem.

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The residents of Jerusalem's Jewish neighborhoods enjoy wide-scale construction and enormous investment. The discrimination is clear, its purpose being to limit legal construction in the Palestinian areas and constrict the space available for the development of Arab neighborhoods. The local Outline Plan, "Jerusalem 2000," approved by Jerusalem's Local Committee for Planning and Building in 2006, perpetuates the discriminatory policies by failing to provide adequate housing units, employment sources, and infrastructure in East Jerusalem. This discrimination in planning has brought about a situation in which most of the buildings in East Jerusalem were built (and are still being built) without a permit. They are densely crowded, and their occupants live in constant fear of having their homes demolished. The high rate of unauthorized building is not testament to an unwillingness to comply with the law on the part of the residents; rather, it proves that the planning system, which fails to address (and has no intention of addressing) the real needs of the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, has become irrelevant for them. Despite the clear responsibility of the municipality and of the planning and building authorities for this situation, the enforcement of planning and building regulations (including home demolitions and imposition of fines) are also implemented in a discriminatory manner between East and West Jerusalem. In 2004, for example, 85% of recorded building violations in Jerusalem were located in the western part of the city, while 91% of all administrative demolitions orders were for buildings in East Jerusalem.

ACRI, together with Bimkom (Planners for Planning Rights), organized courses and distributed information for residents on the planning rights to which they are entitled. It also appealed to the authorities to promote planning in East Jerusalem and end the policy of home demolitions. ACRI will also soon be submitting a principled petition to the High Court of Justice challenging discriminatory planning policies and use of the mechanism of home demolitions.

Housing Units in Jerusalem (Data from the Jerusalem Institute's analysis of data from the Assessment and Collection Department of the Jerusalem Municipality)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
West Jerusalem	95,140	96,457	97,639	98,605	99,416
Settlements in East Jerusalem	47,469	48,344	48,781	49,184	50,197
Palestinians in East Jerusalem	34,509	35,410	36,107	36,575	37,557

Blatant Neglect of Services and Infrastructure

One of the most prominent features of East Jerusalem is the piles of trash in the streets and the numerous illegal garbage dumps—a necessary recourse because of the **chronic shortage of sanitation facilities. Roads are studded with potholes, and the few sidewalks that exist are in serious disrepair** and, as such, cause damage to persons and property.

Public parks and other recreational facilities are a rare sight. Another example of neglect is the fact that **very few municipal forms are translated into Arabic**. An examination of 91 municipal forms and documents revealed that only 13 exist in Arabic, and nine of these deal with property tax payments. ACRI has contacted the mayor's office in the matter several times over the last few months but has received no reply.

There exists blatant discrimination in sanitation and postal services, road and sidewalk infrastructure, and public parks.

In East Jerusalem, the postal service barely functions; seven post facilities serve over 250,000 residents, as opposed to more than 50 postal facilities serving the 500,000 residents of West Jerusalem. It is no wonder that mail sent there takes an unreasonably long time to reach its destination, if it arrives at all. ACRI, on behalf of East Jerusalem neighborhood representatives, has contacted Israel Post and the Ministry of

Communications over the last 18 months to demand improvement in postal services. Despite repeated assurances that action would be taken, none has been evidenced.

Sewage and Drainage System

The infrastructure for sewage and drainage throughout East Jerusalem has suffered from many years of neglect. **Some neighborhoods that have no connection to the municipal sewage system still make use of cesspits.** In other neighborhoods, the municipal sewage system is antiquated or poorly maintained. According to official estimates by Gihon, the independent corporation responsible for Jerusalem's water, sewage, and drainage system, **East Jerusalem currently lacks seventy kilometers of sewage lines.** Sewer water sometimes flows close to homes and children's play areas, and severe weather exacerbates the already unfavorable conditions and further endangers the health of residents. Despite repeated complaints by residents, there has, to date, been no evidence of any repairs or improvements. Installation of sewage and drainage lines is contingent on the payment of high fees and development taxes that residents cannot afford. However, even when residents are willing and able to subsidize the cost of laying down these lines, the authorities most often delay commencement of the work.

The Separation Barrier has also produced sewage problems. Several kilometers of sewer lines were broken during the barrier's construction. In response to ACRI's requests, Gihon repaired the broken sewer lines at the Shuafat-Ras Hamis refugee camp.

Connection to the Water Network

One direct outcome of discrimination in the field of planning between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods is the lack of a fresh water supply—a vital resource for human life. Since Israel's Planning and Building Law prohibits the connection of unauthorized buildings to the municipal water network, tens of thousands of East Jerusalem residents suffer from the lack of a regular water supply. **Based on Gihon's estimates, over half the population, about 160,000 residents, have no legal source of water.** They are left no choice but to rig makeshift connections to water mains or to homes that are

legally connected to the water network, or to suffice with stored containers of fresh water. These temporary measures carry a heavy price: the water pressure is weak and the supply irregular; stored water is exposed to a range of pollutants, from bacteria that thrive in standing water to vermin and dead birds and fowl. The lack of fresh water also reduces the hygiene level (since showers, dish-washing, and house-cleaning become luxuries), creating ideal conditions for the spread of infectious diseases. This situation severely undermines the East Jerusalem residents' rights to adequate living conditions, to dignity, and to health. ACRI is currently promoting legislation aimed to overcome legal obstacles and ensure that each East Jerusalem resident receives a regular supply of water. Efforts by government officials to fund a solution, however, have been minimal.

Education: A Critical Classroom Shortage

The most pressing of the many serious problems in education in East Jerusalem is the shortage of classrooms. The population of the area has grown to more than four times its size in 1967, but the educational system has not kept pace with the changing needs, and very few new classrooms have been built. **Today, there is a shortage of 1,500 classrooms in East Jerusalem, and that number is estimated to reach 1,900 by the year 2010. Because of the enormous lack of facilities, only half of all school-age children are enrolled in municipal schools in Jerusalem, often in crowded and unsafe conditions.** To fill the gaps in the shortage of classrooms, alternative facilities, not designed for educational purposes, are being used, and "second shifts" in the existing classrooms have been organized to accommodate more students. Tens of thousands of children are not accepted into the public school system.

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ACRI has been working with the East Jerusalem Association of Parents Committees and, at all times, represents children for whom no place has been found in the municipal education system. While this work has proven effective in finding solutions for the children represented, other children entitled to a free education by the state are forced to find educational solutions outside the official framework, in schools run by the Wakf [Islamic Foundation], for instance, or private schools in Jerusalem or the West Bank.

These alternatives impose a great financial burden on their families. **Many children remain at home: an estimated 9,000 children are not enrolled in any type of educational framework.** According to Jerusalem Municipality data, **the post-elementary dropout rate in East Jerusalem is 50%.** The corresponding dropout rate for Jerusalem's Jewish sector is 7.4%. In the rest of the country, the highest dropout rate, as recorded by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), is 11.8%, in the community of Jisr a-Zarka.

The Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Education have long been aware of the drastic shortage of classrooms, and the issue has been the subject of several petitions to the High Court of Justice. In the framework of deliberations on an HCJ petition in February 2007, the government made a commitment to build 400 classrooms in East Jerusalem over the next five years, at a cost of NIS 400 million. As planned, this construction will keep pace with the natural growth of the population; it will not satisfy the existing classroom shortage. There are delays, however, in the construction of these 400 classrooms. In June 2008, ACRI submitted a principled petition to the High Court of Justice demanding the reimbursement of funds that East Jerusalem parents have been forced to expend on private school tuition for the children.

Lack of Pre-school Educational Facilities

Approximately 15,000 three- and four-year-old children live in East Jerusalem; nearly 90% of them are not enrolled in any pre-school education facility. Despite the importance of early education and its proven influence on child development, the authorities charged with providing this service to East Jerusalem have made little effort to do so. There are currently only two municipal preschools in East Jerusalem, with a combined enrollment of 55 children. Another 1,900 children attend a few dozen private facilities, whose relative high annual tuition is beyond what the large majority of parents can afford.

The amendment to the Compulsory Education Law granting government-sponsored education to three- and four-year-old children has not yet been implemented in East Jerusalem. 90% of these children are not enrolled in any pre-school education facility.

The reason for this disturbing situation is that the amendment to the Compulsory Education Law granting government-sponsored education to three- and four-year-old children has not yet been applied to East Jerusalem. The amendment has been implemented gradually since 1999 in what is expected to be a decade-long process. By law, the first recipients of the free preschool education guaranteed by the legislation were to be children from the lowest socioeconomic communities and neighborhoods. Despite the fact that the neighborhoods of East Jerusalem are the poorest in the city according to CBS ratings, only West Jerusalem neighborhoods were selected for the establishment of free educational facilities for three- and four-year-olds—and the large majority of these areas are rated higher than those in East Jerusalem.

ACRI, working with a coalition of organizations and concerned East Jerusalem parents, is promoting implementation of the Ministry of Education order calling for the establishment of educational facilities for three- and four-year-old children in East Jerusalem. At a November 12, 2007 session, members of the Knesset Education Committee called on the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Welfare and Social Services to find solutions for the education of East Jerusalem children, and they took on a commitment to monitor the matter.

Welfare Services

Despite the fact that neglect by the authorities has led to severe social problems in East Jerusalem, and the fact that 68.4% of its residents live under the poverty line, only 22% of the population there receives social services. The Jerusalem Municipality and Ministry of Welfare and Social Services might be expected, given the figures, to single out East Jerusalem residents for special attention. **However, the East Jerusalem welfare system also suffers from under-funding and ongoing discrimination compared with the western part of the city. The system, essentially, is on the verge of collapse.**

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Of all government welfare offices in the city, the East Jerusalem office has the lowest number of welfare worker positions: only 49.1 such positions are allotted to the East Jerusalem welfare office, as opposed to an average of 85.1 positions in the West Jerusalem offices. **According to data from the end of 2007, social workers in West Jerusalem were each assigned an average of 111 households; their counterparts in East Jerusalem each handled an average of 190 households.**

West Jerusalem also has twice the number of welfare offices as East Jerusalem (six as opposed to three). Since the paucity of offices reduces the residents' access to social services, the number of visitors to these offices does not reflect the true scale of distress within the East Jerusalem population.

In 2007, ACRI intervened before the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and the Jerusalem Municipality to demand an increase in the number of social worker positions allotted to East Jerusalem. The Municipality responded by saying that an affirmative action process is in continual operation in East Jerusalem and noted that some social work positions have been added to the welfare offices there. The additional posts, however, are hardly sufficient to change the basic situation, and it is ACRI's intention to take legal action in this matter.

Police Brutality and the Abuse of Authority

For most of the Israeli public, East Jerusalem is an unknown entity. **It seems that in an area far from the eye of the public and the media, the authorities allow themselves to behave brutally and violently toward residents, sometimes to the point of breaking the law.**

Until recently, Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem manned "debt collection roadblocks" for the immediate payment of taxes. The Tax Authority and National Insurance Institute, with police assistance, set up these barriers on the streets as a means of stopping passing cars to verify whether drivers or their passengers had any outstanding tax debts. If so, or if anyone in their families was found to owe taxes, the sum had to be paid on the spot or the vehicle would be immediately impounded. A petition to the High Court of Justice against this illegal practice was submitted by ACRI in

August 2007 and is currently pending. In court deliberations on the matter the following February, justices criticized the use of debt collection roadblocks, saying that they constituted a misuse of police authority that resulted in a disproportionate infringement of human rights. Following these court deliberations, the use of debt collection roadblocks was suspended until a court decision is reached on the petition.

In East Jerusalem, far from the eye of the public and the media, the authorities allow themselves to behave toward residents in a manner that would be inconceivable anywhere else in the country.

In recent months, ACRI has received complaints indicating that the Israeli Police has resumed its role as a contracted tax collector for government authorities and even private companies seeking payments from East Jerusalem residents. In this role, the police are making use of two illegal methods:

1. Setup of roadblocks and arrest of debtors: According to testimony reaching ACRI, the police set up debt collection roadblocks in May 2008 in the Issawiya neighborhood. There, they stopped and questioned each passing motorist and pedestrian. Some residents were asked to go with officers to the police station on Salah a-Din St., where they were informed that a writ of execution had been levied against them because of debt. These debts included outstanding payments to the private companies Bezeq (communications), Cellcom (mobile phones), and Karnit (insurance). The residents were told they would be arrested if they did not pay these debts. When they complained to the officers about the roadblocks, they were told that they had been set up as punishment for rock-throwing by area residents.
2. Deceptive police summons and impoundment of debtors' vehicles: Complaints ACRI has received from East Jerusalem residents about telephone calls from people who identify themselves as police officers and, using various pretexts, instruct the residents to meet them at a particular location. When the residents arrive, they are told they have outstanding debts to the Jerusalem Municipality and are warned that their vehicles will be impounded if they do not

remit payment immediately. These residents have no choice but to leave the station and return with the required sum in order to release their vehicles.

ACRI has demanded that the Israeli Police abandon its use of these illegal methods and deal severely with those responsible for them.