

Judaization of Jerusalem

Tracks and Figures



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Over 55 years since the occupation of whole Jerusalem, Israel has been seeking to Judaize the city completely on the religious, cultural and demographic levels. It has also launched a relentless war to confiscate the character of the city seeking to eradicate its Muslim and Arab identity and replace it with a Jewish one.

The following points shed light on the major policies through which the occupation targets Jerusalem as well its people and holy sites, highlighting the most prominent tracks of Judaization along with related figures, developments and statistics.



Judaization of Jerusalem: Objectives and Strategies

1. The idea behind the occupation of Palestine in general, and Jerusalem in particular, was based on annexation and expansion with the aim to control the largest area of land and expel the largest number of Palestinians.
2. The occupation strategy is based on two main tracks: the first is targeting urban, cultural and religious landmarks, the status of these landmarks and their role in mobilizing the Palestinian masses, such as raiding al-Aqsa Mosque. The other is targeting the Jerusalemites and expelling them from their city. These two tracks are ultimately meant to change the identity and face of Jerusalem and change it into the “Jewish” capital of Israel.
3. In the context of the Judaization of Jerusalem, the occupation authorities seek to achieve several goals within the different tracks of Judaization, the most prominent of which are:
 - Isolating occupied Jerusalem from its Palestinian hinterland through a security belt surrounding the city.
 - Developing the settlement infrastructure in Jerusalem and constructing road networks for settlers to move safely across Israeli settlements in addition to enhancing communication between settlements.
 - Obstructing the natural urban and population growth of Jerusalemites while impeding their expansion in their surroundings.
 - Transforming Jerusalem into a city expelling Jerusalemites and attracting settlers parallel to increasing the number of settlers in the eastern side of the city.
 - Dismantling the geographical contiguity between the neighborhoods of Jerusalem and seeking to displace entire Palestinian neighborhoods.
 - Striking the elements of resilience of the Jerusalemite community and abolishing civil society institutions in Jerusalem.



Population in Occupied Jerusalem

4. According to Israeli data, the Jerusalem population reached about 951,100 as of the end of 2020, including 584,400 Jewish settlers and 366,800 Palestinians who comprise 39% of the entire Jerusalem population.
5. As of the end of 2021, the number of housing units in occupied Jerusalem reached 240,300 Palestinian and settler units, including about 64,400 units (27%) in predominantly Arab neighborhoods.
6. Occupied Jerusalem turned into a city expelling settlers. In 2019, the city witnessed a negative migration balance as 11,900 settlers moved to live in occupied Jerusalem while 20,100 settlers left it, which means that the number of settlers deteriorated by 8200.

Religious and Urban Judaization

7. Israel seeks to impose al-Aqsa raids on an almost daily basis, to intensify the Jewish presence in the Mosque and to protect settlers' public Jewish prayers in the context of what has been known as the "moral establishment of the temple" which means addressing al-Aqsa as a space where intruders perform their public Jewish prayers without any obstacles by al-Aqsa guards and the Murabitin, and then moving to cut off parts of the Mosque to build a synagogue or allocate it for Jewish prayer.



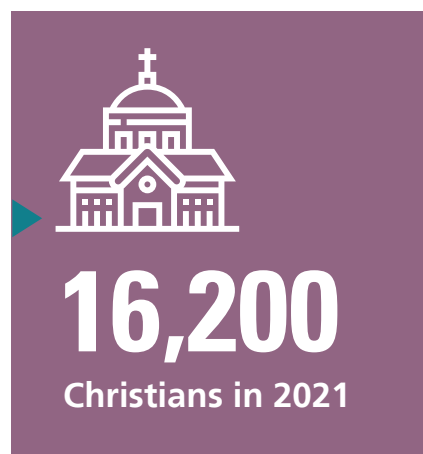
258,000

Settlers stormed
al-Aqsa between
2009 and 2022

8. Israel seeks to escalate al-Aqsa raids and consolidate both Jewish and national holidays as occasions to further desecrate the Mosque, attack its human components and raise the number of settlers participating in these raids. The most prominent religious holidays are "Passover" and "Temple Destruction (Tisha B'Av)" while "Jerusalem Day" is the most notable on the national level.
9. In addition to temple organizations seeking to attract settlers to participate in al-Aqsa raids, the occupation soldiers storm the Mosque in military and civilian uniform besides Jewish students and foreign "tourists" who receive Talmudic explanations about the "temple."
10. The number of settlers who stormed al-Aqsa between 2009 and 2022 reached 258,000. In 2022, more than 50,000 settlers raided the Mosque, which is the highest number of intruders since 2009.
11. The occupation authorities are working to deplete the Islamic presence in the Mosque, so they attack the worshipers, the Murabitin, and al-Aqsa guards. They expel them from Jerusalem and al-Aqsa, prevent them from praying, and impose heavy financial fines on them, in addition to arrests accompanied with physical and psychological violence. Deportation has turned into a punitive measure against those who face settlers' incursions, and the periods of deportation range between 3 days and 6 months while the number of Palestinians banned from the Mosque reached 3,500 between 2013 and 2022.
12. Israel is seeking to change the cultural and historical identity of Jerusalem, and surround al-Aqsa with dozens of Jewish monuments through excavation projects

intended to establish a Jewish city under the Old City and its surroundings within the “rehabilitation of the Holy Basin” project. The occupation is working to link the excavations with a network of tunnels, and it even transformed some of them into museums and synagogues. In the past years, the occupation escalated the construction of Judaizing monuments which aim to manage al-Aqsa raids and distort the Arab and Islamic appearance of the city. The construction of these monuments has escalated since the opening of “Hurva Synagogue” in 2010. According to Jerusalemite sources, the occupation built more than 100 synagogues and Jewish landmarks in the Old City and its surroundings, most notably the “Strauss House” project, a few meters from the western wall of al-Aqsa.

- 13.** Israel has imposed restrictions on Christians and their churches since the occupation of the city by obstructing the celebration of holidays, attacking churches, trying to interfere in their management and seizing Christian endowments. The occupation policies have led to a significant decrease in the number of Christians who today comprise only 1% of the population of Jerusalem with their number not exceeding 16,200 Christians in 2021, including 12,900 Arab Christians, and 3,300 non-Arab Christians.



Judaizing Jerusalem

- 14.** Israel has changed the names of about 22,000 places, streets and landmarks. Israel changes Palestinian names through three methods:
- Changing the Arabic names to names bearing a religious character that go back to the alleged “temple” or to Zionist figures.

- Translating Arabic names into Hebrew, which eliminates their Arabic usage over time.
 - Keeping the same Arabic letters but writing them in the Hebrew letter and pronouncing them in a way that leads to another meaning different from its original Arabic name.
15. The occupation authorities encircle the Old City with seven Judaizing “Biblical parks” connected to each other. The idea of parks began in the seventies of the last century and has escalated significantly in the past years. Biblical parks are a misleading term through which the occupation aims to prevent any Palestinian presence in the vicinity of the Old City and al-Aqsa and to seize more Palestinian lands.
 16. Israel seeks to occupy the space of Jerusalem and distort it with transportation projects and gigantic buildings in the context of changing the face of the city and its historical identity through various projects, including the cable car, huge settlement towers and entertainment centers as well as projects and synagogues mentioned above crowding out al-Aqsa Mosque and its centrality in the identity of the city.
 17. The occupation authorities use the pretext of “public utilities” and “development” to increase settlement infrastructure in both parts of occupied Jerusalem. The aim, in addition to strengthening settlement presence, is to provide security for settlers and allow them to move away from Palestinian population centers, in the context of complete separation between settlers and Palestinians, especially in road networks and various residential neighborhoods. This opens the way for the occupation authorities to achieve more control over occupied Jerusalem and to raise the number of settlers in settlement areas. These projects include the light rail and the tunnel network linking Jerusalem with the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, among others.

Demographic Judaization

18. The occupation imposes restrictions on the Palestinians in Jerusalem, especially those residing in the Old City, by preventing them from building in their neighborhoods and denying them building permits. Only 2% of applications are approved in all of Jerusalem taking into account that permits require many procedures and exorbitant financial costs of up to \$70,000.
19. The policy of demolishing Palestinian homes and facilities has escalated in recent years. As per estimates by the occupation municipality, 20,000 units are subject to demolition under the pretext of building without a permit. According to the data of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),



1,671



homes and facilities
were demolished in
occupied Jerusalem
since 2009

3,100



Palestinians were
displaced

the occupation authorities demolished about 1,671 homes and facilities in occupied Jerusalem between 1/1/2009 and 1/6/2022, which led to the displacement of about 3,100 Palestinians and affected about 8,000 others.

20. The occupation authorities withdraw permanent residency (blue identity document) from Palestinians in Jerusalem to deprive them of the right to reside in the city. Withdrawal of permanent residency is done under several pretexts, including non-payment of taxes and security reasons, a punitive measure against the families of martyrs and Palestinians who execute resistance operations. According to the Israeli "HaMoked - Center for the Defense of the Individual," the Israeli Ministry of Interior withdrew the residency of 26 Jerusalemites in 2021, and 14,727 residencies between 1967 and 2021.

Targeting Jerusalemites

21. The year 2022 saw the arrest of 3000 Jerusalemites, 17% increase compared to 2021.



22. As of December 2022, the number of Jerusalemite prisoners in the occupation prisons was about 400, according to Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer).

Settlements and Taking over Palestinian Neighborhoods

23. The occupation authorities allow settler associations to seize Palestinian homes in Jerusalem and provide them with protection and facilitations. These associations target areas near al-Aqsa, especially Silwan south of the mosque. The occupation aims at cramming the Palestinians into small neighborhoods which cannot be developed on the demographic, social, economic, or political levels.

24. Settlement construction/expansion is a constant policy pursued by successive Israeli governments seeking to increase the number of settlers in occupied Jerusalem while reducing the number of Palestinians. Jewish settlements include about 174,500 settlement units, and between 2014 and 2021, the occupation authorities approved around 89,291 new settlement units. Israel is seeking to establish new settlements as it launched work, in 2021, to build neighborhoods in several settlements, most notably in the “Atarot” settlement, in addition to a neighborhood near the “Ariel” settlement.



Judaizing the Education Sector



51%
of schools in east
Jerusalem teach the
Israeli curriculum



32%
of Palestinian students
in occupied Jerusalem
do not complete the 12
years of schooling

- 25.** The recent years have witnessed an escalating targeting of the education sector in occupied Jerusalem. Israel deprived schools in the eastern part of the city of funding needed to keep pace with the increasing number of Jerusalemite students, especially those still committed to teaching the Palestinian curriculum, in return for lavishing huge budgets on schools that teach the Israeli curriculum in addition to attempts to attract more schools to adopt the Israeli curriculum.
- 26.** A report published by the Ministry of Jerusalem in the occupation government at the beginning of 2022 revealed that 51% of public schools in the eastern part of occupied Jerusalem teach the Israeli curriculum. According to the report, the percentage jumped by 34% in the last four years following the five-year plan approved by the occupation authorities in 2018, which led to a threefold increase in the number of students enrolled in the occupation curriculum.
- 27.** The education sector in Jerusalem suffers from school dropouts due to the economic conditions and the occupation's aggression against Palestinian schools and students. Figures indicate that 32% of Palestinian students in occupied Jerusalem do not complete the 12 years of schooling compared to about 1.5% of Jewish students. The school dropout rate among Jerusalemite students is more than 13%.

Judaizing the Economic and Health Sectors



1,000

Shops suffer from debt accumulation



77.5%

live below poverty line



- 28.** Israel imposes restrictions on the development of the Palestinian health sector in occupied Jerusalem, and forces Jerusalemites to join the Israeli health insurance to pressure the Palestinians and the health sector at the same time.
- 29.** The health sector in Jerusalem suffers from a lack of funding, the accumulation of debts, and the occupation's quest to shut down the existing health institutions. As of the beginning of 2022, the debts of al-Makassed Hospital amounted to about NIS 200 million (about \$60 million), and this affects the ability of hospitals to provide medical equipment and salaries for their staff.
- 30.** The occupation authorities prevent the entry of any medicine manufactured in the West Bank or imported to it to force Jerusalem hospitals to join the Israeli pharmaceutical market and the occupation factories only, in addition to imposing further restrictions on Palestinian suppliers of medical devices.
- 31.** The occupation policies have led to the impoverishment of Palestinian society in occupied Jerusalem. About 77.5% of Palestinian families in the eastern part of occupied Jerusalem live below poverty line, and 86% of Palestinian children in Jerusalem are poor.

- 32.** About 1,000 shops in the eastern part of occupied Jerusalem suffer from the accumulation of debts and the decline in commercial traffic. The number of closed shops in Jerusalem increased from about 350 to about 800 at the end of 2020. Taxes are the most prominent means that besiege Jerusalemites in general and merchants in particular. Jerusalem sources assert that the occupation authorities collect about 35% of the Jerusalemites' budget in the form of taxes but provide services equal to only 5% of what is collected.
- 33.** The occupation authorities prevent civil institutions in Jerusalem from assuming their role in supporting the Jerusalemites through restricting their action then banning and shutting them down. Israel has closed dozens of civil institutions working for Jerusalem inside and outside the city leaving a huge void in the Palestinian society in Jerusalem. According to Jerusalem data, the occupation authorities have closed more than 100 Palestinian civil institutions in the city.



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