

Reversing Israel's Deepening Annexation of Occupied East Jerusalem

International Crisis Group

I. Introduction

The stakes in Jerusalem are high. For Israeli Jews the city's name, Yerushalayim (Abode of Peace), evokes the biblical seat of Jewish kings and the site of ancient Jewish temples. Virtually all members of the current governing coalition – in line with the majority of the Jewish public – agree on three fundamental policy principles: that Jerusalem should be Israel's capital, that the capital must include parts of occupied East Jerusalem, including the Old City and its immediate environs, and that it ought to have a Jewish majority. This consensus stands because most Israeli Jews view the modern city in continuity with the biblical city – return to which Jews across the world have prayed for two millennia.

For Palestinians, the city of al-Quds (the Holy) also lies at the core of national and religious identities and shapes political objectives. Palestinians point to their historical role as defenders of al-Aqsa mosque, located in the occupied Old City. Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders assert that a Palestinian state without a capital in East Jerusalem is “worthless”.¹

The modern diplomatic history of the conflict over Jerusalem began with UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (November 1947), which called for the partition of Mandatory Palestine into two states (one Arab, one Jewish, with equal rights for minorities in each state) and specified that the Jerusalem area – the Jerusalem municipality and several surrounding towns, including Bethlehem – would comprise a *corpus separatum* under a Special International Regime.

Editor's Note:

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By the end of the 1948 war, Israel had expanded its boundaries well beyond those of the 1947 partition plan into the *corpus separatum*, including the western half of Jerusalem. Jordan, which took control of the West Bank, declared a second capital (after Amman) in East Jerusalem, over an area of 6 sq km, which included the entirety of the Old City and most of its holy sites. In 1950, Israel's parliament, the Knesset, declared a capital in the part of Jerusalem under its control. Israel built most of its governing institutions there. The UN and the international community rejected both Israel's and Jordan's unilateral declarations and remained committed to the idea of a Special International Regime for Jerusalem.

Following the 1967 war, Israel occupied the West Bank and unilaterally expanded the city's municipal boundary to encompass the formerly Jordanian-ruled areas (6 sq km) as well as an additional 70 sq km that included dozens of surrounding West Bank villages. In so doing, Israeli leaders weighed several factors: security considerations, preserving land for future development, historical and religious attachments, and bringing into the city "maximum territory and minimum population".² In 1980, the Knesset passed a Basic Law declaring that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel". The Oslo Accords of the 1990s defined Jerusalem as a final status issue, leaving it under Israeli rule during what was supposed to have been an interim period. During final status negotiations in 2000, Israeli and Palestinian leaders discussed partitioning the city, yet the talks collapsed over several issues, notably disagreement about sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. The second intifada erupted in September 2000, beginning the most violent Israeli-Palestinian escalation since 1967. In 2001, Israel shut down Orient House – the PLO's de facto headquarters in Jerusalem, where political, social and cultural activities took place – and has since forbidden all Palestinian political activity in East Jerusalem. Suicide bombings, which took a particularly high toll in Jerusalem, led the Israeli public to support erecting a massive separation barrier to prevent entry of would-be attackers from the West Bank (very few attackers came from East Jerusalem). Cut off from the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority (PA) and without local leadership, large families in East Jerusalem attempted to fill the political vacuum. But they could not prevent the dissolution of the area's social fabric or the rise of criminality. Because boundaries are porous, particularly for drugs and crime, these problems have begun to plague the city's Jewish population as well.

Whereas elsewhere in the West Bank the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) determined the barrier's route, based partly on security considerations, in Jerusalem Prime Minister Ariel Sharon saw to it that the barrier's path was guided primarily by political considerations: setting Israel's potential future borders. Though the barrier for the most part followed the city's municipal boundaries (themselves unilaterally determined by Israel in 1967), it also strayed from them in two important respects: first, it included within Israel several large settlement blocs outside municipal Jerusalem (Givat Ze'ev to the north, Ma'ale Adumim to the east and Gush Etzion to the south); and second, in two crowded Palestinian-populated areas within municipal Jerusalem, Shuafat refugee camp (as well as parts of adjoining Anata) and Kafr Aqab, Sharon opted to route the fence inside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries, thus placing Shuafat/Anata and Kafr Aqab east of the barrier. (Sharon did the same in part of al-Walaja, in the southern part of East Jerusalem, as well

as in al-Sawahra, in the east.) Soon thereafter, the Israeli police stopped operating in these areas. All other Israeli authorities followed suit, leaving these Palestinian Jerusalemites forced to pay municipal taxes, lest they lose their residency, while receiving almost no municipal services. Lawlessness, poverty and crime increased.

Tens of thousands of West Bankers moved into the areas without Israel's permission, residing illegally, according to Israeli law, within occupied East Jerusalem, even though both it and the rest of the West Bank are occupied territory under international law: some came for cheap housing, built in the absence of regulations; some were married to Jerusalemites, whom Israel has, as a rule, refused permission to live with their West Bank spouses in Jerusalem west of the barrier. Others wanted proximity to higher-wage employment in the Jerusalem area; and still others sought a refuge from both the PA and Israel. The municipality estimates, conservatively, that the number who moved into Shuafat/Anata and Kafr Aqab is between 40,000 and 60,000, for an overall Palestinian population living inside these two areas estimated at 140,000; these figures do not include the much smaller populations in the other two areas east of the barrier, al-Sawahra and al-Walaja.³ During the outbreak of attacks by Palestinians in 2014-2017, which some have called the al-Quds Intifada, roughly half the perpetrators came from these areas.

On 6 December 2017, the U.S. recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital; in May 2018, it relocated its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; and on 4 March 2019, it shut down its Jerusalem consulate and merged it into the embassy. Farther away but in the same vein, on 25 March the U.S. recognised Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights. These moves lent encouragement to Israel's leading political and rabbinic advocates of annexation, who argue that steps once deemed impossible (because of international opposition) have now become possible. Israeli leaders have advanced several ambitious plans to consolidate control of the occupied East Jerusalem. Israel's government purposely met to authorise the five-year plan for doing so the day after the U.S. inaugurated its embassy in Jerusalem, seeking "maximal symbolic gains and international backing".⁴

This report sheds light on Israeli policymaking in occupied East Jerusalem. It analyses existing policy plans; it also describes intra-Israeli power struggles that affect Jerusalem policy as well as these policies' probable impact on the conflict and prospects for its resolution. It is based primarily on nearly a hundred interviews with Israeli officials and elected leaders, PA and PLO officials, diplomats and civil society activists between January 2018 and May 2019.

II. A Jewish Majority in "Unified Jerusalem" at Minimum Cost

A. Demographic Manipulations

Since 1967, successive Israeli governments have sought to maintain a large and lasting Jewish majority within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries, as unilaterally determined

by Israel shortly after it occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank in 1967. Israeli governments pursued these objectives primarily through settlement construction, bringing Jews to East Jerusalem and neglecting the Arab parts of the city to impede Palestinian natural growth and nudge Palestinians to depart.

But Israel has consistently failed to hit its numeric targets. The size of the city's Jewish majority has continued to shrink, declining from a ratio of 74 Jewish to 26 Palestinian residents in 1967 to a 62:38 ratio in 2016.⁵ Part of the story is Israel's failure to attract Jewish Israelis into the city, combined with Jewish outmigration to other parts of Israel. But the primary reason for the narrowing Jewish majority is that Palestinian population growth has outpaced that of the Jewish population. In response, Israel adjusted its demographic objectives downward. Whereas in 1973 the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Checking Development Rates in Jerusalem (aka the Gafni Committee) set a goal of preserving the ratio that existed at the time (73.5 per cent Jews to 25.5 per cent Arabs), in 2007 the Jerusalem Master Plan 2000 reset the target to a 60-40 ratio.⁶ Israeli officials increasingly doubt the feasibility of even this lowered objective. A candidate in the 2018 mayoral race, Ze'ev Elkin, the current Jerusalem affairs minister, warned Jerusalemites that by the 2023 municipal election the city may no longer have a Jewish majority.

B. *Territorial Schemes*

Israel's territorial policy objectives in Jerusalem – building large Jewish population centres in and around the occupied East to ensure permanent Israeli control of the city – have proven more attainable. Israeli settlement in and around occupied East Jerusalem consists of three “belts”: an outer belt that defines what Israel calls Greater Jerusalem; a middle belt connecting West Jerusalem to Mount Scopus (a UN-protected enclave with Israeli institutions from 1949 to 1967); and an inner belt encircling the Old City.

The outer belt, which circumscribes a purported Greater Jerusalem, comprises three “fingers” of suburban settlement, each of which extends roughly 10 km from the city's municipal boundaries into the occupied West Bank: Givat Ze'ev in the north, Ma'ale Adumim in the east and Gush Etzion in the south. There is a broad Israeli consensus that, with or without a peace agreement, the three main Greater Jerusalem settlements should be incorporated into the State of Israel. Moreover, Israeli governments have been making slow but steady progress at merging these settlements, as well as Jerusalem's western suburbs, into a single metropolis, with common infrastructure, such as public transport networks.

In the middle belt, Israel has built many new Jewish settlements in areas of occupied East Jerusalem within the city's municipal boundaries. The oldest of these – Givat HaMivtar, Maalot Dafna, Ramat Eshkol and French Hill – were built to connect West Jerusalem with the East Jerusalem area of Mount Scopus. Others were established with the intention of encircling, from the occupied East, the Jewish and Arab city centres, thereby cutting off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. Today only a small strip of Palestinian-inhabited territory remains, between Mount Scopus and Jabel Mukaber, constituting the only significant opening from East Jerusalem into the West Bank.

The innermost belt encircles the occupied Old City and its surrounding basin, which includes the revered historical and holy sites. Here the main direct driver of settlement activity is not the Israeli government but settler groups, including non-governmental organisations and yeshivas (institutes of religious learning), that enjoy government backing for their archaeological, educational and touristic projects. These groups are building a contiguous ring of Jewish settlements and national parks in East Jerusalem to surround the Old City in the hope of preventing an Israeli withdrawal from it in any eventual settlement.

In addition to settlement facts on the ground, Israel has pursued its territorial goals by encouraging a consensus in Jewish public opinion in favour of safeguarding Jerusalem in its expanded form as “eternally united”. Jerusalem scholar Ian Lustick has characterised this policy, which the state promulgated through the school system, legislation (including the abovementioned Jerusalem Basic Law) and politicians’ speeches, as the “fetishisation of Yerushalayim”. In effect, this policy extended the deep, religious and historical attachment that Jews feel to the Old City, less than 1 sq km in area, outside the city walls to include over two dozen distant villages. One former senior adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, asked to explain the logic of his government’s insistence on including the Shuafat refugee camp within the capital boundaries that Israel claims, retorted: “If we give up on Shuafat, we put the Old City in danger”⁷.

III. Squaring Circles

Despite extensive construction in Jewish areas of Jerusalem, both in the West and in settlements within the occupied East, and the severe impediments placed even on natural growth of Arab neighbourhoods within the city, Israel has failed to achieve its goal of establishing a durable and substantial Jewish majority. A former Israeli minister described the dilemma: “East Jerusalem remains stuck in our throat: we can’t swallow it and we can’t spit it out”⁸.

Israeli leaders have contemplated several ambitious ways of maintaining a demographic majority in a unified greater Jerusalem. Some plans face the demographic challenge head on by altering municipal boundaries to include additional Jewish settlements within the city or to exclude Palestinian areas. Other plans aim to expand the supply of residential units for Jews in West Jerusalem, thereby increasing the proportion of Jews inside the municipal boundaries. Though Israel has adopted none of these proposals thus far, they all deserve attention, not only because they are likely to resurface in the future, but also because the political dynamics that prevented their adoption remain relevant. The main policy Israel aims to pursue, in what would be a departure from its longstanding neglect of the city’s Palestinian population, is a plan to economically integrate Palestinian East Jerusalem and its population into Israel while diluting Palestinian national identity, with the hope that Palestinians will accept Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem, participate in municipal elections and identify as residents and citizens of Israel.

A. *Telling Failures*

Since 1996, Israeli officials have advocated expanding the municipal boundaries of the city in order to include major settlements and to prepare the ground for removing large Palestinian-majority areas. Most such proposals in the Knesset had the city absorbing the settlements surrounding the city through full annexation and excising its Arab areas so their residents would lose the right to vote in its municipal elections, voting instead for a new, separate council. Increasing support for full-fledged annexation, a term Israel avoided using after 1967 to spare itself international opprobrium, reflects a growing Israeli sense of impunity. The gap between Israel's de facto annexation – through the application of Israeli law in East Jerusalem – and formal, full-fledged annexation is more than a difference in terminology. While Israel decided in 1967 that its laws would extend to occupied East Jerusalem, it never fully applied them there as it did west of the Green Line: it did not force Palestinian Jerusalemites to take up citizenship, it allowed Palestinians to use non-Israeli (first Jordanian, then Palestinian) school curricula and it did not complete land registration. Israel is now intent on gradually closing the latter two gaps.

1. Greater Jerusalem Law

In 2007, Likud MK Yisrael Katz introduced a draft bill, the Greater Jerusalem Law, which he has made several attempts to guide to passage. If passed, the bill would expand the city's municipal boundaries to include the five settlements of Beitar Illit, Ma'ale Adumim, Givat Ze'ev, Gush Etzion and Efrat, defining them as "daughter municipalities"⁹ In addition, the plan would give the same sub-municipal status to four Palestinian areas that are now part of the municipality but lie beyond the separation barrier: Kafr Aqab, Shuafat refugee camp/Anata, al-Sawahra, and al-Walaja.

In this way, Israel would kill two birds with one stone: it would upgrade the status of the five illegal settlements lying outside the municipal boundaries, while imposing a distinct administrative status on the four Palestinian neighbourhoods within the city, paving the way for their full excision from Israel's Jerusalem municipality and, in the long run, possibly putting at risk their inhabitants' status as Israeli residents. Should Palestinians in these areas lose their status as residents of Jerusalem, they, like Palestinians in the rest of the West Bank, would be required to obtain permits to enter East Jerusalem or Israel. Thus, Jerusalem's Jewish population and Jewish settlements would increase in size, while the city's Palestinian population and territory would shrink.

Since MK Katz began promoting the bill in 2007, it has failed to win government support, even after it was watered down to remove mention of full annexation, due both to international pressure and the opposition of self-styled centrist parties that were in the coalition from 2007 to 2017. In July 2017, it won Prime Minister Netanyahu's support, following an embarrassing episode in which he first installed and then, under local and Jordanian pressure, removed metal detectors at the entrances to Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. Netanyahu shifted to supporting the bill because he wanted to appear strong after backtracking on the metal detectors.

But, even then, it faced opposition. Ultra-Orthodox politicians announced they would oppose the measure, primarily because a clear majority of the residents in the expanded

areas are not ultra-Orthodox and their inclusion would weaken the odds of an ultra-Orthodox candidate becoming Jerusalem's mayor. But ultra-Orthodox politicians also withheld their support because of anticipated international community opposition. Even the Trump administration opposed the law. Coalition chairperson and Likud MK David Bitan explained: "There is American pressure that claims this is about annexation and that this could interfere with the peace process"¹⁰ The combination of ultra-Orthodox opposition and U.S. pressures led to an indefinite postponement. Since then, efforts to rally support for the legislation have stalled.

2. The Elkin plan and its discontents

Since 2017, Jerusalem Affairs Minister Ze'ev Elkin, a mayoral candidate who lost in October 2018 but retained his ministerial post, has advocated excising the city's Palestinian areas that lie beyond the separation barrier. Israel's Jerusalem Basic Law prevents the interior minister from altering the city's municipal boundaries, in contrast to his authority elsewhere in the country. Elkin therefore sought to enable excision by amending the Jerusalem Basic Law. His proposal differs from another, unpopular Likud proposal, which called for handing the excised areas to the PA as a step toward a potential two-state partition. Instead, Elkin has proposed transforming the excised areas into separate local municipal councils. According to Jerusalem expert Nadav Shragai, the Elkin plan's initiator, excision will turn the demographic dial back to a ratio of 69 per cent Jews to 31 per cent Palestinians.¹¹ (In contrast, retaining the territory would leave Israel responsible for the 40,000-60,000 inhabitants of East Jerusalem who do not have Jerusalem residency, leaving Israel to grapple with demands to grant these Jerusalem inhabitants residency, or, less probably, devising policies that would force them to leave.)

Others are more sceptical. A municipal official claimed that the Elkin plan is likely to deliver much more partial results, primarily because many residents of these areas have prepared for the possibility of excision by changing their formal address to one west of the barrier and that many will relocate westward as soon as excision seems imminent. Palestinian Jerusalemites and some Israeli human rights activists share the belief and fear that such excision would be a step toward extensive residency revocations. If Israel were to revoke residency rights for the excised areas' inhabitants, it could serve as another sort of precedent: when negotiating a peace agreement with the Palestinians, previous Israeli prime ministers have considered excising Palestinian towns in Israel proper by transferring them to a Palestinian state in exchange for annexing large settlement blocs in the West Bank.

The argument for such an excision of Palestinian towns in Israel, done against the will of the local population, could be strengthened if a precedent were established in which Israel had already altered the status of Palestinians in areas it considers its sovereign territory. Jerusalem municipal councillors from both left and right share the sense that excision would turn an already dire situation into an outright catastrophe. Excision has failed to win support in the Knesset largely because of internal divisions on the right, where hardline religious Zionists caution that any reshaping of Jerusalem's boundaries could create a situation in which it would become clear to all Israelis that

the notion of Yerushalayim is malleable. As a member of Jewish Home party explained, making reference to Tzipi Livni, a prominent proponent of a two-state partition, “if you can divide Jerusalem this way today, Livni will divide it in a different way tomorrow”.¹²

In an attempt to win a Knesset majority for changing the Jerusalem Basic Law so as to allow excision – an unpopular move among right-wing voters who take Jerusalem’s “eternal unity” as an article of faith – Elkin and Education Minister and Jewish Home chairperson Naftali Bennett proposed in July 2017 an amendment that coupled excision with a more popular move: an increase of the necessary parliamentary majority for handing any of the city’s pre-excised parts to a foreign entity (such as the Palestinians). This way, a future Palestinian state would be less likely to gain control of these occupied areas, irrespective of whether they remained inside Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries. Netanyahu backed the move.

But hardline religious Zionists, led by MK Betzalel Smotrich, successfully rallied the Jewish Home party against excision because they feared that it would set the stage for future partition of the city. The hardliners forced Bennett to retract his support for excision and to modify the legislative amendment hours before the vote. As a result, the final text included only the increase in the size of the parliamentary majority needed to hand to a foreign entity areas within the city’s current municipal boundaries, not the part about enabling excision, which did not pass. Advancing excision in the future will therefore be impossible through a mere directive from the interior minister, as Elkin had planned. It will now require securing a Knesset majority in three votes.

Though few voters in the municipal election chose candidates based on their East Jerusalem agendas, had Elkin won he would almost certainly have used city hall to promote excision and strengthen his hand against annexationist opponents of excision such as Smotrich, potentially gaining support for his original plan of amending the Jerusalem Basic Law. His victory would have given excision electoral backing and institutional authority. Mayor-elect Moshe Leon, by contrast, who competed with Elkin for Likud votes, was the candidate most vocally critical of excision, on the grounds that it would ultimately turn over parts of Israel’s capital to the PA.¹³ A municipal official stated that once Leon takes office “he will quickly realise excision is sensible, but in public he will likely oppose it so that he will not appear to go back on his word”.¹⁴

B. *New Policies: Investing in East Jerusalem’s Economy*

The main new policy approach that has managed to win support across the political spectrum is primarily economic. On 13 May 2018, known in Israel as Jerusalem Reunification Day, marking the 1967 consolidation under Israeli rule of the city’s western and occupied eastern parts, Netanyahu’s cabinet passed a decision entitled “Narrowing Socio-Economic Gaps and Economic Development in East Jerusalem”.¹⁵ Announced with great fanfare, this plan, to be carried out over the next five years, shifted course from decades of neglect of Palestinian East Jerusalem by national governments and mayors alike. The five-year plan allocates nearly 2 billion shekels (over \$500 million) for the years 2018-2023, focusing on improving education, advancing employment and upgrading public spaces.¹⁶ The plan does not stipulate that spending is to be done only on the

western side of the barrier. It is likely, however, that the state will spend only low sums east of the barrier, because the municipality provides limited services there as it is.

The magnitude of investment and the seeming willingness to take responsibility for East Jerusalem have various conflict-relevant implications. These include, most importantly, facilitating greater Israeli government and municipal presence in the Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem as part of a shift from broad neglect of Palestinian areas to the beginning of what is intended to be a decades-long process of absorbing most of East Jerusalem into Israel. Likud ministers, both two-staters and annexationists, who advocate this shift see it as an element of a long-term policy to remould the national identity of Palestinian Jerusalemites from "Palestinian" to being "Arab of Jerusalem".¹⁷

The five-year-plan, known as Government Decision 3790, is premised on continued Israeli rule over East Jerusalem and continued Israeli rejection of either a PA presence in Jerusalem or the establishment of Palestinian municipal self-governance (see Appendix B for a summary of the plan's main elements). It expands and deepens Israeli municipal control over occupied East Jerusalem by allocating funding for services and activities that Palestinian residents and human rights organisations have long called for. Yet it is unlikely to fully achieve its stated objective of redressing socio-economic inequality in Jerusalem: \$106 million per year over five years falls far short of the amount needed to address gaps accumulated during more than 50 years of neglect.¹⁸ Unless the state increases the overall sum considerably, future five-year plans will also fail to close the gap between the city's Jewish and Palestinian residents, as the Jewish population advances in prosperity more rapidly than the Palestinian one.

The plan also has the potential to significantly escalate tensions in Jerusalem and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more broadly. Palestinians vociferously oppose two of its elements – one encouraging East Jerusalem schools to shift to Israeli curricula (nearly half the plan's education budget is conditioned on acceptance of Israeli curricula), which they see as a threat to their national identity, and the other registering lands in Israel's registry, which would secure legal ownership for some Palestinian lands but could also put much illegally built housing at increased risk of demolition and open the door to Israeli confiscation of unregistered lands. Carrying out these policies will further heighten tensions between East Jerusalemites and the government of Israel, as well as between Palestinians who cooperate with these controversial steps and Palestinians who do not. It will also push the PA toward greater advocacy concerning the Jerusalem issue, thereby stoking tensions between the PA and Israel. One effect of such a clash could be to improve the PA's poor standing among Palestinian Jerusalemites.

Israeli criticism of the plan has come mostly from the political left, though even these critics welcomed significant elements of the government's decision. Most of their criticism pertained to what the plan fails to include. Advocate Oshrat Maimon of Ir Amim, an Israeli non-profit devoted to making Jerusalem more equitable for Israelis and Palestinians, said the plan is missing a chapter on planning for new construction for Palestinians in East Jerusalem: she said the existing limit on construction "is the core of the problem for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and it is no coincidence that it is absent".¹⁹

In the same vein, *Haaretz's* Jerusalem correspondent argued that the plan ignores the Palestinians who live beyond the separation barrier; while pretending to welcome hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living west of the barrier into Israel, the plan in effect continues the policy of denying them citizenship, as evidenced by increasing rates of rejection of Palestinian Jerusalemite applications for citizenship. Furthermore, because the plan does not create electoral incentives for Israeli politicians to invest in the city's Arab districts, incentives they have lacked for more than 50 years, there are good reasons to be sceptical about the degree to which Israeli politicians would put in place even the plan's less controversial components.

The newly elected city council has significant influence over how the state will carry out the plan. From the outset, in the words of one municipal official, "policy-making behind the five-year plan saw a constant, ongoing tension between the professionals and the nationalists: those who act primarily with urban service provision in mind and those who act with assertion of sovereignty in mind".²⁰ The new municipal governing coalition is a mixed bag: the newly elected mayor and the ultra-Orthodox politicians who form the majority of the new municipal coalition see the assertion of sovereignty through the five-year plan as a low priority and therefore tend to side with the professionals, albeit without much enthusiasm. Some refer to Shas chairperson Aryeh Deri, whose support for Leon was decisive in the latter's victory, as "Jerusalem's real mayor".²¹ And Deri is reputedly less than eager to invest in Palestinian-populated areas in Jerusalem.

In contrast, the city council also includes the national-religious activist Arie King, chairman of the hawkish settler organisation Israel Land Fund, who secured the Israel Heritage file (which affects municipal policies in East Jerusalem toward the city's sensitive historical core) on the city council in exchange for his support for Leon in the second round of voting. Some settler leaders saw the new mayor's decision to join several of them at a Hanukkah candelabra lighting at the Small Western Wall (a rarely visited section of the Western Wall inside the Old City's Muslim quarter) as an encouraging sign that he will grant King a free hand in East Jerusalem. The nationalist objectives advocated by Jerusalem's settler leaders resonate in the Union of Right-Wing Parties and much of the Likud.

IV. Economic Integration, Political Separation

Israel's five-year plan evinces a desire among some to integrate the city's Palestinians into Israel's economy. But economic integration sits in tension with the state's concurrent effort to keep Palestinians separate from the Israeli polity. This latter effort is most evident in Israel's policy of denying citizenship to the small but growing number of East Jerusalemites requesting it. It is also apparent in state policies that discourage Palestinian residents from exercising voting rights in municipal elections. With a few exceptions on right and left, Israeli politicians have not promoted the political participation of East Jerusalem's Palestinian residents. Indeed, as soon as a Palestinian, Aziz Abu Sara, stated that he was running for mayor in order to advance the establishment of two capitals in

Jerusalem, Israeli hawks presented legal challenges to his candidacy. The Interior Ministry quickly began an inquiry into whether Jerusalem has been Abu Sara's centre of life over the last seven years, leading him to withdraw.

Palestinians, for their part, have shown little interest in participating in Israeli politics. Early in the 2018 municipal campaign, despite the longstanding Palestinian boycott of municipal elections and the prevailing hostility on social media networks toward the Palestinian candidates who had signalled they might run, some polls indicated that Palestinian demand for local political participation might be growing. Yet Palestinian participation in the October 2018 election was even lower than in previous years.²²

As detailed below, the vast majority of Palestinian Jerusalemites agree that the costs of electoral participation in an institution that is part and parcel of a deepening Israeli occupation – including a sense of national betrayal and likely social sanctions from fellow Palestinians – outweigh its limited potential benefits. Palestinian Jerusalemites have the worst of both worlds: they have full obligations to the municipality (in terms of taxes and fines) but receive very limited services (as evidenced in their low share of the municipal budget). The Palestinian Authority and PLO discourage them from advancing their rights in the city via the ballot box, yet the PA has provided them with only modest support, whether financial (eg, in the share of the national budget they are allocated) or political. Meanwhile, East Jerusalem has been suffering socio-economic degradation, marked by increasing criminality, drug use and prostitution, as organised Palestinian political activity has withered.²³

The October 2018 election showed that widespread Palestinian participation in Jerusalem's municipal elections remains a pipe dream, despite some signs that change might come. Israeli officials praise what they believe to be a growing Israelisation of Palestinian Jerusalemites. They are overstating the case, though Palestinians are indeed weighing the pros and cons of participating in future elections. Their choice became real when Ramadan Dabash – the Palestinian candidate for city council who, as chairperson of Sur Baher's community administration (*minhal kehilati*), cooperated with the Likud to secure resources for his community – set a precedent by not withdrawing his candidacy before election day, as all previous Palestinian candidates have done. Dabash has stated that he stayed in the race despite harsh threats and an alleged attempt to kidnap his child by activists who opposed his candidacy.

In the end, however, Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, abstained almost entirely from voting. Focus groups held in East Jerusalem during the months preceding the election suggested that if different Palestinian candidates had run with the backing of Palestinian factions, the participation rates might have been considerably higher, but given past Israeli legal and political opposition to Palestinians running on nationalist platforms it is unclear that Israel would allow such candidates to run. There is also little reason to think that Palestinian factions would field such candidates at present. As long as East Jerusalem remains occupied, the candidate would face the same kind of factional and hence popular opposition that led to meagre electoral participation in October 2018.

In sum, Palestinians are no more interested in fully participating in the Israeli polity than Israelis are eager to include them. In this sense, Israel's continued emphasis on

economic as opposed to political integration of East Jerusalem suits both sides – even as many Palestinians reject components of the five-year plan, such as land registration, that are part and parcel of the plans for economic integration.

V. An Intra-Israeli Debate

As seen, contestation over government policies in East Jerusalem has not been an argument between the Israeli right and the Israeli left, whose direct influence is negligible today. Rather, the dispute has taken place almost entirely within the right-wing coalition that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formed after the 2015 election. Virtually none of its members publicly supports Jerusalem's partition. Rather, all operate on the premise that Jerusalem, east and west, is and will remain under Israeli rule – the difference being primarily whether to rid Jerusalem of the Palestinian-populated areas beyond the barrier or keep them within the city's municipal boundaries.

The outcome of Israel's 17 September 2019 election could have far-reaching consequences not just for Jerusalem but for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a whole. Prominent Likud leaders, including Netanyahu and Jerusalem Affairs Minister Ze'ev Elkin, seem increasingly ready to relinquish some control over territory in order to increase the Jewish majority in the city and concentrate resources on gradually integrating the remaining Palestinian-populated areas into Israel – economically and socially at first, with the goal of ultimately integrating them politically to the point that they vote in elections and accept Israeli rule. Elkin, the primary advocate of excising East Jerusalem Arab neighbourhoods from the city, lost in his 2018 bid to become Jerusalem's mayor, but, tellingly, won the vast majority of votes in strongholds of the Likud and Jewish Home parties. Right-wing Jerusalemites evidently did not consider Elkin's proposal as having crossed a red line. Perhaps incoming Jerusalem mayor Leon could embrace the idea without paying too severe a political price.

The narrow right-wing government Netanyahu likely hopes to form after the September 2019 election may appear to be an improbable champion of excision. The national-religious Union of Right-Wing Parties, an electoral list – made up of Jewish Home, National Union and Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) – that secured five seats in the April 2019 election and is integral to a prospective right-wing coalition, has firmly opposed it so far. Opponents of redrawing Jerusalem's boundaries, including Jerusalem council members who lead the Jerusalem-based pro-settler organisations the Israel Land Fund (Arieh King), Elad (David Be'eri) and Ateret Cohanim (Matti Dan), represent a small yet influential hardline constituency. As noted above, they already scored a success when countering Bennett and Elkin on this front by rallying the Jewish Home party in opposition to excision. They intend to persevere in preventing excision. But their success in convincing the Union of Right-Wing Parties to toe that line is uncertain because the leadership is now divided on the matter. The divisions might open the door to excision even in a future coalition that depends on the support of the Union of Right-Wing Parties.

A municipal official explained why the policy rationale for excision, over which right-wing Israeli leaders are at odds, could prove politically decisive:

[Outgoing Mayor] Barkat supported excision for Jerusalem-related reasons alone – in order to discard a part of the city that drew all of it downward. Elkin, however, sees this as a preview for the West Bank. For him, establishing a working precedent of a municipal council for people with Israeli residency but not citizenship is advantageous because it raises the question: why not apply it elsewhere? This is the pilot.²⁴

Netanyahu, like the former mayor, seems to be ambivalent about the annexationist agenda, despite his end-of-campaign pledge to annex West Bank settlements. His support for excision more likely stems from a limited, Jerusalem-related reason: preserving a Jewish majority in the city.²⁵ Yet if excision takes place, annexationists to the prime minister's right could seize upon the precedent, even if only after the Netanyahu era. Elkin's statements that "today's Jerusalem is the demographic DNA of Israel in twenty years" and that "we must develop models for handling the challenges in Jerusalem which will help us handle the future challenges in Israel" seem in line with annexationist thinking.²⁶ Likud MK Tzipi Hotoveli has been advocating gradual rollout of the annexation and naturalisation paradigm, saying: "We must bear in mind that this [Palestinian population] is a hostile entity and it is impossible to turn them into citizens overnight. There is an intermediate phase of residency that can serve as a sort of candidacy period for citizenship. The drastic step of immediate citizenship for a million and a half Palestinians would be irresponsible and to think of doing such a thing is not serious."²⁷

Even if a narrow right-wing coalition similar to that in place from 2015 comes to power, a shuffling of the ministerial deck might, for example, place the interior ministry or justice ministry in new hands, opening up other avenues to change in East Jerusalem. The former ministry controls residency request approvals and residency revocations; the latter controls Israel's Land Registry. Furthermore, as noted above, the Israeli government had postponed implementation of some Jerusalem policies – such as the Greater Jerusalem Law – out of deference to the Trump administration, which feared they would disrupt its peacemaking efforts. Such policies could be revived if the U.S. peace plan fails to gain traction among Palestinians as is widely expected.

VI. Exiting the Road to Nowhere

President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital has reversed decades-old stated principles of U.S. peacemaking and emboldened Israeli decision-makers to take steps to consolidate control over East Jerusalem. Not surprisingly, Palestinians feel deeply threatened in Jerusalem. Arabs and Muslims continue to be united around the demand that East Jerusalem, including much of its Old City and surrounding areas, be

Palestine's capital. Mounting tensions at the Holy Esplanade exacerbate their sense that this envisioned future is growing less likely.

Much depends on what coalition government emerges from the 17 September 2019 parliamentary election. In the less probable event of a coalition that is led by or includes self-defined centrists like the Blue and White party, the government might be more receptive to international calls to refrain from altering the legal status of Palestinian inhabitants of the areas between the separation barrier and Jerusalem's municipal boundaries. On the other hand, it would also be freer to ignore any pro-annexationist objections from the Union of Right-Wing Parties to excision. It is thus at least conceivable that it be more inclined to excise Palestinian areas.

In the more likely scenario of a right-wing coalition, Israel's international partners could argue to both the opposition and putative centre-right parties in the coalition, such as Kulanu or perhaps Israel Beitenu, that it is in Israel's strategic interest to block excision of Palestinian areas and press the government to discard the five-year plan's most inflammatory components (East Jerusalem land registration and Palestinian adoption of Israeli curricula). These parties might be receptive to the argument that excision could lead to large-scale movement of Palestinians from areas beyond the barrier into the city centre, the spread of crime westward to Jewish population centres, and heightened risks of violent escalation – all outcomes that would harm Israel's interests. They might also be persuaded that East Jerusalemites oppose land registration so strongly that imposing it might cause unrest. Lastly, they might be swayed by the fact that local Muslim religious authorities reject the idea of Palestinians adopting Israeli curricula. That policy is feeding religious tensions in Jerusalem, with adverse consequences for all sides.

Palestinian leaders may well decide to collectively boycott the land registration process, much as they have done by refusing to accept Israel's material incentives for shifting Palestinian schools to Israeli curricula. Opponents of Israel's deepening de facto annexation of East Jerusalem may follow suit. Turkey and Jordan could impede the land registration process to some extent by preventing Israel and individual land owners from accessing the deeds they possess to lands in Jerusalem, notably in the Old City and its immediate environs, in support of such a boycott. Historical Western sponsors of churches could similarly support a boycott in order to pre-empt land registration that would likely affect the large number of church properties owned by foreign states in Jerusalem, and fear Israeli expropriation.

At the same time, Palestinian leaders in Jerusalem should consider seizing upon Israel's departure from its longstanding neglect of Arab East Jerusalem to explore low-profile cooperation in addressing shared challenges. Some instances of cooperation have become public, though both sides wish to keep such efforts inconspicuous, and thus deny the reports. In the less probable event of a coalition that is led by or includes self-defined centrists like the Blue and White party, the reconstituted Waqf Council, which is now more representative of Palestinian society in East Jerusalem, might conceivably obtain Israel's permission to help establish and provide diplomatic cover to a subsidiary institution whose task would be to extend some municipal services to Palestinians and perhaps one day act as the embryo of an East Jerusalem municipality. Though Israel

would have many reasons to reject such an arrangement, seeing it as a step toward Palestinian sovereignty in Jerusalem, it is not impossible to imagine that it could accept it under certain conditions.

The EU and relevant Arab states should use whatever leverage they have with Israel to discourage excision of Palestinian areas and press Israel to discard or indefinitely postpone its five-year plan's most provocative components (East Jerusalem land registration and Palestinian adoption of Israeli curricula). European states could, for example, warn that excision would bring them closer to recognising the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and that Israeli annexation of parts of East Jerusalem would certainly bring about such recognition. Together with Arab countries, they could provide financial incentives for Israel to shelve policies that advance the de facto annexation of East Jerusalem. These incentives could include discreet offers to provide support for PA activities in areas of Jerusalem east of the separation barrier and to invest in these areas on condition that Israel relax its ban on PA activities in the city. They could also include funds to help Palestinian Jerusalemites establish civic leadership bodies that will attempt to operate both east and west of the separation barrier.

Such investments in East Jerusalem would come at a political cost to Israel – undermining the notion of Jerusalem as the country's undivided capital – but they can help mitigate the spread of militancy, curb the negative impact of decades of neglect such as crime that spills over to West Jerusalem, and create a mechanism for addressing conflict in East Jerusalem. As poverty, despair and instability increase in East Jerusalem, especially in areas adjacent to large Israeli settlements, so, too, may Israel's willingness to consider making such trade-offs.

One should not expect interactions to be harmonious: Palestinians will push for more autonomy and attempt to reject certain Israeli policies, while Israel will impose restrictions on Palestinian authority and promote policies that it favours. But though Israel will be the final arbiter of policy in East Jerusalem so long as it continues to occupy it, Israelis will have to make some concessions to the 40 per cent of the city's inhabitants who are Palestinian if they want to lessen the chance of chronic and possibly escalating unrest.

In the less probable event of a governing coalition that is led by or includes self-defined centrists like the Blue and White party, Israel could and should consider going farther – ending its ban on the establishment of an East Jerusalem municipality with which it could cooperate west of the barrier, possibly by casting such an event as part of the standard Israeli practice of encouraging public participation in urban planning. (Israel would almost certainly refuse to allow an East Jerusalem municipality to operate east of the barrier, though it is unclear how capable it would be of enforcing a ban in areas where it has little presence.)

And, whatever coalition emerges from the September elections, in order to mitigate the lawlessness, poverty and crime in the areas of East Jerusalem lying east of the barrier, Israel should relax its ban on PA activities there. Instead of prioritising the dire problems in the neglected areas east of the barrier, the five-year plan appears to continue to ignore them. These areas will likely deteriorate further, becoming potential breeding grounds for militancy, poverty, drug abuse, crime and ill health, all of which will affect the rest of

Jerusalem. With Israel unwilling to assume responsibility in these areas, it should be in its interest to allow the PA to do so.

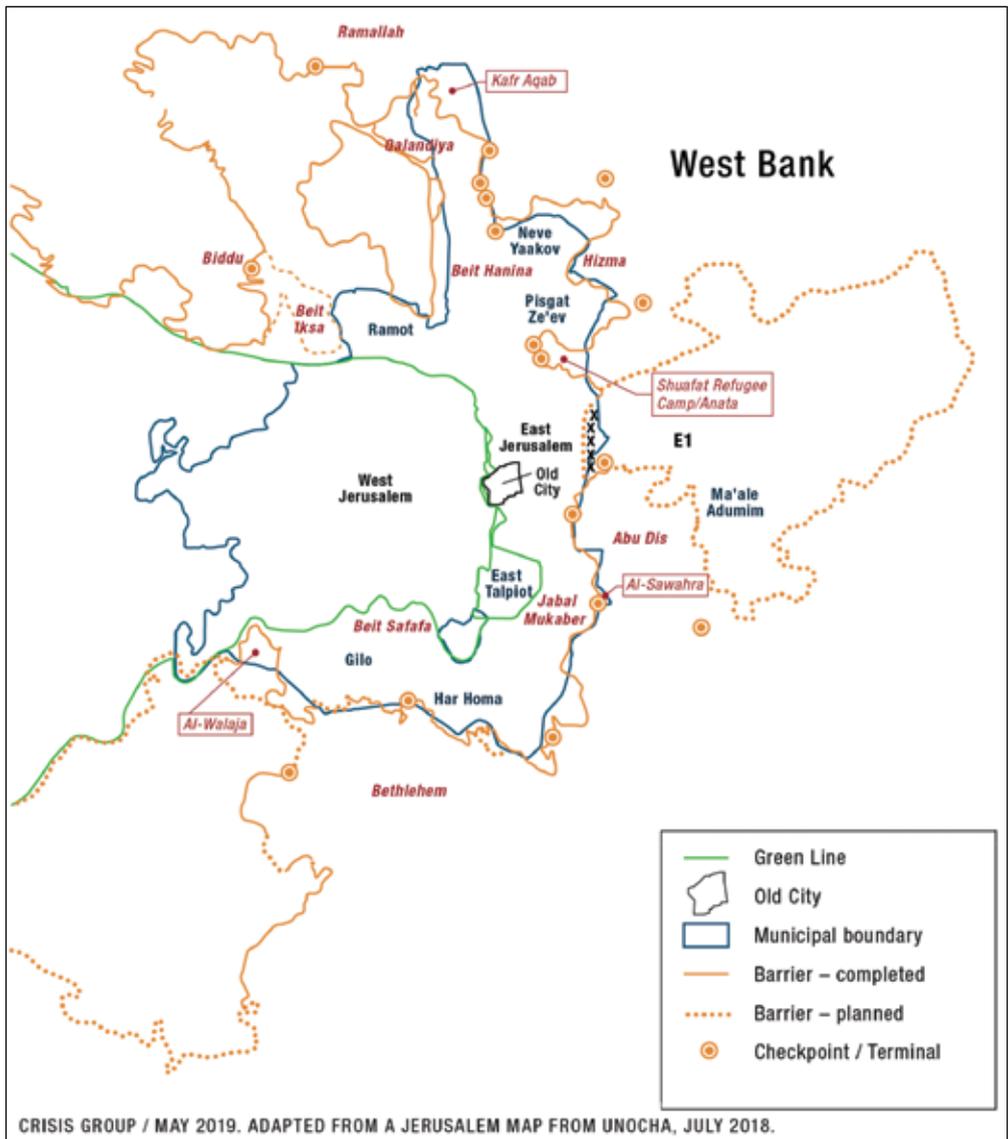
Jerusalem is at the core of both Palestinian and Jewish national identities. Without resolving competing claims to Jerusalem, there can be no Israeli-Palestinian peace. Israeli unilateral changes will only breed resentment and increase risk of violent conflict. Regardless of how the conflict in the city is resolved, Jerusalem residents, as well as both governments, could benefit if Israel were to have a Palestinian inter-locutor on both sides of the separation barrier.

VII. Conclusion

Whatever coalition emerges from the September 2019 elections, the next Israeli government almost certainly will seek to further Israel's hitherto incomplete annexation of parts of occupied East Jerusalem by continuing to implement the five-year plan, now in its second year. As part of this broader socio-economic plan, which marks a shift away from longstanding neglect of Palestinian-populated areas in East Jerusalem, Israel appears intent on advancing two particularly harmful policies: cataloguing all occupied East Jerusalem lands in the Israel Lands Registry and inducing Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem to adopt Israeli curricula. Likewise, seeking to preserve a Jewish majority in Jerusalem, the next government may well decide to excise Palestinian areas east of the barrier, placing them in separate Israeli administrative units outside the municipality's jurisdiction.

These unilateral policies would exacerbate the conflict in and over Jerusalem. They would harm hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, particularly the more than one hundred thousand Palestinians in areas Israel may excise, and present a perilous precedent for Israeli annexationist ambitions in the West Bank. All stakeholders opposed to such a move should do what they can to halt these policies as a first step toward reversing Israel's de facto annexation of East Jerusalem.

Jerusalem/Brussels, 12 June 2019



Appendix A. Map of Greater Jerusalem. Crisis Croup Middle East Report No. 202, 12 June 2019, 31.

Endnotes

- 1 Crisis Group interviews, PLO Executive Committee member, Ramallah, March 2018; PLO Planning Unit official, Jerusalem, April 2018; PLO ambassador, Jerusalem, June 2018.
- 2 Amnon Ramon, "Residents, Not Citizens: Israel and the Arabs of East Jerusalem, 1967-2017", Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2017 (Hebrew).
- 3 There are no exact figures, not least because many Jerusalem ID holders residing in these areas have registered under new addresses lying west of the barrier, for fear of excision. An Israeli official said the municipality's "conservative estimate" of the population without permanent residency now residing in the area was 60,000. Crisis Group interview, Israeli official, Jerusalem, September 2018. Another official suggested a lower figure, arguing that the prevalent government assessment is "at least a third of the 120,000-140,000 residents" of these areas. David Koren, "The Arab Neighbourhoods between the Security Fence and Jerusalem's Municipal Boundary", Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, 2 January 2019. Since Israel erected the separation barrier, West Bankers with spouses from East Jerusalem have often chosen to reside in the areas of municipal Jerusalem beyond the barrier so that the Jerusalemite spouse would not lose his or her permanent resident status (which is removed when Palestinians are found to have their "centre of life" outside the city for more than seven years). The children of such couples are eligible to receive permanent residency, but, in many cases, Israel has not granted it. Crisis Group interviews, East Jerusalem residents, Shuafat and al-Tur, November 2018. The large-scale move into these areas after the barrier's erection was further catalysed by the abundance of relatively low-cost housing once enforcement of Israeli construction standards and restrictions were removed and tall residential buildings were densely built.
- 4 Crisis Group interview, Israeli official, Jerusalem, June 2018.
- 5 In 1967, Jerusalem's population was 74 per cent Jews and 26 per cent Palestinians; in 1990, it was 72 per cent Jews and 28 per cent Palestinians; in 2000; it was 68 per cent Jews and 32 per cent Palestinians; and in 2016, it was 62 per cent Jews and 38 per cent Palestinians. The 2016 ratio works out to 550,100 Jewish and 332,000 Palestinian residents. "Jerusalem: Facts and Trends", Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, 2018. A former municipal councillor pointed out that Interior Ministry figures for Jerusalem's overall population are consistently some 10 per cent higher than those kept by the Central Bureau of Statistics. Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, January 2019.
- 6 Efrat Cohen-Bar, "Trapped by Planning: Israeli Policy, Planning and Development in the Palestinian Neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem", Bimkom, 2014.
- 7 Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, April 2019.
- 8 Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, October 2018.
- 9 Thanks to their status within the area of Jerusalem, residents would be entitled to vote in the city's municipal elections. The law further provides a degree of autonomy to the daughter municipalities whose specific authorities the interior minister is to determine: "The daughter municipalities would have councils elected by their residents on the date of elections for the Jerusalem municipality". Draft Law "Jerusalem and its Daughters – 2017", P/20/4386, tabled 10 July 2017. On file with Crisis Group. The five settlements have a total population of roughly 140,000 Jewish Israelis. Some of the leadership in the relevant settlements opposes the law, despite the putative additional legitimacy that annexation would win for their locality in Israeli public opinion. They oppose it in part because of taxes: if residents of settlements now outside the municipality were to join Jerusalem, they "would have to pay for Jerusalem's poverty". Crisis Group interview, settlement council member, Jerusalem, July 2018.
- 10 Israel Army Radio, 29 October 2017.
- 11 Nadav Shragai, "A Jerusalem Solution: One Sovereignty, Multiple Local Authorities (including for the Arab Neighbourhoods)", Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 20 February 2018. Elkin himself argues that roughly half of these areas' residents are not Jerusalem residents, and he claims that his plan therefore "would discard between 50 and 60,000 city residents. Bringing the ratio

back to 70:30, not 60:40 as it is today". Roei Aharoni, "The new Jerusalem", *Olam Katan*, 17 November 2017.

- 12 Crisis Group interview, Jewish Home activist, Tel Aviv, March 2018.
- 13 Leon said: "If you transfer territory from Jerusalem to an Arab municipal authority, tomorrow another American president or a different left-wing prime minister will say, 'seeing as you have given up on this territory, let's pass it to the Palestinian Authority.'" Uzi Baruch, "Moshe Leon to Arutz 7: 'Jerusalem Needs a Manager, Not a Politician'", *Arutz 7*, 8 August 2018
- 14 Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, November 2018. A knowledgeable former Israeli official ruled out Elkin's plan on account of its political and constitutional complexity, as well as the ill-fated precedents of such local authorities in Arab areas of Israel. Elkin's proposal for governing the new local authority with an appointed committee draws on a similar mechanism which Israel has long used in Arab localities across the country, but which – it more recently has conceded – has failed to secure local legitimacy. The interior ministry no longer appoints such governing committees, calling instead for independent elections. Elkin indeed failed to secure the broad political support for amending a Basic Law. Instead, the former official encouraged pursuing policy alternatives with an eye not only to demographics but to the lawlessness reigning there. The alternatives include keeping everything in limbo; handing the areas over to the PA unilaterally or as part of an agreement; Elkin's plan of establishing additional local authorities within the current municipal boundaries; retracing the barrier so that it correlates with municipal boundaries; redividing de facto service provision based on the barrier's route (the Israeli army on the barrier's West Bank side and the municipality to its east); forming an accompanying security mechanism for municipal employees and subcontractors working on the eastern side of the barrier while granting the municipality a major budget increase for service provision to all residents of these areas (with and without Jerusalem residency permits); and establishing for these areas a new Israeli administrative unit that would renew old buildings, invest in job training for Jerusalem ID holders and expel inhabitants who do not carry a Jerusalem ID. See Koren, "The Arab Neighbourhoods", op. cit. But given the huge inequality in resources allocated to Palestinian areas compared to Jewish ones, it is highly unlikely that politicians will carry out any plan that relies on budgetary increases for Palestinians, who for the most part do not vote.
- 15 The government announcement issued on the day the cabinet took Decision 3790 framed it as one of five decisions pertaining to the "strengthening of Jerusalem". The four other decisions were: allocating 350 million shekels [\$99.9 million], with an emphasis on the "Old City Basin", for the "restoration and preservation of infrastructure, public spaces and sites of historical, cultural and archaeological importance in the city and around it"; a national plan for "revealing ancient Jerusalem ... with ongoing, constant governmental activity to heighten and emphasize the city's role as King David's capital and the modern capital of Israel"; advancing a tourist cable car for the historical core of Jerusalem; and encouraging cinema studies in Jerusalem. Announcement of the Cabinet Secretary at the end of the government meeting of 13 May 2018, Prime Minister's Office, 13 May 2018 (Hebrew).
- 16 Government decision 3790, "Narrowing Socio-Economic Gaps and Economic Development in East Jerusalem", 13 May 2018 (Hebrew).
- 17 Crisis Group interview, Likud Central Committee member close to Likud ministers, Jerusalem, January 2019. So far, Israel's policies have been limited to drawing East Jerusalemites into Israel's economy, not its polity through the extension of citizenship. Interior Ministry officials claim change is imminent, and that wait times for citizenship will be dramatically reduced from an average of six years to one. "Israel vows to drastically cut wait time for Jerusalem Palestinians' citizenship applications", *Haaretz*, 26 February 2019.
- 18 An Israeli official supportive of the five-year plan said: "We are fully aware of the wide gaps. You can't fix the omissions of 50 years in five. But we have to start somewhere". Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, March 2019. He gave a few striking examples based on government data: Arab per capita

- income stands at 40 per cent of that of Jews. Some 79 per cent of Arab families are poor compared to 23 per cent among Jews. An estimated 68 per cent of Arab pupils do not obtain a high-school diploma compared to 30 per cent among Jews. There are roughly twenty times more playgrounds per 100 children in Jewish areas than in Arab ones.
- 19 "Will two billion shekels suffice for East Jerusalem?", *Globes*, 2 September 2018.
- 20 Crisis Group interview, municipal official, Jerusalem, November 2018. The official stated: "Sometimes, for example on sewage, the two logics did not clash. On other occasions, like education, they did. Once the fatwas forbidding Israeli curricula took hold, the Educational Administration of Jerusalem won the day when it insisted that Hebrew teaching would be provided informally within schools during the afternoons, even though Elkin pushed for full linkage between funding and acceptance of the Israeli curricula".
- 21 Crisis Group interview, former municipal councillor, Jerusalem, April 2019.
- 22 In the 2018 municipal elections in East Jerusalem, 1.6 per cent (3,500 of 213,000) of eligible voters, including settlers (Israel's statistics merge the two populations), exercised their right to vote. Crisis Group interview, Yair Assaf-Shapira and Omer Yaniv, researchers with the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 4 November 2018. This rate represents a continuation of a drop in Palestinian voter turnout in municipal elections. For Palestinian voter turnout rates since 1967, see Jonathan Blake et al, "What Might Happen if Palestinians Start Voting in Jerusalem Municipal Elections?", Rand Corporation, October 2018, p. 12. The reasons seem political rather than cultural: the minuscule participation rates contrast starkly with the whopping 84 per cent participation rate among Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel – which is much higher than the 55 per cent participation rate among Israeli Jews. "Israeli Arab municipal elections: more violence, but more women", *Haaretz*, 4 November 2018. The polls were misleading because they asked Palestinians about their general openness to electoral participation, a question that did not distinguish between, on one hand, electoral participation in occupied Jerusalem today, and, on the other, electoral participation in a future scenario in which East Jerusalem is not occupied.
- 23 Crisis Group Report, *Extreme Makeover? (III)*, op. cit.; Nazmi al-Jubeih, "Jerusalem: Fifty Years of Occupation", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 72 (Winter 2017), pp. 7-25.
- 24 Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, November 2018. A PLO official said the dangers of such excision outweigh the minor benefit it may yield in facilitating future Israeli concessions over the excised areas. He noted, however, that "in parts of the West Bank like Hebron, where the PA isn't popular, the population might opt for such a model because they would secure Israeli residency rights, with all the associated benefits, and a modicum of self-governance through institutions that collect their taxes and then invest them in the community". Crisis Group interview, Ramallah, December 2018.
- 25 "During the last year or so Netanyahu has been telling me he is concerned that separating ourselves from the Palestinians is becoming harder". Crisis Group interview, former senior Netanyahu adviser, Tel Aviv, November 2018.
- 26 Both currently and in a non-annexationist future, Israel's Palestinian minority represents 21 per cent of Israel's overall population (Israel counts Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem in the 21 per cent), which is roughly half the percentage of Palestinians in Jerusalem (40 per cent). "Elkin: Jerusalem – the demographic DNA", *News 2 - Hahadashot*, 3 September 2018. Population statistics for Israel and East Jerusalem: "Israel's population 8.972m on eve of 2019", *Globes*, 31 December 2018; "East Jerusalem", B'Tselem, 27 January 2019.
- 27 "Hotoveli Presents: The Gradual Plan – 'Annexation – Naturalization'", *Sovereignty*, no. 2 (January 2014), p. 4. A settler leader who supports annexation of the West Bank (which he referred to as Judea and Samaria) and naturalisation of all its inhabitants said he views such an eventuality positively because "Israel's interest is to grant all West Bankers permanent residency. It gives them the right to apply for citizenship. But how many have actually applied [for citizenship] in East Jerusalem? Judea and Samaria's Arabs would act the same". Crisis Group interview, Jerusalem, November 2018.