

2.2 AT-TUR

Jerusalem Center - Mt. Scopus – Mt. of Olives Zone

SURVEY OF PALESTINIAN NEIGHBORHOODS IN EAST JERUSALEM

ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

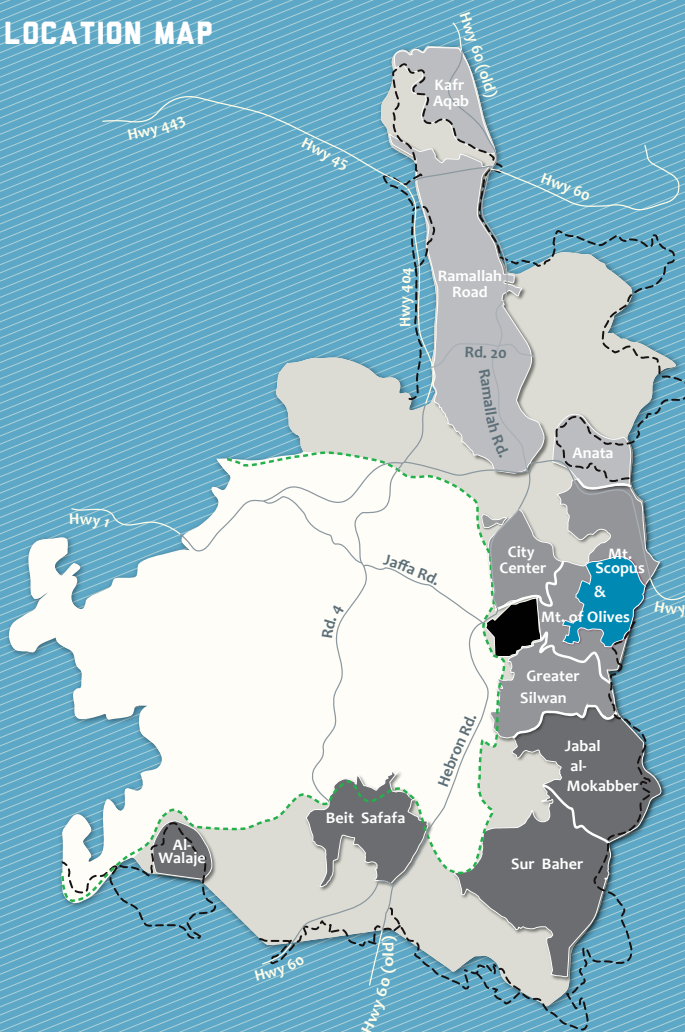
At-Tur is located in the central zone of East Jerusalem, on the slopes of Jabal az-Zaytoon (The Mount of Olives). The mountain, named for the olive groves that covered much of it in the past, is connected to Christian, Muslim, and Jewish traditions. The neighborhood itself borders on al-Isawiyyah lands to the north, as-Suwwanah to the west, and ash-Shayyah to the south. The eastern border of the neighborhood is demarcated by the Separation Barrier on its southern end and by the Jerusalem municipal boundary on its northern end.

The historical village of at-Tur, an Aramaic word meaning “the hill,” was built on the ruins of a Roman village named Beit Faji (House of Figs) and its founders came from the Hebron area and from villages on the East Bank of the Jordan River. Appearing as a “large village” in the Ottoman tax registries as far back as the 16th century, the village’s population almost tripled in size during the British Mandate period. The vast majority of the village is Muslim, with a small Christian minority that lives there, primarily because of the

religious history of the place and the many monasteries in the area. Most of the Christian residents live in the monasteries, with the exception of a few families and individuals who rent houses or live on church-owned property outside of the monasteries.

While the British considered at-Tur to be part of Jerusalem’s urban fabric, in the Jordanian period (1949-1967), the village was regarded as an affluent suburb of the city. Since 1967, when most of the built-up area of the village was included within the municipal boundary of Jerusalem, the village has experienced severe socio-economic decline and to this day the residents of at-Tur suffer from a poor quality of life. The sub-neighborhood of Khamlet al-Ein, and the vacant lands adjacent to it, are considered by the residents to be their primary land reserve for future development, but this part of at-Tur has yet to be recognized by the planning authorities.

LOCATION MAP



FACTS

Population 23,000
Area 1,747 dunam



MAP LEGEND

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| East Jerusalem | Old City |
| Expropriated Land | Green Line |
| Northern Zones | Separation Barrier |
| Central Zones | Roads |
| Southern Zones | West Jerusalem |

MAIN PROBLEMS IN AT-TUR

The Threat of Home Demolitions

The historical core of the neighborhood is very densely built and has almost no land reserves for residential construction. Moreover, the neighborhood is blocked from expansion on all sides – by neighboring Palestinian villages, main roads, the Separation Barrier, and the municipal boundary. Its only hope for expansion is to the northeast, where the unrecognized sub-neighborhood of Khamat al-Ein (see inset) is located, but a plan for a national park is currently being advanced there (see: The National Park). Additional housing clusters are considered illegal because they were built on areas not zoned for housing. The residents of at-Tur, primarily those in the unrecognized and unplanned areas, live under the constant threat of home demolitions and evacuation orders. A recent demolition, on a cold and rainy morning in December 2012, displaced 11 people, including 7 children, who were given less than an hour to pack their belongings.

Settlements

Beit Orot, the first Israeli settlement ever built in the heart of a Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem, is located on the western edge of at-Tur, on the border with as-Suwwanah. The land, most of which had been zoned for a Palestinian

girls' school, was purchased in the early 90s by the American-Jewish multimillionaire Irwin Moskowitz. Two residential buildings on the site were converted for the settlement's use, and a yeshiva was opened. In addition, a number of caravans for yeshiva students and their families were put up on a vacant area zoned as public open space, in close proximity to the neighborhood soccer field. Beit Orot and the Elad settler organization are currently building four new residential structures (totaling 24 housing units) on part of the site designated for housing in the outline plan for as-Suwwanah. Meanwhile, an alternative site was found for the school on land zoned as a nature reserve, in central at-Tur (see expansion), and a stipulation was added to the plan for the yeshiva that if a building permit is granted for building a new yeshiva compound, the municipality must also grant one for the school. In June 2012, the Beit Orot organization submitted a building-permit request for the construction of a new institutional building on the site, and it remains to be seen whether a permit for the school will be granted along with it.

The smaller settlement of Beit Ha-Hoshen was established in 2006, in the southwestern part of the neighborhood, next to the Seven Arches Hotel and the lookout over the Old City. Its approximately 30 settlers live in two adjacent structures that boast a giant

Israeli flag. A Palestinian family continued to live on the ground floor of one of the buildings until November 2012, when they were forcefully evacuated.

The National Park

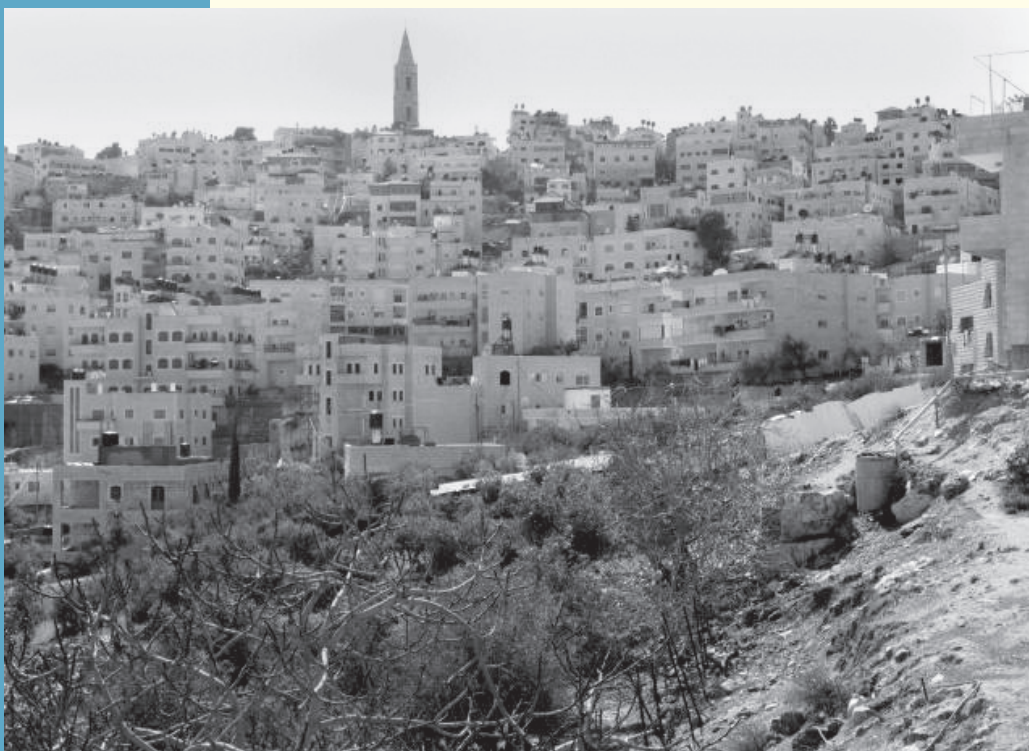
Since 2005, the Israel National Parks Authority, the Jerusalem Development Authority, and the Jerusalem Municipality, have been advancing a plan for a national park on the eastern slopes of Mount Scopus, on 750 dunam stretching from at-Tur in the south to al-Isawiyyah in the north, blocking the expansion of both neighborhoods. The plan for the so-called Mount Scopus Slopes National Park was approved in both the local and district planning committees and was deposited for public review in November 2011. However, following a petition by the residents about the fact that the plan was not translated into Arabic, proceedings were frozen until the court's decision to reject the petition was received in December 2012. Residents from both neighborhoods have submitted objections to the plan and have also appealed to the Supreme Court. Decisions are pending (2013).

The Nature Reserve

In Outline Plan # 2733 for central at-Tur (approved in the late 1980s), a large part of the vacant area in the center of the neighborhood was zoned as a nature reserve. Over the years, houses were built on this area and two detail plans were approved, reducing its size. One of these plans designated a plot for the building of a school, as part of the land swap with the Beit Orot Yeshiva (see: Settlements). Today, the area of the nature reserve is almost entirely built up.

Infrastructure and Services

As a direct result of the terrible situation of the roads in the neighborhood, infrastructure and public services are also severely lacking. Drainage and sewerage are particularly inadequate; entire areas of at-Tur are not connected to the municipal sewer system and the residents have to dig and maintain private cesspits. The steep topography causes seasonal flooding, forcing some of the residents to leave their houses for short periods during the winter. In addition, the street lighting is not properly maintained, and on some of the streets it is nonexistent. There is no public



Village Center (photo Bimkom)

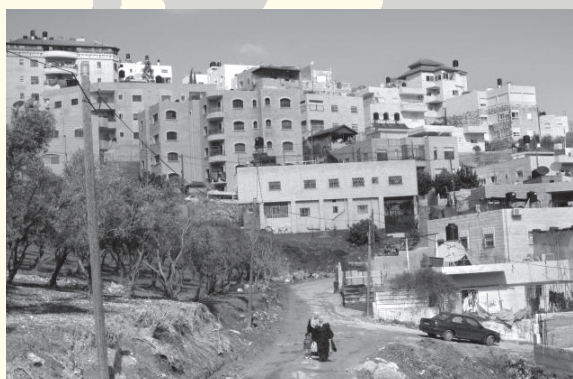
transportation in most parts of the neighborhood, there are hardly any sidewalks, and parking is also very problematic.

The Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan

In the Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan, which awaits deposition for public review, an addition of housing units is proposed for at-Tur through the densification of the built-up fabric as well as the inclusion of an area for future expansion. This area, which is already partially built up, is smaller than the area designated in the residents' plan (see inset). Meanwhile, plans for a national park are eating away at the expansion area (see: The National Park). In the areas designated for densification, construction of up to four storeys is allowed in the west and south of the neighborhood (in the Visual Basin of the Old City) and of up to six storeys in the east of the neighborhood. However, this construction is subject to a limit of no more than two additional storeys on existing structures. Moreover, since large parts of the neighborhoods are already built to four storeys, the proposed densification in fact provides only a negligible number of new housing units.

THE RESIDENTS' PLAN FOR KHALLET AL-EIN

Since 2006, the residents of at-Tur, and in particular owners of land in the sub-neighborhood of Khamlet al-Ein, have been working, with the assistance of the community center, to advance a new plan for part of their neighborhood (about 800 dunam in the northeastern part of at-Tur, located within the Jerusalem municipal boundary). The residents hired the services of an architect and began the arduous journey to achieve the recognition of the Israeli authorities and to change the zoning. Part of the area is unplanned, part is designated as open public space, and a small part is designated as scenic area. The residents' plan proposes to expand the areas allowed for development in at-Tur towards the northeast, and to designate the vacant areas owned by residents of the neighborhood for the creation of additional residential areas, neighborhood parks, access roads, and, above all, areas for public structures. Another goal of the plan is the retroactive legalization of houses built without permits, which are under threat of demolition orders. The plan was made with the encouragement of and in coordination with the Jerusalem Municipality, but now it is being threatened by the plan for a national park on the eastern slopes of Mount Scopus, which eats away at the available areas and leaves no land reserves beyond the already built-up areas. The residents decided to take matters into their own hands and to bypass the Jerusalem Municipality – as permitted by law – by presenting their plan directly to the District Planning Committee. The committee, in turn, will have to decide between two plans being advanced on the same area – the one by the National Parks Authority and the other by the residents.



Vacant Plots (photos Bimkom)

APPROVED PLANS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Part of Outline Plan # 3085 for at-Tur and ash-Shayyah | 619.0 dunam |
| Outline Plan #2733 for central at-Tur | 309.2 dunam |
| Part of Outline Plan # 3092 for at-Tur and as-Suwwanah | 69.0 dunam |
| Part of Local Outline Plan # 9 for the Visual Basin of the Old City | 292.6 dunam |
| Parts of Plans (4752, 14049) for the Mount Scopus Tunnel Road | 110.2 dunam |
| Total planned area | 1,400.0 dunam |
| Unplanned area, including area outside of Jerusalem | 347.0 dunam |
| Total area of neighborhood | 1,747.0 dunam |

In addition, some 10 detail plans were also approved, with no added area for the neighborhood.

ZONING STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO APPROVED PLANS ▪ DESIGNATION VS. USE

| Designation | Plans | | Land Use |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|--|
| | dunam | % | |
| Residential* | 446 | 25 | The residential zoning only partially corresponds with the existing residential areas. Entire residential areas in the neighborhood are located on differently zoned land (open scenic area, open public area, nature reserve, public buildings). Even in the built-up areas that are zoned as residential, building rights, which were defined as rural-type, are not sufficient. A large housing project in the south of the neighborhood was established on church-owned land, adjacent to the border with ash-Shayyah. This construction was enabled by changing the zoning from “institutional” to “religious structures and public institutions.” |
| Open Spaces | 508 | 29 | The approved plans in the neighborhood designate open spaces on all sides of the neighborhood except to the west. To the northeast, on the areas of the unrecognized sub-neighborhood of Khallet al-Ein, part of the land is zoned as public open space. The residents have been working on a plan to change this zoning to residential (see inset), but in the meantime, plans for a national park in the vicinity may thwart these intentions (see: The National Park). To the east, there is a strip of land zoned as open scenic area, which also contains many houses. The open areas to the south are zoned as institutional open space; these areas are church owned and are not accessible to the residents of the neighborhood. Within the neighborhood, there is a soccer field on land zoned for that purpose, and there is not a single plot designated for a neighborhood playground. |
| Roads | 208 | 12 | The roads appearing on the plans only very partially correspond with the existing roads. As a result of this disparity, most of the planned roads have not been developed and are not expected to be developed in the future. Meanwhile, the state of the roads that are in daily use by the residents is very bad: practically no sidewalks, inadequate maintenance, and insufficient deployment – with some residential areas, such as Khallet al-Ein, having no access road whatsoever (see inset). |
| Public Buildings and Institutions | 205 | 12 | The neighborhood has about 20 plots designated for public structures and institutions. Half of them were never developed. Out of these, two are zoned for municipal schools. The rest of the available plots are small and more suitable for kindergartens. At least one kindergarten and one elementary school operate out of rented houses in the neighborhood. Out of the plots that are developed, three contain municipal schools (including one high school) that serve the neighborhood, and one houses the neighborhood mosque. Another plot is located in the area of the Beit Orot settlement (see: Settlements). The rest of the plots serve city-wide institutions, including two Palestinian hospitals, churches, a special-education school, and a nursing school. The second-largest plot contains a cluster of residential structures. |
| Other | 380 | 22 | Includes area for hotelerie, an area for a cemetery, unplanned area within the Jerusalem municipal border (284 dunam) and area outside of the municipal border (63 dunam). |
| Total | 1,747 | 100 | |

* The most common residential zoning type in at-Tur allows for a 50% building ratio, with sparse construction of up to two storeys. In the village core, higher building rights are allowed (between 80% and 90%, with up to four storeys). Some areas have an additional stipulation of a minimal plot-size of 500 m2, and the submission of a detail plan for every plot of more than three dunam.