

Mt. Scopus Slopes National Park

Urgent: as of May 15th 2014, the National Planning Bureau has granted 60 days for the sides to reach an agreement.

Background: In 2004, the residents of Al-Isawiyyah, together with "Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights," began preparing a new outline plan for their neighborhood. The aim of the plan was to enable development, halt home demolitions and ensure a better future for the residents. A few months later, the residents of At-Tur also began drafting a plan for their neighborhood.

As a response to these two plans, the National Parks Authority (NPA) began planning a national park on the land between the two above mentioned neighborhoods. During the many ensuing coordination meetings, between the planners of the new plan for Al-Isawiyyah and the NPA planners, it was clearly stated that the objective of the national park was to curb the expansion of these neighborhoods to the adjacent open spaces. As time went on, this argument dissipated and other justifications were presented.

Al-Isawiyyah and at-Tur do not have alternative areas for growth. They are both surrounded by impassable urban elements (highways, university campus, church compounds, Jewish-Israeli neighborhoods, and others). In addition, the urban fabric of the two neighborhoods is quite dense and their **infrastructure is meager and inadequate**.

An Unjust National Park: The "Bimkom" team identified the valley to the south of al-Isawiyyah as worthy landscape. As a result, a landscape analysis was conducted. According to its findings, the southern valley was included in the neighborhood plan as an open-private area for the use of agriculture, leisure and tourism. Construction was to be limited to the slopes overlooking the valley. As the years progressed, the NPA labored to infuse the national park with meaning: Archeology was enlisted, as were the stories of the prophets and Sciences such as Botany and Zoology - all these to justify the declaration of a national park in the heart of the built up area of East Jerusalem.

Facts and Figures about Al-Isawiyyah:

- As of 2010, the population of al-Isawiyyah stood at 14,500 people. Population growth towards the year 2020 is estimated to reach 18,000 people.
- In 2020, a total of 3,700 housing units will be necessary (according to 5 people per unit). Currently, there are 2,000 housing units in al-Isawiyyah even though the existing approved plan allots for only 1,700 units. Within the built fabric it is possible to add approximately 500 units.
- In order to enable the proper development of al-Isawiyyah and respond to the housing and public needs, the area of the neighborhood must be expanded:
 - For housing alone, another 325 Dunams (32.5 Hectares) are needed.
 - For public institutions, some 150 Dunams (1.5 Hectares) are needed.
 - For open public spaces, some 50 Dunams (.5 Hectares) are needed.
 - For new roads, some 150 Dunams (1.5 Hectares) are needed.

The total area of the necessary neighborhood plan:

Already Planned (670 D or 67 H) + Required Increase (675 D or 67.5 H) = 1,350 D or 135 H

- The original overlap between the new plan for al-Isawiyyah and the plan for the national park: 123 dunams (~12 H). A compromise was reached, leaving most of the contested area available for development of the neighborhood, but the current plan for the national park does not leave al-Isawiyyah with even one dunam of this area.
- The pending Jerusalem 2000 Outline Plan marked a 230 D (23 H) expansion area for al-Isawiyyah. The plan for the national park leaves only 135 D (13.5 H) of the original expansion area, all of which are already built-up, and contradicts the Jerusalem 2000 plan. Usually, plans that contradict the Jerusalem 2000 plan are turned down.