

The E1 Development Plans: Meaning and Implications

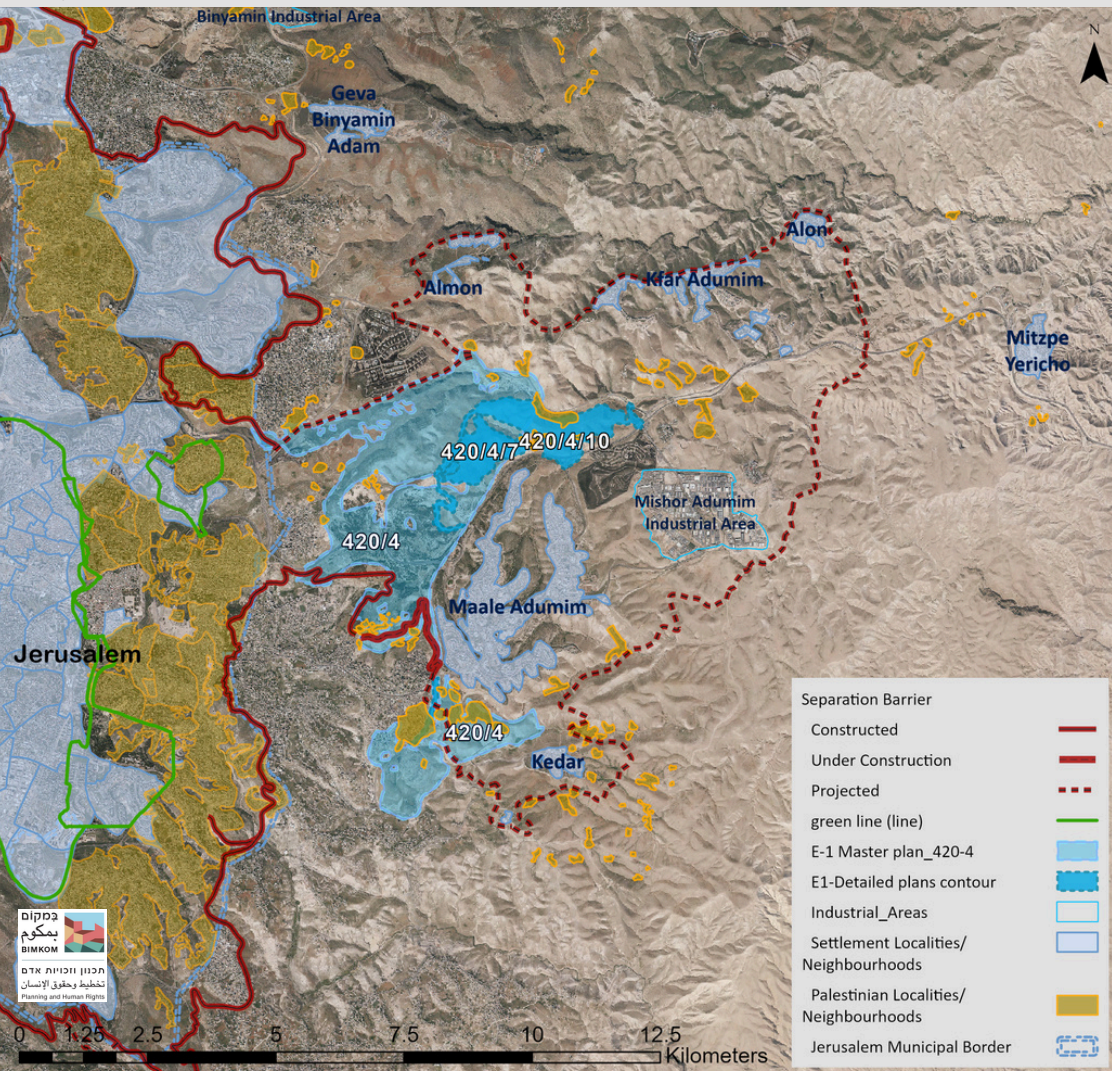
Background

Upon occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the Israeli government immediately annexed parts of it to Jerusalem. Israel's ambition to expand the capital city further east, however, was limited by concerns over international criticism and a reluctance to incorporate dense Palestinian centers into Jerusalem. Instead, the government expropriated extensive lands east of the annexation line. This area became the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, constructed in the 1970's.

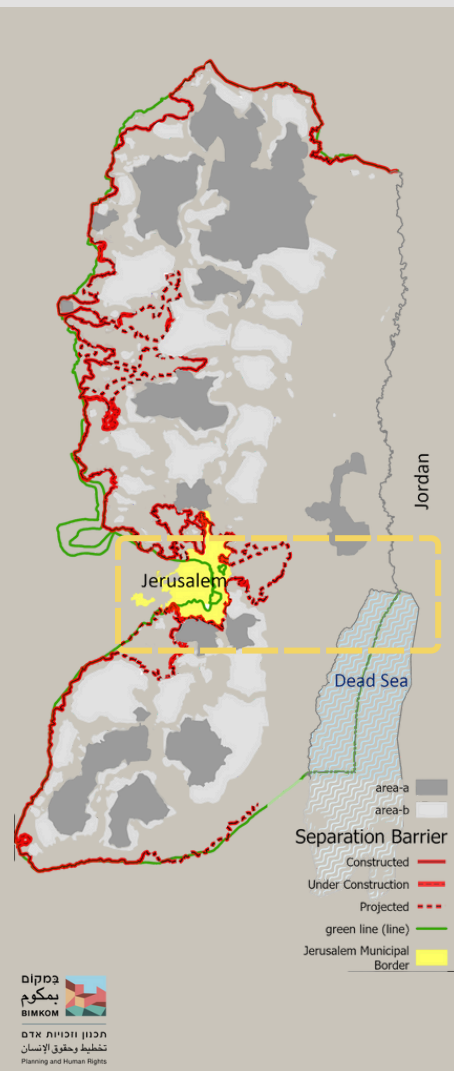
The area known as E1 is located between the built-up area of Ma'ale Adumim and the annexation boundary of Jerusalem. These lands were not expropriated; instead, they were declared as state lands in the 1980s. The plans that have now been approved — Detailed Plan No.420/4/7

and Detailed Plan No. 420/4/10 — specify two of the designated residential complexes from the 1999 masterplan for E1 (Plan no. 420). Together, these plans include more than 2,100 dunams, on which approximately 3,400 housing units are planned north of Route 1. Essentially, they establish an entirely new settlement, which is separate from, rather than integral to Ma'ale Adumim. The plans were initially prepared in 2005, approved for deposit in 2012, deposited for objections in 2020 and, due to their dramatic impact on the region's geopolitics, have only now been approved for final validation, in 2025. The plans have not yet been publicly validated.

Jerusalem-Ma'ale Adumim Area View



E1 and the West Bank



Implications of the E1 plans on local Palestinian communities

Transfer of protected residents

For decades the Jerusalem periphery, where E1 lies, has been home to a diverse Palestinian population, including residents of the villages in the region, as well as Bedouin Palestinian communities expelled from the Negev during the 1948 war. In total, thousands of Palestinians live in the area, and are expected to be adversely impacted by the planned development.

Forcible displacement: Within the areas of the recently approved detailed plans live hundreds of Bedouin Palestinians, whose existence the plans completely ignore. These communities include Bir al-Maskoob, Wadi Sneysal and Qasarat. Israel does not recognize their presence or their land rights, and they are expected to be forcibly displaced from the area, as occurred during the construction of Ma'ale Adumim.

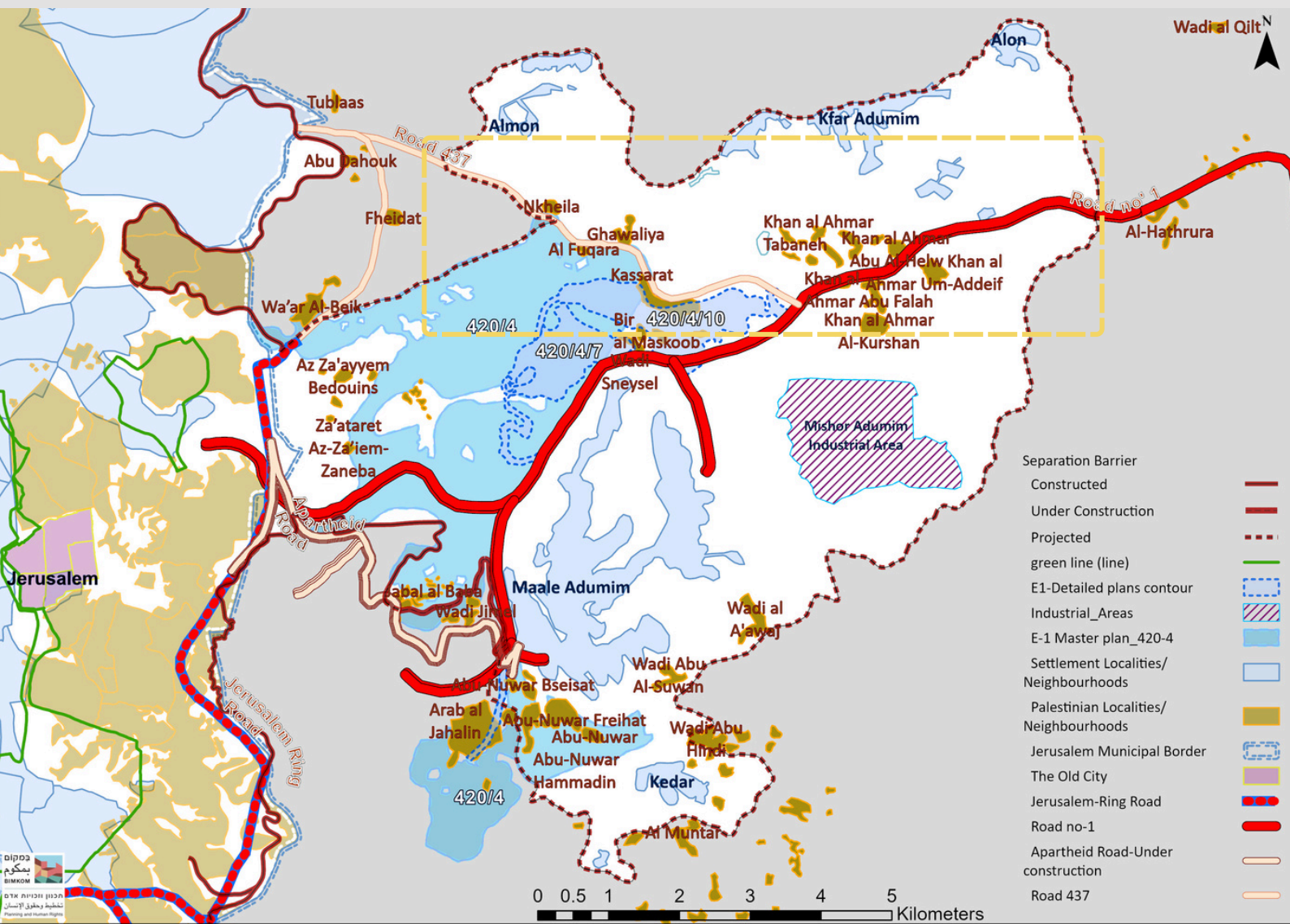
Denial of access to privately owned land: Within the E1 area, approximately 775 dunams of privately-owned Palestinian lands are trapped. Due to their ongoing agricultural use, these lands could not have been declared state lands and therefore were not included in

the plans. The spatial reality created by the plans, however, casts significant doubt over the ability of Palestinian landowners to access these enclaves and continue cultivating them.

Completion of the separation barrier: development of E1 will almost certainly lead to the completion of the separation barrier planned to encircle the Ma'ale Adumim area and all the small settlements around it. The construction of the barrier will enclose a vast area of approximately 64,000 dunams, from which all Palestinian communities, including thousands of individuals, will be forcibly transferred, creating a zone completely free of Palestinian presence. These include the communities of Abu-Nuwar, Jabel al-Baba, Zaneba - Za'ataret Az-Za'ayem, Wadi Jimel, Khan al-Ahmar (multiple communities), Nkheila, Ghawaliya, Al Muntal, Wadi Abu-Hindi, Wadi Abu-al-Suwan, and Wadi al-A'awaj.

More apartheid roads: A complementary measure to cleanse the area of Palestinians is the planned closure of roads to Palestinian traffic, turning them into apartheid roads for Israelis only.

Communities and Plans in E1



Outposts threatening communities along roads no.1 and no.437

Recently, settlers are setting up outposts along Road no.1 (Jerusalem-Jericho) and Road no.437, which connects to Road 60 (Jerusalem-Ramallah). This route provides the main connection for Palestinian movement between the central part of the West Bank and its southern part.

In the long-term, the development of more settlements, as well as a separated road system, is aimed at turning the E1 area into a “Jewish only” space. Yet settlers are already working to expel the area’s communities by setting outposts, out of which they control Palestinian movement and discharge violent attacks. As Israeli security forces continue to back these violent attacks, these communities are likely to flee sooner or later, as has already been the case in many other communities.

The outposts are usually established on declared state-land, but they allow control over much of their surroundings, including privately owned land, rendering the distinction irrelevant. They are strategically located, overlooking the communities and prying into their daily lives. Settlers use surveillance and harassment to create fear among the communities, preventing their movement, herding and other daily activities. They also violently raid the communities, attacking the residents and destroying their properties, food and possessions.

As a result, residents completely refrain from grazing with the herds, having to feed them expensive fodder; women do not exit the community on their own, and are therefore barred from many daily activities; women and children remain inside as much as possible; and the means of subsistence are increasingly diminishing.

Communities and Outposts along roads 1 and 437



The E1 communities

These communities are part of the Jahalin and Ka'abneh-Furijat tribes, who were expelled from the Naqab during the 1948 war. They settled in the area due to the available land for settlement and grazing as well as available water sources, moving across the area between Nabi Mussa in the south and Wadi Qilt in the north for herding purposes. However, seasonal mobility has been severely constrained by Israel’s military and environmental restrictions, settlement building and other physical and administrative limitations.

Implications of the E1 plans on Palestinian communities at large

Restricting movement and strengthening the separation regime

Simultaneously, construction of an apartheid road is being promoted using military requisition orders. This road complements the settlement plans by facilitating separation between the movement of Israeli settlers and Palestinians, allowing the former to travel quickly and comfortably, while the latter will be forced to navigate difficult roads and additional checkpoints. Blocking Palestinian access to Route 1, the main road connecting Jerusalem and the Jericho area, and severing many regional roads, will significantly restrict the freedom of movement for Palestinian communities throughout the area. Channeling Palestinian traffic to separate roads will also make it easier for Israel to block them at any time it deems fit.

Hence, the construction of the road is not about genuinely connecting different parts of the West Bank, but rather cementing the isolation and fragmentation among Palestinians. This move strengthens the separation regime between Israelis and Palestinians and deepens Israel's apartheid governance in the West Bank.

Weaponizing urban planning

The plans do not present any clear planning rationale. They are not aimed at improving living conditions or providing decent living environments for all residents. Instead, they are dictated by geopolitical considerations that contradict every principle of sustainable urban development.

Eliminating the Palestinian state possibility

Due to its location, the establishment of Ma'ale Adumim and current approval of E1 plans severely undermine the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state with a logical and reasonable territorial continuity. Ma'ale Adumim is located at the narrowest part of the West Bank, where only some 28 kilometers separate the Green Line from the Jordanian border. The connection between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adumim through E1 creates physical, urban, and functional fragmentation between the northern and southern West Bank. The steep topography of the area further exacerbates fragmentation of the area.

The planned apartheid road, intended to allow Palestinian passage between the northern and southern West Bank, does not and cannot serve as a substitute for the territorial continuity necessary for creating a Palestinian state.

Isolation of Palestinians in East Jerusalem from the West Bank

Another essential condition for the establishment of a Palestinian state is the ability to establish its capital in Jerusalem. The development of E1 will completely encircle East Jerusalem by Jewish neighborhoods/settlements from the north, east, and south, separating it from the rest of the West Bank. While this process has been ongoing for decades, it was significantly accelerated by construction of the separation barrier around the city, which will now be completed.

Advocacy: Make a sovereign Palestinian state a tangible possibility

Advocate with COGAT and Israel's Foreign Ministry to immediately halt E1 development and all related works. Minister Smotrich clearly stated that final approval of E1 was in response to the growing international recognition of a Palestinian state, aimed at eliminating the possibility of a negotiated, just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Halting E1 will provide a tangible, on the ground expression of the declaration of recognition, necessary for the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state.

As a matter of urgency, the communities must be protected by pressuring Israel to stop settler violence, prosecute all perpetrators, and dismantle all outposts.