



Acceleration of New Settlements in East Jerusalem and their Ramifications

March 2024

Measures are being taken to establish eight brand-new settlements in East Jerusalem with 11 zoning plans and a total of 12,032 housing units. Two of these settlements include multiple plans. Six of the 11 plans have advanced since October 7, two of which were approved (Givat Shaked I and Lower Aqueduct). Since the start of the war, there has been an acceleration in the promotion and fast-tracking of settlement plans. The Israeli government is clearly exploiting the war while attention is diverted to Gaza to create more facts on the ground to predetermine the final status of Jerusalem and thwart all prospects for a negotiated two-state framework with two capitals in the city. *Details and status of each of the plans can be found below the analysis section.*

Number on Map	Name of new Settlement	No. of Plans	No. of Housing Units	GC*	SOLT**	Promoted during the War	Promoted during 2023
1	Givat Shaked	2	1115	yes	yes	yes	yes
2	Givat Hamatos	3	7310		yes	1 plan under construction	2 of the plans - yes
3	Har Homa E	1	540				
4	Lower Aqueduct	1	1,483			yes	yes
5	Nofey Rachel	1	650	yes	yes		File opened in July 2023
6	Umm Lysoon	1	450	yes	yes	yes	yes
7	Nof Zahav	1	100		yes		yes
8	Kidmat Zion	1	384	yes		yes	yes
Total		11	12,032				

* GC – General Custodian

** SOLT – Settlement of land title

Analysis of the Settlement Developments & their Ramifications on the Political Future of Jerusalem

- Many of the plans are strategically designated for areas along the southern perimeter of East Jerusalem. If constructed, they would further fracture the Palestinian space while increasing contiguity with the existing settlements in the area and create a “sealing-off” effect of East Jerusalem from Bethlehem and the southern West Bank. Such moves directly undermine conditions necessary for a viable independent Palestinian state with a contiguous capital in East Jerusalem.
- Nearly all new settlement plans are being advanced in lockstep with formal land registration procedures, known as settlement of land title (SOLT). [As documented by Bimkom and Ir Amim](#), SOLT is being utilized to expand and finalize state/settler appropriation of land across East

Jerusalem for the establishment of new settlements, while increasing the threat of Palestinian dispossession.

- A significant new trend on the rise is the initiation of settlement plans by the Israeli General Custodian -- a department within the Ministry of Justice responsible for managing alleged pre-1948 Jewish assets in East Jerusalem until "reclaimed." While the Custodian has become most associated with the facilitation of forced evictions of Palestinians and settler takeovers of their homes (i.e. in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan) through handing property rights to settler groups, more recently, in an unprecedented move, it has begun to initiate settlement plans on lands it administers. These include so far Givat Shaked, Kidmat Zion, Nofey Rachel, and Umm Lysoon.
- Most of the aforementioned settlement plans are designated for lands either inside existing Palestinian neighborhoods or directly flanking them. Not only is this liable to generate friction within these areas, but it also highlights the depth and breadth of housing and planning discrimination in Jerusalem. Rather than utilizing these plans to rectify the dire housing crisis among the Palestinian population, the authorities deplete the remaining vacant land in and around Palestinian areas for Israeli settlement. This in turn contributes to deepening the housing deprivation and constricting the existing Palestinian neighborhoods, which blocks their necessary expansion to accommodate for population growth.
- In contrast to its robust residential development for Israelis across the city, the Israeli government continues to abdicate responsibility for providing housing opportunities to Palestinians despite them constituting nearly 40% of Jerusalem's population. This plays out in the form of systematically neglecting to advance and/or approve zoning plans for Palestinians while selectively imposing home demolitions on the population. Since 1967, not one new neighborhood has been constructed for Palestinians, while existing neighborhoods face major building restrictions. Such policies ultimately lead to an exponential rate of unpermitted building and eventual home demolitions, which serves as a major impediment for Palestinians to remain in the city and ultimately becomes a mechanism of forced displacement.
- Since the start of the war, there has been a dramatic spike in home demolitions in East Jerusalem, impacting and displacing dozens of Palestinian families. **Since October 7, there have been 133 demolitions, 97 of which were homes. This marks a nearly 70% monthly increase in demolitions compared to the months preceding the war.**
- Such systematic neglect coupled with the threat of home demolitions deprives Palestinians of the basic right to housing and shelter, while eroding any prospect for an agreed and just political resolution on Jerusalem.
- In parallel to efforts to re-chart a path towards a negotiated solution, it is critical to also address the here and the now - the current one-state reality of unequal rights in East Jerusalem that is a direct result of Israeli policies and practices on the ground. As the occupying power, the Israeli government bears the responsibility to afford East Jerusalem residents with the most fundamental rights while refraining from measures that undermine these rights and unilaterally determine the political future of the city. In the immediate term, this must be in the form of holding Israel accountable to stop settlement building, end all processes of Palestinian displacement, and afford Palestinians with the basic right to shelter through promoting housing opportunities and residential development.
- While several countries, including the US, have recently moved to impose sanctions on settlers who have perpetrated violence or forced Palestinians from their lands in the West Bank, it is

critical to underscore that a greater magnitude of violence and displacement of Palestinians in East Jerusalem is carried out by Israeli bodies and government officials. One of the most severe expressions of this is the policy of demolitions, which constitutes a form of state violence and increasingly serves as a tool of Palestinian displacement under the guise of building regulation enforcement. Such a practice is not only a violation of International Law with severe humanitarian consequences but also breeds more enmity, radicalization, and violence among the population. The unwavering support, international protection, and military aid which the current Israeli government continues to enjoy while defying international demands to cease measures, like home demolitions, not only undermine Israel's national security interests, but ultimately endanger global security, and further erode the prospect of peace, stability, and a just political resolution.

Details & Status of Settlement Plans

1. Givat Hamatos – 7310 HU (SOLT)

Once a longstanding international redline (along with E1) due to its lethal impact on the prospects of a two-state framework with two capitals in Jerusalem, **Givat Hamatos is slated to become the first new settlement built beyond the Green Line in Jerusalem in over two decades.**

- **Givat Hamatos A:** the plan for 2610 housing units was approved in 2012 but had remained frozen until 2020 due to US and international opposition. Following the Trump Administration's release of its "Middle East Peace Plan" in early 2020, Netanyahu quickly moved to announce the promotion of tenders for 1257 of these housing units as part of his re-election campaign at the time. The tenders were officially open for bidding in November 2020, and their winning bidders announced on January 20, 2021, just hours before the inauguration of US President Biden. Over the course of the past few years, archeological surveying and infrastructure works have been carried out in lead-up to the construction of housing units.

Current Status: In July 2023, several building permits were approved for laying the foundation for the apartment buildings, while numerous building permit applications were filed for the construction of the residential units themselves. Construction is currently underway and will continue. [See our alert](#) for further details.

- **Tzamarot Plan (Givat Hamatos A Housing Unit Increase):** this plan calls for increasing the building capacity in Givat Hamatos A by adding an additional 1200 housing units via densification and building height increase. If the plan is approved, it will effectively enlarge the total number of housing units allocated for Givat Hamatos A from 2610 to 3810 housing units. [See our alert](#) for further details.

Current Status: The District Planning Committee (DPC) was scheduled to discuss the plan for deposit for objections on March 4, 2024, but the discussion was postponed.

- **New Talpiyot/Hebron Road Strip** (formerly known as Givat Hamatos D): The plan calls for 3500 housing units and 1300 hotel rooms on 140 dunams along the eastern slopes of Givat Hamatos. It will enlarge the planned settlement in Givat Hamatos by nearly 40% and extend

it eastwards towards the settlement of Har Homa, further consolidating Israeli geographical contiguity along the southern perimeter of East Jerusalem. For further details, [see our alert](#).

Current Status: The DPC approved the plan for deposit for objections with conditions on September 11, 2023.

2. Givat Shaked – 1115 HU (SOLT, GC)

- **Givat Shaked I:** the plan calls for the construction of 695 housing units on the northwestern slopes of Beit Safafa, including 4 high-rise towers. Similar to the settlement plans designated for the eastern edge of the neighborhood in Givat Hamatos, the plan for Givat Shaked is not intended for the community's development needs, but rather for a new Israeli housing project over the Green Line in Jerusalem. If realized, Givat Shaked will further exhaust the area's land reserves and envelop the neighborhood with built-up Jewish Israeli continuum, blocking any ability for its necessary expansion. Construction of this settlement will also stand in stark contrast to the existing neighborhood of Beit Safafa, dwarfing and engulfing it with high-rise apartment buildings – the likes of which Israeli authorities largely refuse to approve for Palestinian areas. For further details, [see our alert](#).

Current Status: The DPC rejected all objections and moved to approve the plan on January 4, 2024. The community is planning to appeal the decision to the courts.

- **Givat Shaked II:** this plan will expand Givat Shaked territorially and includes 420 additional housing units and high-rise towers.

Current Status: In November 2023, the DPC approved the suggestion that it itself formally promote this plan.

3. Har Homa E – 540 HU

This plan was advanced alongside promotion of the Givat Hamatos A tenders in 2020 after being frozen for years due to international pressure. **The plan was ultimately approved in May 2021, constituting the first settlement approval in East Jerusalem under the Biden Administration.** While portrayed as an extension of Har Homa, the plan is designated for land entirely detached from the existing settlement. This new settlement would be built just 400 meters from the area designated for the planned settlement of Givat Hamatos, further contributing to the emerging settlement wedge between East Jerusalem and the Bethlehem area.

Since the land is private, a tendering stage is not required, and its owners can directly request building permits. So far, no permit requests have been submitted, as far as we know. While the construction's timeline is more dependent on private developers, the government can still halt it. [See alert for further details.](#)

Current Status: Fully approved.

4. Lower Aqueduct - 1483 HU

The plan calls for the construction of a new settlement on roughly 186 dunams of land adjacent to the Palestinian neighborhood of Umm Tuba and sandwiched between the existing settlement of Har Homa and the planned settlement of Givat Hamatos. Straddling the green line, this plan carries serious ramifications for the political future of Jerusalem. If constructed, it will extend the Israeli settlement block along East Jerusalem's southern flank, further detaching it from the southern West Bank, while fracturing the Palestinian space and depleting more vacant land for Palestinian development. For further details, [see our alert](#).

Current Status: The plan was fully approved and published in the public record on December 29, 2023, constituting the first major new settlement plan to be approved in East Jerusalem in over a decade after Givat Hamatos in 2012.

5. Nofey Rachel - 650 HU (SOLT, GC)

The plan calls for the construction of a new settlement on 29 dunams of land situated along the southern slopes of the Palestinian neighborhood of Sur Baher-Umm Tuba, and its boundaries extend up against existing Palestinian homes. The plan directly borders the boundaries of the Lower Aqueduct plan, which will extend the Israeli territorial continuum in the area.

Current Status: The plan is in its preliminary stages, and no dates have yet to be published for hearings at the respective planning committees. For further details, [see our alert](#).

6. Umm Lysoon – 450 HU (SOLT, GC)

The plan calls for the construction of a new settlement on an area of 12.5 dunams in the middle of Umm Lysoon, a small Palestinian neighborhood tucked between two larger Palestinian neighborhoods of Sur Baher and Jabal Mukabber. As with other East Jerusalem neighborhoods, Umm Lysoon continues to suffer from a severe shortage in housing, public buildings, and basic infrastructure. Instead of promoting residential development to meet the community's needs, the plan is rather being advanced to establish a new Jewish settler enclave inside a Palestinian neighborhood. For further details, [see our alert](#).

Current Status: The DPC discussed the plan for deposit on February 12, 2024 (after taking it off the agenda twice). They decided to reconvene in 30 days after further checks are made on issues pertaining to traffic and road infrastructure.

7. Nof Zahav - 100 HU (SOLT)

The plan calls for a total of 100 housing units and 275 hotel rooms in the heart of Jabal Mukabber. While characterized as an expansion of the existing settlement of Nof Zion, it will be territorially disconnected and therefore constitutes another settlement in the Palestinian neighborhood.

Beyond its geopolitical impact, this is another example of the severe discrimination in urban planning and housing in East Jerusalem. Years ago, the land was expropriated and designated for so-called public use. Yet, despite the plot's location at the entrance to Jabal Mukabber, it is not intended for

the community's development needs, but rather for the establishment of a new Jewish settlement in the middle of a Palestinian neighborhood. For further details, [see our alert](#).

Current Status: The DPC approved the plan for deposit for objections in August 2023.

8. Kidmat Zion - 384 HU (GC)

The Kidmat Zion plan calls for a fortified, gated settler compound on 79 dunams of land in the heart of a Palestinian area known as Ras al-Amud/a-Sawahrah which is located along the eastern-most edge of East Jerusalem. It is slated for land directly adjacent to the Israeli side of the Separation Barrier and the West Bank town of Abu Dis on the Palestinian side of the barrier. Establishment of a settlement in this location will not only sever Palestinian spatial continuity, but also block access to some 20 Palestinian homes in the area.

The DPC approved this plan for deposit on October 9, just two days after October 7 when most government agencies were shuttered and the public at large sheltering at home. For further details, [see our alert](#).

Current Status: The DPC approved it for deposit for public review on October 9, 2023.

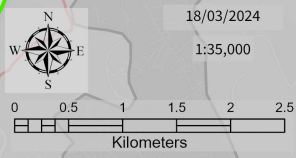
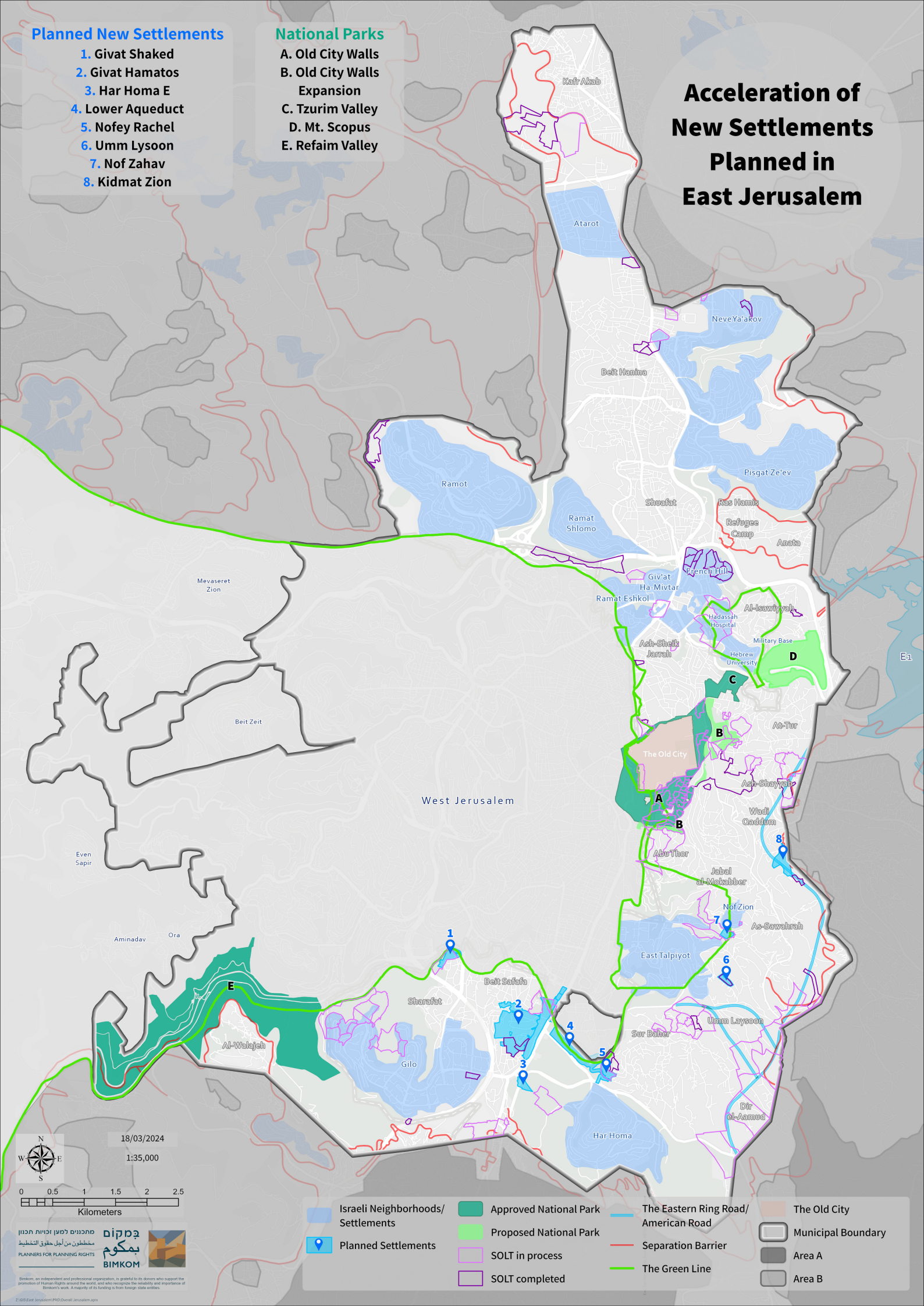
Planned New Settlements

1. Givat Shaked
2. Givat Hamatos
3. Har Homa E
4. Lower Aqueduct
5. Nofey Rachel
6. Umm Lysoon
7. Nof Zahav
8. Kidmat Zion

National Parks

- A. Old City Walls
- B. Old City Walls Expansion
- C. Tzurim Valley
- D. Mt. Scopus
- E. Refaim Valley

Acceleration of New Settlements Planned in East Jerusalem



מסמכים לסמן זכויות תכנון
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Israeli Neighborhoods/ Settlements	Approved National Park	The Eastern Ring Road/ American Road	The Old City
Planned Settlements	Proposed National Park	Separation Barrier	Municipal Boundary
SOLT in process	SOLT completed	The Green Line	Area A
			Area B