

East Jerusalem: Facts and Figures 2019

May 2019

The number of Palestinians who live in Jerusalem is **341,453** – **approximately 38% of the total population of the city.**¹

Approximately **140,000** residents of East Jerusalem live in neighborhoods of the city left outside the Separation Barrier. This figure includes approximately **80,000** residents in Shuafat refugee camp and three adjacent neighborhoods (Ras Khamis, Ras Shehadeh, and A-Salaam), as well as approximately **61,500** residents in Kafr 'Aqab, a neighborhood to the north of Qalandiya checkpoint.

Several thousand Palestinians live in various “enclaves” created by the Separation Barrier along the Jerusalem city limits. In some cases, the Barrier separates residents of Jerusalem from other parts of the city, as for example on the edge of the Jabal Mukabber neighborhood (in the area of Sheikh Sa’ad and Sawahreh). Elsewhere, the Barrier separates Palestinian residents of the West Bank from other parts of the West Bank, trapping them on the “Jerusalem” side of the Barrier, as for example in Wadi Humus.

Residents of East Jerusalem suffer from a lack of infrastructures and basic services. The situation in the neighborhoods beyond the Barrier and in the enclaves it creates is even worse, and is compounded by the difficulties involved in crossing the checkpoints.

Legal Status

The residents of East Jerusalem were given permanent resident status in Israel after the area was annexed to Israel in 1967. From 1967 through 2018, Israel revoked the residency status of **14,643** Palestinian residents of the city. In 2018, the Interior Ministry revoked the permanent residency of **13** Palestinians from East Jerusalem, including four women.

Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of residents of East Jerusalem requesting Israeli citizenship. In 2018, for example, **1,012 naturalization applications** were submitted, only **363** of which were approved during the same year. Residents who wish to obtain Israeli citizenship face a long wait before their applications are processed by the Population and Migration Authority office in Wadi Joz.

¹ Complete references for all data cited in the report are available in the [Hebrew version only here.](#)

Poverty and Welfare

The poverty rates in Jerusalem and in the Jerusalem District are the highest in Israel: **72%** of all Palestinian families in Jerusalem live below the poverty line, compared to **26%** of Jewish families. **The child poverty rate in East Jerusalem is twice the rate among Jewish children: 81%** of Palestinian children in the city live below the poverty line, compared to **38%** of Jewish children.

Approximately **8,474 children** in East Jerusalem are defined as children at risk.

Given the high poverty rate among residents of East Jerusalem, there is a particularly vital need for welfare services in the area. Despite this, there are only **six welfare offices** in the area, responsible for caring for **334,776 people**. By comparison, **19 welfare offices** serve the Israeli-Jewish population in the city, caring for **569,817 people**. The average number of clients at the welfare offices in East Jerusalem is **55,796**, compared to **29,900** in the west of the city.

Of staff positions for social workers in the city, **127.25** positions out of a total of **423.85** are allocated for East Jerusalem – approximately 30 percent. On average, a social worker in East Jerusalem cares for **290.72** residents, compared to **194.53** residents in the offices serving the Jewish population in the city.

Due to the pressure facing the welfare offices in East Jerusalem, as of January 2019 approximately **533 families** were waiting to for intake and care, compared to an average of **211 families** in other parts of the city.

Education

East Jerusalem is currently home to **127,198 Palestinian children** aged three to 18. However, only **108,598 students** are registered in the Arab education system in the city. Over **14%** of Palestinian children in East Jerusalem (approximately **18,600 children**) are not registered at any known educational institution and are not being monitored by the Ministry of Education.

32% of Palestinian students in East Jerusalem do not complete 16 years of education, compared to just **1.5%** of Jewish students in Jerusalem. The national average dropout rate from educational institutions is **0.9%**.

In the 2017-2018 school year, **170** schools belonging to the Arab education system operated in East Jerusalem. Of these, **65** are official schools, attended by 41.1% of students; **105** have “recognized but unofficial” status, and are attended by 43.2% of students. The remainder of students (15.7%) attended **79** private schools.

A total of 143 schools teach the Palestinian curriculum (*Tawjihi*).

There is a chronic shortage of classrooms in East Jerusalem. Of the total shortfall of classrooms in the city as a whole (approximately 3,800), over half – 1,983 classrooms – are lacking in the Arab education system.

Despite the grave shortage of classrooms, the pace of construction of new classrooms is slow and inadequate. Since a principled court ruling was granted in 2011 concerning the shortage of classrooms and the registration of students in East Jerusalem, **just 314 new classrooms have been completed**. The Jerusalem Municipality plans to construct no more than **834** classrooms for students in East Jerusalem through 2022.

The education system in East Jerusalem also suffers from a long-term shortage of professional personnel: Only about 30 of the total of **369.65** staff positions for educational psychologists allocated to Jerusalem are intended for schools in the east of the city.

Mother and Child Clinics

The Jerusalem Municipality operates **six Mother and Child clinics** in the Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem, compared to **25 clinics** in Jewish neighborhoods. The Red Crescent operates six Mother and Child Clinics on 'Uqbat al-Khaladiyah Street and at the Flowers Gate. The establishment of a Mother and Child Clinic in Shuafat refugee camp is due to be examined as part of the Ministry of Health's work plan for 2020. However, a single clinic cannot meet the needs of the residents in the camp. The congestion at the Mother and Child Clinic in the Kafr 'Aqab neighborhood, which is also situated beyond the Separation Barrier, is the highest of any of the clinics in the city.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Although there has been a significant increase in the development of plans for transportation in East Jerusalem, these are not sufficient to close gaps created over five decades. Many roads in East Jerusalem are still full of potholes and bumps, lack safety barriers and sidewalks, and are inadequate to cope with the volume of traffic.

In 2018 a five-year plan was approved for East Jerusalem, including the allocation of approximately NIS 500 million to improve transportation infrastructures in the area. In addition, the Ministry of Transport has launched a pilot project for the operation of public transportation lines connecting the east and west of the city, and has allocated NIS 10 million for this purpose. NIS 65 million has been allocated for the construction of the so-called "American Road," which will connect the northern and southern neighborhoods in the center of East Jerusalem.

In recent months, preparations have been made to introduce the use of the Rav-Kav smart card in East Jerusalem. However, a pilot project undertaken on several lines was not based on the format used throughout Israel, which allows for transfers between different lines and forms of public transportation and provides discounts and benefits.

In 2019, the construction of a wall along Road 437 from Ma'ale Adumim to Jerusalem was completed. The eight-meter high wall along a four-kilometer stretch of road separates Israeli and Palestinian drivers. The road was constructed in order to cut traffic pressure facing drivers

from the settlements in the Binyamin area, and has been given the nickname “the Apartheid Road.”

Planning, Construction, and Demolition

Housing congestion in the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem averages **six people per apartment** and **approximately 1.8 persons per room** – **almost twice** the congestion in the Jewish neighborhoods in the west of the city (3.2 persons per apartment and one person per room).

Only around **15%** of the area of East Jerusalem (and **8.5%** of the total area of Jerusalem) is zoned for residential purposes for Palestinian residents. The permitted building percentages for Palestinians in the city are particularly low. Only **2.6%** of the total land in East Jerusalem is zoned for public buildings for the Palestinian population in the city.

For over a decade, the local and district planning and authorities have failed to authorize a **single outline plan** in the Palestinian neighborhoods. Even plans initiated by the Jerusalem Municipality itself do not reach the approval stage.

Due to the planning failure, residents of East Jerusalem have virtually no chance of obtaining building permits. Accordingly, a large proportion of the construction in the area is undertaken without permits. In recent years there has been a sharp increase in the demolition of homes in East Jerusalem due to construction without permits: In 2017, **61 residential homes housing 155 people** were demolished; in 2018, **57 residential homes housing 144 people** were demolished; and through the end of April 2019, **45 residential homes housing 148 people** were demolished. From 2017 through the end of April 2019, **167 buildings not used for residential purposes** were also demolished in East Jerusalem, including warehouses and businesses. This rate of demolition is over twice as high as the annual average for the preceding decade.

Until 2016, the Israeli authorities refrained from demolishing homes in the neighborhoods beyond the Separation Barrier. In 2017 the Planning and Building Law was amended and budgets were allocated for actions by the National Enforcement Unit in Arab locales within the State of Israel. In 2018 the Unit began to conduct demolitions in the Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the Barrier, particularly in the neighborhoods that border on Shuafat refugee camp. These actions included the demolition of **four housing units in al-Walaja**, a village in the south of Jerusalem that was disconnected from the city by the Separation Barrier, and part of whose land lies within the city limits.

Israel is also continuing its policy of **punitive house demolitions**, whereby the army demolishes or seals the homes of people who conducted attacks and of those who assisted them. From July 2014 through April 2019, **six homes were demolished** in East Jerusalem as a **punitive measure**, and **five additional homes were fully or partly sealed**. During the same period, the army undertook surveying work in preparation for the punitive demolition of **18**

homes in Jerusalem, but to date orders have not been issued for their demolition. **Nine demolition of sealing orders were nullified**, seven following the submission of petitions to the Supreme Court.

Water and Sewage

The number of residents of East Jerusalem recorded with Hagihon, the municipal water and sewage corporation, is **151,900**. In other words, **44%** of the residents of East Jerusalem are connected to the water grid in an orderly and legal manner.

The problem of the lack of proper connections to the water and sewage grids has emerged due to the authorities' ongoing failure to plan the Palestinian neighborhoods in the city and to facilitate the development and expansion of infrastructures in line with population growth. This situation is particularly extreme in the neighborhoods adjacent to Shuafat refugee camp.

According to Hagihon, tens of thousands of people in the neighborhoods beyond the Barrier use water in an unregulated manner.

In 2017 Hagihon repaired **7,234 meters** of sewage lines in East Jerusalem and laid **6,555 meters** of new lines. In May 2018, Hagihon estimated that approximately 30 kilometers of new sewage lines are needed, in part in order to eliminate the use of cesspits.

Mail Services

In the Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, **eight post office branches and agencies** are in operation, compared to **33** in the Israeli neighborhoods.

In most of the Palestinian neighborhoods, mail is delivered to distribution centers (a single structure containing hundreds of post boxes). There are deficiencies in the delivery of mail to homes in Kafr 'Aqab and Shuafat refugee camp, as well as in the delivery of mail to distribution centers in Jabal Mukabber, Beit Safafa, Um Tuba and Um Lisan, Sharafat, and Silwan.

Following a petition submitted to the Supreme Court by ACRI in 2010, **names and house numbers were given** for the first time to **all roads** in East Jerusalem. Through the end of 2019, a plan will be implemented to provide additional post offices and distribution centers in the Palestinian neighborhoods in the city.

Detention and Indictment of Minors

77% of all minors arrested last year in Jerusalem were Palestinians. During 2018, **788** non-Jewish minors were arrested, the vast majority of whom were Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem; **29** of these were under the age of 14. During the same period, **235** Jewish minors were arrested, just **two** of whom were under the age of 14.

In 2018 indictments were served against **267** Palestinian minors in East Jerusalem, seven of whom were under the age of 14. By comparison, **98** indictments were served against Jewish minors in the city, just one of whom was under the age of 14.

78% of Jerusalem minors detained pending the completion of proceedings are Palestinians. In 2018, **168** Palestinian minors were detained pending the completion of proceedings, including four under the age of 14, compared to **45** Jewish minors, none of whom was under the age of 14.

Removal and Restriction Orders

Between 2016 and 2018, the Commander of the Home Front signed **17 restriction orders** concerning 15 Palestinian adults holding permanent residency status in East Jerusalem (in some cases the orders include more than one restriction). 13 orders imposed removal from all or part of Jerusalem; two ordered removal from areas in the Negev; seven prohibited individuals from contacting various others; two ordered nighttime house arrest and two ordered the recipients to report to the police station at specified intervals.