



# Reshaping and Imposing History

HOW THE ISRAELI SETTLER-COLONIAL PROJECT TAKES OVER PALESTINIAN LAND, HISTORY AND HERITAGE

PLO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY & POLICY



**ISRAEL HAS CONSTANTLY USURPED  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SITES  
IN PALESTINE UNDER THE PRETEXT OF  
EXISTING JEWISH TIES TO THE AREA.**

**RIGHT AFTER THE MILITARY OCCUPATION IN  
1967, ISRAEL TOOK CONTROL OVER  
PALESTINIAN HERITAGE SITES, THROUGH A  
VARIETY OF METHODS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO  
EMPHASIZE A ONE-SIDED NARRATIVE AND  
PUSH FORWARD FALSIFIED CLAIMS.**

**ISRAEL HAS USED THIS EXCLUSIVE  
RELIGIOUS CLAIM TO CONSTRUCT ILLEGAL  
SETTLEMENTS WITH STRATEGIC  
IMPORTANCE (ALTITUDE & NATURAL  
RESOURCES) ON STOLEN PALESTINIAN LAND,  
IN A GRAVE VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL  
LAW.**

**THIS KIND OF ABSOLUTIST IDEOLOGY IS  
DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE RIGHT-WING  
FANATIC RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN ISRAEL  
AND THE FUNDAMENTALIST EVANGELICALS,  
WHO APPROPRIATE THE RICH AND DIVERSE  
HISTORY OF PALESTINE.**

**THIS BRIEF REPORT PROVIDES A GLIMPSE OF  
THE REALITY.**

# FACTS & FIGURES

There are around **7,000** archeological sites in the Occupied West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, of which more than half are located in so-called "Area C", where Israel exercises full administrative and security control illegally.

The **≈230** illegal Israeli settlements and outposts in the Occupied West Bank, including occupied Jerusalem, usurp more than **hundreds of** archeological sites and features.

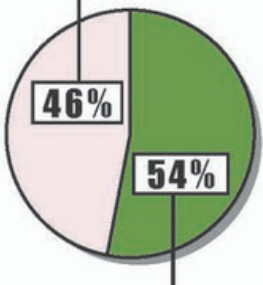
Upon the completion of the illegal annexation wall, Israel will take over more than **3,500** archeological sites and features, including **500** significant archeological sites. Additionally, another **1,000** sites were either partially damaged or completely destroyed due to the construction of the Wall.

In 2017, Israel designated **1,000** new archaeological sites in "Area C" of the West Bank. The period between 2017 and 2019 witnessed a **162%** rise in demolition orders for dwellings built on antiquity sites across "Area C".

# PALESTINIAN TOURISTIC SITES DENIED DEVELOPMENT BY ISRAEL

**Palestinian Land Restricted by Israeli Settlements and the Wall**

**Areas under Israeli settlement control**



**Areas remaining for Palestinians**

- 1967 Boundary ("Green Line")
- Palestinian territory under Israeli settlement control
- Territory remaining for Palestinians
- Israeli Annexation Wall**
- constructed or under construction (70%)
- approved or planned (30%)
- Israeli settlement built-up areas (~ 1.3% - 690,000 settlers)
- Palestinian Touristic sites denied development by Israel





## OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM AND ITS WALLS

The heart of Palestine's capital, the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls have been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It holds religious significance to all monotheistic religions which exist in Palestine. Among the ancient and cultural heritage sites are Al-Haram Al-Sharif (Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound) and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Palestine Archaeological Museum (Rockefeller Museum).

Israel occupied Jerusalem in 1967 and illegally annexed the Palestinian Capital in 1980. Since then, it attempts to alter the demographic, historical and cultural make-up of the ancient City with constant drillings and excavations, forced displacement, denial of worship and raids on the historical sites.



## THE IBRAHIMI MOSQUE

Dating back around 4,000 years and located in the heart of Al-Khalil/Hebron south of the occupied West Bank, the Ibrahimi Mosque was named in reference to Prophet Ibrahim's tomb. Historical evidence suggests that the tombs of the Prophet's wife, Sara, and his sons, Isaac, Ismail, Jacob and Joseph and their wives are located under the mosque's domes. The Mosque has been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In 1994, American-Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein, from the nearby illegal settlement "Kiryat Arba", stormed the mosque and massacred 29 Palestinians during dawn prayer. Israel has since divided the mosque and locked down the old city of Hebron. It established a Jewish temple inside and placed gates and restrictions on Palestinian worshipers. Israeli settlers continue to storm the mosque and harass Palestinian residents daily.

## BATTIR TERRACES

Known as the "land of olives and vines", the breathtaking hilly green area of Battir and its terraces are located west of Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank. The Site is famous for its Roman-era irrigation systems, fed by the rich water sources in the area. The Battir Terraces were accorded protection status by UNESCO in 2014 as a World Heritage Site.

The ancient site faces constant threats of Israeli confiscation as Israel attempted to extend its illegal annexation wall through the area. Israel has also razed and excavated lands in Battir in order to construct by-pass roads connecting illegal Israeli settlements in the vicinity.



## MOUNT 'ORMA

The 843M high hilltop is located in the town of Beita near Nablus north of the occupied West Bank. Mount 'Orma has been a strategic area for several civilizations since the Bronze-Canaanite ages. Ruins of a castle dating back to the Hellenistic, Roman, Umayyad and Ottoman periods can be found on top of the hill.

Mount 'Orma has been the latest victim to Israeli settler incursions with the help of the Israeli occupation army. Israeli settlers falsely claim that Mount 'Orma holds biblical importance as a pretext to take over the strategic hilltop. They are attempting to create shortcuts to the mountain from the nearby illegal settlements of "Itimar" and "Givat Arnon".





## **RACHEL'S TOMB (BILAL'S MOSQUE)**

Rachel's Tomb, or Bilal's Mosque, is located between the occupied Palestinian cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

Israel has separated this ancient site from its natural Palestinian surroundings with its illegal annexation wall. It has also sieged the site and established a military base nearby.

It has been turned to a Jewish-only religious site, denying access to Palestinian worshippers. In 2010, Israel added the tomb within its "National Jewish Heritage".



## TELL DOTHAN

Tell Dothan (Dothan hill) and the el-Hafire water well are located in the Jenin Governorate north of the occupied West Bank. The area is located above the 'Arraba Valley (Sahl 'Arraba) and is a fertile area which contains huge water reservoirs.

The hill is 320M above sea level and was inhabited since the Copper age by 19 different civilizations. In the Early Bronze and Middle Bronze Ages (3000-1550 BC) the site was a major fortified urban center. The habitation continued in the Late Bronze, Iron Age and scant remains were found dating back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

An illegal Israeli settlement named "Mevo Dotan" was built there as part of Israel's colonial project.

**Did you know?** Beer el-Hafire or the el-Hafire well is believed to be the well where Prophet Joseph was thrown into by his brothers.



## SEBASTIA

The former Roman city, Sebastia, is located in the Nablus Governorate north of the occupied West Bank and is 420M above sea level. The Site includes habitation from the Iron Age, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods.

A large construction plan was carried out during the Roman period, including the city wall, a gate, a colonnaded street, the basilica, the forum, a theatre, a temple for Augustus, a stadium, an aqueduct and cemeteries.

An illegal Israeli settlement named "Shavei Shomron" was built nearby. Sebastia is often stormed by illegal settlers, accompanied by Israeli occupation forces, in an attempt to take over the historical site.

Currently, Israeli occupation authorities are planning to establish a police station near this ancient site in line with escalating frequent raids.





## KHIRBET SILON

Inhabited since the Bronze Age, the ruins in the area can be dated back to around 2,000 years BC. The historical site contains ruins relating to numerous civilizations such as the Canaanites, Romans, Hellenists, Byzantines and Arabs.

It is located near the Palestinian village of Qaryut, south of Nablus, in the occupied West Bank. An illegal Israeli settlement named "Shiloh" was built nearby and "Tel Shiloh" has been turned into a touristic site for extremist Jews and fundamentalist Christian Evangelicals.

University Professor of Old Testament Susanne Scholz rejects the claims that Shiloh was the capital of ancient Israel and calls it "utter nonsense".

# QUMRAN CAVES (KHIRBET QUMRAN)

The Qumran caves are where the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by a Palestinian shepherd.

The caves are located on mountains near the Dead Sea in the occupied Jordan Valley.

An illegal Israeli settlement named "Kalya" was built nearby.

Israeli officials have repeatedly vowed to annex the occupied Jordan Valley, which makes up nearly 30% of the West Bank and serves as an important source for agriculture, tourism and natural resources.





## "BEIT EL"

Built on 860M high hilltops north of Ramallah and Al-Bireh, "Beit El" is an illegal Israeli settlement which is claimed to be a holy site for extremist Jews who consider it to be the "House of God". Religious fanatics also claim that it is where "Jacob's dream" took place.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump, his son-in-law Jared Kushner and former U.S.

Ambassador to Israel David Friedman have all made donations to "Beit El".



@PalestinePDP



## NABI SAMWIL

Situated on a hilltop to the north of Jerusalem, it is believed to be the burial place of Prophet Samuel, with spiritual importance to all monotheistic religions.

The original Palestinian village was built around the shrine of Prophet Samuel and among the archaeological remains. After 1967, the Israeli army demolished the original village and its residents were evicted to a nearby area. Israel later declared the area a national park. Today some 200 Palestinian residents live there facing numerous restrictions and are sieged off from their surroundings.



## JOSEPH'S TOMB (QABR YOUSEF)

Located in Balata, Nablus, Joseph's Tomb has been a pilgrimage site for centuries. The Site is believed to be the funerary monument to Sheikh Yusef, a religious figure that has spiritual significance for locals. Settlers claim that the site contains the remains of biblical Joseph.

The tomb is open to Israeli settlers only and a number of Israeli officials have visited the site. Under the protection of the Israeli army, mass raids of settlers occur at night. Many Palestinians have been wounded and killed in protests against the tomb's closure.





## **MOUNT KABIR**

The 950M high mountain is located in the Palestinian village of Azmut near Nablus. The diverse natural reserve houses a wide variety of animal and plant species.

The nearby illegal settlement of "Elon Moreh" poses a threat to Mount Kabir. The area faces constant harassment from Israeli settlers, such as assaulting Palestinian visitors and uprooting/burning trees.



## **HERODION JABAL AL-FUREIDIS**

Overlooking occupied Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, the 758M high mountain dates back to the Herodian Kingdom.

This fortress includes the remains of a huge palace built by King Herod between 23 and 18 BC. During the Byzantine period, several churches have been constructed at the site.

The area has been under occupation by Israel since 1967 and 2 illegal Israeli settlements, "Nokdim" and "Tekoa", surround the historical mountain. Israel has installed gates and sieged the ancient site, isolating it from its natural Palestinian surroundings.

# HORN OF SARTABA (QARN SARTABA)

Overlooking the Jordan Valley, the Horn of Sortoba is located 365M above sea level near the Palestinian village of Aqraba in the Nablus Governorate.

The Site dates back to the Hellenistic and early-Roman era, includes a fortress and contains lots of ancient remnants and artifacts. It is also rich with diverse water sources.

In an effort to block access to Palestinians, and seize the site, Israeli occupation authorities often declare the area as a "closed military zone".



*Ahmad Khalaf*  
Photography

# DEIR SAM'AN

Located between the Palestinian towns of Kafr ad-Dik & Deir Ballut in the Salfit Governorate, this ancient site contains a Roman-era fortress and a Byzantine-era church with beautiful mosaic floors, in addition to water pools, oil and grape presses. Remains from the early Islamic era (Umayyad and Abbasid periods) can also be found.

Deir Sam'an is surrounded by 3 illegal settlements and Israeli occupation authorities confiscated the ancient site last year to make room for a new illegal settlement.

The Site also faces numerous raids from the Israeli army and settlers who attack Palestinian residents as well as loot and vandalize ancient artifacts.



AlJazeera



AlJazeera



AlJazeera



## TELL RUMEIDA

This ancient hilltop is located in the heart of the Palestinian city of Hebron in the occupied West Bank. It dates back to the fourth millennium BC. Tell Rumeida was one of the main city-states during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages in Palestine. The Site includes structures from the Iron, Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Israel continues to deny access to Palestinians and is conducting constant excavations that threaten Palestinian residents and their land/homes there.

An illegal Israeli settlement with the name "Admot Yishai" and a touristic settlement were built adjacent to the Site. Israel is also funding an "archaeological park" there.



## **MOUNT GERIZIM (JABAL AL TOR)**

Overlooking the city of Nablus, Mount Gerizim is the sacred place for the Palestinian Samaritan community and is believed to be the site of King Solomon's Temple. Samaritans believe that Mount Gerizim was the place where Abraham was about to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Mount Gerizim is under the control of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. Israel limits access to Palestinians and conducts illegal excavations in the area.