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STATUS OF JERUSALEM – ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

ABSTRACT

The most neglected and yet the thorniest issue in the Arab-Israeli peace process is the status of Jerusalem. Contention over it surpasses issue of Palestinian refugees, borders of the West Bank, issue of water or any other. Its importance for the continuation of the conflict and its presence in official documents of the peace conferences and similar gatherings are disproportionate. Issue of the status of the Israeli capital or would be capital of Arab Palestine is rarely mentioned even by those organisations and individuals in the Jewish community that support the two-state solution. Key for understanding this lies in the highly religious identity of both Israelis and the Arabs and in the nature of the conflict.

Key words: Jerusalem, Peace process, Middle East, Israel, Palestine

“Eternal and indivisible” capital

Jerusalem is the holy city; city of peace, the perfect and it will spiritually be the new Sodom and Gomorra (Holy Bible, Rev. 11: 8). In the countries of the Christian and Muslim heritage and among Jewish people, majority of population probably has some notion of Jerusalem as the central place in the Holy Land. It is the city where the Jesus was crucified and resurrected three days after, city

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from which the Mohammed has had, according to the Muslim credo, ascended in the skies and the city of the Temple for the Jews, the place where the Altar of the Temple was is particularly the holy of the hollies. Holy for the three religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) it is also the capital city. Both Israel and the self-proclaimed State of Palestine declare it as the capital city, while almost all of the other states do not recognize it to be the capital city of either of the States until both sides reach the common solution. Contending over Jerusalem is the central issue in the long Arab-Israeli and Muslim-Jewish conflict.

Since the end of the Second World War, Middle East,² named after the events in that war, became notorious for wars, crisis and later paired with the phrase the 'peace process'. Long and troubled Middle East or Arab Israeli peace process started in the late 1970s and its smaller twin Israeli-Palestinian peace process started as the Soviet Union bloc was collapsing. Since the beginning many actors had interest in the process and not in its resolution which partially explains the duration of the conflict (started in 1948) and later of the peace process (since 1978). Other part of the explanation is in the issues over which there seems to be no room for the compromise.

The reconciliation in the Middle East is difficult to achieve not only because of occupation, because of memory and wounds from the past and more recent wars but also because of mutually excluding aims. Both sides, Jews and Muslims, see Palestine as their territory. Still, not all the Jews claim all of Palestine for the Jewish state nor do all of Palestinian Arabs claim all of the Palestine for their dreamed state. The question is what is the political strength of those who claim all of the territory, for the Israel or for the desired State of Palestine? Aside this issue, another territorial dispute, that involves more foreign participants in the conflict, is over Jerusalem. Israel already has it as the capital city, and the Arab Palestinians dream it.

But status of Jerusalem does not regard only control of the territory. At stake is not just any city, but holy city. At the very heart of this largest urban centre in the Israel and in the Palestine is the old city known as East Jerusalem and that is the holy place claimed by the sides in conflict. This is place with the most or some of the most important religious places of pilgrimage for Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher attracts more Christian

² After the allied command for the Near East in Damascus, led by French was handed to the Vichy regime, the command for the Middle East, led by British in Karachi, took over the Near Middle East area. Since then the British started using term Middle East for the countries formerly known to belong to the Near East region.

pilgrims than any other place in the East. On the other hand, Bible says that in the end of the times Jerusalem will be the seat of false Messiah, the antichrist, which will rule from the rebuilt Jewish Temple. The Temple Mount, (Har haBáyit in Hebrew) is the central place in the Judaism and in the same time one of the pivotal places of the Islamic sacral geography. Jews of all religious currents expect their Messiah to come to rebuild the Third Temple or to enter into finished one.³ Some think that he will rebuild it, while others want to rush him by rebuilding it first. Muslims claim it as the waqf, the religious land that needs to be liberated. Therefore the problem of the sovereignty over Jerusalem is central and hardest resolving element in the Arab-Israeli conflict and obstacle to the resolution of the Peace process.

Examination of the status of Jerusalem is necessary prerequisite to comprehend the complexity of the peace process in order to be able to offer some practical proposals. Therefore we will present the proposals of the solution for the status of the city elaborated by the politicians and by the academic community, and present the religious, legal and territorial features of the city.

Divisions in Jerusalem

Since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict the Jerusalem has had the special place. Due to religious importance, the UN envisaged it to be the city with special administration and to have independent government vis-à-vis Jewish and Arab states that were to be created on the British mandate territory of Palestine. As the war between Jews and Arabs exploded in April 1948 and turned to Arab-Israeli conflict with the proclamation of the State of Israel on midnight (local time) 14/15 May 1948, Jerusalem was divided between the armies of the nascent state and the Kingdom of Jordan. The Jordanians took over the old city. After the war in 1967, the Israel liberated (or occupied) the Eastern Jerusalem, annexing much of local land to the city. Then the conflict was transformed from the inter-ethnic to religious conflict. Since then Muslims insist on the liberation of the Al-Quds (one of the Muslim names of the city). But the division of the

³ Depending of the religious current. While haredim believe that Messiah will rebuild it in the three days, some religious Zionists believe that they can rush his advent by rebuilding the temple. Talmudists believe that he will come before the Jewish year 6000, (2013 largely corresponds with the Jewish year 5774). See: "What Is the Jewish Belief About Moshiach?", Internet, <http://www.chabad.org/>, retrieved on 28/05/2013.

city after the war 1948/49 is maintained until today. What was then the Israeli territory today is West Jerusalem while the Jordanian Jerusalem with adjacent land annexed to it in 1967 is what is called East Jerusalem. Jordanian city had an area of 6 km², while Israel immediately after the seizure in 1967, annexed to it another 64 km². All of the Jerusalem is the largest urban agglomeration in Israel with surface of 125000 dunums (125,1 km²) with more than 800 thousand of residents. Tel Aviv, for example has an area of 52000 dunums (52 km²) and 404 thousand residents.

Almost all of Arabs live in eastern side of the city – close to 300 thousands of Arabs comparing to little bit less than 200 thousands of Jews in the East Jerusalem.⁴ If the 36% of the Jerusalemites are Arabs, Muslims were 34% in 2012 (Arab Christians being remaining two percent).⁵

Jerusalem is considered to be the holy city for the presence of numerous places of worship in the city and around it.

Demography and construction

“Between 1967 and the end of 2011 Jerusalem’s population rose by 200%. The Jewish population grew 157% and the Arab population 327% in that time.”⁶ Israeli concern was always to maintain majority in the country and particularly in Jerusalem. That is why its municipal area is enlarged and the construction of new housing units is ongoing. Latest activity in building new Jewish houses is:

- “On August 25, Jerusalem municipal officials approved plans to move ahead with construction of infrastructure for 1500 new settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem.
- On August 12, Israel approved construction of 900 new settlement units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Mordot Gilo.
- On August 11, Israel announced tenders for nearly 1200 new settlement units; 793 in East Jerusalem, and 394 in the West Bank.”⁷

⁴ “Selected Data on the Occasion of Jerusalem Day: 2013”, Press Release CBS, Jerusalem May 6, 2013, Internet, www.cbs.gov.il, p. 1.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ “Press release: Population – End of 2011 (provisional data*)”, Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, May 21st, 2012.

⁷ “Introducing the ‘Facts on the Ground Peace Index’”, Internet, <http://mondoweiss.net/2013/08/introducing-the-facts-on-the-ground-peace-index>, retrieved on 04/09/2013.

These are just examples of the continual colonisation of the Jewish population in the liberated/occupied territory of East Jerusalem. Same process and agenda is ongoing in Judea and Samaria (West Bank). As in Israel, Jews are majority in the city, but due to the eastern part, the size of two groups differ. Ways to stop Arab proportional growth of the population in the city are essentially three: to promote the higher fertility of the Jews, settle new Jewish population in the city and to discourage the Arabs from living in Jerusalem.

Besides being the capital, “Jerusalem is the largest city in Israel; at the end of 2012, the number of residents in Jerusalem was 815,300, of which 515,200 were Jews and others⁸ (63%), and 300,100 were Arabs (37%).⁹ Among Arabs majority are Muslims, but unlike in the rest of Israel, Jewish fertility is higher in Jerusalem than that of Arabs (Muslims included).

Table 1. Total Fertility Rate, in Jerusalem and in Israel, 2012¹⁰

	Jerusalem	Israel
Total	3.97	3.05
Jews and others	4.25	2.95
Thereof: Jews	4.34	3.04
Arabs	3.55	3.32
Thereof: Moslems	3.62	3.54

Jewish population in the city is largely divided as in the rest of the country. But the proportion between various Jewish groups is quite different respect to the Israel in general. Major group are Haredi or ultra-orthodox Jews: “Of the Jews in Jerusalem, 35% defined themselves as ultra-Orthodox, 18% as religious, 12% as traditional-religious, 14% as traditional-not so religious, and 20% as secular.” The proportion of various groups among Jews is mostly an estimate

⁸ Others include non-Arab Christians, members of other religions, and persons not classified by religion by the Ministry of Interior.

⁹ *Selected Data on the Occasion of Jerusalem Day (2012–2013 Data)*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem May 25, 2014, retrieved on: 26/05/2014.

¹⁰ Table retrieved from *Selected Data on the Occasion of Jerusalem Day (2012–2013 Data)*, op., cit.

because the census recognises the Jews as single category. In school system it is easier to distinguish the groups because they attend different types of schools. At the national level in the period of 2009-2011 major group among those Jews who have more than 20 years, were secular (43%) followed by traditionally religious (34%), while religious Zionists were 10% and Haredi 9%. In the younger population Haredi and religious Zionists represent larger segment of the population. Thus in elementary schools religious Zionists were in the same period 19,6% of all pupils while Haredi were 24,7%.¹¹

High fertility of the Haredi and the emigration of the secular Jews out of the city emphasize even more the religious image of it. Even though the Haredi are 35 percent of the population in the city (less than 10 percent of the Jewish population at the national level) they represent the absolute majority of the students in primary schools: “The percentage of students under ultra-Orthodox supervision in the primary schools in Jerusalem has been increasing continuously, from 57.3% in the 2000/01 school year to 66.2% in 2011/12. At the same time, the percentage of students under state supervision decreased from 24.9% in 2000/01 to 17.1%.”¹² Political representatives of Haredi and particularly of religious Zionists are against any concessions regarding the holy city. These parties have growing support among the electorate not only due to higher fertility rate of their constituencies.

But any division, even if negotiated would be hard to achieve because the Jews are increasingly settling on peripheries of the East Jerusalem but also in Arab neighbourhoods Silwan and Sheikh Jarra (Shimon HaTzadik in Hebrew) most notably, as well as in At-Tur (Mount of Olives), Wadi Joz, Ras al-‘Amud, Jabal Al Mukabbir. and in the Old city (See Map 1).¹³

Divisions in the Jewish camp are loom into Shabbat wars and clashes between Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) and others over schooling, working time, dressing, separation between sexes on streets and in public transport. Stoning

¹¹ CBS, STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF ISRAEL 2010, Education 8.19 и 8.9, Internet, <http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader>, retrieved on: 08/08/2012; “Jerusalem: Facts and Trends 2013”, *Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies*, Jerusalem 2013, p. 27.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Settlements in Palestinian Residential Areas in East Jerusalem”, April 2012, The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Internet, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_area_c_factsheet_january_2013_english.pdf, retrieved on 20/04/2013.; “Israel’s Land Grab in East Jerusalem”, *The Nation*, April 17, 2013, Internet, <http://www.thenation.com/article/173884/israels-land-grab-east-jerusalem#>, retrieved on 25/04/2013.

between Jews occurs just like stoning between Arabs and Jews, particularly in Jewish capital. Driving a vehicle on Shabbat in neighbourhood with Haredi majority or with significant Haredi community could easily end in stoning. Protests between parking lots open on Shabbat or against services and gas stations opened on that day are not rare in this city.¹⁴

This policy was prepared at least in the early 1980s. In 1982 “in a document prepared for Mayor Teddy Kollek’s international advisory council, the Jerusalem Committee, which clearly states: ‘the ring of settlements will provide a necessary buffer in case of any political or military pressure’.¹⁵ But the idea goes back to 1967, when Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Begin called on Israelis “We must bring Jews to eastern Jerusalem at any cost. We must settle tens of thousands of Jews in a brief time. Jews will agree to settle in eastern Jerusalem even in shacks. We cannot await the construction of orderly neighborhoods. The essential thing is that Jews will be there.”¹⁶ Ring of Israeli settlements is in constant expansion, also according to the official Master plan for the development of the city.¹⁷ Latest tactic for the integration of the city and its detachment from the West Bank is the building of the Separation barrier (known as *The Wall*) from 2002. The lines of the barrier are believed by many researchers and politicians to be the basis of the new administrative lines of the city and its separation from the Arabs.¹⁸ The

¹⁴ On Shabbat wars see: “Mayor stoned in Jerusalem Shabbat war”, August 13, 2009, Internet, <http://www.thejc.com/>, retrieved on 18/11/2012; Secular Jerusalem Jews take on growing ultra-Orthodox influence”, 972Mag.com, September 30, 2012, Internet, <http://972mag.com/secular-jerusalem-jews-take-on-growing-ultra-orthodox-influence/56765/>, retrieved on: 21/02/2013; “Shabbat wars: Hundreds in Acre protest opening of store on Saturday”, Haaretz, Nov. 11, 2012, Internet, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/shabbat-wars-hundreds-in-acre-protest-opening-of-store-on-saturday.premium-1.476800>, retrieved on 15/12/2012.

¹⁵ David Kroyanker, Jerusalem Planning and Development 1979-82, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1982), 27, taken from: Wendy Pullan, “The current situation in Jerusalem: The Urban Question: Israeli settlement and expropriation of Palestinian land in Jerusalem since 1967”, in *International Meeting On The Question Of Jerusalem*, Ankara, 12 and 13 May 2014, CPR/IMQJ/2014/8.

¹⁶ According to: Nadav Shragai, “Demography, Geopolitics, and the Future of Israel’s Capital: Jerusalem’s Proposed Master Plan”, *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* 2010, p. 12.

¹⁷ See more in: Francesco Chiodelli, “The Next Jerusalem: Potential Futures of the Urban Fabric”, *Jerusalem Quarterly* 53 (Spring 2013), p. 52.

¹⁸ Guy Ben-Porat, “We are here, they are there: between peace and exclusion in Israel/Palestine”, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3, June 2008, 307–320; Monica Duffy Toft, “Demography and national security: The politics of population shifts in contemporary Israel”, *International Area Studies Review* 15(1) 2012, pp. 21–42.

Wall encircles much wider area than the administrative line of already big Jerusalem and it connects the city via E1 area and Ma'ale Adumim with the military controlled Area C of the West Bank.¹⁹ This was later termed as the policy of new realities on the ground, cited by the Bush administration (misquoted as facts on the ground).²⁰

The policy of the physical separation and the growth of Jewish settlements around the Arab neighborhoods is the strategy of the Jewish state to keep entire city for itself in the final status arrangement.

What are current statuses and proposals for the city in light of the Middle East Peace process?

Statuses of Jerusalem

Legal status

Definition of the legal status of this city may be dubious due to historical facts. Since the UN envisaged the city to be autonomous and under international supervision and not part of neither of the states (Jewish and Arab), both sides in the conflict did not respect the UNGA Resolution 181 (from November 1947). Later on, when the entire city went under the control of Israel, as the result of war, due to the pressure of Muslim countries (Arab and not Arab countries, like Malaysia, Pakistan...), the UN did not recognise the city to be the capital of Israel. Today almost all of the countries in the world do not recognise the Jerusalem to be the capital city of the Israel. But according to the Israeli legal and political system, Jerusalem is the capital city and it was envisaged as such since the creation of the Jewish state. First session of the Knesset was held on February 14, 1949 in Jerusalem and was, because of the war operations temporarily transferred close to Tel Aviv.²¹

¹⁹ Area C is 61 percent of the territory of the West Bank and is under exclusive Israeli administration. See: "Settlements in Palestinian Residential Areas in East Jerusalem", op., cit.

²⁰ "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949...", Letter From President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon, The White House, April 14, 2004, Internet, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040414-3.html>, retrieved on 20/03/2013.

²¹ Ruth Lapidot, Moshe Hirsch, "The Jerusalem Question and Its Resolution: Selected Documents", Martinus Nijhoff 1994, pp. 83-84.

Israel doesn't have a constitution and its highest legal acts is the Basic Law. Prior to the Basic Law, Israeli politicians were referring to the Jewish Law (customary and religious law – halakha), which remains one of the sources for the legal system in contemporary Israel. There are 11 Basic Laws until today. First Basic Law was emanated in 1958 and it designated Jerusalem as the seat of Knesset.²² Latest Basic Law was promulgated in 2001 and it regards the election and the work of the government and of the Prime Minister. Article 2 of the Law defines Jerusalem as the seat of the government.

Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel was adopted in 1980 and three new articles were amended in November 2000 as reaction to the Camp David II negotiations. This law states that:

1. "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel.
2. Jerusalem is the seat of the President of the State, the Knesset, the Government and the Supreme Court."²³

Three amendments after the foreign pressures for the internationalisation of the city administration were new guarantee against the division of the city in the lines proclaimed in 28 June, 1967.

Legal acts regarding Jerusalem often comprise quotes from Bible or they recall the biblical Israel – Eretz Israel. Hence, then Minister of Defense, David Ben Gurion was issuing proclamations during the Arab-Israeli war. His first, Proclamation No. 1, published on 2 August 1948, proclaimed the (liberated) part Jerusalem to be administered territory by the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces):

"1. The term "administered area" means the area including most of the city of Jerusalem, part of its environs and western approaches and the roads linking Jerusalem with the coastal plain, all within the area marked by a red line in **the map of the Land of Israel** signed by me bearing today's date, 26 Tamuz 5708 (2 August 1948) or in any other map which will replace it and will be signed by me and similarly marked.

2. The law of the State of Israel prevails in the administered area."

This incorporation of the Jerusalem in the State of Israel by the extension of the law was basis for the *de iure* annexation of any territory of the biblical Israel

²² "Basic Law: The Knesset – 1958", Internet, <http://www.knesset.gov.il>, retrieved on: 24/09/2013.

²³ "Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel", Интернет, <http://www.knesset.gov.il>, доступ: 24/09/2013.

(Land of Israel). Reference to the Land of Israel was repeated many times, and David Ben Gurion has explained the difference later, when he stated for the State of Israel (Medinat Israel) “It is called the ‘State of Israel’ because it is part of the Land of Israel and not merely a Jewish State. The creation of the new State by no means derogates from the scope of historical Eretz Israel”.²⁴ But this provision which preceded the actual annexation of the Jerusalem, in 1967 and in 1980, lays basis for the annexation of other territories belonging to the Eretz Israel (See Map 2).²⁵

Therefore the city was envisaged to be the capital even before the formal proclamation, which happened in 1950.²⁶ The later proclamation occurred because of the time needed to settle the institutions after the end of the war (which ended in 1949).

Religious status – Holy places

Reference to the biblical history of the Jews and on the continuity with contemporary Israel is a constant element in local politics. Israeli Prime minister Moshe Begin wrote in the letter to Anwar Sadat (4 August 1980): “Time and again I repeated that Jerusalem, in its entirety, is the capital of Israel, a city reunited and indivisible for all generations.

Yes, indeed, there are in Jerusalem places holy to Christians and Moslems. We respect them. . . . To the Jewish people Jerusalem is not only holy; it is their history for three millenia, their heart, their dream, the visible symbol of their national redemption.”²⁷

There are variety of solutions and approaches which depict, analyse the problem of the status and offer possible solutions. In IR and peace studies theoretical models with hypothetical problems and actors can resolve any quagmire but the real issue of the Jerusalem status remains a puzzle despite being

²⁴ State of Israel, “Israel, the State and the Nation” in *Government Year-book*, 5716 (1955), page 320.

²⁵ “Israel Defence Forces Administration in Jerusalem Proclamation No. 1, Jerusalem Declared Israel-Occupied City, Government Proclamation, Official Gazette, No. 12, 2 August 1948.”

²⁶ Премјер Бен Гурион га је прогласио за престоницу 4. јануара 1950, а Кнесет 23/01/1950.

²⁷ “114 Letter from Prime Minister Begin to President Sadat- 4 August 1980”, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Internet, <http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook4/pages/114%20letter%20from%20prime%20minister%20begin%20to%20president.aspx>, retrieved on 21/10/2013.

studied by many authors. Some approach it with the theories and models of the negotiations. This school is usually essentially treating humans as robots, that is, as creatures without soul – senseless, with no attachment to non-material values, and thus susceptible only to their physical needs. Scott Atran, esteemed researcher in the field of the negotiations, and practitioner of it in the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as a consultant for the American government, produced several studies alone or with other researchers explaining the intractability over sacred with traditional approach (based on rational choice or real politik). Particularly, Atran and his team surveyed 4000 Arab Palestinians and Jews from 2004 to 2008. This massive survey showed that offering financial incentives for the sacrifice of some sacred value produced anger and even reactions that were mounting to violence toward the researchers.²⁸ Although Atran claims that many people on both sides were eager to share the Jerusalem, after other side would offer symbolic, that is to say moral concession like an apology or an official promise, he failed to present the concrete numbers. Aside research interviews and scholarly articles, political reality seems to point to the increasing absence of the compromise over the Holy City.

Despite the issue of Jerusalem is just as any other issue in the negotiations (Arab refugees, separation wall, size of the Palestinian territory, security guarantees...), when speaking or writing about the negotiations and compromises it is less likely to find some official document or statement of the Israeli government aimed toward concession on Jerusalem.

Importance of this city and thus the impossibility or difficulty to compromise over it shows the importance of the religion and religious identity not only in the region but also in extra-regional countries. Many foundations in USA, European and Islamic countries are funding or supporting expansion of Jewish settlements and houses in the East Jerusalem, or in the minor measure the Arab resistance to it.²⁹

Diatribes over the Jerusalem resulted also in the fact finding mission using statistics: which religion holy scripture or scriptures mention Jerusalem and how many times. Thus one is possible to find on the site of the particularly Israeli

²⁸ Scott Atran and Jeremy Ginges, How Words Could End a War, New York Times, January 24, 2009; Partial results were presented in: Scott Atran, Robert Axelrod, Richard Davis, “Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution,” Internet, www.sciencemag.org on August 24, 2007.

²⁹ See for example the article on the expansion of the Jewish population in the East Jerusalem: Elena Dusi e Paolo Pieraccini, “La battaglia per Gerusalemme”, *liMes: I quaderni speciali* Luglio 2010, pp. 9–28.

engaged American Jewish professor Daniel Pipes these lines “One comparison makes this point most clearly: Jerusalem appears in the Jewish Bible 669 times and Zion (which usually means Jerusalem, sometimes the Land of Israel) 154 times, or 823 times in all. The Christian Bible mentions Jerusalem 154 times and Zion 7 times. In contrast, the columnist Moshe Kohn notes, Jerusalem and Zion appear as frequently in the Qur’an “as they do in the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita, the Taoist Tao-Te Ching, the Buddhist Dhamapada and the Zoroastrian Zend Avesta”—which is to say, not once.”³⁰

Israelis, or those who like Pipes advocate Israeli interests, often use this line of argumentation. Also Israeli politicians are using these facts. Thus “Netanyahu told a parliamentary session commemorating Israel’s capture of East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 war that “Jerusalem” and its alternative Hebrew name “Zion” appear 850 times in the Old Testament, Judaism’s core canon.

“As to how many times Jerusalem is mentioned in the holy scriptures of other faiths, I recommend you check,” he said.

The dispute is further inflamed by the fact East Jerusalem houses al-Aqsa mosque, Islam’s third-holiest shrine, on a plaza that Jews revere as the vestige of two biblical Jewish temples.

Heckled by a lawmaker from Israel’s Arab minority, Netanyahu offered a lesson in comparative religion from the lectern.

“Because you asked: Jerusalem is mentioned 142 times in the New Testament, and none of the 16 various Arabic names for Jerusalem is mentioned in the Koran. But in an expanded interpretation of the Koran from the 12th century, one passage is said to refer to Jerusalem,” he said.”³¹

Political usage and treatment of the facts might seem objective in this case. Yet, the fact is that both the politicians and Jewish intellectuals omit that the Christian Holy scripture is not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well. Following this type of argumentation the Christians have the greatest attachment for the city, because the Christian Bible all together mentions Jerusalem and Sion 1011 times.

But these facts still cannot negate the belief, be it of later or of old data, and the conviction of the Islamic masses that Jerusalem is the third holiest city of

³⁰ <http://www.danielpipes.org/84/the-muslim-claim-to-jerusalem>.

³¹ Internet, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/05/12/us-palestinians-israel-jerusalem-idUSTRE64B2 EY20100512>, retrieved on 25/02/2013.

Islam. Especially the three mosques are important for the Muslims: al-Aqsa, Dome of the Rock and al-Haram al-Sharif. Building upon that fact, or sharing that belief, the Palestinian and other Muslim countries, their political and religious elites are mobilizing support in their “fight for the liberation of the Al-Quds (one of the 16 Islamic names for the Jerusalem).”

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (prior Organization of Islamic Conference) each year organizes the Islamic summit that initiates with the statement on Palestine and Al-Quds. That was the case also in 2013: “We reaffirm the centrality of the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif to the Muslim Ummah as a whole and the need for the latter to use all its powers and legitimate ways and means to defend the inviolability of the Islamic and Christian holy places... We reaffirm that, according to the relevant international resolutions, Al-Quds Al-Sharif is an indivisible part of the State of Palestine’s territory occupied by Israel in 1967... We call upon all OIC Member States to engage with the Palestinian cause and the question of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the primary issues on which Member States must adopt a unified stand at the international fora”³²

So Jerusalem bears enormous significance for both parties. What about the proposals for solution?

Impasse

Many authors and politicians offered different solutions for the administrative fate of Jerusalem, from Said to Breger and Klein. All of them are summoned in the paper of Sarah Krinsky, who advocates the international administration over holy basin (old city plus Christian holy places in Jerusalem and around it), which goes hand in hand with wishes of non-transparent centers of world political and financial influence, such as Bilderberg. Yet the five categories she individuated truly depict the main proposals on the matter:

“1) The first proposition places Jerusalem as an undivided capital under Israeli sovereignty with full autonomy to Palestinians and “provisions necessitated by the city’s unique character.”

³² “Cairo Final Communiqué of the Twelfth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Session of New Challenges and Expanding Opportunities)”, OIC/SUM-12/F.C./FINAL Cairo- Arab Republic of Egypt (6-7 February 2013), pp. 2–3.

2) Next, there is a line of thought that advocates the division of the city in one way or another. There are a few variations on this theme, some of which involve physically partitioning the city into two separate capitals (although the exact borders of this solution remain unaddressed and would undoubtedly be difficult to agree upon), while others include physically undivided but politically separated cities in which Israel and Palestine govern their respective sections.

3) A similar solution proposes joint sovereignty and the creation of one municipality with parity and equality, geographically and demographically, between Palestinians and Israelis,

4) ... a fourth position mixes the previous two and recommends two separate municipalities working under the umbrella of a balanced super-municipality.

5) Finally, the fifth solution is the one first mentioned in the (British) Royal Commission Report almost a century ago: an internationally governed and distinct entity under neither Palestinian nor Israeli sovereignty.

The approaches to governance of the holy places follow a similar pattern. Three plans have been suggested: transferring power to an interfaith committee, giving each religion control over its holy sites, or leaving matters to international guarantees like UNESCO or Hague Conventions.”³³

But despite all of these proposals are still offered on the table they tend to be more and more illusory as the absence of compromise becomes strikingly missing and evident. Demographic and political trends in Israel indicate that political forces that are vouching for peace and two state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, requiring the partition of Jerusalem, are more fragile than they were in the 1990s.

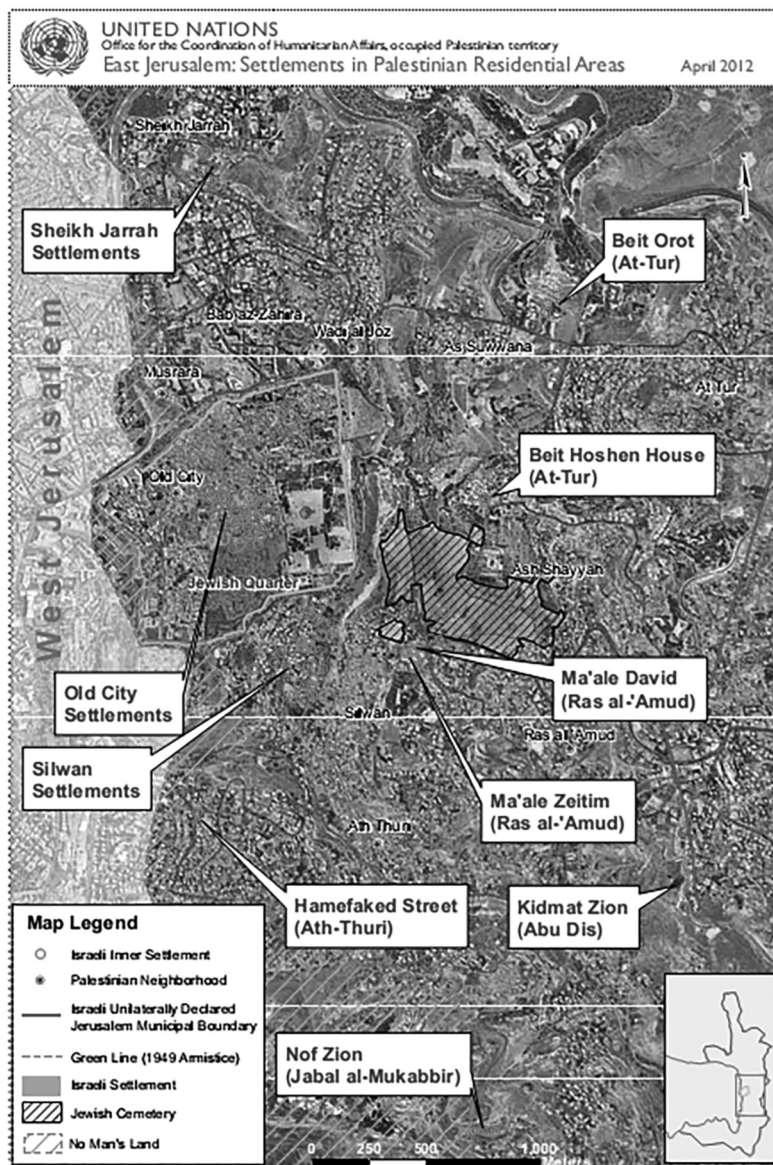
Jerusalem in 2013 is farther from the negotiated settlement than it was at the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Building of new neighbourhoods, growth of the existing and settlement of the Jews in Arab parts of the city makes the division harder and almost impossible as the times passes by.

Haredization and further radicalisation of the city in which religious Zionists are becoming the second group will ultimately bring all stories about the division to an impasse as the population adverse to the compromise gains majority. Radical and conflicting positions are producing and reviving still low level of conflicts due to security barrier and efficient security policies of Israel.

³³ Sarah Krinsky, oly Site”, *The Yale Review of International Studies*, February 2012, Internet, http://yris.yira.org/essays/350#_fn6, retrieved on: 26/09/2013.

ANEXX: MAPS

MAP 1, JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN EAST JERUSALEM



DISCLAIMER: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Reproduction and/or use of this material is only permitted with express reference to "United Nations OCHA" as the source.