



Foreign Actors in eastern Jerusalem: A Challenge to Israeli Sovereignty in its Capital

Foreign actors have stepped-up their subversion of Israeli sovereignty in eastern Jerusalem. This includes covert and overt activities, both legal and illegal, ideological and concrete, in the civilian and security spheres. In response, the Israeli government must devise an integrated, inter-ministerial approach to this challenge; prevent illegal activities, especially illegal foreign financing; revise and rigorously implement the law which bars the Palestinian Authority from governmental activity in Jerusalem; and provide enhanced and accessible municipal services to Jerusalemite Arabs, instead of the foreign actors.

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"Foreigners are possessing our inheritance" (Lamentations 5:2)

Background

Foreign actors have stepped-up their subversion of Israeli sovereignty in eastern Jerusalem. This includes covert and overt activities, both legal and illegal, ideological and concrete, in the civilian and security spheres. This activity subverts Israeli sovereignty in its capital and delegitimizes Israeli activity in eastern Jerusalem. Some of this activity also generates an ideological basis for Palestinian nationalistic or Islamic terrorism.

This paper exposes the scope of foreign activity taking place in eastern Jerusalem. It analyzes its motives, practical effects, and the challenges it poses to Israel. It then examines the alternatives for dealing with this challenge and recommends a course of action.¹

¹ This paper does not discuss four important entities operating legally in eastern Jerusalem under historical agreements: the churches, the Waqf, foreign embassies and consulates, and the United National Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees. The activity of these entities will be discussed in separate articles. The author wishes to thank Ben Avrahami and Ben Levy from the Jerusalem municipality's team for eastern Jerusalem for their contribution to the study, and Elisheva Simon for important materials she provided.

The policy recommendations include establishment of an inter-ministerial committee charged with implementing an integrated approach to this challenge; prevention of illegal activities, especially illegal foreign financing; revision and rigorous implementation of the 1994 law which bars the Palestinian Authority from governmental activity in Jerusalem; and provision of enhanced and accessible municipal services to Arab residents of the city, instead of the foreign actors.

Fundamental Israeli Strategic Assumptions regarding Foreign Activity in eastern Jerusalem

1. Israel wishes to preserve its sovereignty in united Jerusalem, including eastern Jerusalem.
2. Improving the lives of the Arab-Palestinian residents of Jerusalem is not the sole motive of foreign actors. Foreign intervention also serves subversive, anti-Israel, and pro-Palestinian objectives, even when camouflaged as civilian activity.
3. Foreign actors are most active in civilian and geographic areas in eastern Jerusalem where Israeli presence and activity are inadequate. They strive to present a Palestinian or pro-Palestinian alternative to Israeli services.
4. Activity in eastern Jerusalem of groups hostile to Israel motivated by nationalistic or Islamic religious perspectives creates an atmosphere conducive to terrorism against Israel and Jews.
5. In view of these fundamental assumptions, Israel has a strategic interest in restricting such foreign activity and providing an Israeli alternative in its place wherever possible, with an emphasis on providing quality services to residents.

Mapping Foreign Entities Operating in eastern Jerusalem

Foreign actors subverting Israeli sovereignty in eastern Jerusalem can be divided into three main categories: Palestinian, non-Palestinian Islamic, and international.

There are two main Palestinian sub-categories. The first is nationalistic, led by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah members in Jerusalem. The second is Islamic, led by the Muslim Brotherhood – Hamas and the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement. Groups in these two sub-categories sometimes cooperate in the framework of the "Joint Jerusalem Committee of the National and Muslim Forces." This committee publishes proclamations calling for a boycott of Israeli government agencies, such as the Mayor of Jerusalem, in neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem. They also promote a struggle against the introduction of the Israeli curriculum in eastern Jerusalem schools. Their schools mostly teach the curriculum studied in the PA, called *Tawjihi*.

The non-Palestinian Islamic category can be sub-divided into organizations and countries. In the organizational sphere, there are Salafi fundamentalist organizations opposed to nationalism for religious reasons. These organizations are transnational, with members from many nationalities. The most prominent such organization in

eastern Jerusalem is *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Liberation Party), which advocates the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate through *dawa* (persuasion and proselytizing), not violent Jihad. This movement aims to replace every national government, especially the Zionist-Israeli one, with a global Islamic government.

The global Jihad movement is not recruiting a great deal of support among the masses in eastern Jerusalem, but it has both sleeper and active cells on the ground. For example, an ISIS cell was discovered in the Shuafat refugee camp in October 2016 and its members were arrested.

As for the Muslim countries operating in eastern Jerusalem, the two most prominent are Turkey and Jordan, which compete for influence on the Temple Mount and the surrounding area. The status of Jordan on the Temple Mount and the Old City basin is formalized in the 1994 peace treaty with Israel. Furthermore, the Waqf, a Jordanian authority, manages daily affairs on the Temple Mount. Nevertheless, Jordan is being supplanted in eastern Jerusalem public opinion by the growing power of Turkey, led by anti-Israel Islamist Turkish President Erdogan. Arab Jerusalem popular opinion regards Erdogan as the last Muslim strongman daring to challenge the "tyranny" of the "Zionist occupier."

The third category, parties in the international community, includes two main actors: the UN and the European Union (EU). These parties formerly concentrated on funding non-governmental political groups on the left of the Israeli political spectrum and Palestinian groups affiliated with the PA. These actors are now also involved in funding and promoting physical projects in Jerusalem Arab neighborhoods, such as building playgrounds and renovating commercial compounds. They also engage in political intervention, such as helping groups and Palestinian residents in eastern Jerusalem being prosecuted for illegal building.

The First Category – Palestinian Groups

The PA – Its Perception of Eastern Jerusalem and the Resulting Practical Consequences

Determined resistance to Israeli control of eastern Jerusalem is a foundational principle of PA policy. According to this worldview, formed by the PLO, the establishment of the PA in 1994 was but an initial step towards realizing the vision of a Palestinian state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital. Since eastern Jerusalem is the heart of the future Palestinian state, any political agreement, whether temporary or long-term, must include the transfer of this territory to the PA.

It therefore follows that as long as Israel prevents realization of this vision through its control of the territory, every Palestinian loyal to his national heritage must constantly take action to subvert and overthrow Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem.

Such action can consist of working towards Palestinian possession of the territory or opposition to any cooperation or normalization (Arabic – *tatbia*) with Israel or volunteer organizations aimed at promoting Jewish settlement in eastern Jerusalem.

As the PA sees it, these organizations, such as the City of David Foundation and Ateret Cohanim, are spearheads for the Israeli government in its "racist" policy of alleged dispossession of Palestinian land and property rights and entrenching Jewish "settlers" in their place. The Palestinians cite the funding provided by the government for guarding Jewish homes in eastern Jerusalem as proof that their allegations are justified.

In recent months, Palestinian activity in Jerusalem has focused on the struggle against the sale of land and properties to the Jewish settlement organizations, whom the Palestinians believe are "Judaizing" eastern Jerusalem (Arabic – *Tahwid al-Quds*). This "Judaizing" is supposedly especially grave, because the PA believes that it undermines the naturally rooted Arab foundations of eastern Jerusalem.

The goal of "Judaizing" Arabs in eastern Jerusalem is allegedly also reflected in the educational system in eastern Jerusalem, the PA feels. Growing demand from Jerusalemite Arabs has led the Jerusalem municipality and the Ministry of Education to open elective programs for study towards Israeli high school matriculation in Arab neighborhoods. The PA portrays these programs in the Palestinian media and the eastern Jerusalem press as a largely political act with no educational dimension.

According to Jerusalem municipality figures, the number of students in eastern Jerusalem studying for Israeli matriculation grew 23% between September 2017 and 2018. According to the PA, this growth is the result of pressure exerted by Israel on residents of eastern Jerusalem, not practical considerations by Arab parents and teenagers seeking a better personal future in Jerusalem by studying the Israeli matriculation program and the Hebrew language.

The PA exerts extremely heavy pressure on parents registering their children for an Israeli matriculation program, seeking to persuade parents to cancel the registration of their children for this program and leave them in the Palestinian matriculation program. The PA and Fatah agents thereby prevent parents and their children from freely deciding on their educational and professional future.

In recent years, the Jerusalem municipality has improved infrastructure, planning and building, welfare, educational, and sports services for the Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem. The PA also is sabotaging these actions aimed at benefiting the Arab residents of the city.

One aspect of PA sabotage is a major propaganda campaign among the Palestinian residents alleging that these actions are not really motivated by the municipality's feeling of responsibility for improving the quality of their lives. The municipality's

actions are portrayed as part of a Zionist "plot" to win the trust of the Palestinian residents of eastern Jerusalem. The municipality is supposedly instilling Israeli norms of thinking and behavior on them that will "uproot their Palestinian character" and replace it with a foreign Israeli wrapping.

The PA regularly spreads disinformation about the intentions of the municipality and the Israeli government. For example, the Palestinian media portray every case of land expropriation in eastern Jerusalem for the purpose of building roads in Jerusalem Arab neighborhoods (in the framework of a NIS 500 million five-year transportation plan) as dispossession of Palestinian land. The PA repeatedly depicts all roads built for the benefit of the Arab residents as being aimed at the benefit of allegedly-planned future Jewish communities.

The violent and aggressive discourse instigated by the PA and its agents in eastern Jerusalem against anyone cooperating with the Jerusalem municipality and the Israeli authorities is extreme and unreasonable. Even leaders in the Arab neighborhoods who are in no way "pro-Zionist" are verbally and physically attacked by PA agents in Jerusalem for intervening with the Israel authorities in order to improve the residents' lives. These neighborhood leaders are subjected to social and public blackballing. Such threats and intimidation have included the burning of two Jerusalem municipality community centers in eastern Jerusalem by Fatah members: one in Sur Baher and the other in Isawiya.

As a rule, the PA takes aggressive and violent action to prevent Jerusalemite Arabs from behaving as residents with equal rights and duties. The PA wants to keep them from exercising those rights with Israeli authorities. It seeks to prevent healthy interaction with the Israeli government and its institutions and with Israeli society in general. There is no doubt that the PA ceaselessly undermines the foundations of Jerusalem's unity and works towards de facto division of the city by strengthening the Arab residents' attachment to Ramallah, instead of Jerusalem.

PA Institutional Activity in Jerusalem

The PA operates several institutions in Jerusalem: the eastern Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce, the Supreme Council for the Arab Tourism Industry, the Center for Palestinian Studies, the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, and the Office for Social and Statistical Studies.

Minister of Public Security Gilad Erdan extends from time to time the directive restricting the activity of these institutions. His authority is based on Article 3A of the Law Implementing Agreement on Gaza and Jericho Areas (Restrictions of Activity) – 1994. This law bars the PA from opening or operating any offices, holding any gathering, or conducting any activity in Israel. It authorizes the minister of public security to issue a directive preventing such activity. These institutions and other entities identified with the PA holds occasional events of a political character

in support of the PA and in opposition to normalization with Israel. When Israeli security agencies obtain advance information about such events, the police prevent them from taking place.

The PA's activity in eastern Jerusalem focuses on two areas. One is the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, headed by the PA Minister Adnan al-Husayni, based in A-Ram outside Jerusalem. The other is PA Governor of Jerusalem Adnan Gheith, a resident of Silwan. Husayni is responsible for formulating strategy and managing the campaign to enhance the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem and thwart efforts to "Judaize" it. Husayni is prominent in the struggle against introducing the Israeli curriculum into schools in eastern Jerusalem. Gheith leads field work for the PA: community work with street leaders in eastern Jerusalem, inciting and funding violent uprisings and rioting, events in support of the PA, protests against "normalization," and terrorizing "Zionist collaborators" of various types.

Online PA budget books show that the PA spends NIS 64 million a year on activity in Jerusalem: NIS 6 million from the governor and NIS 58 million from the minister. The budget items are general, but the emphasis can be deduced from them.

Governor Gheith's budget contains items such as:

- Support for "sumud" – retention of land and maintaining determined resistance to the "crime" of the "Israeli occupation";
- Supervision of illegal weapons – a completely governmental action. It can be assumed that the Palestinian criteria for the "legality" of weapons are the opposite of the Israeli criteria;
- Receptions for overseas delegations – an official diplomatic action;
- Aid for refugees and families of prisoners and "*shahids*" ("martyrs");
- Help for women in finding jobs, family counseling, and community affairs.

The minister's budget includes:

- Humanitarian aid for needy families;
- Support for institutions affiliated with the PA;
- Legal and economic aid for those whose homes were built without permits and are at risk of demolition;
- Support for cultural, social, and sports activities;
- Financial assistance for merchants.

Spending on sports activities, for example, is often in response to the expansion of Israeli municipal services in the Arab neighborhoods. For example, in the Isawiya neighborhood, the Jerusalem municipality wanted to make extensive renovations of the existing soccer field. When the discussions between the municipality and the residents reached the advanced stages, the PA "suddenly" entered the picture and allocated a respectable sum from its budget for renovating the field. The PA's renovations were halted following intervention by the Jerusalem District police.

The PA also operates five private schools in eastern Jerusalem in which the Palestinian curriculum is studied. These schools are not subject to Israeli supervision.

The PA's goal is to exert effective control over as many spheres as possible in the lives of residents in eastern Jerusalem. In the economic sphere, the PA solicits donations from international groups, such as the EU, and from Arab countries.

At the January 2018 Arab League Summit, the Palestinian ambassador presented a "strategic growth program" for eastern Jerusalem for 2018-2020. He asked for NIS 425 million to fund the program "in order to save Jerusalem and defend it against the Israeli program." This activity is mostly coordinated by the "Jerusalem unit" in President Mahmoud Abbas's office in cooperation with Husayni's Ministry for Jerusalem Affairs and Governor Gheith's office.

PA representatives occasionally organize conferences and meetings with the participation of groups active in eastern Jerusalem, including prominent public figures, PA officeholders, and neighborhood leaders. Even representatives affiliated with Hamas and the Islamic Movement are sometimes invited in order to coordinate views and arrange collaboration against the "occupier's" activity in eastern Jerusalem "in the interests of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem."

A general analysis of the PA's activity in Jerusalem shows that it is establishing a governmental system, albeit limited and partial in scope, as an alternative to the Israeli governmental system. The bulk of the PA's budget in Jerusalem deals with spheres related to political and national aspects: demolitions of buildings, support for violent resistance and protests against Israel, and public diplomacy against "the Israeli occupation." The Palestinian budget focuses on undermining Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem and encouraging political and legal subversion for the purpose of furthering a Palestinian alternative to Israeli rule.

It should be noted that the Palestinian budget is negligible in comparison with the Israel budget. In recent years, Israeli governments have allocated many hundreds of millions of shekels for roads, drainage, infrastructure, education, welfare, leisure, sports, etc. On the other hand, Israeli budget focuses on providing municipal services, while the Palestinian budget concentrates on propaganda and politics.

The Struggle over Sales of Land and Properties to Jews

Gheith has been arrested many times in connection with the Palestinian struggle against the sale of land and properties to Jews. Gheith was suspected of involvement in the interrogation, kidnapping, and smuggling into PA territory of Issam Akel, a resident of eastern Jerusalem and an American citizen. Gheith and his associates suspected Akel of selling properties to organizations promoting Jewish settlement in eastern Jerusalem. A PA court sentenced Akel to life in prison at hard labor. Despite

the PA's reluctance, Akel eventually was released and sent to the US. In addition to Akel, the PA recently arrested 45 Palestinians on suspicion of selling properties to Jews.

The Palestinian security organs, whose activity in eastern Jerusalem is illegal, were involved in the interrogation of the "accused." The PA's security and political subversion in Jerusalem led to counter-action by the Israeli security agencies. In late November 2018, the Jerusalem police arrested 32 residents of eastern Jerusalem suspected of taking part in actions by the Palestinian security organs in violation of Article 7 of the Law Implementing Agreement on Gaza and Jericho Areas, which bans recruitment and enlistment in the PA's armed forces. The media reported that tens of thousands of shekels in cash and foreign currency, Palestinian police documents, various types of uniforms, ammunition, a variety of military equipment, various authorization documents, and many photographs and documents relating to the PA security organs were seized in a search of the suspects' homes.

Over the past year, the issue of land sales in eastern Jerusalem became a key tool in power struggles among the leadership of the PA and Fatah. For example, senior Fatah leader Mohammed Dahlan, a bitter enemy of Abu Mazen, was accused of being involved in the sale of a Palestinian property in the Old City to the Ateret Cohanim organization. Dahlan made strenuous efforts to disprove these rumors by donating hundreds of thousands of dollars for the renovation of Palestinian-owned buildings in the Old City. He gave scholarships and loans to Palestinian residents of eastern Jerusalem.

Popular Activity by Fatah and Other Palestinian Nationalist Parties in Eastern Jerusalem

Fatah is the dominant movement in the PA leadership, which makes it impossible to separate the PA's activity in Jerusalem from that of Fatah. As a political mass movement, Fatah nevertheless often acts independently in eastern Jerusalem without the PA umbrella, mainly for legal reasons.

Fatah operates several sports clubs in eastern Jerusalem. One of the most prominent is the Mount of Olives club (Arabic: *Nadi Jabal a-Zaytun*) in the A-Tur neighborhood – Fatah's most important political power base in Jerusalem. This club conducts sports, cultural, and leisure activity in the neighborhood. It competes for young people with the Jerusalem municipality's community center in the neighborhood.

Fatah is prominent in eastern Jerusalem in organizing riots and processions in celebration of Palestinian events and anniversaries. The organization fosters the development of community leadership affiliated with the movement in various neighborhoods.

Fatah also plays a leading role in parent committees in schools and neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem. These committees engage in political activity under an educational façade. They are involved in the resistance to the introduction of Israeli matriculation. They shut down schools during confrontations with the Israeli authorities, while taking no effective action on behalf of the academic and professional future of children and teenagers in neighborhoods.

Two other prominent Palestinian nationalistic political parties operating in the Arab neighborhoods are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). These parties concentrate on riots, armed processions, and holding pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist events in core neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem, such as Silwan and Isawiya. PFLP and DFLP maintain extensive connections with countries, organizations, and pro-Palestinian foundations in the BDS framework.

Hamas Activity in eastern Jerusalem

As a terrorist organization, any activity by Hamas in Jerusalem is illegal. Any official or covert activity by the movement known to Israeli security agencies is prevented. Hamas has nevertheless managed to gain extensive public allegiance in eastern Jerusalem. The movement has accumulated a great deal of power under the surface among people in eastern Jerusalem.

Hamas focuses its activity in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount. Its members lead religious and cultural activity there. They organize riots, entrenchment in the Al Aqsa mosque, and engage in confrontations with Jews visiting the Temple Mount and Israeli security forces.

Hamas is also very active in community work in eastern Jerusalem, especially in charity and welfare associations and in education. Hamas is involved in several sports ventures for young people in various neighborhoods, and from time to time holds competitions in memory of *shahids*. These actions are not under the organization's official auspices; they are conducted through organizations and associations affiliated with Hamas or its ideas.

Hamas is well rooted in several neighborhoods, the most prominent of which are Sur Baher, Umm Tuba, Jabel Mukaber, and Umm Lisun in southeastern Jerusalem. For example, some members of a dominant and influential parents' committee in Jabel Mukaber are senior Hamas members recently released from Israeli prisons.

In contrast to the parents' committees affiliated with Fatah, this committee does not focus on political aspects. It strives to find solutions for concrete educational problems, such as a shortage of classrooms, improvement of teaching, etc. The businesslike attitude of Hamas and its educational successes have strengthened it at

the expense of Fatah in the struggle for Palestinian popular opinion in eastern Jerusalem.

The Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement

The Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement was outlawed in November 2015. Its influence on public opinion in eastern Jerusalem, however, is palpable.

The Northern Islamic Movement, led by Sheikh Raed Salah, is a leading factor on the Temple Mount. Salah has led the "Al-Aqsa-is-in-danger" campaign for the past 20 years. This campaign brought thousands of Israeli citizens from villages in the Triangle area in the eastern Sharon plain and in northern Israel to the Temple Mount, both in quiet times and in periods of unrest. The resulting confrontations frequently culminated in clashes with the Israeli security forces. Salah's arrest and the outlawing of the movement hindered its efforts.

Like Hamas, however, this movement also has great influence over popular opinion in eastern Jerusalem. This influence is especially prominent in neighborhoods adjacent to the Old City basin, such as Silwan and Wadi Joz.

After it was outlawed, the Northern Islamic Movement's became more camouflaged and surreptitious. Before it was outlawed, however, the movement left its mark in very visible areas, such as construction of playgrounds in Silwan.

In order to evade the legal challenge to the movement and augment its influence in Jerusalem, Salah founded an organization called "The Islamic Nation Waqf for Jerusalem and Al Aqsa," which operates from Turkey "to preserve the holy places and prevent the occupation from controlling them." The organization solicits donations from governments, international organizations, businessmen, and popular leaders. It finds bank accounts in which the donations can be safely deposited. It then invests the money in projects in Jerusalem, mainly in Al Aqsa and the Muslim quarter in the Old City.

Dozens, even hundreds, of Islamic organizations operate in the same way, some from Jerusalem and some from the Muslim world. They engage in a variety of actions, but all of them highlight the slogan "strengthening Muslims in Jerusalem." Their activities include donations to Al Aqsa, supporting *rabat* (active resistance to Jews entering the Temple Mount), and charity. These organizations are also involved in relatively high-profile activities, such as education and renovation of buildings in the Old City.

The Second Category – The Islamic and Non-Palestinian Arab Players Hizb ut-Tahrir

Hizb ut-Tahrir (Liberation Party) is a fundamentalist Islamic movement that aims to eliminate all national political frameworks and establish a global Islamic caliphate in their place. The movement, which was founded in Jerusalem in 1953, has branches throughout the world. It promotes this aim through dawa (religious empowerment via persuasion and proselytization), not a violent Jihad.

The movement focuses on two main spheres in the Palestinian context: preparing land for turning the Al Aqsa mosque into a platform for the future caliphate, and challenging Jordan as guardian of the holy places in Jerusalem.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has a "modesty patrol" throughout eastern Jerusalem for ensuring behavior in compliance with Islamic religious law, including a ban on drinking alcohol, familiarity between men and women, etc. It is especially active on the Temple Mount and in the Muslim quarter and a few mosques in Beit Safafa and Beit Hanina.

Popular Islamic and Arab Initiatives

Muslim groups organize popular initiatives and social media campaigns for Jerusalem from time to time, sometimes in cooperation with civil groups. For example, a campaign by "The Jordanian Engineers' Committee for Palestine and Jerusalem" raised over five million Jordanian dinars. The money was spent on renovating 220 housing units and classrooms. Money was given to 1,200 residents and students in eastern Jerusalem.

***Al-Itthad al-Alami Li-Ulama al-Muslimin* (International Union of Muslim Scholars)**

The International Union of Muslim Scholars is a group of Muslim theologians that describes itself as "the supreme authority of the Muslim Brotherhood." Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, regarded as the greatest living Sunni authority in Islamic law, is its leader. The Union convenes a "Jerusalem committee" whose main objective is "to save Jerusalem from the Zionist occupation." This committee solicits donations "on behalf of the holy Al Aqsa mosque" and coordinates allocations of funds with those who run the mosque. It encourages Muslims from all over the world to visit and pray at Al Aqsa and buttress the Islamic presence on the Temple Mount.

ISIS

The global Jihad movement has no mass appeal in eastern Jerusalem, but it has sleeper and active cells there. An ISIS cell was discovered in the Shuafat refugee camp in October 2016 and its members were arrested. Other ISIS cells focus on a struggle against the Christians living in the city. This includes the publication of proclamations calling on Christians to leave Jerusalem, anti-Christian graffiti in Christian schools, etc.

Muslim Countries

Turkey

Turkey is the most active and important foreign country operating in eastern Jerusalem. Led by Erdogan, Turkey seeks to exert its influence in the Middle East and to reinstitute the Ottoman sultanate. It regards influence in eastern Jerusalem, particularly the Temple Mount, as a major strategic goal. The Erdogan regime is currently the leading global patron of the Muslim Brotherhood. It sees events in Jerusalem as an element in the establishment of Turkish regional hegemony at the expense of other players.

Jordan, which played the role of guardian of the holy places and champion of residents of Eastern Jerusalem, is the main loser from Turkey's growing presence. Jordan's standing in the city has gradually diminished in recent years. Its role in the city has been restricted to the 144-dunam (36-acre) Temple Mount compound, and that role is being eroded even there. Turkey is filling the vacuum throughout the city and on the Temple Mount. The admiration for Turkey among residents of eastern Jerusalem is unprecedented. Turkish flags are often flown on roofs of buildings in eastern Jerusalem and even on the Temple Mount.

The rejuvenation of Turkish culture in the city is reflected in the study of the Turkish language and the presence of Turkish music and food. Its public support on the Palestinian issue and for Al Aqsa, and the millions of dollars it distributes to eastern Jerusalem, are winning sympathy and support for Turkey. Turkish popularity in eastern Jerusalem has grown so much in recent years that leaders in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the PA have told Israel that Erdogan was building up spheres of influence in eastern Jerusalem that jeopardized their interests and those of Israel.²

Turkish involvement is facilitated through cooperation with Muslim Brotherhood groups in the city, which are often allied with Turkey and do its bidding. Turkey funds a large proportion of dawa actions in the city, including charitable associations, women's organizations, leisure and cultural events, and youth activities. Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem in 1996-2004, sponsors a large proportion of these organizations. He has become the leading figure affiliated with Turkish activity in the city.

Turkey conducts its actions and investments in eastern Jerusalem through its governmental aid agency, the Turkish consulate in Jerusalem, and a number of Turkish organizations maintaining local branches in Israel or in Judea and Samaria.

² Amir Tibon and Yaniv Kubovich, "Jordan, Saudis and Palestinians Warn: Erdogan Operating in Eastern Jerusalem under Your Nose," *Haaretz*, June 28, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-jordan-saudis-and-pa-warn-israel-erdogan-operating-in-east-jerusalem-1.6220111>.

Turkey also renovates buildings in the Old City and undertakes infrastructure projects through organizations acting on its behalf.

The encouragement of Turkish religious tourism is also worthy of note. The Turkish government recently declared that pilgrimage to Jerusalem was an integral part of the haj to Mecca. Some Turkish pilgrims have clashed with the Israeli police on the Temple Mount to challenge Israeli rule there.³

Jordan

Article 9 of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty states, "Israel respects the present special role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim Holy shrines in Jerusalem." The Hashemite dynasty's prestige depends on its role as the guardian of Al-Haram al-Sarif (the Temple Mount). The Waqf, which manages day-to-day affairs on the Temple Mount, is a Jordanian entity. Its employees receive their salaries from Jordan. The Jordanian royal house is informed of every strategic decision involving the Temple Mount and its surroundings, and its assent is required. The Jordanian Waqf operates Sharia (Islamic religious law) courts in addition to the Sharia courts operated by the Israeli government.

The Jordanian government issues Jordanian passports to residents of the city, who are entitled to simultaneously hold both Jordanian and Israeli passports. This service is provided in the above-mentioned Sharia court. In contrast to other foreign passports, holding a Jordanian passport does not affect the residency status of Arabs in eastern Jerusalem.

Despite Jordan's unique status, it appears that while popular opinion in eastern Jerusalem mostly appreciates and respects the Jordanian royal house, there is no real sympathy for it. This is reserved for Erdogan, whom the Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem regard as the only real man left in the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates

The Palestinian and Arab media have been replete with reports about growing efforts by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to increase their influence in eastern Jerusalem. Saudi Arabia is reportedly striving to exploit the decline in Jordan's status to play the role of "guardian of the holy places" in Jerusalem, in addition to Mecca and Medina, the holy cities of Islam located in Saudi Arabia.

At the most recent Arab League Summit in April 2018, Saudi Arabia donated \$150 million to eastern Jerusalem. It was also reported that Saudi Arabia and UAE were buying up property in the Old City and near the Temple Mount.

³ See this author's article, "Eastern Jerusalem: End of an Intermediate Era," October 31, 2017, <https://jiss.org.il/en/eastern-jerusalem/>

Despite Saudi efforts, it appears that most residents of eastern Jerusalem object to the Saudi presence in the city. They regard Saudi activism as a vain attempt to buy the city residents' loyalty with money, not as an expression of genuine concern for their needs and welfare. UAE has even been accused in the Palestinian and Arab press of being involved in the sale of land to Jews.

The Third Category – Groups in the International Community

The European Union

The EU funds non-governmental political organizations affiliated with the left of the Israeli political spectrum. This funding is accompanied by the publication of position papers and field projects in two main areas. The first consists of undermining Israeli sovereignty in eastern Jerusalem and defaming Israel and the Jerusalem municipality in public opinion and international forums on the issue of eastern Jerusalem. The second consists of civil projects for the benefit of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem and siding with them in exercising their rights vis-à-vis the various Israeli authorities.

In planning and building, the EU is prominent in paying for legal counsel for families and organizations subject to prosecution for illegal construction. In the business sphere, the EU campaigns for the reopening of the once-active Palestinian Chamber of Commerce, closed by Israel, which is seeking to reopen as the PA's business arm in Jerusalem. The EU also provides financial support for Palestinian hospitals operating in eastern Jerusalem. This support totaled €66 million in 2012-2018. The EU also supports several sports and cultural clubs affiliated with the PA operating in eastern Jerusalem.

The UN

The UN operates in Jerusalem primarily through two agencies: UNRWA, which will be discussed in a separate paper, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

As part of its activity in Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and eastern Jerusalem, UNDP runs an "assistance program for the Palestinian people." This includes infrastructure in eastern Jerusalem, such as playgrounds, sewage infrastructure, etc. UNDP also collaborates with the "Working Woman's Association" in eastern Jerusalem in supporting women's rights in order to empower Palestinian women there.

Relations between Players in Different Categories

The three above-mentioned categories of players are capable of independent action, but cooperation between them creates a force multiplier in challenging Israeli

sovereignty in Jerusalem. There are two alliances connecting the players in the various categories: a religious-Islamic alliance and a political-diplomatic alliance.

At the head of the Islamic grouping is Turkey, which acts in coordination with Hamas and the Northern Islamic Movement. This "Islamic alliance" seeks to expel Israel from eastern Jerusalem, above all as an "apostate" player operating in an Islamic holy place. This alliance accordingly focuses its efforts on the Temple Mount and the surrounding area.

The "political alliance," led by the PA, operates in close coordination with European players in order to undermine the foundation of Israeli rule in eastern Jerusalem. It regards Israeli rule there as the main barrier to achieving the Palestinian dream of a state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital.

Each of these "alliances" fully believes in the justice of its cause. Each devotes large sums of money and great efforts to excluding Israel from eastern Jerusalem and creating a wall separating the municipality and the Israeli authorities from the Palestinian residents in the city.

The Islamic alliance delegitimizes and demonizes Israel on the issue of Jerusalem and accuses it of conspiring to destroy the Al Aqsa mosque, supposedly in order to replace it with the Third Temple. These allegations were responsible to a large extent for the atmosphere that caused the wave of "lone wolf" terrorist attacks on the streets of Jerusalem in 2014-2017. Effective measures against this alliance are therefore closely related to security at the most basic level.

Policy Recommendations for Confronting Foreign Subversion in Jerusalem

Israel must take foreign challenges to its sovereignty and rule in eastern Jerusalem seriously, and act determinedly to fortify its sovereignty and increase the security of all Jerusalem residents.

Israeli policy in dealing with the challenges described in this paper should be based on several principles:

1. Treat the issue as a matter of national security that should be addressed in integrative manner by a team from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministries of Public Security and Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage, the Jerusalem municipality, Israel Security Agency, and Israel Police. The issue may require leadership by the National Security Council as an coordinating agency.

It is recommended that this team take the following measures:

- a. Extend and complete the intelligence picture presented here with information that is not publicly available.

- b. Classify all activities by foreign actors according to their legal status (legal or illegal) under existing law.
 - c. Evaluate an extension and revision of the Law Implementing Agreement on Gaza and Jericho Areas dealing with the PA's activity in eastern Jerusalem. This should include adaption of the law to areas that it does not currently cover.
 - d. Investigate the financial channels for funding foreign activity and methods of reducing the scope of legally transferred money.
 - e. Conduct a discrete, frank, and transparent dialogue with the Jordanian government about measures that will bolster a Jordanian counterweight to the power of Turkey in matters pertaining to the Muslim religious world.
2. The foreign "assault" must be met by an Israeli civilian "assault." This should consist of optimal implementation of Israeli government plan No. 3790, amounting to NIS 2.1 billion in spending over five years, with a focus on infrastructure, education, planning and building, sports, employment, and welfare in eastern Jerusalem. A special effort should be made in "soft" matters pertaining to the campaign for winning over young people: community centers, group activities, education and access to Israeli higher education, and employment in the Israel labor market.

This program and other civil investment programs should be accompanied by appropriate public relations by the Israeli government and the Jerusalem municipality directed at Arabs in eastern Jerusalem. The goal should be to emphasize the civil and practical character of this investment. Palestinian allegations about efforts to "Judaize" Arabs in eastern Jerusalem and eliminate the Palestinian character should be refuted.

3. Enhancing the Israeli presence in the physical territory of eastern Jerusalem and online (in social networks). A widespread municipal, governmental, and police presence should be established. Specialists in field cells should be deeply involved in a way that make them extremely knowledgeable about a specific field cell, given the great size of the territory and the variation between the types of people in various villages and neighborhoods.

Social networks are a main battleground in the struggle to shape the consciousness of Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem, too. The Jerusalem municipality operates a municipal website in Arabic and an Arabic-language Facebook page with nearly 35,000 followers, most of whom are Palestinian residents of eastern Jerusalem. The reach of this municipal page should be widened. Facebook pages should be created for other Israeli authorities, such as Israel Police, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, etc. These pages will facilitate a direct dialogue with the residents themselves, free of intermediaries, thereby refuting the large-scale disinformation coming from the PA and its agents.

4. The strategic partners in eastern Jerusalem of the municipality and the Israeli authorities should be embraced, including directors of community centers, school superintendents, mukhtars, and leaders in contact with the authorities.

These parties often feel that not enough attention is paid to their needs. An attempt should be made to consider their requests positively and expeditiously and to meet their needs as neighborhood representatives.

These partners bear the brunt of the struggle against the Islamic alliance and the political alliance. They are trying to give a real chance to a civil policy that bestows equal rights and obligations on Arabs in eastern Jerusalem. Embracing these partners can work to their detriment by marking them as collaborators with the "occupation." If they can bring concrete achievements to villages and neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem through dialogue with the authorities, however, this will bolster their power as a significant pragmatic counterweight to the Islamic and political players seeking to eliminate Israeli rule in the capital.

