

Al-Tur

Introduction

Al-Tur began as a small village perched atop the Mount of Olives, one of the most prominent mountains in Jerusalem at 826 meters in elevation.¹ Due to this elevation, Jerusalemites and tourists flock to the Seven Arches Observation Point² to view the Old City from its eastern side and take in its beauty and ancient historical buildings.



¹ Al-Dabbagh, Mustafa Murad. "Our Country, Palestine." *Palestine Remembered*.

<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Articles/Biladuna-Filisteen/Story25765.htm>

² It is called the Seven Arches Panorama for its proximity to the Seven Arches Hotel which dates back to Jordanian rule in Jerusalem. The Occupation authorities call it the "Rehav'am Observation Point" after the minister of tourism who was assassinated by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in 2001.

Location and Area

Al-Tur village (Mount of Olives) is located east of the Old City of occupied Jerusalem. It is bordered from the north by al-Issawiyah village and Wadi al-Joz neighborhood, from the south by Silwan and al-Ezariyah, from the east by al-Zayim, and from the west by the Old City and al-Aqsa Mosque.

Today, al-Tur falls under the jurisdiction of the Occupation Municipality in Jerusalem. According to their administrative zoning, it has an area of 1,747 dunums, though its original area is 8,700 dunums³, including the lands on which al-Sowanah neighborhood developed on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Al-Tur also includes land located in Palestinian Authority territories as per the divisions stipulated by the Oslo Agreement, including al-Zayim neighborhood, established and populated after the Nakba in 1948 by refugees from the uprooted village of Deir Rafat, west of Jerusalem.⁴

Origin and History

Palestinian scholar and historian Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh notes that the origin of the name may be associated with the olive trees that cover the area.⁵ Arabs named it Tur Zayta, with *tur* meaning “mountain” and *Zayta* denoting olives or oil. Arabs continued to call it Tur until the 12th century AH.⁶ It appears that the definite article “al” was added later, as the village appears in Ottoman registers as Tur Zayta. With time, the name was later shortened to al-Tur.⁷ In the Roman era, the village was known as Bethphage.

On its western side, the Mount of Olives is separated from the Old City by a valley carrying many names: Wadi Sitna Mariam (Valley of Our Lady Mary), Wadi Jahannam (Hell Valley), Wadi al-Nar (Fire Valley), Wadi Silwan or Wadi Kidron⁸. Bashir Barakat notes that the Muslim caliph, Omar ibn al-Khattab, and the Ayubid leader Salah al-Din camped on this mountain.⁹

³ According to Salim Sayyad, a land surveyor in al-Tur, during a phone call on 3 October 2018.

⁴ Barakat, Bashir, "Maalem Qaryat Al-Tur Al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Landmarks of Al-Tur)," in *Mabahith Fi al-Tarikh al-Maqdisi al-Hadith* (Themes from the Modern History of Jerusalem) (2005) (al-Zayim is a neighborhood founded on the lands of al-Tur).

⁵ Al-Dabbagh, Mustafa Murad. "Our Country, Palestine." *Palestine Remembered*.

<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Articles/Biladuna-Filisteen/Story25765.htm>

⁶ Bashir Barakat, "Maalem Qaryat Al-Tur Al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Landmarks of Al-Tur)," in *Mabahith Fi al-Tarikh al-Maqdisi al-Hadith* (Themes from the Modern History of Jerusalem) (2005).

⁷ Al-Dabbagh, Mustafa Murad. "Our Country, Palestine." *Palestine Remembered*.

<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Articles/Biladuna-Filisteen/Story25765.htm>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*



Population

Today, al-Tur is inhabited by approximately 25,000 Palestinians.¹⁰ Most of them descend from the original families of al-Tur, which branch out into several families: Abu Ghannam and Khuwais are the largest two families and own the largest areas of land. There is also al-Sayyad, Abu al-Hawa, Abu Sbitan, al-Hidra and Ashayer,¹¹ in addition to other families who moved to al-Tur from Jerusalem and Hebron.

¹⁰ "The Arab Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem: al-Tur", The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, Research no. 454.

¹¹ According to Hasan Hasan Hamad al-Hidreh, the former head of al-Tur Town Council, in an interview with the author on 20 January 2019.

Social and Economic Context

Historically, economic activity in al-Tur relied primarily on agriculture, including wheat, barley, legume and Palestine vetch cultivation, in addition to livestock farming and cheese, yoghurt and *jameed* production. Due to a lack of natural springs in the village, the residents relied on wells for irrigation, and each family dug a well to satisfy its basic needs. With time and urban expansion, the features of this agricultural and pastoral activity began to fade, and the number of families relying on raising livestock has significantly decreased.

As with most Jerusalem villages, al-Tur's original families were concentrated in the village center, where the main street lies today, opposite al-Makassed Hospital. They gradually expanded into overcrowded neighborhoods following the increase in population density and the influx of many families from outside al-Tur.¹²

Landmarks

Hospitals

Al-Tur is home to many Palestinian institutions, including two of the largest Palestinian hospitals in occupied Jerusalem, both established in the mid-20th century: al-Makassed Hospital of the Makassed Islamic Charitable Society, which also includes al-Makassed college in al-Tur; and the Augusta Victoria hospital of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Both hospitals receive patients from Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In 1967, on the eve of the occupation of Jerusalem, al-Makassed Hospital had been in its final phase of construction, funded with Kuwaiti money. After the occupation of Jerusalem, the Zionist military governor seized control of the hospital and sought to turn it into "government property." However, doctors, nurses and other patriotic Jerusalemite figures took swift action to furnish the facility and begin operating the hospital, thus saving it from confiscation.¹³

The Augusta Victoria Hospital is housed in a historical building that was constructed between 1907 and 1914 at the behest of the last Queen of the German Empire, Augusta Victoria of Prussia, wife of German Kaiser Wilhelm II. In some references, Arabs refer to the place as "Um al-Talaa." In 1914, Ahmed Djemal Pasha, commander of the Fourth Ottoman Army, used it as

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ For more information about al-Makassed Hospital, visit their website: <https://almakassed.org/>

headquarters.¹⁴ In 1927, the British claimed it as their headquarters at the beginning of their occupation, prior to relocating to the palace of the High Commissioner in Jabal al-Mukabber.¹⁵ In 1950, the building was officially converted into a hospital under German administration.

Religious Landmarks

Al-Tur is one of the most important religious and historic sites in Jerusalem due to its link to Jesus and the Christian Faith. Christians believe that Jesus often ascended al-Tur to escape Jewish persecution, and to seek isolation, worship and prayer. Christians also believe that Jesus ascended to heaven from al-Tur forty days after his crucifixion at the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Islamic Landmarks

Al-Asaadi Mosque: Located in the south of al-Tur over an area of 66 square meters, its name is attributed to the Muslim sheikh Asaad Afandi bin Saad al-Din al-Tabrizi (died 1624). According to the inscriptions on its walls, it was built in 1615. Available information on al-Tabrizi indicates that he arrived in Jerusalem in early-1615 on his return journey from Mecca following his Hajj pilgrimage. Al-Tabrizi remained in Jerusalem for a while before leaving for Istanbul, and it seems he commissioned the construction of the mosque during his stay in the Holy City. The designation of the mosque as a zawayah (Sufi monastery) prevails in most historical references.

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Rabia al-Adawiyyah Sanctuary: Located south of al-Tur, below al-Asaadi Mosque, the sanctuary is dedicated to Rabia al-Adawiyyah, a Sufi saint who likely lived in the 8th century and died in Basra, Iraq. Today, the sanctuary is under the custody of al-Alami family, who also oversee al-Zawayah al-Asaadiya.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Aref Al Aref, *The Nakba: The Nakba of Jerusalem and the Lost Paradise, 1947-1949*, vol. Second (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2012).

¹⁶ Natsheh, Yusuf, *Pilgrimage, Science and Sufism: Islamic Art in the West Bank and Gaza* (Palestinian Ministry of Culture and Museum Without Borders, 2010).

¹⁷ Al-Dabbagh, Mustafa Murad. "Our Country, Palestine." Palestine Remembered.

<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Articles/Biladuna-Filisteen/Story25765.htm>



Salman al-Farisi Mosque: Located east of al-Tur, near the village cemetery, the mosque was originally a sanctuary dedicated to Salman al-Farisi, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad. Available information reveals that it was built before the year 1613 and expanded over time. The present sanctuary was built in 1910, and in 1926, Mohammed Issa Abu al-Hawa funded the construction of the mosque and its minaret.

Al-Mansouriyah School: Built during the Mamluk period, the religious school includes a well, mosque and adjacent square-shaped courtyard. The building is currently deserted.¹⁸

Cemeteries

The village cemetery is located near the mosque on Salman al-Farisi Street. In the cemetery, there is a blocked cave, which is said to contain the remains of the mujahidin who joined Salah al-Din's campaign to liberate Jerusalem in the 12th century. Others refer to the cave as Maqam

¹⁸ "The Arab Neighborhoods in East Jerusalem: al-Tur", The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. Research no. 454.

al-Arbain (The Sanctuary of the Forty), stating that it holds a grave with remnants of inscriptions from the Mamluk period.

Among the most famous graves in the cemetery is that of Sheikh Mohammed Hashem Hasan al-Baghdadi (1909–1995) from the al-Qadiriya Sufi order and the Sufi sheikh of Jerusalem.¹⁹ In addition to the grave of Sheikh Mohammed Said al-Jamal, a member of the Shadhili Sufi order and a teacher at al-Aqsa Mosque (died in 2015), the cemetery also includes the graves of the Mount of Olives *shuhada* (martyrs) that have fallen since 1948, and the *shuhada* of the last popular uprising (2014–2017), including Mohammed Hasan Abu Ghannam, Ali Mohammed Abu Ghannam and Hanadi Abu Sbitan.

Christian Landmarks

The Lutheran Church of the Ascension: At 850m above sea level, the church is located at one of the highest points in Jerusalem. The structure was built in a Wilhelman- Byzantine style, with reinforced western facades.²⁰

The German Kaiser Wilhelm II visited Palestine in 1989 during the reign of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II for two reasons: firstly, to inaugurate the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Old City of Jerusalem; and secondly, to consolidate the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Germany. Following this visit, negotiations took place over the sale of real-estate in Jerusalem, including the land on which the Augusta Victoria compound would later be built and named after the Kaiser's wife. After purchasing the land, the Kaiser built the Lutheran Church of Ascension and an adjacent German palace in 1907. Under Jordanian rule, the palace was converted into a hospital.

¹⁹ Barakat, Bashir. "Maalem Qaryat Al-Tur Al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Landmarks of Al-Tur)," in *Mabahith Fi al-Tarikh al-Maqdisi al-Hadith* (Themes from the Modern History of Jerusalem) (2005).

²⁰ Kroyanker, David, *Jerusalem Architecture, Periods and Styles: European Christian buildings outside the Old City Walls, 1855-1918*. 1987. p.64.



The Ascension Rock (Chapel of the Ascension): Located north-east of the Asaadi Mosque, it is a circular open yard with a high dome at its center. Below the dome is a stone in the shape of a large foot. The yard is flanked by column bases, the remains of a demolished church described by Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali as “Hellenistic,” built during the time of Queen Helena.²¹ The site is run by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf (Islamic Religious Endowments Organization). Christians believe that the stone is a trace of Jesus's left footprint and that he ascended to Heaven from that spot after his crucifixion.

Bashir Barakat notes that he found evidence in Sharia court records indicating the dome was rebuilt in 1834 after it had been destroyed in an earthquake that same year. Jordan funded the restoration of the site in 2016.²²

²¹ Barakat, Bashir. "Maalem Qaryat Al-Tur Al-Islamiyyah (Islamic Landmarks of Al-Tur)," in *Mabahith Fi al-Tarikh al-Maqdisi al-Hadith* (Themes from the Modern History of Jerusalem) (2005).

²² Ibid.

The Ottoman state appointed officials to be responsible for the care of the site, until this task was assigned to the Abu Ghannam family by the Islamic Waqf. The site is a tourist destination, and a mass is held there once a year for the Feast of Ascension on the fortieth day of Easter.

The Russian Orthodox Convent of the Ascension (or the Russian Orthodox Church): The convent was built between 1870 and 1887 next to the Church of Ascension, and it can be reached through one of the alleys near the main street in al-Tur. Inside the convent is one of the most remarkable landmarks of al-Tur: a 64m bell tower visible from different areas in Jerusalem. The convent is inhabited by Orthodox nuns and provides a view of the neighborhoods east of al-Tur, including Abu Dis and al-Ezariyah.²³

Church of the Pater Noster: It stands on the left side of the road as you head to the Seven Arches observation point. The name of the church is associated with its location, where it is believed that Jesus taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer.²⁴

The Church of All Nations (Basilica of the Agony) / Gethsemane: This church is located at the crossroads between Silwan, Jerusalem and al-Tur. It is named the Church of All Nations because many countries donated funds for its construction in the 1920s (circa 1924). Originally a Byzantine church, it is adorned with 12 domes bearing the coats-of-arms of the countries from which the donations originated, such as Brazil, Italy, France, Argentina and the United Kingdom.

The word "gethsemane" is of Syriac origin, meaning "oil press." Inside the church, facing the altar is an outcrop of rock called the Rock of Agony, where Jesus' disciples are believed to have fallen asleep as Jesus agonized shortly before his arrest at the behest of the Jewish High Priest.

There are eight Roman olive trees in the church garden. The garden is mentioned in the Gospel as the place where Jesus found solitude and prayed (where he said: "Thy will be done") and suffered his burden after his last supper with the disciples and prior to his arrest, trial and crucifixion. This church represents "the place of betrayal" for Christians, where it is believed that Jesus said his last prayer before Judas Iscariot betrayed him and surrendered him to the Sanherdin.²⁵

²³ "Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem", Wafa Agency: [الأماكن المقدسة المسيحية في مدينة القدس](#)

²⁴ Sarah Kochav, Mount of Olives, An Authoritative guide to the Christian Holy.

²⁵ Aslan, Hiba, "Ard Al-Jismaniya, Li Kol Kanisa Hikaya (The Gethsemane Land: Each Church Has a Story)," Al Jazeera, November 12, 2016, <https://bit.ly/2OkmytN>.

Church of the Sepulchre of Saint Mary: Located north of the Church of All Nations and run by the Orthodox Church (Greek and Armenian), it is accessible via a stone staircase. Eastern Christians believe that the Virgin Mary was buried there in a rock-cut cave. Adjacent to the church and ahead of the staircase, is the shrine of Jerusalemite scholar and researcher Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali al-Ulaymi (1465–1522). al-Ulaymi wrote the remarkable book *al-uns al-jalil fi tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil* (The Glorious History of Jerusalem and Hebron).

Church of Saint Mary Magdalene: Russia purchased the land upon which the church was built from the Ottoman Empire in 1885. The church was built by Tsar Alexander III using Jerusalem limestone and took three years to be completed in 1888. The Tsar had it built in honor of his mother, Maria Alexandrovna, who in turn said that Mary Magdalene is more rightful to the name, as she had been the first woman to visit the empty grave of Jesus. The gilded onion domes that decorate its roof reflect its Russian architecture.²⁶

Dominus Fleuit Church (The Lord Wept): Located on the western slopes of the Mount of Olives, the church is distinguished by its altar, which directly faces the Dome of the Rock at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound. The church is affiliated with the Latin Patriarchate and was built in 1955 over the remains of a Byzantine church to commemorate passages in the Gospel that describe Jesus as he wept.

The Church of Bethphage: This catholic church was built on the spot from where it is believed that Jesus began his procession into Jerusalem. The church contains a Crusades-era stone from the year 1170, which is decorated with illustrations of events from the New Testament. The current church building was constructed in 1883 and renovated in 1954.

Finally, on the southwestern slope of the Mount of Olives, below the Seven Arches Hotel lies a massive Jewish cemetery. Most of the land on which the cemetery is located (250 donums) is owned by the Islamic Waq, endowed to the Salahiya school in the Old City and leased as a cemetery under Ottoman rule in 1872 for 99 years. Although the lease expired in 1971, the Occupation authorities continue to control and expand the cemetery to this day.²⁷

²⁶ Kroyanker, David, Jerusalem Architecture, Periods and Styles: European Christian buildings outside the Old City Walls, 1855-1918. 1987. p.134.

²⁷ According to Bashir Abd al-Ghani Barakat, a researcher on Jerusalem affairs and history, in an interview with the author on September 29, 2018.

This large cemetery is of particular significance to Jews, given their claim that Jews began burying their dead there 3,000 years ago, and that the Resurrection will begin over Wadi Kidron. Those buried in the cemetery, they believe, will be the first to be resurrected.

This religious aspect, regardless of its accuracy, cannot be divorced from Israeli colonial efforts in the cemetery. Many news reports have been published promoting the claim of the existence of fictitious graves there,²⁸ or attempting to falsify history by claiming Byzantine or Greek graves as Jewish. Moreover, there are unrelenting efforts to expand this cemetery, undertaken by settler organizations such as El-Ad Foundation (responsible for colonization in Silwan), which developed a website dedicated to documenting the graves in the cemetery and the biographies of those buried there.²⁹

History of Resistance

Due to its important location as one of the most elevated areas in Jerusalem, al-Tur was subjected to numerous Zionists attacks during the Nakba, aiming to occupy it and control the eastern part of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem-Jericho Road (eastern entrance to Jerusalem). Near dawn on May 4, 1948, a battalion of the Zionist Palmach militia attacked the Augusta Victoria hospital but failed to occupy it after Jordanian forces barricaded inside the hospital building and repelled the attack, killing 5 Zionist combatants and wounding dozens.

Al-Tur escaped occupation in 1948 and came under Jordanian rule until 1967. The Jordanian army maintained control over sites and fortifications on the slopes of the mountain, specifically in the vicinity of the Augusta Victoria hospital. This site witnessed a battle between the Jordanian army and the Israeli army in the 1967 Naksa, and it holds the graves of the Jordanian soldiers who fell in defense of the location.³⁰

Al-Tur was occupied in 1967 and annexed to the Occupation Municipality in Jerusalem.

More recently, during the 2014 Mohammed Abu Khdeir uprising and the following uprising in 2015, al-Tur witnessed waves of popular resistance against the Occupation police, which took the form of stones and Molotov cocktails being thrown at Beit Orot colony in particular.

²⁸ Awawdeh, Wadie, "Istimrar Zar Al-Qubour Al-Wahmmiyah Bil Quds," Al-Jazeera, 2012, <https://bit.ly/2N3SO2t>

²⁹ The website was founded in 2010, and can be accessed through: [Mount of Olives in Jerusalem](#)

³⁰ Abu Gharbieh, Bahjat. The Memoirs of Bahjat Abu Gharbieh, From al-Nakba to al-Intifada: 1949-2000.

Colonization

Colonialization is starkly present in al-Tur in the form of colonial outposts and colonies, and so-called “national parks,” both detailed below:

Colonial Outposts and Colonies:

There are two colonial outposts on the lands of al-Tur.³¹ One of these has expanded into Beit Orot, a colony on the northwestern slope of al-tur, adjacent to al-Sowanah neighborhood below the al-Tur football stadium. The second is the colonial outpost of Beit HaHoshen, known as the “Dar Abu al-Hawa outpost” and located in the center of al-Tur, opposite al-Zawiyah al-Asaadiyah.

Beit Orot was established in 1990. It is the first colonial presence in al-Tur and the first Palestinian property bought by settler organizations outside the Old City since the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967. In 1990, the American Jewish millionaire, Irving Moskowitz, bought an old Palestinian house from one of its owners who at the time resided in the United States.³² Subsequently, the house was turned into a colonial outpost, and over the following years, colonial activity expanded further over adjacent properties, on which four new buildings were constructed. This brought the total number of colonial apartments there to 24, thus establishing Beit Orot colony.

Additionally, the colony includes a Yeshiva, located in that first house bought in 1990. In addition to the recruitment of the Yeshiva students into the Occupation military, the school organizes many colonial activities that attract large numbers of settlers, including the yearly commemoration of the 1967 occupation of the eastern part of Jerusalem, dubbed by Zionists as “Reunification of Jerusalem Day.” The school also organizes tours of the colonies on the occasion of Tisha B’Av (the ninth of Av). Year after year since 2016, the Beit Orot colonists have sought to hold their ritual sacrificial slaughter preceding Passover at the closest point possible to al-Aqsa Mosque.

According to the colony’s website and that of the settler organization running it, it was named Beit Orot after Rabbi Chanan Porat, who helped establish the colony and its Yeshiva. The site

³¹They are commonly called “colonial outposts” because they consist of a house or several houses located in the middle of Palestinian neighborhoods and captured by colonists.

³² According to the Beit Orot website (in Hebrew): <http://www.beitorot.org>. The information is confirmed by Palestinian sources.

was chosen in commemoration of Porat's commander Giora Ashkenazi, who had been killed in battle near the site during the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967.³³

The second colonial outpost in al-Tur is Beit Hoshen, located in the middle of al-Khalwa neighborhood on the road leading to the Seven Arches Hotel. A massive Israeli flag flies over this outpost and can be seen from different areas in occupied Jerusalem. It is also known as Abu al-Hawa outpost, as it occupies residential apartments that were sold by a Palestinian from the Abu al-Hawa family.

The presence of these two colonial outposts in the heart of Jerusalem is a threat to Palestinian-Arab presence there. It impacts people's daily lives through the intense presence of Occupation police in al-Tur and the actions of the colonists' armed guards.

The "National Park"

Al-Tur suffers from other manifestations of settler-colonialism in the form of so-called "national parks." Large areas of land are declared as "national parks" by the Israeli Ministry of Interior under the pretext of the existence of archaeological, natural or historically significant sites. One such example was the discovery of the remains of a Crusader fortress and its subsequent declaration, including the surrounding monuments, as a "national park." After this declaration, the area was put under the control of the "Israel Nature and Park Authority," an Israeli government body.

Regularly, and especially in Jerusalem, false pretexts are fabricated about some archaeological or environmental value to a certain location, which is then associated with Jewish history and claims regarding its link to the place in question. Two locations in al-Tur attest to this: the Emek Tzurim National Park at Wadi al-Sowanah, and the Mount Scopus Slopes National Park.

Emek Tzurim was announced in 2000 over 170 donums of Wadi al-Sowanah land (northwest of al-Tur), under the pretext of expanding the Jerusalem City Walls National Park, and "re-enacting the scene pilgrims saw upon arriving in Jerusalem."³⁴ In other words, the confiscation of these lands and transfer of the right to their use to the "Israel Nature and Park Authority" comes

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ For more details, visit the website of the Israeli organization B'Tselem: [الحديقة الوطنية عميق تسوريم | بتسيلم](https://www.btselem.org/)

under the guise of “preserving a historical scene that the ancestors saw on pilgrimage to the city.” The land that falls within the area declared as a “national park” is privately owned by Palestinians and the Islamic Waqf. Declaring it a “national park” means that it will not be possible for its owners to develop it or build on it. Consequently, this severs the contiguity among Palestinian neighborhoods and turns the “national park” into a colonial wedge to split Palestinians apart.

This is also evident in the Mount Scopus Slopes National Park plan — yet to be implemented due to repeated legal objections and petitions — which aims to devour more than 700 donums from al-Issawiyah and al-Tur, the only areas left in the two villages for any future expansion.³⁵ The pretext put forward by the confiscation plan is that these lands contain “distinct vegetation and important archaeological discoveries.” The people of the two villages are well aware that there is no rare or distinct vegetation in that area that necessitates the confiscation of their lands and their prevention from building there. Moreover, the number of archaeological discoveries there is equal to the number of those unearthed in other areas where the building of Zionist colonies was encouraged.

It is thus possible to understand the role of Israeli “national parks” in the prevention of Palestinian urban expansion and geographic contiguity, especially in areas close to the Old City of occupied Jerusalem, which the Occupation authorities dub “the Holy Basin,” and where they seek to reduce the number of Palestinians and to control more land.³⁶

Epilogue

Today, al-Tur is one of the most densely populated areas in the eastern part of occupied Jerusalem. It is a lively commercial center, in addition to being one of the most prominent tourist destinations in Jerusalem for its religious landmarks and churches in particular. To tour its different landmarks, you may begin from the center of the village, from Salman al-Farisi Mosque and the adjacent cemetery. Then head to the Russian Orthodox Church of Ascension, on to the Ascension Rock, al-Zawiyah al-Asadiyah, Rabia al-Adawiyah Sanctuary and Church of the Pater Noster. Walk towards the Mount of Olives observation point (the Seven Arches Hotel), then descend the stairs towards the churches located at the foot of the mountain: the Dominus

³⁵ For more details, visit the website of the Israeli organization B'Tselem: <https://www.btselem.org/> [الحدائق الوطنية منحدرات جبل المشارف، والأضرار التي تلحقها بالعبودية والطور](https://www.btselem.org/press-releases/2017/07/20170720-national-parks-colonization)

³⁶ For more information, read “al-Hadaiq al-Qawmiyah: al-Istitan Bi Ism al-Tabia” (National Parks: Colonization in the name of Nature), Hanadi Qawasmi. *Mitras*. <https://bit.ly/34kGkvO>

Flevit Church, Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Church of All Nations and the Church of the Sepulchre of Saint Mary. At the end of this trajectory, you will have reached the vicinity of Bab al-Asbat (Lions' Gate), one of the gates to the Old City of Jerusalem.

+972 (0) 2 966 5655
info@grassrootsalquds.org | grassrootsalquds.net
9 Harun al-Rashid Street, Wadi al-Joz (3rd floor)
9149302 Jerusalem | P.O. Box 49379
شارع هارون الرشيد 9 - الطابق الثالث، وادي الجوز، القدس
ص.ب. 49379 | الرمز البريدي 9149302

