

Factsheet: Israel's Plans For Building in E-1

On November 30, 2012, Israel announced that it would advance plans to build housing units in E-1. This small, 4.6 square-mile barren hilltop lies between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim, a West Bank Israeli community with 40,000 people. Developing E-1 would ease connections between Maale Adumim and Jerusalem, just 2.5 miles away. Israel's announcement sparked an international outcry and a massive misinformation campaign.

Israel's decision about E-1 should not be controversial. All Israeli governments and two-state peace proposals presumed that Maale Adumim and E-1 would remain part of Israel.

- All Israeli prime ministers, including Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Ehud Olmert, have supported the plan to build in E-1 to connect Maale Adumim to Jerusalem.¹
- The plans for building 3,500 housing units in E-1 were first drawn up in 1994, during Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government.²
- Peace proposals, from the Clinton parameters in 2000 to Ehud Olmert's offer to Mahmoud Abbas in 2008, presumed that Maale Adumim and E-1, which is in Maale Adumim's municipal borders, were part of the "consensus settlements" that would remain part of Israel.³
- Even the Geneva Initiative, a 2003 peace proposal hammered out by left wing Israelis and many prominent PLO members, placed Maale Adumim and E1 in Israel.⁴

Retaining E-1 is critical for Israel's contiguity and security.

- Without E-1, Maale Adumim and its 40,000 Israelis would be cut off and isolated from Jerusalem and the rest of Israel.⁵
- Loss of control over E-1 would undermine Israel's ability to control the Jerusalem-Jericho road. This road is strategically vital, as it allows Israel to transport troops to the Jordanian border rapidly in times of war.⁶

Plans for E-1 are part of a larger plan to build more housing units for Jerusalem's growing population of both Arab and Jewish residents.

- Jerusalem's District and Planning Committee announced in mid-December that 5,285 new apartment units are being planned. Half of them will be for Arab Jerusalemites.⁷
- The demand for housing units in Jerusalem is at 4,500 a year, but only 1,700 are being built annually.⁸
- The plans include building commercial and industrial areas that will serve both Palestinians and Israelis.⁹

Israel's plans for E-1 will not prevent the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state.

- Israeli building in E-1 will not cut off the northern West Bank from the southern West Bank. Roughly ten miles of land between Maale Adumim and the Jordanian border will still connect the northern and southern West Banks. Israel itself is also only 10 miles wide in certain areas.¹⁰



- Israel is already building bypass roads which will link Ramallah in the north with Bethlehem in the south. ¹¹ One such road was completed in 2007. ¹²
- The *New York Times* had to issue corrections to its own stories on Dec. 7th and Dec. 8th which erroneously claimed that E-1 would separate the northern and southern West Bank. ¹³

Israel's E-1 plans will not displace Palestinians or use Palestinian land.

- The barren hilltop of E-1 is largely uninhabited state land, much of it unsuitable for building. Israel's E-1 plan includes creating a nature reserve in this area. ¹⁴
- The few Palestinians and Bedouin who inhabit E-1 illegally built almost 100 structures in the area without getting required permits or approval. Nevertheless, the Israeli authorities have not taken any measures against this illegal construction thus far. ¹⁵

Israel's E-1 plans will not cut off Palestinian access to East Jerusalem

- Israel has invested tens of millions of dollars to build new roads between East Jerusalem and Palestinian communities in the West Bank. ¹⁶

Israel's E-1 plans are politically controversial, but do not violate international law or signed PLO-Israeli agreements, according to numerous legal scholars.

- According to numerous legal scholars, the West Bank is disputed, not occupied territory under international law. Israel has legal, historical, and security claims to the land. Therefore, the Geneva Conventions do not apply to the West Bank and Israeli settlements are not illegal. ¹⁷
- The Oslo Accords, which were signed by the Palestinian leadership, do not prohibit Israel from building houses in the West Bank, particularly in Area C which remains under Israeli control. ¹⁸

Israel's plans to build in E-1 should not harm the peace process.

- Israel has not begun building houses in E-1 and likely will not do so for at least a year. The Palestinians have ample time to negotiate with Israel over E-1 and all other outstanding issues between the two parties. ¹⁹
- The blows to the peace process are not Israel's E-1 plans, but rather Palestinian terrorism, incitement to hatred and violence against Jews and Israelis, and refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to self-determination.
- A major obstacle to peace is the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, which governs Gaza, and continues to seek the obliteration of Israel: *"Palestine from the river to the sea...was, continues to be, and will remain Arab and Islamic. Jihad and armed resistance are the proper and true path to liberation... **The true statesman is born from the womb of the rifle and the missile.**"*—Khaled Meshal, Hamas leader, Dec. 8, 2012. ²⁰

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- ¹ Nadav Shragai, "Protecting the Contiguity of Israel: The E-1 Area and the Link Between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, May 24, 2009 at <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
- ² Tovah Lazaroff, "Analysis: In the eye of the beholder," *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 24, 2012 at <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=297090>
- ³ Tovah Lazaroff, "Analysis: In the eye of the beholder," *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 24, 2012 at <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=297090>
- ⁴ Elder of Ziyon, "Look who supports including Maaleh Adumim in Israel," *Elder of Ziyon*, Dec. 7, 2012 at <http://elderofziyon.blogspot.com/2012/12/look-who-supports-including-maaleh.html>
- ⁵ Nadav Shragai, "Protecting the Contiguity of Israel: The E-1 Area and the Link Between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim," *JCPA*, May 24, 2009, at <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
- ⁶ Nadav Shragai, "Protecting the Contiguity of Israel: The E-1 Area and the Link Between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim," *JCPA*, May 24, 2009, at <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
- ⁷ Ilan Ben Zion, "Panel approves 1,500 homes in East Jerusalem neighborhood," *Times of Israel*, Dec. 17, 2012 at <http://www.timesofisrael.com/panel-approves-1500-homes-in-east-jerusalem-neighborhood/>
- ⁸ Nadav Shragai, "If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem," *Israel Hayom*, Dec. 6, 2012 at http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_opinion.php?id=3010
- ⁹ Nadav Shragai, "Protecting the Contiguity of Israel: The E-1 Area and the Link Between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim," *JCPA*, May 24, 2009, at <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
- ¹⁰ Pesach Benson, "Despite the Hype, E1 Doesn't Cut West Bank in Two," *Honest Reporting*, <http://honestreporting.com/despite-the-hype-e1-doesnt-cut-west-bank-in-two/>
- ¹¹ Nadav Shragai, "Protecting the Contiguity of Israel: The E-1 Area and the Link Between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim," *JCPA*, May 24, 2009, at <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
- ¹² Jodi Rudoren, "Dividing the West Bank, and Deepening a Rift," *New York Times*, Dec. 1, 2012 at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/02/world/middleeast/2-state-solution-at-risk-in-israeli-building-plan.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
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- ¹⁵ Nadav Shragai, "Protecting the Contiguity of Israel: The E-1 Area and the Link Between Jerusalem and Maale Adumim," *JCPA*, May 24, 2009, at <http://jcpa.org/article/protecting-the-contiguity-of-israel-the-e-1-area-and-the-link-between-jerusalem-and-maale-adumim/>
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