



المركز الفلسطيني
للبحوث
السياسية والمسحية
Palestinian Center for
POLICY and
SURVEY RESEARCH

Who Needs Security?

Insecurity in the Isolated Jerusalem Neighborhoods: The Example of Kofr Aqab

Executive Summary



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August 2017



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The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)

PSR is an independent nonprofit institution and think tank of policy analysis and academic research. It was founded in 2000 with the goal of advancing scholarship and knowledge on immediate issues of concern to Palestinians in three areas: domestic politics and government, strategic analysis and foreign policy, and public opinion polls and survey research. PSR conducts policy analysis and empirical surveys and public opinion research and organizes task forces, study groups, meetings and conferences. Its work focuses on current public policy issues with a special reliance on empirical evidence as a tool to advance scholarship and understanding.

PSR is dedicated to promoting objective and nonpartisan research and analysis and to encouraging a better understanding of Palestinian domestic and international environment in an atmosphere of free debate and exchange of ideas. PSR is registered as a nonprofit institution in the Palestinian Ministry of Justice.

This initiative has been organized in cooperation with the Netherland Representative Office in Ramallah and in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ramallah



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Preface:

Since early 2016, the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research has conducted empirical research on Palestinian needs for security and rule of law in the Palestinian territories outside the area known as “A.” These targeted areas included the following: (1) area B, (2) area C, (3) H2 sector of Hebron, and (4) isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods located to the east of the Israeli separation wall, including Kofr Aqab, Samir Amis, Shufat refugee camp, and parts of Qalandia.

The study utilized various means and activities. Eight focus groups were conducted, each with a small group of residents from these areas ranging between 15 and 20 men and women, young and old. Four public opinion polls have been conducted during 2016. They included all areas under study, with two among a representative sample of the entire West Bank, to allow comparisons between A and non-A areas, while the other two focused on non-A areas. Six case studies covered a range of issues, including forced migration from area C, the status of security in the Jerusalem neighborhoods in area B, drug trafficking in non-A areas, aggression against women in area C, settlers’ violence, particularly in H2 area, and absence of security in isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the separation wall. The case studies relied on official statistical data, polling results, focus group findings, and field interviews. Finally, the study relied on interviews with Palestinian officials in relevant ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Judicial Council, the Police, the Palestinian Military Liaison, and others. Interviews were also conducted with relevant international and Israeli figures involved in the management of Palestinian-Israeli security coordination and rule of law. The study concludes with a Final Report containing a summary of the findings and the study’s recommendation and main conclusions. This paper, “Insecurity in the Isolated Jerusalem Neighborhoods: The Example of Kofr Aqab,” provides a review of the problems that infect all isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods that have been left by the Israeli on the eastern side of the Jerusalem separation wall leading to a grave vacuum of security and law enforcement.

This initiative has been conducted in close cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Interior and in consultation with various security sector and rule of law agencies. The study has also been conducted in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ramallah and the Quartet Office and with funding from the Netherlands Representative Office in Ramallah. PSR wishes to express gratitude to all those partners and donors who contributed to its work. It should be clear however that support for this project does not necessarily mean an endorsement of the content of this final report or any of the other papers and products.

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Executive Summary:

We have selected Kofr Aqab as an example of the state of lawlessness and insecurity prevailing in all isolated Jerusalem neighborhoods, those that have remained to the east of the separation wall built by Israel to separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank. Various aspects of this lawlessness can be seen in Kofr Aqab: breaches of building code, violation of public and private property, spread of arms and its use in quarrels between groups and families, drug use and trafficking, disregard to traffic law in a place central to movement between major populated areas, Ramallah and Jerusalem as well as north, center and south of the West Bank.

The problem started when the Israeli police, in the aftermath of the building of the separation wall, decided not to operate in Kofr Aqab. Israel, as the occupying power, is responsible under international law for enforcing the law in this town. The Oslo agreement has prevented the Palestinian security forces from operating in the Jerusalem area because it has been defined as one of the issues of the permanent status negotiations. Therefore, the PA has no legal or law enforcement jurisdiction in those areas considered by Israel to be part of Jerusalem despite the fact that Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem vote in the Palestinian parliament.

Israel seems interested in taking Kofr Aqab out of the Jerusalem municipal boundaries as the means to reduce the concentration of Palestinians in Jerusalem thus changing the demographic balance inside the city. It might decide at one point in the future to deny them the ID they currently enjoy which allows them free movement and access to the labor market in Israel.

In its efforts to reduce the suffering in Kofr Aqab, the PA has three possible options:

(1) The PA can seek to open a police station in the part of Kofr Aqab located in area C. Patrols by Palestinian police can also provide the public with a sense of security and deter violations of the law. This requires an Israeli consent for greater Palestinian law enforcement jurisdiction in area C. This is the most preferred choice of the residents of the isolated neighborhoods.

(2) The PA police, working jointly with local government and the governorate of Jerusalem as well as civil society, can form an unarmed local National Guard unit, in uniform, to be located in Kofr Aqab's local council building. This unit would work closely with the head of the local council and civil society groups while reporting directly to the PA police. The PA, through the local government ministry, would provide the necessary financial and logistical support.

(3) The PA, preferably with Israeli consent, should extend its own legal jurisdiction over all Palestinian residents in the areas of its judicial jurisdiction, including those East Jerusalem residents in Kofr Aqab with Israeli IDs.

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