

TIMELINE

From displacement and dispossession in Sheikh Jarrah to hostilities

19 May 2021 (Updated March 2022)

1865 – Palestinians establish the modern neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah north of the Jerusalem Old City walls.

1890 – The Jewish neighbourhood of Shimon HaTzadik (Simeon the Just) is established on land in Sheikh Jarrah purchased in 1875.

1948

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War Jordan gains control over the eastern part of Jerusalem, including the area of Sheikh Jarrah.

Jews who resided in the Sheikh Jarrah area evacuate their homes as fighting erupts and are subsequently unable to return. Their assets are placed under the administration of the Jordanian Custodian of Enemy Property.

Some 700,000 Palestinians are displaced from their homes in areas that came under Israeli control, among them Palestinian residents from neighbourhoods in the western part of Jerusalem.

1950 – The Knesset (Israel's parliament) enacts the Absentee Property Law pursuant to which the property of Palestinians displaced from areas that came under Israeli control in the 1948 War was placed in the hands of Israel's General Custodian. Palestinians have not been able to reclaim their property since.

1956 – 28 Palestinian families that had been displaced from their homes in areas that came under Israeli control in 1948 are resettled in Sheikh Jarrah on land provided by Jordan pursuant to a housing scheme sponsored by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

1967

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East Jerusalem begins, Sheikh Jarrah comes under Israeli control.

Israel decides to annex East Jerusalem, imposing its domestic law in the annexed territory and placing it within the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Municipality.

1970 – The Knesset enacts the Legal and Administrative Matters Law pursuant to which properties in East Jerusalem that were owned by Jews before they came under Jordanian control in 1948 could be reclaimed by their original owners.

1972 – Pursuant to the Legal and Administrative Matters Law of 1970, Israel's General Custodian orders that plots in Sheikh Jarrah be released and registered under the name of Jewish trusts whom it recognizes as the rightful owners. The trusts demand rental payment from the Palestinian families residing there.

1973 – The Israeli government adopts the recommendation of an inter-ministerial committee (the Gafni Committee) to preserve the demographic balance in the city at 73.5% Jews and 25.5% Palestinians.

1980 – The Knesset enacts Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel, imposing constitutional restrictions on the possibility of revoking the application of Israeli law to East Jerusalem.

1982 – The two Jewish trusts registered as owners file a lawsuit against Palestinian families residing in the Shimon HaTzadik compound of Sheikh Jarrah and demand their eviction. The parties reach a procedural agreement approved by the court according to which the families recognized the trusts' ownership of the plot in exchange for recognition of their status as protected tenants. The Palestinian tenants subsequently attempt to have the procedural agreement declared null and void but their efforts are rejected by various instances in the Israeli Court System and finally dismissed by the Israeli Supreme Court in 2008.

1993 – The two Jewish trusts begin filing suits for removal of the Palestinian residents, on the grounds that they had not paid rent, and had breached the terms of the procedural agreement. In 2001, the Jerusalem Magistrates' Court rules in favour of the trusts and orders that the Palestinian families evict the premises. Appeals challenging the ruling are denied first by the Jerusalem District Court in 2002 and then by the Israeli Supreme Court in 2008.

1997 – Sulayman Darwish Hajazi files suit before the Jerusalem District Court presenting documents from Ottoman and Jordanian archives said to prove his family's ownership of part of the Shimon HaTzadik compound. The suit is denied in 2005 and an appeal before the Israel Supreme Court is rejected in 2006.

2008

The Jewish settler organization Nahalat Shimon International purchases the rights over the properties in the Shimon HaTzadik compound.

The organization submits a plan to the Regional Committee for Planning and Construction for the destruction of homes on the plots they own in which Palestinians reside, for the removal of 500 Palestinian residents, and for the construction of a Jewish neighbourhood with 200 housing units.

Pursuant to an Israeli Court ruling, members of al-Kurd family are forcibly evicted from their home in the Shimon HaTzadik compound in Sheikh Jarrah and Jewish settlers move in.

2009 – Following another Israeli court ruling 53 members of the Hanun and al-Ghawi families are evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah and Jewish settlers move in their place.

2010 – Forced evictions and settlers' move into houses in Sheikh Jarrah prompt large protests and widespread denouncement including calls by the US and European governments on Israel to stop the process.

2014 – Jerusalem municipal planning authorities approve a plan to erect a 12-story building to serve as a campus for the *Or Sameach* yeshiva (a Jewish educational institution for religious studies) in Sheikh Jarrah.

2017 – The Shamasneh family is forcefully evicted from the family home in Sheikh Jarrah.

2021

The Jerusalem District Court rules in favour of Nahalat Shimon International ordering that eviction orders for hundreds of Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah are to be implemented by dates set for May 2021. Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah appeal the decision before the Israeli Supreme Court.

12 April – Ramadan begins, Israel erects barriers to prevent Palestinians from accessing a popular gathering point in the Damascus Gate Plaza, sparking protests.

16 April – A 10,000 person limit is imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank, who try to enter Jerusalem for prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque on the first Friday of Ramadan.

22 April – Jewish extremists from the ultra-nationalist *Lehava* group march through Jerusalem confronting Palestinians gathered near the Damascus Gate chanting “Death to Arabs”. Mobs of Israeli Jews and Palestinians then attack each other.

25 April – Israeli security forces remove the barrier at the Damascus Gate.

2 May – Israeli Supreme Court hearing on the leave to appeal request filed by four Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah. The families file a written response with the Court on 6 May, informing the Court that they could not reach a mutual understanding with Nahalat Shimon International, on the basis of the conditions proposed by the latter.

7 May – Hundreds injured in violence at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, following police incursion there. Clashes ensue also at Damascus Gate and in Sheikh Jarrah.

9 May – The Israeli Supreme Court postpones the hearing on the eviction order pertaining to four Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah, following a request from Israel’s Attorney-General.

10 May

Jewish right-wing extremists prepare to march through the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City as part of their annual "Flag March".

Citing a need to respond to a threat to the peace, Israeli police force their way into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Clashes ensue.

At least three hundred Palestinians and twenty-one Israeli policemen are wounded in the ensuing clashes.

Following an ultimatum to Israel to withdraw its forces from the compound and from Sheikh Jarrah, Hamas fires rockets towards Jerusalem.

Israel retaliates with air strikes in Gaza.

10-21 May


Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza fire over a thousand rockets into Israel, some of which strike at cities in the centre and south of the country. Hundreds are reportedly injured and 10 are killed following these attacks, in Israel.

Israel launches hundreds of air strikes in Gaza. Over a thousand people in Gaza are reportedly injured, over two hundred are killed, and massive destruction is caused by the Israeli airstrikes, including damage to crucial civilian infrastructure. Over 50,000 people are displaced as they seek shelter from the aerial attacks.

Protests erupt in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, as well as in Israel with multiple incidents of violence between Palestinians and Israeli civilians and security forces. At least 20 persons are killed, and thousands injured.

On 21 May, a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas enters into effect.

October – Israel's Supreme Court proposes a compromise according to which four Palestinian families residing in Sheikh Jarrah would be deemed protected tenants on condition that they pay symbolic rent to Nahalat Shimon International, foreclosing the possibility of their immediate eviction. Both parties reject the compromise, which would not have precluded them from contesting ultimate land ownership, the following month.



2022 – On 1 March, the Supreme Court issues a binding ruling broadly reflecting the terms of the October compromise, determining that the four Palestinian families can stay in their homes as protected tenants until the question of title registration, and thus formal land ownership, is resolved by Israel’s Ministry of Justice. The families argue that registration of their title to the land with the Jordanian authorities was ongoing when Israel took control of East Jerusalem in 1967, which if proven would settle ownership in their favour.

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