

Following the post-1948 division of Jerusalem into east (Transjordan-controlled) and west (Israeli-controlled), from 1948 to 1967, Jews were denied any access to their holiest sites in Jerusalem and dozens of synagogues were decimated by the Jordanian army. After the city was reunited in 1967, the three religions of Abraham--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam--were allowed access to their respective holy sites. Under Israeli rule, each religion has been allowed to oversee the management of its own holy sites.

Jerusalem 1948-1967 vs. 1967-2007: Comparing the Israeli and Jordanian Record

By **Linda Machaud-Emin***

- On November 29, 1947, the United Nations partitioned the British Mandate of Palestine into two states, namely Arab and Jewish. This was known as the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine or United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181.
- This plan was rejected by the Arabs, and following the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, the armies of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, Iraq, with the support of others, launched an attack on the new state of Israel.
- King Abdullah of Transjordan was assigned the position of commander-in-chief of the Arab armies. Under his command, a British Lieutenant-General named Sir John Bagot Glubb, also referred to as Glubb Pasha, led the Arab Legion of Transjordan into Jerusalem on May 17, 1948.
- The Arab Legion succeeded in conquering the Old City of Jerusalem, and expelled or killed the inhabitants of the Jewish Quarter. Jerusalem was divided and a ceasefire line established through the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and Transjordan split the city into East Jerusalem, part of Transjordan, and West Jerusalem, part of Israel, until 1967.
- In 1950, Jordan annexed all territory that it occupied west of the Jordan River, including east Jerusalem and the West Bank. The annexation was not recognised by the international community.
- On June 7, 1967, the third day of the Six Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbours (namely Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Algeria) resulted in Israel's conquering Jerusalem and all Jordanian-annexed territory west of the Jordan River from Jordan.

Jordan built a hotel on Mount of Olives thus destroying part of oldest and most important Jewish cemetery:

- The Mount of Olives is a mountain ridge east of Jerusalem which from Biblical times until today is a cemetery and the site of many important Biblical events. It is important to not only Jews, but also to Christians and Muslims, and many important religious events are tied to this historical location.
- During the period of Jordanian control over eastern Jerusalem and the Temple Mount from 1948 until 1967, King Hussein of Jordan allowed the construction of a hotel access road to the Intercontinental Hotel which spanned across the Mount of Olives cemetery, where hundreds of Jewish gravestones were bulldozed and desecrated.
- The Mount of Olives is a Holy Place by UN definition and by doing so, Jordan violated Article VII of the Israel-Jordan General Armistice Agreement (GAA) of 1949.

Jordan destroyed ancient synagogues in the Old City's Jewish quarter:

- From the period of 1948 to 1967, Jordan demolished 58 synagogues in Jerusalem's Old City.
- All but one of the ancient synagogues in the Old City were demolished and ravaged during this time by the Jordanians.

Jews had absolutely no access to the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site:

- On April 3, 1949, Israel and Jordan signed an Armistice Agreement. One of the conditions of the GAA was that a special committee would be formed to make arrangements for safe movement of traffic between Jerusalem and the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University, as well as free access to Holy Places. The Jordanians, by denying access to Jews to enter the Old City and Judaism's holiest sites, directly violated the GAA.
- Under the Jordanian control of East Jerusalem, Jews were denied access to the Western Wall and Temple Mount. Likewise, in Hebron, Jews were not allowed to enter the Tomb of the Patriarchs and other holy places in Bethlehem.

- Similarly, during Jordanian rule (and eventual annexation) of the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem from 1948 to 1967, Israeli Christians and Muslims were also barred from their own respective Holy Places.

Muslim *waqf* now controls workings of Temple Mount with important mosques, not Israelis:

- As a result of the Six Day War in 1967, Israel recovered the Old City and the entire Jordanian-held territory west of the Jordan River.
- Almost instantaneously, 19-year-old barriers once separating Jerusalem were removed so that all peoples of all religions could be allowed access to their holiest sites.
- To assure that any member of a respective religion will no longer be denied access to their holiest sites, the Knesset passed a law on June 27, 1967, guaranteeing free access to everyone and determining punishment for the desecration or denial of entry.
- From 1967 onward, the Muslim Waqf Administration is responsible for the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock and all other mosques within Jerusalem.
 - On several occasions, those praying at al-Aqsa then began pelting the Jews praying below at the Western Wall with stones and bricks.
 - As a result, when tensions are high, Israel is occasionally forced to limit temporarily the age of those entering the Temple Mount compound for Friday prayers.
- As for other communities, Christians are placed in charge of administering their own holy sites, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of Israel is in charge of the Western Wall and other Jewish holy sites.

** Linda Machaud-Emin is a Research Fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center, Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya.*