



Nationalist Jewish Violence in Jerusalem:
A Review
March 2013

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Introduction

Many press reports appeared in the summer of 2012 about hate crimes and acts of violence by Jews against Arabs in Jerusalem. The attempted lynch in the middle of August, when dozens of Jewish boys attacked Jamal Julani in the center of town, shocked people all over Israel. On August 16, dozens of Jewish boys attacked three Palestinian boys at Kikar Hahatulot in central Jerusalem. They chased them all the way to Zion Square, where one of the victims, Jamal Julani, collapsed, and the assailants continued to beat him unconscious.¹ Julani had to be resuscitated, was hospitalized and remained in serious physical and mental condition for weeks after the assault.² It took the Israeli politicians, including Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, a few days to realize it was a serious nationalist attack and therefore they were slow to condemn it.³ In November it was reported that the recordings of Julani's assailants' investigations had been erased.⁴ On January 15, 2013 the District Court approved a lenient plea bargain with two of the suspects in the attack. Instead of aggravated assault they were only charged with incitement.

That incident appeared at the time to be a high point in violence against Arabs in Jerusalem. In the following months frequent reports have appeared in the press about Arabs being attacked by Jews in Jerusalem:

- On September 6, 2012, Ibrahim Abu Taha was attacked by five Jews who saw him in the company of a Jewish woman. Abu Taha was hospitalized with a broken leg and the assailants were caught by the police.⁵
- On September 9, 2012, Nassim Abu Rumuz, a Palestinian gas station attendant, was attacked in a gas station in the Beit Hakerem neighborhood of Jerusalem by Jews who had come to fill up gas.⁶ Abu Rumuz was hospitalized with injuries.
- In two separate cases in September, Jews threw stones at Palestinian vehicles on Hebron Road and in Shuafat.
- On October 11, 2012 there was another assault at Kikar Hahatulot: Mohammed Saeed was attacked by seven Israelis after he did not allow one of them into the parking garage where he works.⁷ The police arrested a Palestinian and four Jews, including a key suspect in the assault on Jamal Julani.
- On December 9, 2012 a Palestinian was attacked in the neighborhood of Kiryat Moshe.⁸

¹ "A witness to Jerusalem violence: 'It was a lynch,'" Mako, August 17, 2012 <http://www.mako.co.il/news-law/crime/Article-1c685f750743931017.htm>.

² "The lynch victim went back to school and fainted," Mynet, August 29, 2012, www.mynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4274287,00.html.

³ Barkat responded to the attack on August 19, three days after it occurred.

⁴ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/417/920.html?hp=1&cat=402&loc=128>.

⁵ "Five youths arrested on suspicion they beat an Arab teen in Jerusalem," Nrg, September 8, 2012, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/402/011.html?hp=1&cat=402&loc=53>.

⁶ "Arab gas station attendant in Jerusalem: 'They beat me and threatened to kill Arabs,'" Ynet, September 9, 2012, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4278723,00.html>.

⁷ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/54/ART2/407/093.html?hp=54&cat=869>.

⁸ <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=51441>.

- On December 25, 2012 a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was attacked, suffered medium injuries and was hospitalized.⁹
- On January 24, 2013 several 12-year-old Arab boys from the sixth grade of the Jerusalem Hand in Hand Bilingual School were attacked while riding the bus home from school towards Pisgat Ze'ev.¹⁰
- On February 26, 2013 a Palestinian woman, Hana Imteir, a pregnant mother of eight, was attacked by three Jewish women at the light rail station in Kiryat Moshe. Her head covering was pulled off violently and eyewitnesses testified that a security guard who was present made no attempt to intervene.¹¹
- On March 6, 2013 two teachers, Revital Wolkov and Suhad Abu Zmeira, were attacked in Kiryat Moshe, where they had come to pay a condolence call, by yeshiva students, who spat at them, threw various objects at them, slashed their tires and smashed their windshield with stones.¹²

Attacking Palestinians is not a new phenomenon in Jerusalem but such events have not always been reported. For example, in the month before the Julani attack there were several cases of vandalizing Palestinian vehicles and attacking Palestinian passersby in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City,¹³ that were not mentioned in the news.¹⁴ It appears that in the wake of the shock over Julani's assault, the media stepped up the reporting of nationally motivated attacks on Palestinians.

Two serious cases from the last two years that did receive wide coverage were the stabbing to death of Hussam Rweidi in February 2011 not far from the Ben Yehuda pedestrian mall,¹⁵ and a gang of 20 Jewish boys who attacked young Palestinian men after the latter responded to the advances of a girl. Rweidi's stabber was charged with manslaughter and sentenced to eight years in prison.¹⁶ In the other case, police arrested nine suspects in December 2010.¹⁷

We will present below another long list of incidents of incitement and violent attacks on Palestinians in the city. But even this partial list portrays a grave picture. It cannot be ignored that the fact that the victims were Arabs was a main reason they were attacked.

⁹ <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4324103,00.html>.

¹⁰ <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/1.1914487>.

¹¹ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/446/406.html>.

¹² <http://news.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleID=963271>.

¹³ See reports on the Hakol Hayehudi site, for example: <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=38748> and www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=21791.

¹⁴ The report of stone throwing in Shuafat indicates that similar incidents occurred before but were not reported in the press. On November 3, 2012 Jews attacked a Palestinian in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Romema with stones and tear gas. The victim was lightly wounded in the head and evacuated to hospital <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=45508>. This item was not reported in the media, which might indicate a return to "routine" and loss of interest by the press and the general public.

¹⁵ Even though the assailants were chanting "death to Arabs," the stabber was only charged with manslaughter and not murder. "Stabbed an Arab to death and was charged with manslaughter," Ynet, February 27, 2011, www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4034993,00.html.

¹⁶ "Playing it safe: stabbed an Arab to death and was charged with manslaughter," Ynet, February 27, 2011, www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4034993,00.html.

¹⁷ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/191/746.html>.

Only by identifying the incidents as a growing phenomenon of nationally motivated violence can we properly analyze the causes and reasons such violence is expanding and act to put an end to it.

The purpose of this review is to try to identify the main components of Jewish nationalist violence in Jerusalem as well as its meaning and the parties that encourage (or maybe even organize) it.

This review is not reciprocal. It does not cover the cases of Arab violence against Jews in the city. We are not ignoring the existence of that phenomenon but this review focuses on the violence of the majority group towards the minority group in Jerusalem, the violence towards a disempowered community that is ruled by a powerful sovereign. The issue of the authorities' response to nationalist violence from this direction, or rather the absence of a response to this kind of violence, highlights the need for this review.

The components of nationalist Jewish violence in Jerusalem

a. Attacks on Palestinian men because of liaisons with Jewish women

Besides the incidents we already mentioned, there were additional attacks against Palestinian men who were seen in the company of Jewish women: one in Zion Square,¹⁸ the other in the Bayit Vagan neighborhood¹⁹ (both in May 2012).

One of the salient attributes of these assaults is the assailants' reference to a liaison between the Palestinian men and Jewish women as the reason for their actions: the police investigation of the Julani assault in Zion Square found that the event began with a girl telling her friends she had been raped by an Arab.²⁰ Other assaults mentioned above were also committed in response to real or imagined liaisons between Palestinian men and Jewish women. The harassment and assault of women by men, Jewish or Arab, is a phenomenon that must be fought. But its association with a national or religious conflict takes things in a dangerous direction.

Private individuals and organizations who are interested in inflaming relations between Palestinians and Jews in Jerusalem create a hysterical atmosphere surrounding the issue of relationships between Palestinian men and Jewish women. Sometimes such relationships are called assimilation. Sometimes they are called harassment and in any case they are described as an illegitimate and dangerous phenomenon. Even if the aforesaid parties overtly limit their activity to "education," their violence and inflammatory tone still inspire aggression.

¹⁸ <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=31785>.

¹⁹ <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=31622>.

²⁰ "One of the suspects in the lynch of the Palestinian in Jerusalem: 'He might as well drop dead, he's an Arab,'" Haaretz, August 20, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/1.1805474>.

One leading organization in incitement of this kind is Lehava (an acronym for “prevention of assimilation in the Holy Land) created about three years ago. Lehava director Bentzi Gopstein was a follower of Rabbi Meir Kahane and is a member of the Kiryat Arba City Council. In May 2011 the Haaretz newspaper published an investigative report about Lehava and its sources of funding.²¹ For several years the organization has been issuing strong messages against relationships between Palestinian men and Jewish women. Gopstein repeats again and again that “assimilation” is equal to “bloodshed.”²² He has run numerous campaigns to boycott businesses where Palestinian men work alongside Jewish women,²³ nor has he shied from threatening Palestinians who are in relationships with Jewish women, as described in an interview with Gopstein on Mynet:

“...the ‘dirtiest’ job was to get to the Arab. We speak with them only in the language they understand. We actually threaten them that if they dare speak to that girl or with any Jewish women, they’ll be sorry.”²⁴

Gopstein also speaks openly against the presence of Palestinians in areas he considers “Jewish”:

“Arabs have no business in Zion Square. They don’t go to the movies or eat at restaurants.”²⁵

In interviews and materials he publishes on the internet, Gopstein incites to violence: he tells how his activists had to beat a Palestinian in self-defense and explains that the campaign against the “Yesh” chain ended up in a fist-fight between Palestinian employees and residents of the neighborhood. He said the boys who almost killed Julani “lifted Jewish honor up from the ground.”²⁶ A flyer distributed by his organization said plainly that Palestinians should better avoid liaisons with Jewish women if they didn’t want to get hurt.²⁷

²¹ "Kahane lives well," Haaretz, May 7, 2011, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1173276>.

²² Interview with Bentzi Gopstein on the Hakol Hayehudi site, October 30, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=45183>,

²³ For instance, a campaign this April to boycott a branch of the Yesh supermarket chain in Givat Shaul: <http://www.leava.022.co.il/BRPortal/br/P102.jsp?arc=326787>.

²⁴ "Dating an Arab? You're on our list," Mynet, May 31, 2012, <http://www.mynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4236203,00.html>,

²⁵ "One of the suspects in the lynch of the Palestinian in Jerusalem: 'He might as well drop dead, he's an Arab,'" Haaretz, August 20, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/1.1805474>.

²⁶ "Lehava: our daughters are not fair game," Arutz Sheva, August 21, 2012, <http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/242931>.

²⁷ As written in the flyer Lehava supposedly distributed after the attack on Julani (see photo).



[Do you want a husband for your daughter?
Do you want your grandson to be named Ahmad Ben Sara?
An Arab courting Jewish girls at the Givat Shaul branch of the Yesh chain]



[Demonstration in support of the boys who defended the honor of Jewish girls
Today, Sunday, at 1 p.m. at the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court
The Committee for the Honor of the Daughters of Israel]

Lehava publications

After the attack on Jamal Julani, Lehava distributed this flyer:

בחור ערבי יקר:

אנחנו לא רוצים שתופגע!

הבנות שלנו יקרות לנו,
 כשם שאתה לא רוצה שיהודי יצא עם אחותך
 כך אנחנו לא מוכנים שערבי יצא עם בת מהעם שלנו.
 כשם שאתה היית עושה הכל כדי למנוע שיהודי יצא עם
 אחותך, כך גם אנחנו!

אם אתה חושב להגיע למדרחוב או לקניון בירושלים כדי
 לצאת עם בנות יהודיות זה לא המקום.
 תוכל לטייל בכפר שלך ולמצוא שם חברות, לא אצלנו!

בשבוע שעבר ערבי שחשב למצוא בנות יהודיות נפצע.
אנחנו לא רוצים שתופגע,
שמור על הכבוד של הבנות שלנו
כי בנפשנו הדבר!

ארגון להב"ה o.leava@gmail.com

الرجل العربي المحترم
 اهدنا لا نرغب في شتمنا بناتنا خاليات علينا
 انت لا تترقب يهودي شيمبي مع فوانك
 كما اننا لا نرغب في شتمنا مع بناتنا
 انت يا عربي تتعامل على اشئ شخواتك ماشئ
 مع يهودي كما اننا
 امر بتفكر شتروف لكتيون او لمدروف عشان
 نتخي مع بنات يهوديان انسي من الموضوع
 هدا عن المكان روح لقرينك هنال بتلادي
 صبرائك

الاسبوع الهافني عربي شفتكر على بناتنا
 هو انصاف اهدنا لا نرغب في شتمنا
 اشتردهم شرفك وشرف بناتنا
 اهدنا مع شرف كما ان

[Dear Arab man,
 We do not want you to get hurt!
 Our daughters are dear to us. Just like you do not want a Jew to date your sister, so we do not want an Arab to date a girl from our nation. Just like you would do anything to prevent a Jew from dating your sister, so would we!
 If you're thinking of going to the pedestrian mall or the shopping mall in Jerusalem in order to date Jewish girls, you better not. Why don't you take a walk through your village and find a girlfriend there, not on our side of town!
 Last week an Arab who wanted to find Jewish girls was injured.
 We do not want you to get hurt. Respect your honor and the honor of our girls. We have honor too. (last section translated from the Arabic)
 Signed, Lehava]

Following the statements by Gopstein and the flyer, Ir Amim filed a complaint to the police saying the organization was threatening assault:

“From reading the sticker and its proximity to the lynch, and from my further searching of the Lehava website, I view the sticker and the Lehava organization and its chairman Bentzi Gopstein as issuing a real call to attack Arabs again. The wording of the sticker is a threat that implies that it is clear that anyone who does not do what it asks can expect to be physically hurt. Furthermore, the publication of the sticker on Facebook and the call to ‘Like’ the sticker are real incitement and encouragement to attack Arabs again just like the lynch that took place last Thursday.”²⁸

²⁸ From the complaint, No. 362361/2012.

A news report published after the complaint was filed indicated that the police consulted the District Attorney's Office about how to handle the complaint. However, when we inquired by phone two months later, we discovered that the police had decided to close the file because of "absence of a crime." To this day the police have not given us that answer in writing. Such a decision, made just a few weeks after an assault that almost ended in murder, is very strange, especially as the aforesaid flyer continued to appear on the organization's website unimpeded.

The campaigns "to prevent assimilation" are also associated with the subject of "Jewish work," led by various organizations as part of their fight against the danger of "assimilation." One example is an initiative by right-wing activists to draw a map of businesses that employ Arabs in the Machaneh Yehuda market,²⁹ a campaign to boycott the Rami Levy supermarket chain because it employs Palestinian men alongside Jewish women, and the boycott of the Yesh chain mentioned above.

The Lehava organization also organized the December 2010 letter signed by 27 rabbis' wives calling on Jewish women to stay away from Arabs (in recreation, work or national service).³⁰ The appeal by the wives of mainstream rabbis reinforced the legitimacy of Lehava's activity and gave it the stamp of a seemingly legitimate religious message rather than dangerous incitement. The attorney general decided to close investigation files against rabbis who called on the public not to hold joint activities for Jews and Arabs. He argued that since the calls were religiously motivated it could not be claimed that they constituted incitement to racism.³¹ Clearly in the real world, treating "assimilation prevention" as a merely religious or theoretical issue ignores the facts on the ground and the practical implications of such discourse.

b. Exporting violence from the West Bank to the streets of Jerusalem

Whereas in the not so distant past acts such as spraying inflammatory graffiti on walls, desecrating mosques, vandalizing Palestinian property and physical assaults occurred mainly in the villages surrounding the settlements in the West Bank, in the years 2011-2013 numerous actions of that sort occurred inside Israel and especially in Jerusalem. Here is a partial list:

- Between the months of October 2011 and February 2012 there were three incidents of graffiti, vandalism of olive trees and arson of cars in the neighborhood of Beit Safafa.³²

²⁹ "The right-wing activists' map: how to buy only from Jews in the Machaneh Yehuda market," Walla, July 26, 2012, <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=90/2553257>.

³⁰ "The rabbis' wives' letter: Girls, don't date Arabs," Ynet, December 28, 2010, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4005854,00.html>.

³¹ "Most of the complaints against inciting rabbis are not investigated," Nrg, November 8, 2011, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/303/891.html?hp=1&cat=402&loc=9>.

³² "Price tag' operations in Jerusalem," Mako, October 27, 2011, <http://www.mako.co.il/news-channel2/Channel-2-Newscast/Article-f70692af6664331017.htm>, "Price tag' in Jerusalem: 'revenge' on

- On November 10, 2011 Muslim graves were desecrated in the Mamila neighborhood.³³
- On December 14, 2011 a mosque was set on fire on Strauss Street. Graffiti such as “Mohammed is a pig” was sprayed on the walls.³⁴
- In November 2012, following the demolition of a number of structures in the settlement of Yitzhar, five cars were vandalized in the neighborhood of Shuafat.³⁵

In March 2013 the Jerusalem district police reported there had been a spike in “price tag” incidents in 2012.³⁶ Police data indicates 56 “price tag” incidents in 2012 compared to 28 incidents the previous year.

There are extremist groups that have coherent doctrines combining ideologies justifying the harming of Palestinians with violent tactics and operational plans. One central location from which such a doctrine is spread is the “Od Yosef Chai” yeshiva, headed by Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, in the settlement of Yitzhar. The settlement’s rabbis wrote the book “The King’s Law,” which discusses justifications for killing non-Jews. Rabbi Yosef Elitzur, one of the authors of “The King’s Law,” also published an article called “Mutual responsibility, the strategy,” specifying the tactics and methods of operation that should be used. The article itself was printed and apparently not uploaded to the Internet,³⁷ yet still seems to have achieved considerable influence. Various assaults that came to be known as “price tag” or “mutual responsibility” attacks were undertaken in the way and in the context described in Elitzur’s article.

In August 2011 the IDF issued 12 administrative restraining orders against Jews from West Bank settlements (Yitzhar, Esh Kodesh and other places) following information from the Israel Security Agency (ISA, aka Shabak) about their involvement in violent acts against Palestinians and against the army.³⁸ In January 2012 a similar number of orders was issued.³⁹ Many of the restrained individuals moved to Jerusalem and in the following months the aforementioned incidents occurred. Although we have no evidence except for that coincidence of timing, in December 2011 the police arrested several of the

cars,” Mako, January 4, 2012, <http://www.mako.co.il/news-channel2/Channel-2-Newscast/Article-f70692af6664331017.html>; “Price tag’ graffiti sprayed on school and monastery in Jerusalem,” Walla, February 7, 2012, <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/90/2506911>.

³³ “Price tag’ in Jerusalem again: Muslim graves vandalized,” Nrg, November 10, 2011, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/304/961.html>.

³⁴ “Suspected ‘price tag’ operation: attempted arson on mosque in Jerusalem,” Globes, December 14, 2011, <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000706634>.

³⁵ “After the demolition in Yitzhar: protest actions all over the country,” Hakol Hayehudi, November 4, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=45545>.

³⁶ <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0.7340.L-4351694.00.html>.

³⁷ A partial quote can be found here: <http://cafe.themarker.com/topic/1355624>.

³⁸ “This morning: Twelve administrative restraining orders against Jews – some for as long as one year,” Hakol Hayehudi, August 2, 2011, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=11920>.

³⁹ “IDF expels Jewish extremists from West Bank for allegedly attacking Palestinians,” Haaretz, January 5, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/idf-expels-jewish-extremists-from-west-bank-for-allegedly-attacking-palestinians-1.405586>.

restrained on suspicion of involvement in “price tag” actions.⁴⁰ One of the men under restraining orders was interviewed for Arutz Sheva and told about his activity “to prevent an Arab takeover” of the French Hill neighborhood.⁴¹

In December 2012 the phenomenon recurred: a few months after a number of right-wing activists were banished from the West Bank to Jerusalem,⁴² a Palestinian was attacked in Kiryat Moshe,⁴³ abusive graffiti was sprayed on the Monastery of the Cross, and several cars parked nearby were vandalized.⁴⁴

A similar phenomenon had occurred before, in 2010. Neria Ofan, a right-wing activist who had been banished from his home in the settlement of Yitzhar by order of the head of the IDF’s Central Command, moved to Pisgat Ze’ev in Jerusalem. There he continued to be involved in activity against the presence of Palestinians in the neighborhood. Besides being involved in organizing conferences and marches and the distribution of flyers on the subject, there were a number of cases of arson of Palestinian-owned cars in the neighborhood. Finally Ofan was banished from Jerusalem too.⁴⁵

The picture that emerges as possible, and certainly worthy of investigation, is that Jerusalem is a source of attraction for people banished from their homes in order to limit dangerous activity of which they are suspected. In Jerusalem the banished individuals continue to receive the support of a sympathetic community and may be offered fertile ground to continue to spread their methods of operation and recruit people.⁴⁶ So that the exile to Jerusalem not only does not separate the suspects from their power bases but may even enable them to relocate their activity and recruit supporters and activists in Jerusalem.

⁴⁰ "Detainees in Jerusalem: right-wing activists smashed patrol car's windows," Ynet, December 14, 2011, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4161564,00.html>.

⁴¹ "Expelled from the West Bank and operating in Jerusalem: the banished residents of Yitzhar," Arutz Sheva, October 2, 2011, <http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/227190>.

⁴² "Fighting against the outposts: the IDF issues administrative restraining order against 15-year-old," Hakol Hayehudi, December 5, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=50805>, and "The new administrative restraineer," Hakol Hayehudi, December 4, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=50587>.

⁴³ "Arab attacked on Sunday in Kiryat Moshe in Jerusalem," Hakol Hayehudi, December 12, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=51441>.

⁴⁴ "Price tag? at the Valley of the Cross Monastery," Nrg, December 12, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=51441>.

⁴⁵ "Right-wing activist expelled from two Jerusalem neighborhoods," Haaretz, May 25, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/right-wing-activist-expelled-from-two-jerusalem-neighborhoods-1.292155><http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/right-wing-activist-expelled-from-two-jerusalem-neighborhoods-1.292155>.

⁴⁶ For example, in January 2012 a "circling of the Gates" – a monthly procession surrounding the Temple Mount – was dedicated to the evicted from the West Bank: "Tomorrow's circling of the Gates under the slogan 'I shall plant them in their land,'" Hakol Hayehudi, January 23, 2012, <http://www.hakolhayehudi.co.il/?p=23683>.

c. Incitement by rabbis

Other radical religious communities are organized around the same principles as Rabbi Ginsburg's in Yitzhar: a congregation surrounding a spiritual leader and a philosophy, among whose goals is the dissemination and implementation of a racist and violent ideology. The "field activists" who carry out the violent activities against Palestinians receive explicit or implicit spiritual and moral support from a group of rabbis.⁴⁷ At conferences, in sermons and in letters, these rabbis speak out against selling or renting apartments to Arabs or employing them.⁴⁸ Many dozens of rabbis have signed such letters and spoken at conferences on that theme.⁴⁹ The subject of "the danger of assimilation" also plays a central role in the speeches of many rabbis.

This can be seen in Jerusalem as well. In 2006 there was a conference of rabbis against the intention of opening the Hand in Hand Bilingual School (a school for Jewish and Palestinian children) in the Beit Safafa neighborhood. We mentioned above a few cases of vandalism of property – including school property – that occurred in the neighborhood a few years after the conference. That conference was also one of the only cases in which rabbis were subsequently put on trial for their racist comments.⁵⁰

In August 2009 a rabbinical conference took place in Pisgat Ze'ev against selling or renting apartments to Arabs. Among the participants were key rabbis like Rabbi Shmuel Eliahu, Rabbi Yaacov Yosef and Rabbi David Shalem, as well as former Member of Knesset Mayor Porush and incumbent MK Michael Ben Ari.⁵¹ A similar conference took place about a year ago in Pisgat Ze'ev, which we will discuss below.

d. Nationalist violence in soccer

On January 26, 2013, while the Beitar Jerusalem soccer team was in the process of hiring Moslem players, several fans raised a banner during a game saying "Beitar shall be pure forever."⁵² The fans were widely criticized for this.⁵³ On February 1, fans attacked the team's Muslim players and vandalized the Beitar chairman's car.⁵⁴ On February 8, fans set fire to the Beitar offices because of the hiring of the two Muslim players. A fans'

⁴⁷ For a comprehensive review of rabbinical comments, see report by the Israel Religious Action Center: "Love the stranger as yourself: Racism in the name of halacha: Racial Incitement by Rabbis in Israel," Attorney Einat Hurvitz, Attorney Leora Bechor, Rabbi Alona Lisitsa, IRAC, November 2011, <http://www.irac.org/userfiles/racism-report.pdf>.

⁴⁸ "Religious conflict: Tzfat on the verge of explosion," Nrg, October 24, 2010, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/54/ART2/170/128.html>.

⁴⁹ For instance: "Fifty city rabbis: Do not rent apartments to Arabs," Ynet, December 7, 2012, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3995411,00.html>.

⁵⁰ "Kabbalist David Batzri and his son admitted to incitement," News1, November 6, 2008, <http://www.news1.co.il/Archive/001-D-178277-00.html>.

⁵¹ This conference is one example of many of the extensive activity of rabbis all over the country against the rental and sale of apartments to Arabs. Rabbi Shmuel Eliahu is a key figure in those campaigns.

⁵² "I was warned not to take part in bringing the Muslims," Haaretz, January 28, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/sport/israel-soccer/1.1916561>

⁵³ <http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/250598> and <http://www.mako.co.il/news-israel/local/Article-881146e47018c31004.html>.

⁵⁴ <http://sports.walla.co.il/?w=/157/2612726>.

organization, called “La Familia,” which stood behind some of those actions, decided in February to suspend its activity.⁵⁵

About a year earlier, in March 2012, after a home game at Teddy Stadium, 300 Beitar fans attacked Palestinian workers in the nearby Malha Mall. In the incident, which was widely covered by the press, the crowd chanted “Death to Arabs” and Palestinian workers were attacked and pushed against storefront windows. The riot was so bad that the mall security guards could not get it under control and had to call the police, who took 40 minutes to restore order.⁵⁶ In April 2012, less than a month after the attack, dozens of Beitar fans marched from Sacher Park to the stadium ahead of a game that was going to take place there. The fans chanted racist slogans and “Death to Arabs.” A Jewish woman who, hearing the chants, came out of her house with a sign reading “Down with Beitar’s racism,” was attacked by the fans, who spat at her, and one of whom even hit her on the head with a stick.⁵⁷

In both cases the police response was very problematic. During the Malha assault the police refrained from making any arrests and only public criticism of its behavior prompted the police to launch an investigation, which led to the arrest of 16 people and a recommendation to charge six of them. In the second case, the police forces who were securing the procession left shortly after it began, despite the potential for violent behavior by the fans.

Members of the radical right wing Eretz Yisrael Shelanu party work together with the Beitar fans,⁵⁸ as evidenced by the fans’ visit to the Jewish settlement in Hebron (where they were hosted by Bentzi Gopstein, head of Lehava),⁵⁹ as well as by party member Michael Ben-Ari’s statements last summer that he was considering buying the team.⁶⁰

e. The radicalization of the Jerusalem Day parade

Jerusalem Day and the parade that takes place on it have in recent years become another venue where an essentially official event has turned into a platform for inflaming anti-Arab sentiments and has even spilled into assaulting Palestinians. Although in 2010 the route of the parade was shortened and it was not allowed to enter the Old City through Lions’ or Herod’s gates, the following year, 2011, the route was changed again to include

⁵⁵ <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4344117,00.html>.

⁵⁶ "More than 300 Beitar fans attack Arab workers in the Malha mall," Ha'aretz, March 23, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/sport/israel-soccer/1.1670339>.

⁵⁷ "Beitar fans march in Jerusalem, chant racist slogans and attack woman," Haaretz, April 15, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/law/1.1686408>.

⁵⁸ The radical right wing party which until recently had as members Michael Ben Ari, Baruch Marzel and Itamar Ben Gvir.

⁵⁹ "Dozens of Beitar fans spend Shabbat with Baruch Marzel in Hebron," Nrg, June 7, 2012, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/54/ART2/375/250.html>.

⁶⁰ "Michael Ben Ari interested in buying Beitar Jerusalem," Ynet, July 6, 2012, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4251996,00.html>.

a march through the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah.⁶¹ That route in itself was a blatant political statement: the neighborhood is the site of several conflicts over the control and ownership of houses, and several Palestinian families have already been evicted from their homes.

In the last two years the march was accompanied by chants against Arabs and Muslims, especially when it passed through places such as Sheikh Jarrah and Damascus Gate. There were also several confrontations between the marchers and Palestinian residents. It reached the point that on the last Jerusalem Day the police tried to convince Palestinian business owners in Damascus Gate not to open their shops on the day of the parade – a step that undermines the livelihood of the city's residents and defies the police role of defending them.

The very march of hundreds of Israelis through the streets of the Muslim Quarter of the Old City and other Palestinian neighborhoods is in itself a threatening message to the Palestinians, which during the march itself becomes active incitement. If there has to be a march at all, its route ought to be changed so that it does not include those neighborhoods.

f. The seam line neighborhoods and their community administrations

The highest level of friction between Jews and Palestinians in Jerusalem is in the “seam line” neighborhoods of East Jerusalem such as Pisgat Ze’ev, Neve Yaacov and French Hill. Palestinians travel through the seam neighborhoods to get to other parts of town. They spend time in their superior public spaces and use the services – shopping centers, playgrounds, post offices, health funds and so on – that the municipality makes sure to develop in the Israeli neighborhoods and which are usually absent from the Palestinian neighborhoods. Some Palestinians even rent and buy apartments in these neighborhoods because of the severe building restrictions and extreme shortage of available housing in the Palestinian neighborhoods. The seam neighborhoods illustrate the gap between slogans and day-to-day life, between declarations about the “united Jerusalem” and daily life in adjacent neighborhoods that reveals the large disparities between the city's Israeli and Palestinian neighborhoods.

In Pisgat Ze’ev there has been steady activity against the presence of Palestinians in the neighborhood for some years. There is evident involvement of radical right wing elements in the anti-Arab activity in Pisgat Ze’ev. That activity includes posting flyers against the presence of Palestinians, rallies and marches calling for their eviction from the neighborhood, and in some cases physical violence.⁶²

⁶¹ "Clashes between left-wing activists and right-wingers during flag parade," Nrg, June 1, 2011, [???

⁶² <http://www.mynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3771263,00.html> ; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_FSbj5OmTQ.

Last Jerusalem Day there was a march through the neighborhood for the eviction of Palestinians from the neighborhood. Twelve participants in the march were detained by the police.⁶³ A few months later there was a gathering in the neighborhood against building a school for the students of Beit Hanina next to Pisgat Ze'ev, out of fear that it would attract Palestinians to move into the neighborhood. The conference demonstrated the patterns we indicated above: deliberate and declared incitement relying on the supposedly developing relationships between Palestinian men and Jewish women. Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira, one of the authors of “The King’s Law,” was one of the speakers, and the event itself was held in the neighborhood’s Chabad synagogue.⁶⁴



[The traditional conference of joyous Jews in Pisgat Ze'ev
With Rabbi Yitzhak Shapira
Head of the Od Yosef Chai Yeshiva and author of “The King’s Law”
With neighborhood activist Moshe Ben Zikri
Conference about “The War for Peace”
Jews, let’s win!]

Violence on this issue peaked in the neighborhood in 2008. In April, on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, dozens of Jewish youths armed with sticks and knives attacked two Palestinians next to the Pisgat Ze'ev mall. The Palestinian boys were hospitalized at the Hadassah in Kerem hospital, suffering from serious injuries and stab wounds. Eleven indictments were filed against participants in the attack.⁶⁵ It was a planned assault that began with the distribution of text messages saying: “Let’s put an end to all these Arabs hanging around Pisgat Ze'ev and the mall, whistling at girls, cursing, threatening little children. If you are a Jew and want to put an end to it, come to Burger Ranch at 10 p.m. and we will show them not to walk around our area anymore, once and for all. Anyone who is willing to do it and has Jewish blood, put down your

⁶³ <http://honenu.org.il/pages/yom-iroshlim12-atzorum-btzadh-lman-pisgt-zab-ihodit.php>.

⁶⁴ “The King’s Law’ in Jerusalem: We don’t want Arabs in our neighborhood,” Nrg, August 17, 2011, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/54/ART2/271/586.html>.

⁶⁵ “Lynch in Pisgat Ze'ev,” YouTube, May 27, 2008, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH6_qHz6Tyw. The testimonies of the boys who took part in the attack appear in a report in Haaretz from May 28, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1327826>.

name if you agree with this message.” Needless to say, the two boys who were attacked were by themselves and were not bothering anyone.

The “Jewish Pisgat Ze’ev” list headed by Moshe Ben Zikri, whose main agenda is to kick Arabs out of the neighborhood, won four out of nine seats in the elections for the community administration at the end of 2010. Ben Zikri admitted he received support and advice from members of the settlement of Yitzhar.⁶⁶

There are also people in Pisgat Ze’ev who oppose Ben Zikri and his violent activity. When Ben Zikri was running for the community administration, neighborhood resident Zvi Shamir, a lawyer, made a motion to disqualify him. Shamir claimed that “the candidate cannot run because of racist activity that violates the Proclamation of Independence.”⁶⁷ Ultimately, Ben Zikri did run and his list won the elections. Only after the elections for the community administration was Ben Zikri’s election disqualified because it turned out he did not live in the neighborhood.⁶⁸

Despite Ben Zikri’s departure, activity against Palestinians in Pisgat Ze’ev continued, as described above. Ben Zikri himself returned to Pisgat Ze’ev lately, “fired up with motivation to re-establish the neighborhood guard, head it and fight against assimilation.”⁶⁹

In the French Hill neighborhood next to Issawiya there is also a high level of friction between Israelis and Palestinians, which sometimes declines into violence. We mentioned before that there are people who were banished from Yitzhar who are active on French Hill. Residents of the neighborhood have even threatened the mukhtar of Issawiya that they would block the passage between Issawiya and French Hill with barricades.⁷⁰

The head of the neighborhood community administration, Yochanan Bechler, said in a newspaper interview that the administration had raised funds to hire a security company to patrol different places in the neighborhood where there is Palestinian presence. Furthermore, following complaints by residents about the noise of the muezzin at night, the administration is fundraising to install a loudspeaker system to play noisy music aimed in the direction of Issawiya.⁷¹

Many of the complaints of the French Hill residents have to do with thefts and vandalism they claim are committed by Arabs from Issawiya. There is no question as to the residents’ right to personal security and the city and police’s duty to protect them and

⁶⁶ “Moshe Ben Zikri and the fight for a Jewish Pisgat Ze’ev,” Channel 10, May 13, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqDAUswp1wQ>.

⁶⁷ “Demand in Pisgat Ze’ev: Do not let Moshe Ben Zikri run,” Nrg, November 18, 2010, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/54/ART2/179/663.html>.

⁶⁸ Press reports indicate that Ben Zikri’s departure from the neighborhood, and from Jerusalem, had to do with warning conversations he had with the Shabak.

⁶⁹ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/54/ART2/449/706.html?hp=54&cat=869>.

⁷⁰ Yedioth Yerushalayim, July 6, 2012.

⁷¹ Ibid.

their property. But that is still a far cry from the complete de-legitimation of Palestinian presence in the neighborhood.

It is interesting to look at a hearing held by the Knesset Interior Committee about complaints by residents of the seam line neighborhoods of a surge in thefts and harassment attributed to Palestinians.⁷² Unsurprisingly, the most extreme position was expressed by MK Arie Elad of the National Union, who presented the presence of Palestinians in the seam line neighborhoods as a Palestinian plot to take over Jerusalem. As far as Elad is concerned, the Palestinians have no needs except for the need to take land away from Jews.

The attitude of the rest of the MKs, although more to the point, was also problematic. Besides their concern over the rise in vandalism and harassment of the residents of the neighborhood, committee chairman David Azulai spoke about “the neighborhood becoming a transition area from Issawiya to the center of town.” It can be understood from his comments that there is something wrong with the very presence of Palestinians in the neighborhood. Furthermore, the committee did not distinguish between the presence in the Israeli neighborhoods of Palestinians from the occupied territories who are in Israel without permits, and that of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, as if they were not residents of the city who carry Israeli identity cards. The chairwoman of the community administration, Gila Elisar, repeated the demand mentioned above, to block the passage between Issawiya and French Hill. Different Knesset members repeatedly demanded the Minister of Domestic Security allocate larger police forces to patrol the neighborhoods.

Conclusion

When more than one third of the population – the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem – cannot move freely in their city because of their national identity, this requires real action to change the situation. This widespread violence is in stark contrast with the mayor’s vision of branding Jerusalem as an attractive tourism city to the point of increasing the number of visitors threefold. Increasing the number of religious pilgrims to the city, as the mayor aspires to do, cannot take place while “price tag” slogans are being sprayed on churches and clergymen are being attacked. A harmonious city without violence, surely without racial violence, is a necessary condition for a thriving tourism industry.

Racist and violent elements are making manipulative use of seemingly commonplace values: from support for the Beitar soccer team, through the Jerusalem Day parade and to the problematic agenda of “preventing assimilation.” It is important to recognize how these values are being subverted and act courageously to stymie that process.

⁷² Elad: “Use Giuliani’s methods on French Hill,” Arutz Sheva, January 6, 2011, <http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/214673>.

Nationalist assaults against Palestinians must be recognized as a phenomenon that requires a serious response from the authorities. The apparently cavalier attitude towards grave incidents of violence by the enforcement agencies is worrisome: in November 2012, as aforesaid, it emerged that the recordings of the investigation of those accused of the attack on Jamal Julani had been erased. This followed the disturbing discovery that the security cameras that were positioned at the site where Julani was attacked were not working. And as described at the beginning of this review, the legal proceedings against two of the accused ended with a plea bargain that reduced the charges to mere incitement. These incidents join a long list of incidents described above in which the police did not prevent attacks against Palestinians by Jews.

We know that in 2010 Jerusalem joined the “City without Violence” program, but as far as we have been able to check, there is no specific program to confront nationalist Jewish violence in Jerusalem.

As for the community administrations, in the mutual relationship between them and the municipality, the municipality is obligated to ensure their proper management and to insist on their conduct not being offensive, discriminatory or inflammatory.

As the bi-national status of the city becomes entrenched, it is necessary for the authorities to grant institutional recognition to the role of the Palestinians in Jerusalem. In the absence of public spaces in the Palestinian neighborhoods, the populations can be expected to intermingle in the city at a growing rate, and this requires an organizational and conceptual infrastructure to contain the situation and resolutely prevent the Jewish nationalist violence it entails.