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## **Survey shows Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem experience the archaeological activities as a tool to undermine Jerusalem's national and religious identity**

Issues of identity, religion and recognition are much more critical to East Jerusalem residents than what the Israeli right wing and centrists would have us believe. A new survey shows that East Jerusalemite Palestinians are more concerned by Jewish ascension to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif and archaeological excavations than problems such as lack of infrastructure and denial of construction permits.

The survey<sup>1</sup>, commissioned by [Emek Shaveh](#), asked East Jerusalem residents what issue concerns them the most. 67% chose Jewish pilgrimage to the Temple Mount. 44% quoted archaeological excavations while denial of construction and lack of infrastructure were ranked as matters of most concern only by 41% and 30% respectively. For an op-ed on the subject see [Why Israeli Archaeological Excavations Worry Palestinians](#).

Below is a detailed summary of the full survey:

### **1. Frequency of visits to Jerusalem in the last 3 years**

**How many times did you visit Jerusalem in the last 3 years? (The question was directed to 91% of the interviewees, excluding residents of Jerusalem)**

96% of the Jews and 85% of the Arabs stated that they visited Jerusalem at least once in the last 3 years.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey was carried out by the Smith Institute. 500 individuals made up the sample representing Israel's adult population (Jews and Muslims, ages 18 and older). Sampling error - 4.5%. Among East Jerusalem residents 150 individuals made up the sample representing the Arab population of East Jerusalem. Sampling error - 5.6%. Some of the questions were identical, some were different.

## 2. Visits to archaeological sites in Jerusalem

For those who visited Jerusalem in the last 3 years and for residents of Jerusalem - 90% of the entire sample.

**Have you visited any of the following sites in Jerusalem in the last 3 years:** (adds up to more than 100% since it was possible to choose more than one response)

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Overall (95%)*</b> |  |
| <b>45%</b>            | <b>“City of David”</b>                 |
| <b>43%</b>            | <b>Western Wall Tunnels</b>            |
| 24%                   | Tower of David                         |
| 15%                   | David’s Tomb/Mount Zion                |
| 9%                    | Davidson Center<br>Archaeological Park |
| 8%                    | The Herodian Quarter                   |
| 8%                    | Burnt House                            |
| 32%                   | I did not visit any of the<br>above    |

\*Among those who visited Jerusalem at least once in the last 3 years and among residents of Jerusalem.

72% of the Jewish population (residents of Jerusalem and those who visited in the last 3 years) and 38% of Israeli Arabs visited at least one of the archaeological sites.

**Jewish sector: The sites visited based on frequency of visits to Jerusalem in the last 3 years**

|  | Overall among Jewish population | Based on frequency of visits to Jerusalem in the last 3 years |                  |                     |
|--|---------------------------------|---|------------------|---------------------|
|  |                                 | 1-3 visits  | 4 or more visits | Jerusalem residents |
| <b>“City of David”</b>                 | <b>49%</b>                      | <b>46%</b>  | <b>53%</b>       | 40%                 |
| <b>Western Wall Tunnels</b>            | <b>48%</b>                      | <b>45%</b>  | <b>54%</b>       | 35%                 |
| Tower of David                         | 27%                             | 21%   | 32%              | 21%                 |
| David’s Tomb/Mount Zion                | 16%                             | 9%  | 20%              | 30%                 |
| Davidson Center<br>Archaeological Park | 10%                             | 6%  | 11%              | 19%                 |
| Burnt House                            | 9%                              | 4%  | 11%              | 14%                 |
| The Herodian Quarter                   | 8%                              | 3%  | 12%              | 9%                  |
| I did not visit any of the above       | 28%                             | 32%   | 23%              | 30%                 |

City of David and the Western Wall Tunnel received the highest number of returning visits, and the number of returning visitors for each site is identical (for instance, 4 visits more - 53% and 54% accordingly).

**3. What does the Temple Mount (for the Jewish population)/Haram al-Sharif (for the Arab population) mean to you?**

|                   | <b>Israeli Jewish public</b> | <b>East Jerusalem Arab population</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sacred site       | 52%                          | <b>90%</b>                            |
| Historical site   | 31%                          | 2%                                    |
| National site     | 9%                           | 3%                                    |
| Other, no opinion | 8%                           | 5%                                    |

For half of the Jewish and 90% of East Jerusalem Arabs, the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif is “first and foremost a sacred site.”

Among those who are of the opinion that the site is a sacred site, 56% are of the Jewish population, 77% are Israeli Arabs, and 95% are from East Jerusalem.

**4. What type of site is the Temple Mount, according to the Jewish sector**

Adds up to 100% in each row

|                | Sacred site | Historical site | National site | No opinion |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| Secular        | 25%         | <b>49%</b>      | 14%           | 13%        |
| Traditional    | <b>67%</b>  | 22%             | 8%            | 4%         |
| Religious      | <b>93%</b>  | 4%              | 2%            | 2%         |
| Ultra-orthodox | <b>97%</b>  | 0%              | 0%            | 3%         |

The most notable differences are between secular Jews and the rest:

- Among secular Jews, only 25% considered it a “sacred site” and 49% considered it an “historical site,” while among traditional Jews 67%

considered it a “sacred site,” compared to over 90% of the religious and ultra-orthodox Jewish population who considered it a “sacred site.”

- In this sample, 75% of those who considered it a “sacred site” identified with the Right, while only 11% who considered it as such identified with the Left, as opposed to 61% of the left wing population who considered it an “historical site.”

## 5. Purpose of archaeological excavations

**In your opinion, what are the two purposes of archaeological excavations in the Old City?** (adds up to more than 100% since it was possible to choose more than one response).

|   | <b>Israeli Jewish public</b> | <b>East Jerusalem Arab population</b> |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Scientific - finding historical evidence of life in the city and the people who lived there throughout the different times. | <b>80%</b>                   | 14%                                   |
| To attract tourists from all over the world to Jerusalem  | 36%                          | 11%                                   |
| To strengthen Jewish hold on Jerusalem  | 34%                          | <b>53%</b>                            |
| To erase all remnants of the city’s Muslim history  | 3%                           | <b>57%</b>                            |
| To erase all evidence of non-Jewish historical remnants   | 2%                           | <b>21%</b>                            |
| Other, no opinion   | 5%                           | 9%                                    |

Among the Jewish population 80% stated that the purposes are first and foremost scientific.

Among the East Jerusalem Arab population the most notable responses are to “strengthen Jewish hold on Jerusalem” and to “erase all remnants of the city’s Muslim history.”

**The purpose of archaeological excavations - according to background, Jewish sector, adds up to more than 100% in each row.**

|                | Scientific | To encourage tourism | Strengthening Jewish hold on Jerusalem | To erase all remnants of the city’s Muslim history | To erase all non-Jewish historical remnants | No opinion |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|--|--|---|------------|
| Overall        | <b>80%</b> | <b>36%</b>           | <b>34%</b>                             | <b>3%</b>  | <b>2%</b>                                   | <b>5%</b>  |
| Secular        | 82%        | 38%                  | 23%                                    | 3%   | 3%  | 7%         |
| Traditional    | 77%        | 36%                  | 35%                                    | 4%   | 4%  | 4%         |
| Religious      | 78%        | 25%                  | <b>69%</b>                             | 4%   | 0%  | 2%         |
| Ultra orthodox | 85%        | 38%                  | 35%                                    | 0%   | 0%  | 6%         |

Among the religious sector a relatively high percent stated “strengthening Jewish hold on Jerusalem.”

## 6. Safeguarding Antiquities

Sacred sites are generally ancient sites and thereby archaeological sites. In your opinion, who should decide on how to protect antiquities and oversee changes at these types of sites?

|  | Israeli Jewish public | East Jerusalem Arab population |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>The Israel Antiquities Authority or other organization related to archaeological conservation</b> | <b>66%</b>            | 41%                            |
| Ministry of religious services/Rabbinate or members of the religious establishment/Qadis             | 23%                   | 29%                            |
| Other, no opinion  | 11%                   | 39%                            |

A high percentage of the Jewish population, two thirds, responded that “the Israeli Antiquities Authority or an organization related to archaeological protection” should oversee conservation at ancient sites. The Arab population is divided.

Among the Arab population of East Jerusalem a high percentage did not express any opinion.

**Protecting antiquities according to background, Jewish sector, 100% for each row**

|                  |                             | <b>The Israel Antiquities Authority or other organization related to archaeological conservation</b> | <b>Ministry of religious services/Rabbin ate or members of the religious establishment/Qadis</b> | <b>Other, no opinion</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Religious sector | Secular                     | <b>85%</b>   | 6%   | 10%                      |
|                  | Traditional                 | 62%  | 26%  | 11%                      |
|                  | Religious                   | 40%  | 38%  | 22%                      |
|                  | Ultra-orthodox              | <b>9%</b>  | <b>88%</b>   | <b>3%</b>                |
| Political view   | Right                       | 53%  | <b>37%</b>   | 10%                      |
|                  | Center-right                | 63%  | 26%  | 12%                      |
|                  | Center                      | 74%  | 15%  | 11%                      |
|                  | <b>Center-left and left</b> | <b>89%</b>   | <b>3%</b>  | <b>9%</b>                |

The biggest gaps are between secular group and the rest, and between the right and left wing.

The left may have not understood the significance of the question regarding the Temple Mount or did not take this site into account.

**Question specifically for Arab residents of East Jerusalem:**

**7. Which of the following issues concerns you the most? Which others? - Question to Arab residents of East Jerusalem**

(Adds up to more than 100% in each column since it was possible to choose up to two responses).

|   | Overall    |
|---|------------|
| <b>Jewish ascension to the Temple Mount/Haram el-Sharif</b>                     | <b>67%</b> |
| <b>Archaeological excavations in the Old City, including the Silwan tunnels</b> | <b>44%</b> |
| Obstacles to construction in East Jerusalem                                     | 41%        |
| Lack of investment in infrastructure in East Jerusalem                          | 30%        |
| Other   | 1%         |
| None of the above, no opinion   | 9%         |

Jewish ascension to the Temple Mount was the most common response. Archaeological excavations are perceived as an issue of greater concern than obstacles to construction or lack of infrastructure.

### **Impact on quality of life due to archaeological excavations in the Old City**

#### **Extent of impact on quality of life.**

**To what extent if at all, do archaeological excavations in the Old City and surrounding area affect you and your family's quality of life?**

|   | Overall | Collected |
|---|---------|-----------|
| To a large extent                               | 42%     | 60%       |
| To a certain extent                             | 18%     |           |
| Very little                                     | 8%      | 40%       |
| Does not impact my/my family's quality of life. | 32%     |           |

**In what way is your quality of life impacted - open response.**

For those who stated that the excavations damage their quality of life - 60% of all respondents.

|   | Overall (60% of all respondents) |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Pose hazards to buildings and walls - cracks, noise pollution, etc. | 26%                              |
| Damage to Islamic and historic infrastructure in the Old City       | 25%                              |
| Impacts al Aqsa mosque/hazards/destruction/blocks access etc.       | 17%                              |
| Damage to monuments   | 6%                               |
| Psychological damage  | 6%                               |
| Traffic   | 6%                               |
| Jewish attempt to gain control                                      | 4%                               |
| General impact on quality of life                                   | 6%                               |
| Other   | 6%                               |
| No opinion  | 2%                               |