

# **Jerusalem in the Religious-Right Zionist Ideology and the Policies of Control and Judaization of the City 1996-2017**

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## **Abstract**

The study deals with Jerusalem in the right-wing Zionist religious Ideology and the Israeli policies of control and Judaization since the year 1996 and onwards. This period witnessed a clear Israeli shift towards the right wing political ideology as well as an increasing power of the settler religious Zionist groups inside the Israeli political system and society. Since 1996, the negotiations and the peace process between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli governments failed in bringing towards a solution or to a significant change of the status quo due to several reasons. In the same year Benjamin Netanyahu started his first government after he won the elections; in addition to the failure of the Camp David II negotiations in 2000 and the visit of former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to Al-Aqsa Mosque in the same year, which caused the outbreak of the Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada).

The study focuses on a very important subject its title might express. This importance reflects mainly the importance of the city of Jerusalem for both nations; Palestinians and Israelis, as well as the implications of these changes upon the status and future of the city of Jerusalem and the Palestinian existence in it. Israeli policies and procedures of increasing Judaization of the city in this period aim to change the Arab-Islamic nature of the city, socially, culturally, religiously, demographically, politically and economically, and to impose a new political reality in which there is no place for Palestinians.

The purpose of the study is to clarify and understand the impact and role of religious right-wing Zionist ideology of Israeli political parties, movements, institutions and individuals who constitute together the so-called New Right in Israel, on the official policies of the right-wing Israeli governments towards the city of Jerusalem. This new political reality constitutes a threat on the future of Jerusalem in any proposed future solution, but also reflects the nature and the aim of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine, as this study argues.

The study seeks to answer the following main question: What role and impact do the right-wing religious Zionist ideology play in the Judaization procedures and policies carried out by successive Israeli governments towards the city of Jerusalem from 1996 to 2017? Meanwhile, the study asks further sub-questions that it aims to answer, such as: What are the ideological sources of religious Zionism? Which importance has the city of Jerusalem in the Zionist right-wing religious thought? And, how can we understand the settler-

colonial policies and procedures that implemented by the Israeli governments in the city of Jerusalem?

The study is based on the main argument that the new right-wing control of the government in Israel since 1996 has led to an increase and expansion of the Jewish settlement practices and procedures by the Israeli governments towards the city of Jerusalem.

Theoretically, the study refers to the theories of settler colonialism, which developed from the field of colonialism and postcolonial studies. It considers Zionism and its national project in Palestine as a settler colonial project that seeks not only to colonize and occupy Palestine, but to replace the indigenous people with by controlling the land and depriving it from its owners, expelling the indigenous people, settling the land, controlling natural resources and all aspects of life in Palestine in general, an in Jerusalem in particular.

The study concludes several points: the recent so-called New-Right in Israel, led by Benjamin Netanyahu throughout the last two decades, is acting in the city of Jerusalem by using two main methods: the first can be described as the violent method, which includes the increasing of settlements, and does not care about local and international laws. This method is represented by religious individual settlers, political parties and Zionist associations. The second method can be called the soft method, which complements and intersects with the first method. It is represented by extensions of the first method in the Israeli political system, and implements the agendas of Judaization and settlement through the government, the Knesset and the ministries. The study also emphasizes the close linkage between Jewish religious beliefs regarding the Biblical importance of the city of Jerusalem to the Zionist religious right-wing thought and the Zionist project since its establishment. All of these factors constitute together a reality of the Judaization, settler colonial policies, practices and procedures in Palestine in general and in the city of Jerusalem in particular.