



Burj Al-Luqluq's Jerusalem Garden to Reopen



By Muntaser
Ekdaidek

rehabilitate the damaged wall that abuts land recently claimed by the settlement organization Ataret Cohanim, earmarked for a housing development.

To obtain the necessary permit, Burj Al-Luqluq invested a hefty amount of money into engineering services and site investigations, navigating the procedures required by Jerusalem Municipality. In 2019, the organization received the approval to commence rehabilitation and launched a fundraising campaign to raise \$550,000 for the restoration

of the garden and its collapsed wall. Despite initial interest from international donors, the project ultimately was not funded.

In 2022, however, Burj Al-Luqluq was presented with an opportunity when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued a call for the rehabilitation of East Jerusalem areas through its partnership with KfW, the German Development Bank. The project was approved, and implementation began in September of the same year, projected to last nine months.

Burj Al-Luqluq's garden, Jerusalem. ©UNDP/PAPP – Zakaria Abu Al Halaweh.

The sudden collapse of the boundary wall of Burj Al-Luqluq's main garden in 2016 prompted Jerusalem Municipality to close the public space, citing safety concerns for local children and youth.

Burj Al-Luqluq Social Center Society is a non-profit organization that serves the residents of the Old City of Jerusalem in general, and the people of Bab Huttah neighborhood in particular. Its nine-dunum total area, divided between enclosed halls and green spaces, is the only open area in the neighborhood of Bab Hutta. The 500-square-meter garden serves as a crucial gathering place for under-served communities, including children, youth, and women from the Old City, who lack access to adequate open spaces.

Consequently, Burj Al-Luqluq took action. In collaboration with legal counsel, the organization secured permission from the Israeli authorities to



Currently, five months into the project, progress has been hindered by the Israel Antiquities Authority which has suspended work on the site for more than two months, designating it an archaeological site. The organization is now awaiting the results of the authority's site investigation and the development of a new engineering design before it can resume construction.

We remain optimistic that the project will be completed this year and look forward to the day when the Burj's main garden is once again a safe and accessible space for the children and youth of Jerusalem.

Muntaser Ekdaidek is the executive director of Burj Al-Luqluq Social Center Society.

Burj Al-Luqluq's garden, Jerusalem. ©UNDP/PAPP – Zakaria Abu Al Halaweh.

