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Subject: The High Court of Justice Demands an Explanation Why Public Spaces in the City of David are Closed to Silwan's Residents
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To: kmccarthy@fmep.org



The High Court of Justice Demands an Explanation from the Nature and Parks Authority as to Why Public Spaces in the City of David are Closed to Silwan's Residents on the Sabbath and Jewish Holidays

On Monday, January 14, 2018, the High Court heard the petition filed by Emek Shaveh together with the residents of Silwan via Attorney Eitay Mack, regarding public spaces in Silwan, which the Elad Foundation, who runs the City of David National Park, has closed off to the local residents.

The City of David National Park is situated at the heart of a populated, urban space. Extensive areas in the park are public spaces in a neighborhood that suffers from a chronic deficiency of such spaces. In 2015, the Elad Foundation placed gates and closed archaeological areas [known as Area E](#) and Area G (No. 6 and 7 and No. 3 on the map). These public spaces had been open to the residents at least as far back as the British Mandate.

The gates that were placed are locked at closing time, thus blocking passage between two neighborhoods within the village. The site closes on the Shabbath and on Holidays as the Elad Foundation observes the Sabbath, thus restricting the local residents' freedom of movement and use of public spaces. As most of Silwan's residents work in West Jerusalem, Shabbath (Saturday) is their day of rest, yet it is on this day that the nearby green public areas are closed off to them

In a ruling that was sent to the parties on Wednesday, January 16, 2019 by Chief Justice E. Hayut, and Justices U. Vogelman and N. Sohlberg, the Nature and Parks Authority was asked to explain why the site was not open every day of the week like any other national park.

We in Emek Shaveh welcome the decision which indicates to the Nature and Parks Authority and the Elad Foundation that the needs of the residents cannot be ignored. This decision reveals that, even though the Nature and Parks Authority is responsible for the site, the decisions over the park are in fact taken not by the government agency, but by a private NGO (the Elad Foundation), who was handed responsibility over the management of a national heritage site.

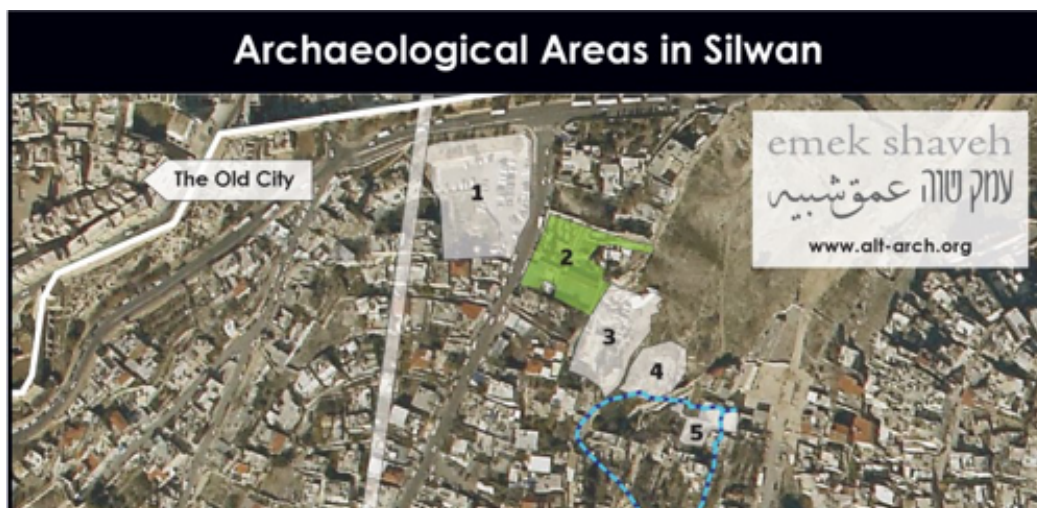
We should mention that these days Emek Shaveh is in the process of filing another petition against the Nature and Parks Authority and the Elad Foundation, [demanding to cancel](#) the agreement between the two, seeing as the latter repeatedly assumes unlawful practices and conducts illegal construction works in the national park which it was given responsibility to manage.

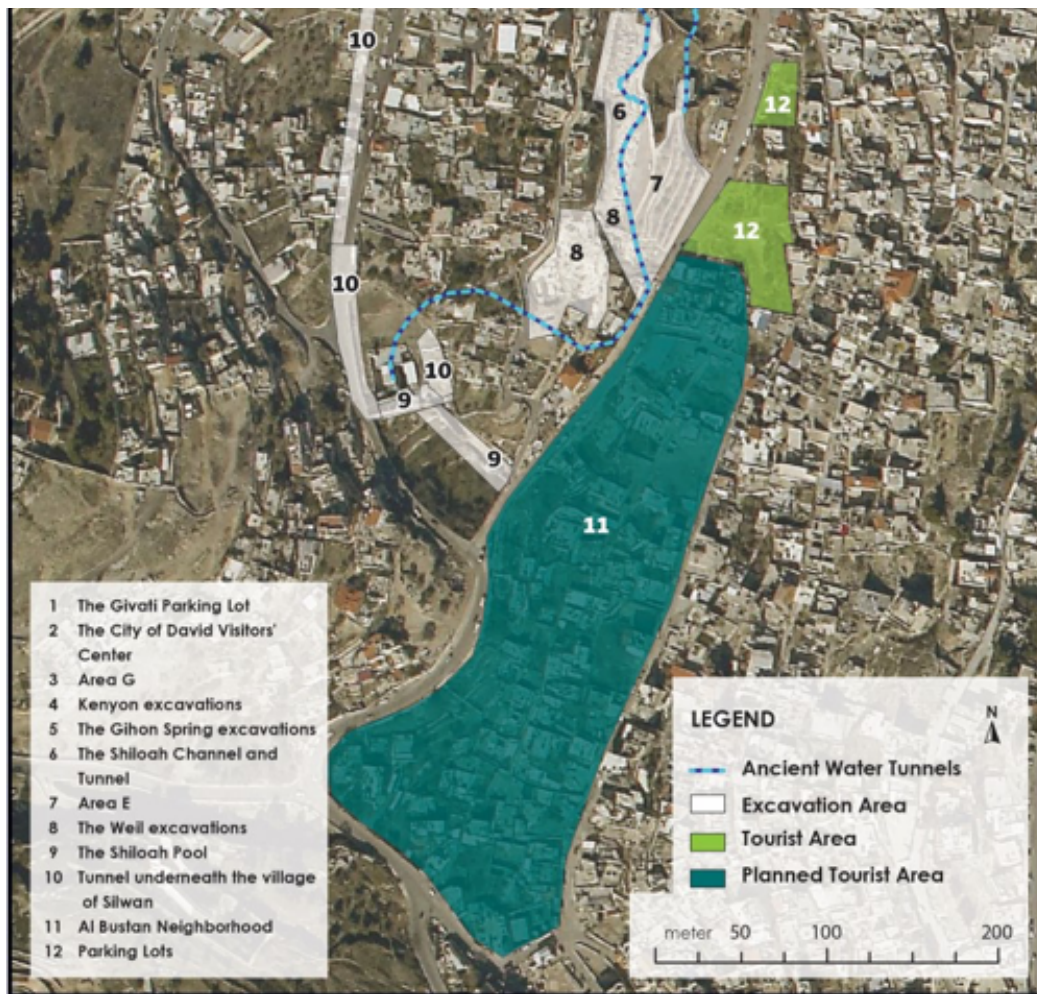
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