

Old City Alternative Audio Tour

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

TRACK 1 Introduction.

Location: No set location, may be heard before beginning the tour.

TRACK 2 Damascus Gate.

Location: Outside the Old City walls, on the steps in front of Damascus Gate.

TRACK 3 El Wad Street.

Location: Inside the walls, walking from the gate down towards the fork in the street.

TRACK 4 Sharon's House.

Location: Further down El Wad St, stop after the undercover sections when the street opens again.

TRACK 5 Austrian Hospice.

Location: Austrian Hospice Rooftop.

TRACK 6 Via Dolorosa.

Location: Walking between the stations of the cross, numbers III to V.

TRACK 7 Community Policing Center.

Location: 200 m further down El Wad St at the Community Policing Center.

TRACK 8 The Cotton Market & Al Aqsa

Location: Suq el Qattanin – The Cotton Market

TRACK 9 Synagogue excavations

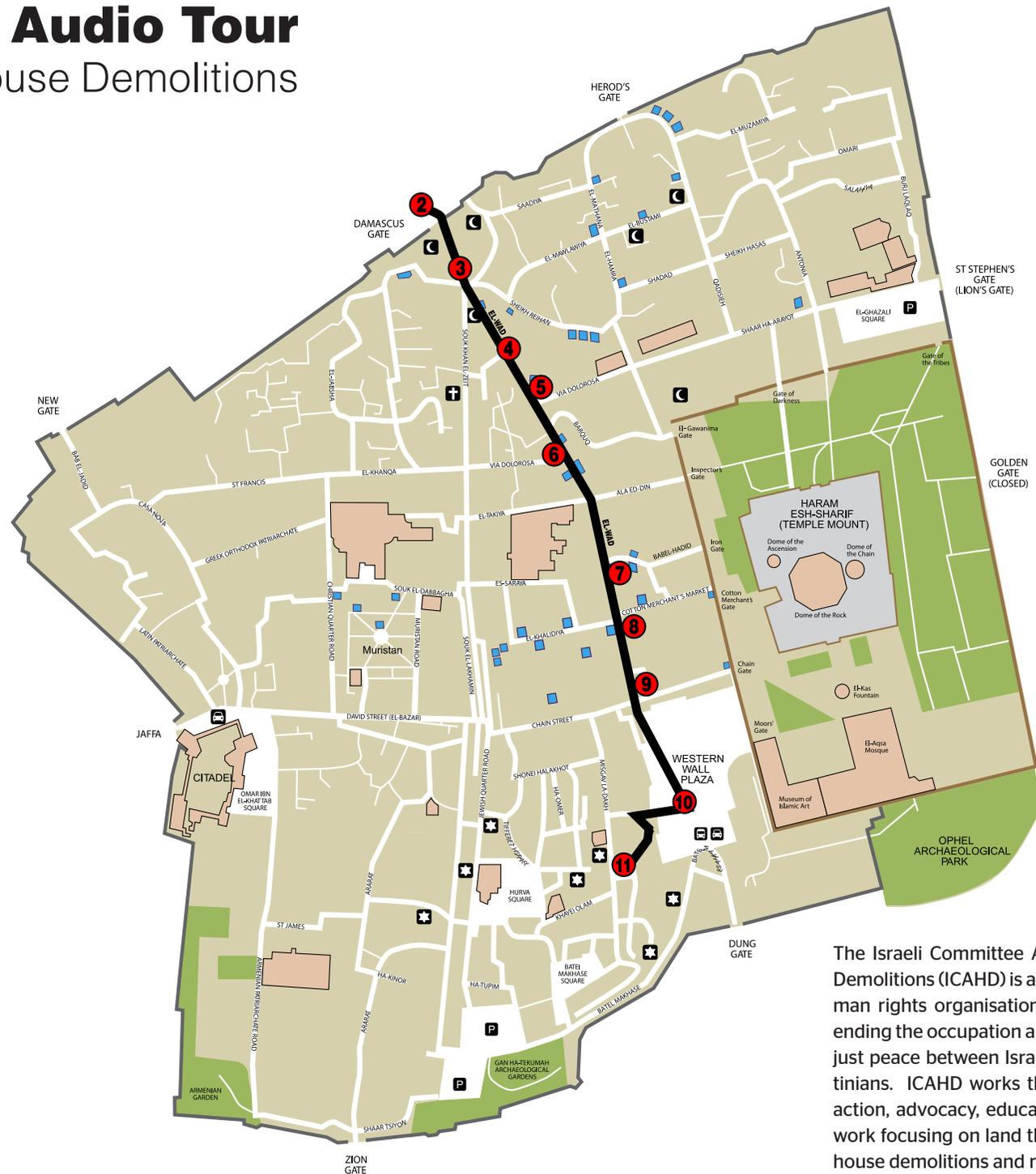
Location: New synagogue, just past the Suq el Qattanin, new building several storeys high.

TRACK 10 Western Wall – The Kotel

Location: On the plaza after the security control.

TRACK 11 Jewish Quarter.

Location: Observation porch, after the security control on the other side of the plaza.



The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAH) is a peace and human rights organisation dedicated to ending the occupation and achieving a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians. ICAHD works through direct action, advocacy, education and legal work focusing on land theft, evictions, house demolitions and rebuilding.

About the tour

Whilst many tours focus solely on the religious and cultural history of the Old City, ICAHD's tour weaves this history together with the stories of present-day communities. The tour provides the listener with an understanding of the religious, historical and political backdrops against which daily life unfolds in Jerusalem's Old City today.

Logistics

The tour takes approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes, and guides the listener from Damascus Gate to the Western Wall.

Visitors are encouraged to consider cultural differences in the choice of clothing before entering the Old City. Religious Muslim and Jewish communities may be offended by immodest dress, and prefer visitors to wear long pants and cover their shoulders.

The plaza around the Dome of the Rock is open to non-Muslim visitors daily from 7:30am - 11am and 1:30pm - 3pm in summer, and from 8am - 10:30am and 12:30pm - 2pm in winter. The area is always closed to visitors on Fridays, and people not dressed appropriately will be refused entry.

Jerusalem's Old City

The Old City covers an area of less than 1 square kilometre, and is home to some 35 thousand people. It contains four quarters - Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Armenian. In fact, the Muslim quarter is the biggest, and its population outnumbers that of the three others put together. This tour runs almost entirely through the Muslim quarter.

The city of Jerusalem has seen many wars and conquests, but the last two are felt most poignantly today. In 1948 the Israeli army captured the west of Jerusalem and the Jordanian army the east, including the Old City. A border, known as the Green Line, ran through the city - a line of fences and minefields, in some places just outside the walls of the Old City. This war is known as the War of Independence to Israelis, and the Nakba, or 'Catastrophe', to Palestinians. Many Jerusalemites became refugees at this time, with some two thousand Jews forced to leave the Old City, and some 30 thousand Palestinians forced to leave West Jerusalem.

During the Six Day War in 1967, Israel conquered the Old City and East Jerusalem. Most Jerusalemites stayed put despite the conquest, with the exception of Palestin-

ians living in what had been the Jewish quarter before 1948, as well as those in the adjacent Moroccan neighbourhood. These people were evicted immediately after the war and moved to Shuafat Refugee Camp, in the north of the city. East Jerusalem was annexed, with Israel claiming sovereignty and celebrating the "unification of the city", however this was never recognised by the international community and East Jerusalem remains occupied territory under international law. Despite the claim to sovereignty, East Jerusalemites are not Israeli citizens and instead hold 'residency', which grants a conditional right to live and work in the city, but not to vote in National elections or carry an Israeli passport. Residency status can be revoked by the Israeli authorities under certain circumstances, resulting in permanent exclusion from the city.

In order to ensure Israeli control of the entire city, the State introduced a demographic policy, the stated goal of which is to maintain a large Jewish majority in Jerusalem. This policy is implemented primarily through restricting building and development in Palestinian neighbourhoods, and by actively developing large satellite neighbourhoods for Jews on confiscated Palestinian farmland in the east of the city. Alongside this demographic policy, the separation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the west bank, entrenched by the recent construction of the separation wall, denies most Palestinians access to the city, its markets, and holy sites. The division creates economic problems both for the people of the West Bank and those of East Jerusalem.

History Line:

