

In the heart of a city with 160,000 Palestinians, Israel maintains a Jewish settlement with 800 people. To protect them, the Israeli military has established a massive system of guard posts, checkpoints and road closures since 2001.

More than 1,800 Palestinian shops have closed and several thousand people have been driven from their homes. The once flourishing gold market is now blocked with barbed wire and choked with weeds.

"For years, Israel has severely oppressed Palestinians living in the center of the city," notes B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights group, in a recent report.

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