

Background for a Debate

Deer/Gazelle Valley

The Deer Valley is an open space of 260 dunams in the heart of Jerusalem. Gazelle Valley is named for a herd of gazelles that live in this area, bounded by urban development. The area is owned by the state, which previously leased it to kibbutzim near Jerusalem - Kiryat Anavim and Ma'ale Hahamisha, which used it to cultivate apple and cherry orchards until the early 1980s.

In the late 1990s, the site had been threatened by local real estate developers for residential, commercial, industrial and public areas and the plan was supported by the mayor and also by the various kibbutzim.

The construction plan had been issued following the need to use this large area, belonging to the state, in the heart of the Israeli capital. These plots, in the city center, have in fact a huge economic potential for the city of Jerusalem and the residents of the kibbutzim. The money raised by the project was intended to be used for the development of the city and the well-being of the residents, as well as for economic developments that could help many residents.

The activists who promoted the project argued, first and foremost, that the deal was legal and legitimate, and there was no reason to prevent it due to considerations that were not relevant. In addition, they argued that it would not be possible for the center of Jerusalem to have such large, uninhabited areas, at times when it could be used for construction purposes. The money raised would be used for the benefit of all residents.



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A broad public movement arose that aimed to preserve the valley as an open public space for the residents of Jerusalem in general and the residents of nearby neighborhoods in particular, opposed those entrepreneurial forces and economic needs.

The valley, has long been a bubble of wilderness in the heart of the city and had given residents the feeling that nature and their home are connected. The Deer Valley Action Committee, which opposed construction in the valley, included a large number of social and environmental organizations, along with representatives of nearby neighborhoods and city residents.

The main arguments of the residents were that the city of Jerusalem is crowded anyway, and it needs a green lung that will help deal with air pollution, noise and overcrowding within the city. The residents of the city wanted to keep the park in their city, due to the ecological reasons and the need for green lungs.

The environmental organizations see the struggle for the Deer Valley in Jerusalem as a success. The won their battle and prevented building real estate on a green lung.

