



**Freedom of Information Petition:
Who is providing electricity to illegal Palestinian construction?**

The Regavim movement has petitioned the Jerusalem District Court, after the Civil Administration refused to provide data on the extent of electricity connections apparently supplied by the East Jerusalem Electric Company, an Israeli subsidiary of the Israel Electric Company, which is subject to Israeli law, for thousands of illegal Palestinian structures in Judea and Samaria.

Tens of thousands of illegal structures have been built in the last decade in Area C, the section of Judea and Samaria under full Israeli jurisdiction. Most of these structures are connected to the electricity grid operated by the East Jerusalem Electric Company, an Israeli company supervised by the Public Services Authority. Other than the Israel Electric Company, the East Jerusalem Electric Company is the only company in Israel licensed to distribute electricity throughout the country.

To ascertain the extent of this phenomenon, Regavim submitted a Freedom of Information request to the Civil Administration last August. The request focused on electrical connections provided for illegal structures located a few meters from the entrance gate to Efrat in Gush Etzion. These structures, built illegally by Arabs with the encouragement and support of the Palestinian Authority, are connected to the East Jerusalem Electric Company network.

Regavim wanted to understand how the East Jerusalem Electric Company received permission to connect the illegal structures to the grid, and precisely how the electricity pillars were placed: Is there an approved masterplan for the area? Were these structures given permits, or perhaps granted permit exemptions which allowed for their connection to the grid?

The Civil Administration did not respond; after Regavim's second request for information, the Civil Administration's official response was that "staff members are working vigorously to formulate a response to this query;" although these structures had been hooked up to the electrical supply only a few months before the query was submitted, the Civil Administration explained that the structures in question are "old," and that "in-depth examination of the archives is required."

Months after this puzzling response, no substantive reply was received from the Civil Administration to the Freedom of Information request, so Regavim petitioned the court to compel the Civil Administration to provide satisfactory answers about this absurd situation.

"Aside from the safety hazards posed by unauthorized, unsupervised electrical connections, this situation lends permanence to the illegal structures," says Yakhin Zik, Director of Operations at the Regavim Movement. "It is inconceivable that a company subject to Israeli law should provide unauthorized electrical connections to structures built illegally. It is inconceivable that while on the one hand the Israeli government has vowed to fight and win "the battle for Area C," on the other hand it is allowing this

phenomenon to entrench and reward the illegal construction that is the primary tool for the hostile Palestinian takeover of Area C."

Attached are photos and a video clip about the petition. All credits: Regavim

<https://youtu.be/5nt8uBXpyAs>

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