

Terminales L-ES européennes – Jerusalem, a divided city.

Holy Jerusalem: The key to peace, By BBC News Online's Tarik Kafala.

The old city of Jerusalem contains sites holy to Jews, Muslims and Christians. At the heart of the bitter Palestinian-Israeli dispute is the Temple Mount or Haram al-Sharif.

National symbols:

For secular Jews, the Temple Mount is a profound national symbol. The capture of the Western or Wailing Wall in 1967 was, even for the non-devout, a great national achievement.

Equally, the Haram al-Sharif is of deep religious and political significance to Palestinians and to Muslims around the world. For Palestinians, having their future capital in East Jerusalem is a fundamental element of any future state.



The Dome of the Rock above the Wailing Wall

The options for Jerusalem:

- **Full Israeli sovereignty:** That Jerusalem is the "*eternal and undivided*" capital of Israel is an Israeli political mantra that has been repeated by Israeli leaders of every hue. Many Palestinians - and Muslims in the wider world - would not endorse a peace agreement that left Israel in full control of Jerusalem and its holy sites.

- **Shared sovereignty:** Under this model, Israelis and Palestinians would share sovereignty of the holy sites. Palestinians also want sovereignty or some other form of jurisdiction over East Jerusalem, the Arab part of the city, which under international law has been illegally occupied by Israel since 1967.

- **Twin capitals:** In late September, Prime Minister Ehud Barak put forward a plan for twin capitals next to each other - al-Quds, the Arabic name for the city, would belong to the Palestinians while Jerusalem would be Israel's internationally-recognised capital.

This solution would not solve the issue of holy sites, because al-Quds under this plan would not include the Temple Mount. "*No Jewish prime minister will sign (an) agreement that transfers the sovereignty of the Temple Mount to the Palestinians or to an Islamic body,*" Mr Barak said.

- **International or 'God's' sovereignty:** Because of the holiness of Jerusalem to the three monotheistic religions, it has been suggested that the city should be given special international status and administration.

The Vatican, and in particular Pope John Paul II, has often called for Jerusalem to be given special status. (...) The concept of 'God's' or 'divine' sovereignty has been raised. Under this model, neither Palestinians nor Israelis have sovereignty over the holy sites, which are seen as too important to fall under any one state's political sovereignty.

The sites would therefore be administered by Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders.

Under the 1948 United Nations resolution on the partition of Palestine, Jerusalem was designated as a special international city to be administered by the UN." (Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>> [In Depth: Israel and the Palestinians: issues](#) : Tuesday, 18 February, 2003).

Instructions.

1. What is the religious undertone of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over Jerusalem?
2. What national symbols are at stake?
3. List the different options for Jerusalem? What did the UN decide in 1948?
4. What solution is likely to be the best?