

Barkat rejects plan for baby clinic in Silwan neighborhood

By [Nir Hasson](#)

[Follow Haaretz.com on twitter!](#)

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat has rejected the recommendation of municipal professionals and will not include the establishment of a well-baby clinic in the Silwan neighborhood in the coming year's budget. The proposed clinic would have served some 100,000 Arabic-speaking residents. On the other hand, the 7,000 residents of the Old City's Jewish Quarter will receive a well-baby clinic in 2010.

Unlike other parts of the country, in Jerusalem it is the municipality that owns and runs these clinics. Beyond the significant gap that exists in general in the level of services for the residents of East Jerusalem compared with those in the western part of the city, there is a particular disparity in health services for babies. While the Jewish residents of the city have 25 such clinics at their disposal, the 250,000 residents of the eastern part of the city have a mere four. And because many of the residents of Arab East Jerusalem have difficulty traveling the long distances required to get medical treatment for their children, only a small percentage receive vaccinations and many suffer from a lack of regular medical follow-up.

Professional workers in the municipality's community authority recently recommended to the mayor that a well-baby clinic be opened in Silwan, which would also serve the residents of adjacent Arab neighborhoods such as the Old City, Ras al-Amud and Abu Tor. The recommendation came in the wake of discussions they had held with residents of Silwan under the aegis of the Inter-Cultural Center in Jerusalem. It was suggested that a clinic be opened in the Jewish Quarter at the same time.

But on Thursday, during discussions on the 2010 budget, the mayor decided to reject the Silwan proposal but to accept that for the Jewish Quarter. It must be noted that from the budgetary point of view, it is more costly to open the clinic in Silwan.

"I don't understand why in the mayor's neighborhood there is a well-baby station but not in ours," said Fahri Abu Dieb of Silwan, in reaction to the decision. "Is he entitled to it but we are not?. Are my children any different from his? After that he will say again that Jerusalem is united." He added: "Soon Hamas will open clinics and we'll go to them. What we are interested in is our children's health, and if the municipality doesn't have any clinics, we'll look for other ways."

Haggai Agmon, director of the Inter-Cultural Center, a non-profit organization that works to assist the city's different ethnic groups become involved in communal life, says that "the urgent need to open a well-baby clinic in Silwan was agreed upon by both sides but to my great surprise, someone took it off the budget at the last minute."

Laura Wharton, a city council member from Meretz, also attacked the decision. "The matter should have been considered according to needs and not according to the vested interests of preferring one population over another," she said. "The decision was made out of discrimination toward the Arab population but I hope we'll be able to change it."

The municipal spokesman said: "The municipality is acting to improve the services given to the residents of Silwan and in that framework it was decided

More Headlines

- 01:01** Top ministers conclude critical Shalit session
- 23:35** IDF soldier dies in training accident in Golan Heights
- 22:16** Netanyahu's brother-in-law: Free Shalit through war, not talks
- 23:13** Islamic Movement head banned from entering Jerusalem
- 21:57** Mousavi's car said attacked after mass rally at Iran cleric's funeral
- 19:21** Pope recalls 'upsetting' Yad Vashem visit amid row over Pius XII
- 21:03** Graphic novel on IDF 'massacres' in Gaza set to hit bookstores
- 22:52** TV ROUND-UP: Ministers meet again over Shalit deal; Auschwitz sign found
- 16:42** U.S. won't rule out Iran strike; France touts new nuclear sanctions
- 21:02** Israel unposed / 'Jesus' comes to Tel Aviv, Druze culinary delights
- 15:31** Demjanjuk unmoved in face of emotional Holocaust survivors
- 21:20** Immigration cops break into Tel Aviv church to nab illegal migrants
- 19:19** IN PICTURES / Israel uncovers first Jesus-era house in Nazareth

at first to invest in an unprecedented fashion in the construction of public buildings that have been lacking for many years for the benefit of the residents. In the second stage, the municipality intends to open a well-baby clinic there."

PROMOTION:

[Subscribe to Print Edition](#)

 [Bookmark to del.icio.us](#)

 [Digg It!](#)



Footnotes on Gaza

Award winning graphic novelist publishes comic book on IDF 'massacres' in Gaza.



'Free Shalit in war'

Netanyahu's brother-in-law argues with abductee's father in Jerusalem.



[Top](#)

[Home](#) | [TV](#) | [Print Edition](#) | [Diplomacy](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts & Leisure](#) | [Sports](#) | [Jewish World](#) | [Site rules](#) |

| [Advert: Recommended Restaurants](#) | [Makom: Engaging on Israel](#)

| [Search engine marketing](#)



Haaretz.com, the online edition of Haaretz Newspaper in Israel, offers real-time breaking news, opinions and analysis from Israel and the Middle East. Haaretz.com provides extensive and in-depth coverage of Israel, the Jewish World and the Middle East, including defense, diplomacy, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the peace process, Israeli politics, Jerusalem affairs, international relations, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Israeli business world and Jewish life in Israel and the Diaspora.

© Copyright 2009 Haaretz. All rights reserved