

On Saturday, announcements for “organization and construction” were posted in the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood, in the town of Silwan, south of Al-Aqsa Mosque, threatening large areas of the neighborhood’s lands with confiscation, and dozens of homes with demolition, under the pretext of “public benefit.”

The Wadi Hilweh-Silwan Information Center explained that the project is surprising and that there is not enough information for the neighborhood committee, land owners and residents about the project. According to the announcement, which is signed by the “Chairman of the Local Planning and Building Committee,” entitled: “Announcing the intention to obtain full rights to the land and the freedom to dispose of it (purchasing for the needs of the public - according to the Planning and Building Law of 1965), and its first clause states, “Within its powers and in accordance with Articles 189 and 180 of the Planning and Building Law, and under the National Outline Plan - the Old City Cable Car, an announcement regarding its approval in the Regional Planning and Building Committee, and in accordance with the provisions 5 and 7 of the Land Law: “The plot of land is required for a general need for a transportation line for a large number of passengers, and the committee intends to purchase a holding in the land for a temporary period of 8 years.”

As for the second clause of the advertisement, it demands ownership of the lands: “The committee intends to obtain ownership of the land, and any person who has ownership or any right to the aforementioned land must relinquish his ownership within 60 days of publishing this advertisement.”

The announcement stated in one of its clauses that the lands targeted by the project “on which the project is intended to be implemented” include: “Oufal Road,” Al-Turbah Road, “Melki Zedek Road,” Baydoun Street, “Ma’ali HaShalom,” from the Dung Gate to the Nabi Daoud Gate,” and “Gay Bein Hinom”, Wadi Al-Rababwh, Hebron Road, Remez Road, the old Ottoman station.

According to the announcement, the project will confiscate 5 ponds containing 14 plots of land, with an area of 8700 square meters.

Residents of the lands explained that they were surprised today by the announcement being posted in more than one area in the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood “on poles and walls” to confiscate the lands under the pretext of public benefit. The residents said that more than 1,000 people will be displaced under the pretext of public benefit and the establishment of a cable car line that would serve tourists. They want to confiscate the land and evict the residents so that tourists can take a cable car ride.

The residents confirmed that the project is not clear to them, and they are trying to contact the lawyer and the competent authorities to find out the details of the project and the plan, especially since the “old cable car plan” was to place cable car poles in empty areas “without construction,” and without the need for confiscation or demolition.

The neighborhood's residents confirmed that they will not accept negotiations over their right to their lands and will not give them up, as it is the land of their fathers and grandfathers.