



POLITECNICO  
DI MILANO

**DAS U**

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN STUDIES  
LABORATORY OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

POST GRADUATE PROGRAMME

# **COOPERA(C)TION**

## **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**



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SECOND  
EDITION

## **VISUALIZING HEBRON UNDER OCCUPATION**

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## ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT

Hebron is the only Palestinian city that has internal Israeli settlements and it is a sobering symbol of how Palestinians are affected by the policies of the occupation. The city, in according to the Hebron agreement signed in 1997, was divided in two areas: H1 under the Palestinian Authority and H2 under Israeli military control. Hebron is turning into two different cities: area H1 and H2 are completely divided by physical elements and difference in social classes.

The mass departure of the residents that could financially afford to leave the H2 area has transformed the old city in an almost-empty neighborhood, heavily controlled by the Israeli army and today mainly inhabited by settlers and the lowest socio-economic classes of Hebronite society. The historic center is additionally fragmented through the presence of closures, barriers, checkpoints, military zones and Israeli settlements. As a result, it is difficult to develop a clear understanding of how the structure of Hebron is disintegrating and part of it is altering into a Judaized quarter. These policies of separation prohibit freedom of movement and suffocate the social and economic life for Palestinians.

The fragmentation in the old city produces the displacement of the urban population. This political and military strategy is used to protect, maintain, connect, and expand the Jewish settlements. Urban analysis can be used to explain the complexity of the occupation by describing the severity of the policies of expropriation of land, spatial separation and segregation.

A map is able to describe a clear factual representation of the conflict and it can easily show how the Old City of Hebron is gradually being sterilized .

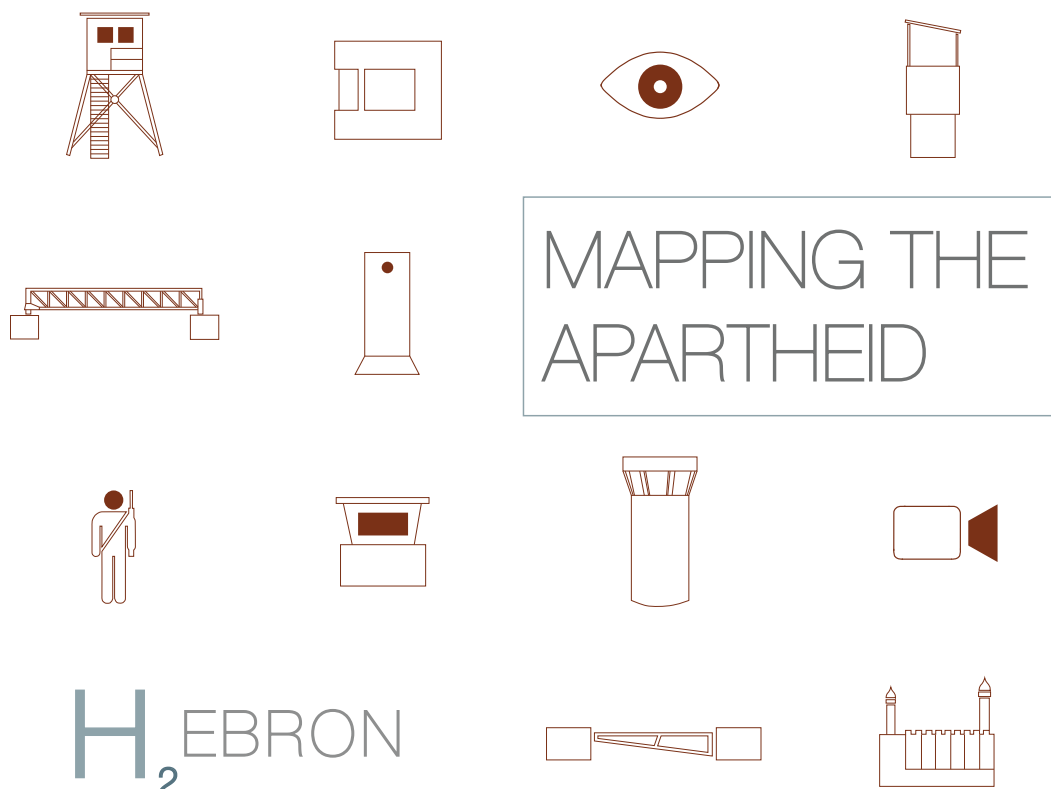
The main actors involved in this project are “Yas”, a nonviolent action group of local people and the Polytechnic of Hebron for the technical support.

The primary intention of the final project is to provide users with an urban analysis of the occupied city, with which to form their own opinions about the situation.

The main idea is to create an interactive map, using easy-to-understand graphics, creates a simple tool that sheds light on this very complex social and political reality.

The choice to make the map interactive is to give users a more comprehensive picture with detailed information. This map contains links to documents to deepen the users' understanding. Some of the documents show the urban strategies and the tangible elements used by the Israeli army to separate the city, others describe the story of the places which have been completely changed due to the military architecture.

The strategy of occupation is clearly based on the distortion of urban memory and the narration of personal stories and the history of the city play the important role of providing factual objective information.



Now-a-days in the old city of Hebron a network of barriers creates a continuous strip of land in the H2 area, along which Palestinian vehicles are completely forbidden. This strip, which stretches from the Kiryat Arba settlement in the east to the Jewish cemetery in the west, is separated from the rest of the city, as the army controls and restricts entry of Palestinians to it. The middle of the strip contains many sections of road closed for Palestinian pedestrians. The most important is called Al-Shuhada Street, which is closed to Palestinian vehicular and pedestrian traffic between the Beit Hadassah and Avraham Avinu settlement points. The settlers, on the other hand, are allowed to move about freely in these areas.

According to a report from Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, a policy of “separation” has guided the operations of the Israeli military (IDF) in the area. The Israeli security forces believe that the physical separation of the two ethno-national communities is necessary on both security and operational grounds. The result is the creation of “protective spaces” using the elements of the occupation, such as checkpoints and physical roadblocks. These are placed to separate the city of Hebron from the area occupied by Jewish settlers adopting a strategy of “sterilization”. The “sterile” area is usually the zone located around the settlement’s compounds, from which Palestinian pedestrians are forbidden.

The primary intention of the platform is to provide users with an urban analysis of the occupied city, to show a clear factual representation of the situation.

The core of the project is an interactive map, to shed light on this very complex social and political reality.

## THE PLATFORM: phases of the project

### -Phase 1: Data collection

#### -Historical research:

collection of data and information about the history of the Occupation in Hebron

#### -Survey of the H2 area

We started creating the map from the information we got through a survey and some existing maps produced by UN in 2007. The survey has been made marking the position of all the elements and infrastructures of the occupation: settlements, barriers, closures, checkpoints, military bases and cameras. Making pictures was an useful tool to analyse these elements and their impact on the area.

#### -Personal stories:

Yas collected the stories of the Palestinian families living inside the H2 area



Checkpoint 56

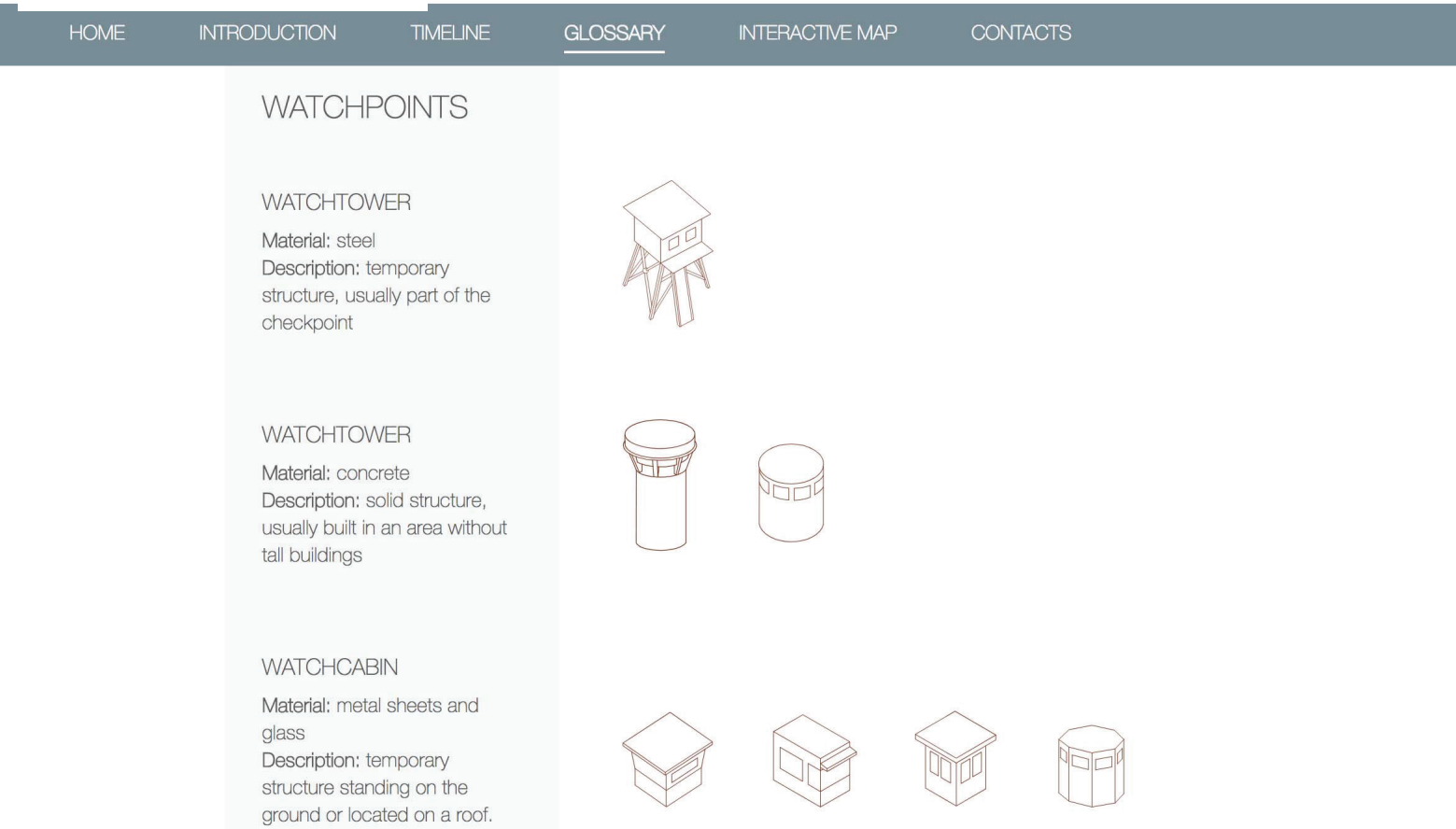
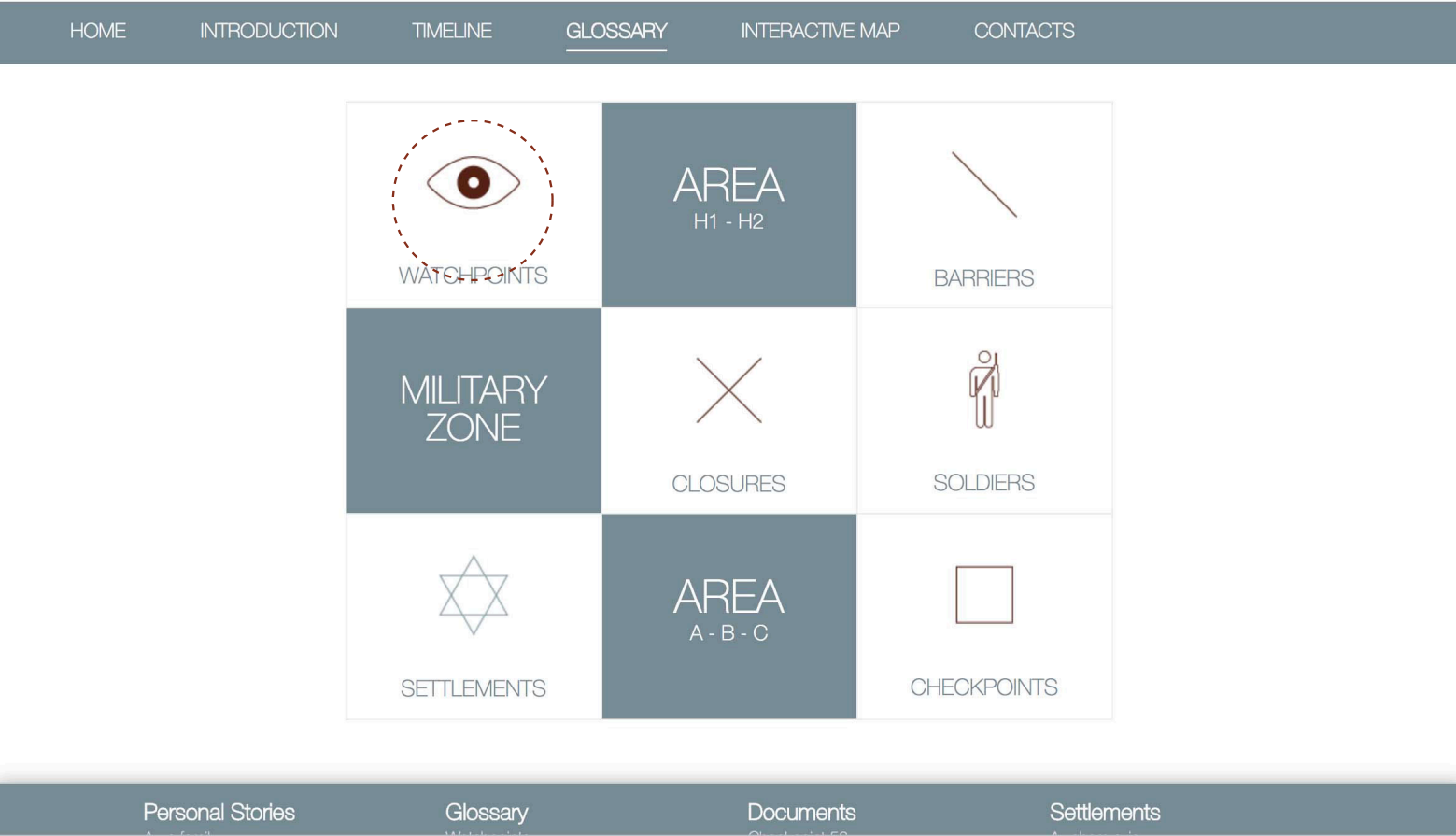


Kasbah



-Phase 2: Data visualization

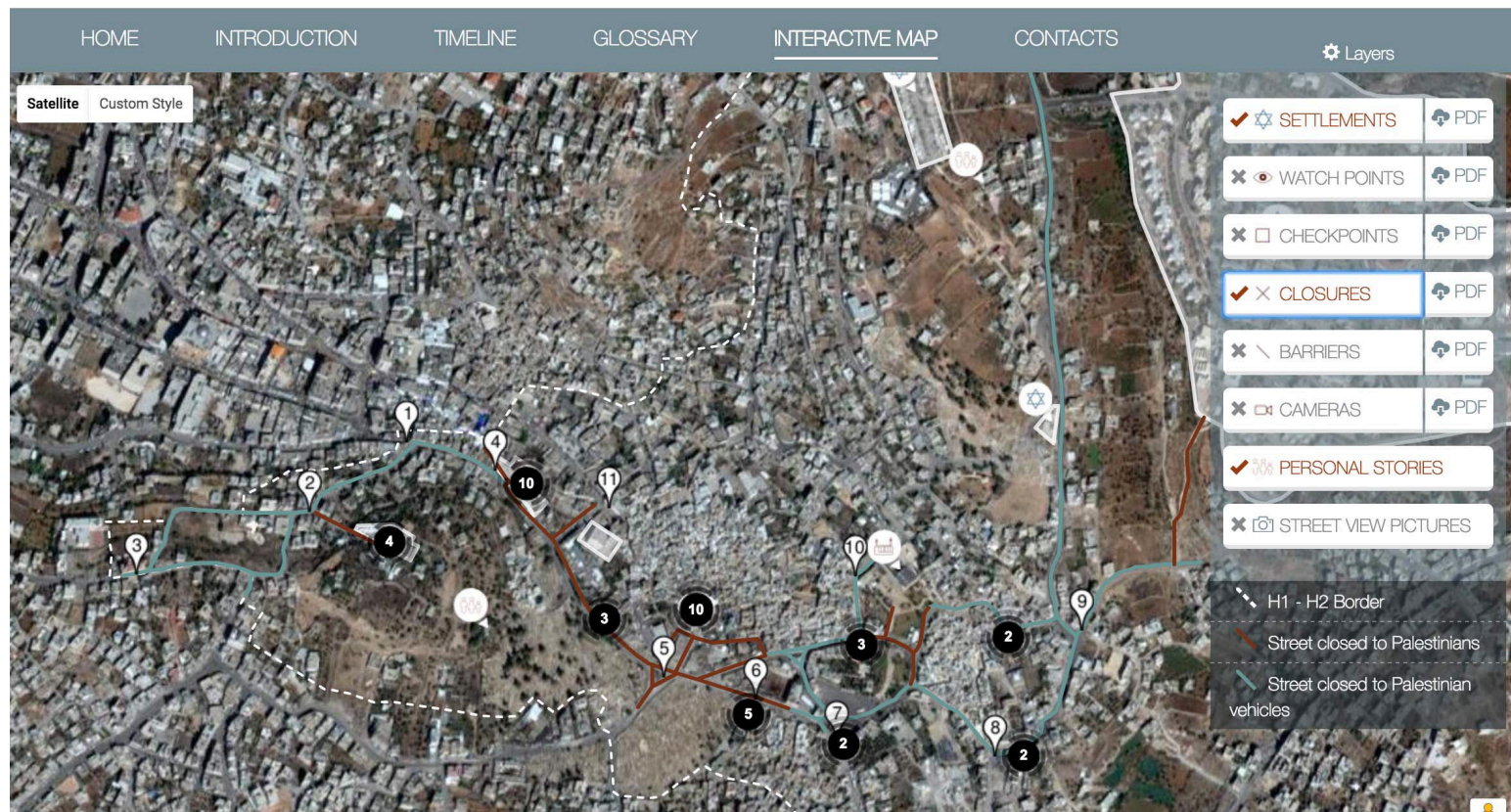
-The interactive glossary describes and classifies the elements of the occupation





## -Phase 2: Data visualization

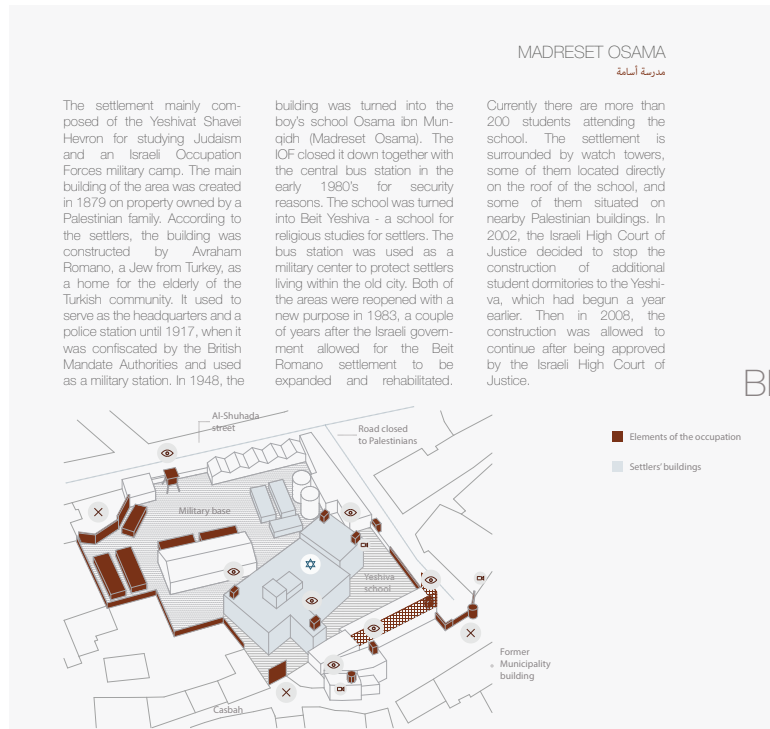
-The Interactive map: the data of the survey are geolocated and translated on the google maps base. Each element of the occupation represents a layer of the map. The interactive layers allow the user to overlap the elements, combining the data. All the elements are represented on the map through easy-to-understand infographics.





## -Phase 2: Data visualization

-The interactive map contains links to documents to deepen the users' understanding. Some of the documents show the urban strategies and the tangible elements used by the Israeli army to separate the city, others describe the story of the places which have been completely changed due to the military architecture.



### BEIT ROMANO Settlement

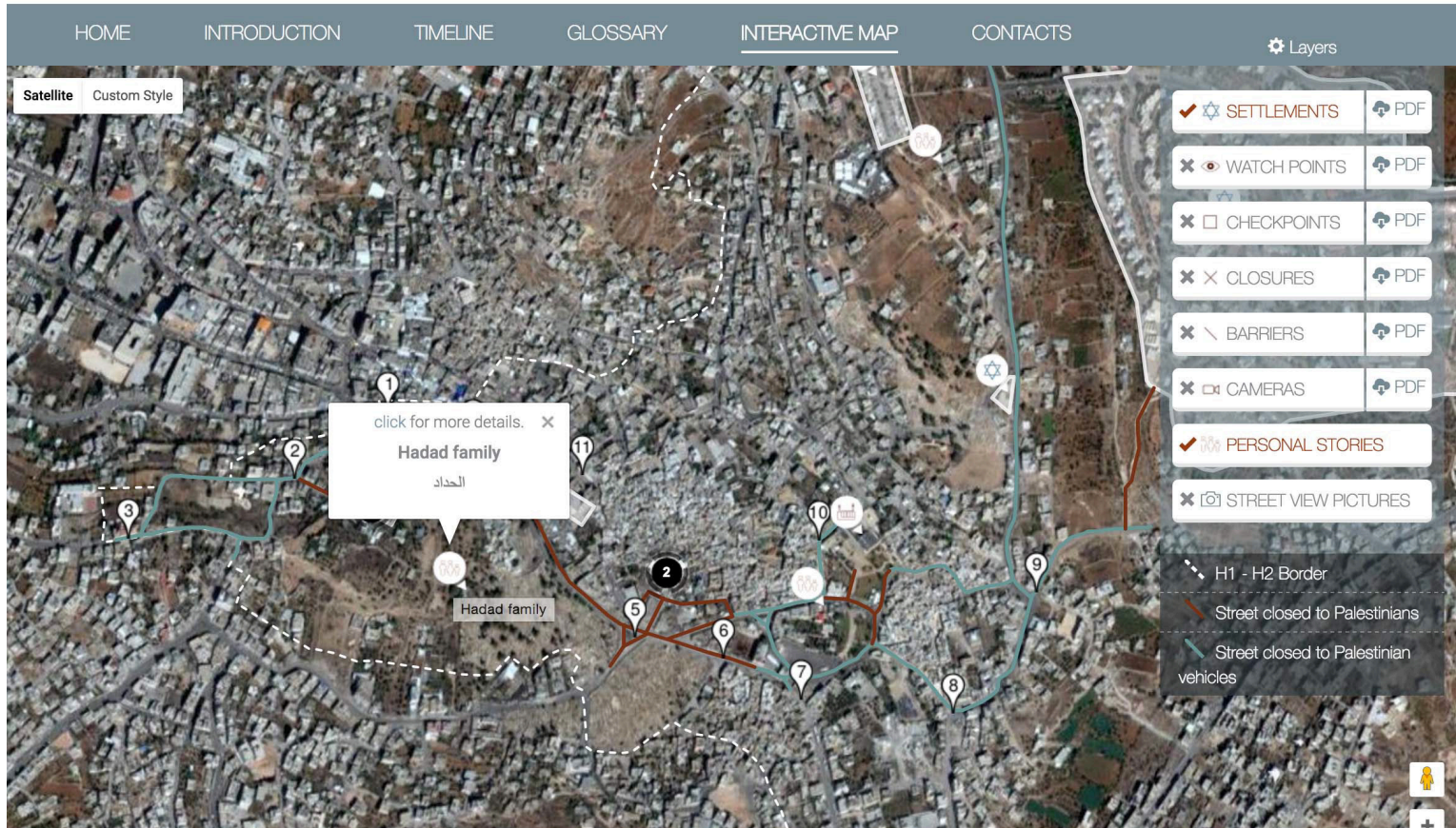


### BAB AL-BALADIEH The gate of the municipality

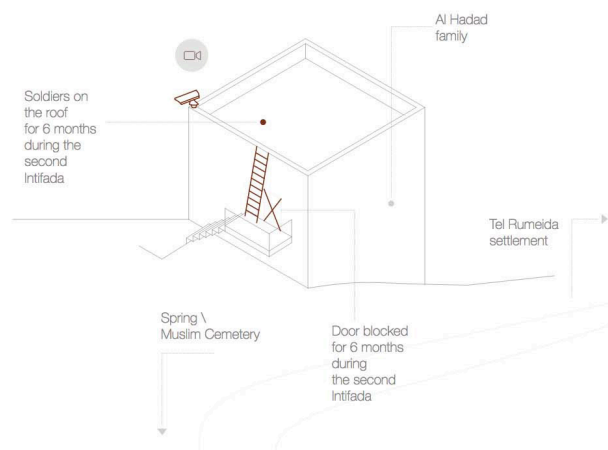
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## -Phase 2: Data visualization

-Personal stories: YAS collected and translated eight stories of families living inside the H2 area. Each of these families is located on the interactive map. I focused on their houses, I produced 3d schemes to describe how their personal stories are strictly related to the transformations that their houses undergone over the years of occupation.



### AL HADAD FAMILY عائلة الحداد



The Al Hadad Family live on Tel Rumeida hill, in between olives trees, on the path that connects the settlement (located on the top of Tel Rumeida) and Shuhada street. This location passes through the water spring, which settlers consider holy. During the second Intifada, soldiers occupied their rooftop and part of the second floor of their house for almost 6 months. The soldiers climbed onto the roof through a metal ladder and they prevented the family from using the main entrance to enter the house. Today the soldiers have a camera on their rooftop in order to protect settlers walking down.

Soha Hadad moved into the house during The Second Intifada. For the first three months, soldiers occupied part of the house. They then moved to the roof, stayed for six months, and installed security cameras as they left. When



## -CONCLUSION:

The project wants to be a database for analysis and comprehension, using mapping as a tool to denounce the Israeli urban policies of occupation in West Bank and the impact on the local population.

The primary intention of the web-site is to provide users with an urban analysis of the occupied city and a description of the urban transformations due to the occupation.

The platform provides factual information and every documents and maps can be downloaded and used as a material for research purpose or simply as touristic purpose, like a guide of the occupied city.

The mapping project is a methodology of approach and analysis of a complex urban-social and political situation.

