

Rawabi: Palestinian middle class city

Between Ramallah and Nablus, at the huge construction site of the city of Rawabi, buildings' structures are already visible.

Five-room apartment Price: less than 400 thousand NIS

Asaf Gabor and Yochai Ofer |13.05.2013 8:57    

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The new Palestinian city of Rawabi is taking shape between Nablus and Ramallah. The site spans over more than six square kilometers, and today you can see tall buildings already in advanced construction stages.



Establishing Rawabi: you can already see buildings

Within the coming months hundreds of families are expected to dwell in the first apartments. The price of a five-room apartment which is 115 sqm in size is about eighty thousand dollars – up to no more than 400 thousand NIS - a price that young couples in Israel can only dream of.

Rawabi, which means "hills", is developed by Bayti Real Estate Development CO. headed by Palestinian-American millionaire Bashar al - Masri in partnership with the Qatari "Diar" located in Doha. According to estimates, the new Palestinian city investment will be about 850 million dollars. The purpose of this ambitious project is to provide the Palestinian middle class with affordable housing units, within a fair distance from Ramallah and Jerusalem. The city will include bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways, shopping centers, hotels, and cultural center with a capacity for thousands of visitors, and three cinemas.



Computer simulation of Rawabi

"A student graduating from Nablus, who gets married and finds a job, is currently suffering from housing problems," explains Amir Dajani, who is the project manager in Rawabi. "Prices in villages near Ramallah and Jerusalem, where there is a standard of living compatible with his level of education, are very expensive and not affordable to middle-class young generation." he said.

Rawabi is expected to include a mixture of middle-class families alongside the Palestinian Authority families who are supposed to enjoy some subsidy to the prices of apartments in the city.

Dajani says that construction will be carried out in stages, and eventually the city is supposed to include about 40 thousand inhabitants. "The first stage involves 1,200 five-room units being currently built, and when all phases are complete, Rawabi will be home to about 6,000 residents."

Dajani added "In Bayti Real Estate Co., we believe that the establishment of Rawabi will attract new Palestinians to the entire region, adding that the surrounding villages are expected to enjoy a building boom." "Today, the population of the area consists mainly of poor villagers," says Dajani. "The establishment of Rawabi will provide ten thousand jobs, a fact that will attract strong population into the area, where they will enjoy improved infrastructure and modern services. In addition, the current population already in the area, who suffered, so far, from problems of power supply, water, and shaky sewerage system will be attracted to the modern world of Rawabi"

The Palestinian Authority plans to establish a direct connecting highway between Ramallah and Nablus through Rawabi. Currently the project is stuck; because section of the planned road passes through an area defined as Area C under total Israeli control." The hope and goal is to change the status of this parcel territory to Area B, and then build an underground highway road to pass under Route 456," explains Dajani.

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English Translation by Kameel Jafar/Rawabi