

# The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

## Controversial Jerusalem Old City Cable Car Plans Okayed by Housing Cabinet

Tovah Lazaroff, Jerusalem Post, November 5<sup>th</sup> 2019

### Recap:

The Housing Cabinet approved a controversial cable car project for Jerusalem's Old City that will help visitors access the Western Wall.

### The Context:

- The cable car line will start in West Jerusalem and end near the Dung Gate entrance to the Old City, the closest access point for both the Western Wall and Dome of the Rock [1]. The route will pass directly over Palestinian homes in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan [2].
- The project will improve access to the Old City and significantly ease traffic congestion, especially during Jewish holidays [3]. Once completed, the \$56 million project will transport 3,000 people an hour in both directions to the Western Wall, which draws about 135,000 visitors weekly. A single ride will last about 5 minutes.
- Jewish critics expressed concerns that the cable car will have a destructive impact on the Old City landscape while Palestinian viewed the move as another way Israel seeks to consolidate its control over Jerusalem [4]. Jerusalem is a flashpoint for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and any building project is routinely condemned by Palestinians, who view East Jerusalem as the capital for their future state.

### Conversation Points:

- Will the cable car change the Old City's character and is the tradeoff worth it?
- What weight should Israel give to Palestinian reactions before undertaking such developments?
- Should a transitional government have the right to pass legislation?

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## Twitter Suspends Accounts Linked to Hamas, Hezbollah

Sarah E. Needleman and Bowdeya Tweh, Wall Street Journal, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Recap:**

Twitter suspended accounts linked to Hezbollah and Hamas after US lawmakers criticized the social media company for allowing them to remain active on the platform even though the State Department has designated both as terrorist organizations.

**The Context:**

- Twitter's decision is an about-face after previously telling lawmakers that it distinguished between military and political arms of the two groups. Government officials criticized the company for "arrogantly disputing the US government's determination of what constitutes a terrorist organization [5]." Lawmakers noted that Facebook and Google "have taken proactive measures to address the presence of foreign terrorist organizations on their platforms [6]."
- Raja Abdulhaq, co-founder of New York based Palestinian news agency Quds News Network, said three of his organization's Twitter accounts, totaling a million followers, were removed as a result of Twitter's decision. Abdulhaq criticized the company for its "clear censorship of Palestinian narratives" since the accounts had no affiliation with Hezbollah or Hamas.

**Conversation Points:**

- Should distinctions be made between a terrorist group's political and military wing?
- How should social media companies determine who is allowed to use their platforms?
- Should social media companies be trusted to self-regulate?
- Did Twitter discriminate against Palestinians by removing accounts unaffiliated with Hamas or Hezbollah?

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## Israel Steps Closer to Winning the Race to Serve Cultured Meat

Chase Purdy, Quartz, October 29<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Recap:**

Israeli startup Future Meat Technologies will build the world's first production facility for cultured meat.

**The Context:**

- Future Meat's mission is to reduce the environmental impact of meat eating. The company says its manufacturing model will reduce land use by 99% and emit 80% less greenhouse gas than traditional meat production [7]. The company grows animal cells in bioreactors and says its end product is indistinguishable from animal meat. The cells do not undergo genetic modifications and can multiply indefinitely [8].

- Future Meat's current small-scale production of chicken costs \$150 per pound and its beef, roughly \$200 per pound. The company plans to eventually price its cell-cultured meat for less than \$10 per pound [9] however, instead of selling to the general public, the company seeks to supply hardware and cell lines for manufacturers of lab-grown meat [10].

**Conversation Points:**

- What kashrut laws should apply to cultured meat?
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**Notes:**

1. [Israel approves controversial cable cars in Jerusalem](#), Oren Liebermann, Michael Schwartz and Abeer Salman, CNN, November 5<sup>th</sup> 2019
2. [Israel approves plans to tighten grip on East Jerusalem](#), Jonathan Cook, Al Jazeera, June 7<sup>th</sup> 2019
3. [Housing Cabinet approves Kotel cable car](#), Arutz Sheva, April 11<sup>th</sup> 2019
4. [Israel's Housing Cabinet Green Lights Controversial Jerusalem Old City](#), Nir Hasson, Haaretz, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2019
5. [Lawmakers accuse Twitter of allowing content from Hamas and Hezbollah, violating law](#), Israel Hayom, October 24<sup>th</sup> 2019
6. [U.S. Lawmakers Call on Twitter to Remove Hamas and Hezbollah Content](#), Marcy Oster, Haaretz, October 24<sup>th</sup> 2019 Twitter
7. [Lab-grown meat could be on store shelves by 2022, thanks to Future Meat Technologies](#), Jonathan Shieber, Tech Crunch, October 10<sup>th</sup> 2019
8. [Future Meat Technologies to build lab meat production facility outside Tel Aviv](#), Times of Israel, October 10<sup>th</sup> 2019
9. [Lab-grown meat could be on store shelves by 2022, thanks to Future Meat Technologies](#), Jonathan Shieber, Tech Crunch, October 10<sup>th</sup> 2019
10. Ibid.

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**The Sabra Report** is a newsletter intended to stimulate conversation about Israel by recapping major events & providing context. Our conversation points are meant to encourage discussion amongst friends and family.

**The Sabra Report** is written by Irving Safdieh.

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