

# Massive modern catacombs set to open in Jerusalem

August 29 2019, by Ilan Ben Zion And Isaac Scharf

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In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019 photo, workers are busy at the construction site of a massive underground cemetery in Jerusalem. Under a mountain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis comprised of a mile (1.5 kilometers) of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

Workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis under a mountain just outside Jerusalem. It's comprised of one mile, or about 1.5 kilometers, of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead.

Up above, the Har Hamenuhot Cemetery dominates hillsides above the highway leading into Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

In October, the cemetery's management plans to open the first section of a sprawling catacomb complex which, once completed, will provide 23,000 gravesites for an increasingly crowded country.

Land is in short supply in Israel, and Jewish and Muslim burial customs require interring the dead in the ground and prohibit cremation.

Arik Glazer of Rolzur Tunneling, the company building the tunnel tombs, says that "people will die probably forever ... so you have to get space for that."



In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019 photo, a worker carries boards at the construction site of a massive underground cemetery in Jerusalem. Under a mountain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis comprised of a mile (1.5 kilometers) of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)



In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019 photo, workers walk at the construction site of a massive underground cemetery in Jerusalem. Under a mountain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis comprised of a mile (1.5 kilometers) of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)





In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019 photo, a laborer works at the construction site of a massive underground cemetery in Jerusalem. Under a mountain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis comprised of a mile (1.5 kilometers) of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)



In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019 photo, a worker cleans the floor at the construction site of a massive underground cemetery in Jerusalem. Under a mountain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis comprised of a mile (1.5 kilometers) of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)





In this Sunday, Aug. 18, 2019 photo, a worker walks at the construction site of a massive underground cemetery in Jerusalem. Under a mountain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, workers are completing three years of labor on a massive subterranean necropolis comprised of a mile (1.5 kilometers) of tunnels with sepulchers for interring the dead. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

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