

# Israel Attacks Islam's Third Holiest Site

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Israel gives Judaism a bad name. More proof came Sunday morning. soldiers stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque, firing tear gas and rubber-coated steel bullets at nonviolent worshipers to clear way for extremist Jews to access Islam's third holiest site where they don't belong.

Israel has no shortage of synagogues for worshipers to pray any day of the year for any reason. Forcibly entering a Muslim holy place with plenty of supportive military muscle constitutes a criminal act.



Photo by Andrew Shiva

Settlers came on a Jewish fast day (Tisha B'Av - marking the destruction of Jerusalem, two holy temples and other ancient tragedies).

Dozens of Palestinian worshipers were injured - from tear gas and pepper spray inhalation, rubber-coated bullet injuries, and beatings with rifle butts and other blunt objects.

Soldiers entered the compound's Moroccan, Chain, and Hutta Gates, closed them with chains, and attacked Muslim worshipers inside the holy site.

Palestinian security guards were assaulted and overwhelmed by brute force - prevented from protecting their own people.

Notorious racist agriculture minister Uri Ariel (wanting all land between the Jordan River and

Mediterranean Sea exclusively for Jews) entered the compound along with other extremist Jews.

Earlier Sunday morning, Israeli forces restricted Muslim worshipers wanting access to Al-Aqsa to men aged 50 or over and women. After 6:30AM, all Palestinians wanting entry were denied.

Israel reportedly wants the compound open to non-Muslim worshipers. It's where Jews believe the first and second temples once stood.

Since occupation began in June 1967, Israel agreed not to allow non-Muslim prayer in the area - only at the adjacent Western Wall, the second temple's remaining remnant.

Israeli pledges are worthless. Extremist Jews regularly enter the compound - heavily protected by soldiers and police, justifiably enraging Muslim worshipers.

Separately on Saturday, Jewish settlers assaulted a Palestinian child near al-Ghawanma Gate leading to Al-Aqsa's compound. Intervention by other Palestinians witnessing what happened saved him.

At the same time, Jewish settlers performed Talmudic rituals at the King Faisal and al-Qattanin Gates. Right-wing Jewish groups urged them to storm Al-Aqsa's compound.

They demanded Muslims be entirely excluded from Saturday evening to sunset Sunday - as well as from 7:30 - 11:30AM for provocative scheduled Israeli tours this Monday through Thursday.

Extremist Jews want Al-Aqsa destroyed - replaced by a Jewish temple, a notion justifiably enraging all Islam. A Knesset measure proposed dividing the compound into Jewish and Muslim sectors - an idea Palestinians reject.

## **A Final Comment**

Israeli violence against Palestinians occurs multiple times daily throughout the Occupied Territories. The IDF intermittently bombs Gaza targets at its discretion or attacks them by ground incursions.

Israeli soldiers attack weekly Friday Bil'in village nonviolent protests against the illegal apartheid wall and settlements on stolen Palestinian land.

They march peacefully, carry Palestinian flags, demand all political prisoners be released and call for Palestine's liberation.

They demand Israeli criminals be held accountable in international tribunals. They want Palestine freed from repressive rule.

On Friday and Saturday, Israeli forces attacked Silwad, Betunia, Nabi Saleh and Kufur Qaddoum village residents. Many were injured.

Homes were invaded so soldiers could fire on Palestinians from rooftops. During the week ending July 15 alone, Israeli forces conducted 30 forceful incursions into West Bank Palestinian communities - arresting 28 nonviolent victims, including seven children.

Daily persecution targets millions of Palestinians wanting only to live on their own land in peace - free from militarized occupation, denying them fundamental rights everyone deserves.

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