

# *Israel Attacks Muslims at Al-Aqsa Mosque with Tear Gas, Rubber Bullets*

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Jerusalem, June 20 (RHC)-- Muslim worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem attacked by Israeli forces Sunday were left suffocating and injured after tear gas grenades and rubber bullets were fired.

The police's brute force affected 30 people, with two young people detained at the site of the incident. The incident began when Israeli police attacked Palestinian worshippers who were chanting religious slogans in protest of the presence of Jewish settlers, police and military forces on the mosque's grounds.

Following the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has largely maintained a compromise with the Islamic trust that controls the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, not to allow non-Muslim prayers in the area. In addition, Israeli police usually close off the gate to the mosque for the last 10 days of Ramadan, considered the holiest for many Muslims. However, this year, Israel allowed access to Israelis and foreigners to the site, which has caused near-daily clashes.

On Sunday, 250 Israeli soldiers had stormed the compound, allowing Israeli settlers to enter, and desecrate the mosque. A Fatah official condemned the incident as "an extension of Israel's fascist and

aggressive policies against Palestinian people,” reported Ma’an.

Director of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Sheikh Omar Kiswani, told Ma’an that he held the Israeli government responsible for the escalation of violence during Ramadan, by allowing “extremist Israelis to conduct the provocative tour around the mosque.”

The incident comes in the wake of a move to inflict “collective punishment” on Palestinians in the territory through road closures, arbitrary searches and mass detentions, which Israel has levelled in response to an attack on an Israeli police officer in Jerusalem over the weekend.

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