

# *Palestinian mosque desecrated in apparent hate crime in West Bank*

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Ramallah, February 5 (RHC)-- Several extremist Jewish settlers have desecrated a mosque in the central part of the occupied West Bank, spraying racist slogans and Hebrew graffiti messages on the walls of the mosque.

Mansour Mansour, the mayor of the city of Dayr Dibwan, located east of Ramallah, told Palestine's official WAFA news agency that settlers stormed the city early on Monday, and spray-painted anti-Palestinian slogans on the walls and asphalt of the mosque and several vehicles there.

Among the slogans spray-painted on the walls of the mosque were "Here people incite to murder Jews" and "The Jewish nation lives." Palestinian sources also reported that settlers poured flammable material on the shoe rack placed at the entrance of the mosque, but apparently didn't light it.

Palestinian Minister of Religious Affairs Sheikh Youssef Idais denounced the act, saying: "There are no longer safe places of worship in light of Israeli forces' and settlers' attacks and crimes [against Palestinian people]." He added: "This racist attack is a new [act of] provocation added to the list of Israeli crimes against the holy sites."

He highlighted that Israeli violations and attacks against places of worship, including their closure, and Tel Aviv's prohibition of the Muslim call to prayer attest to the magnitude of barbarism being enforced by the Israeli regime.

Idais then urged Arab and Muslim countries in addition to the international community to intervene and protect holy places in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Locals said Israeli settlers raided the village, slashing the tires of Palestinian-owned vehicles and spray-painting Hebrew slogans on them, in another "price tag" attack. The so-called price tag attacks are acts of vandalism and violence against Palestinians and their property as well as Muslim holy sites by Israeli settlers.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 120 settlements built since Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank in 1967. This is while much of the international community considers the settler units illegal and subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied land.

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