

Israeli forces clash with Palestinian worshipers in al-Aqsa



Ramallah, August 11 (RHC)-- Israeli police have clashed with Palestinian Muslim worshipers in the al-Aqsa Mosque compound on the start of Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) festivities. The violence erupted on Sunday morning after Israeli policemen fired stun grenades and tear gas at the Palestinians who had finished their Eid prayers.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said that at least 14 worshipers had been injured in the clashes inside the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which lies in the Old City of Jerusalem al-Quds. Lebanese TV channel al-Manar reported that Grand Mufti of Jerusalem al-Quds Sheikh Muhammad Hussein was among those injured. At least four Israeli officers had also been lightly to moderately wounded. The Israeli forces also arrested a number of Palestinian worshipers.

Israelis had been barred from entering the holy site to observe the fasting and mourning day of Tisha B'Av, which coincided with Eid al-Adha this year.

The al-Aqsa Mosque compound is usually closed to non-Muslim visitors during Muslim holidays, but as the holidays overlap this year, some Israeli organizations had appealed to the regime to allow Jewish visitors into the site. On Friday, the Islamic Waqf (Endowment) organization, which oversees the site, urged Muslim worshipers to crowd the al-Aqsa Mosque to keep Israelis from visiting.

Hard-line Israeli legislators and extremist settlers regularly storm the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, a provocative move that infuriates Palestinians. The Jewish visitation of al-Aqsa is permitted, but, according to an agreement signed between Israel and the Jordanian government after Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem al-Quds in 1967, non-Muslim worship at the compound is prohibited.

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