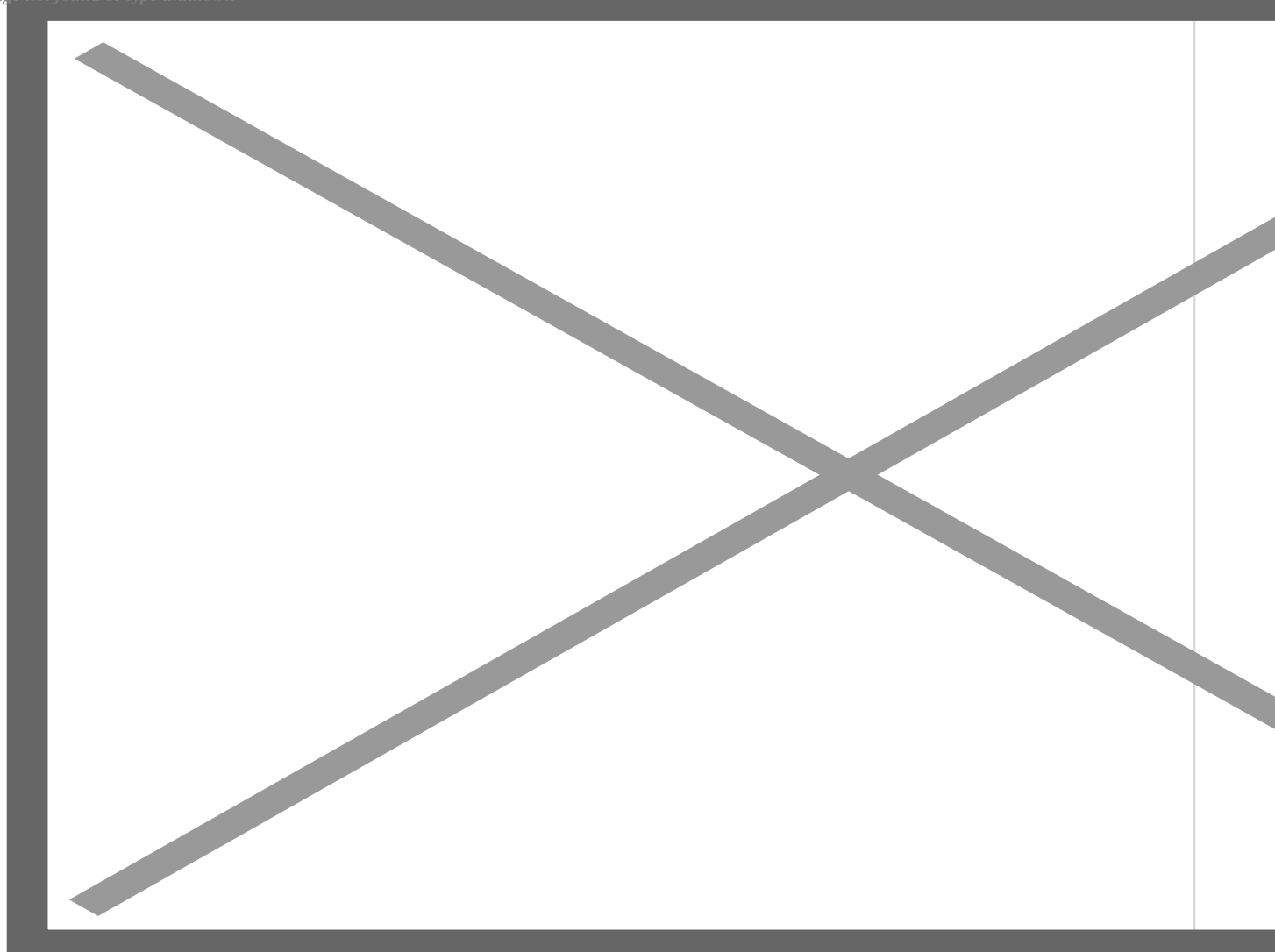


Anger among Palestinians as U.S. delegation visits al-Aqsa Mosque

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Anger among Palestinians as U.S. delegation visits al-Aqsa Mosque?

Ramallah, August 11 (RHC)-- Palestinian resistance groups have condemned a recent visit by a U.S. delegation to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, saying such provocations embolden the Tel Aviv regime to keep violating Palestinians' rights.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which are both based in the besieged Gaza Strip, reacted on Tuesday to the American delegation's tour of the sacred site while being heavily guarded by Israeli occupation forces.

Hamas said in a statement that the entry of the U.S. delegation into the al-Aqsa Mosque under the escort of Israeli police violates international law and resolutions.

"This wrong measure, as we have always emphasized, reflects the United States' policies in support of the positions taken by the Zionist regime, and it is one of the main reasons for the continuation of the Israeli occupation and acts of aggression against the Palestinian nation and sanctities," it added.

"The repetition of such moves will encourage the Zionist enemy to commit more foolish acts and will increase tensions by fanning the flames in the occupied territories, especially in al-Quds. The US government will be responsible for all dangerous consequences."

Meanwhile, Islamic Jihad spokesman Tariq Salmi said that the US delegation's visit to al-Quds and the Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as its meetings with Zionist and Palestinian officials are meant to strengthen the so-called "security cooperation" between the Israeli regime and Palestinian Authority.

This trip, he added, is also aimed at "returning to the path of fruitless peace talks through the implementation of the tripartite agreement between the United States, the Zionist regime and the Palestinian Authority."

Salmi further called on all Palestinian factions to confront the enemy's schemes, which are designed to breach the Palestinians' national rights and principles.

The al-Aqsa Mosque compound is the third-holiest site in Islam. It is located in East al-Quds, which Israel annexed following its invasion in 1967, in a move never recognized by the international community.

Israeli forces and settlers regularly storm the site, which they call the Temple Mount, and violently attack Palestinian worshippers there.

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