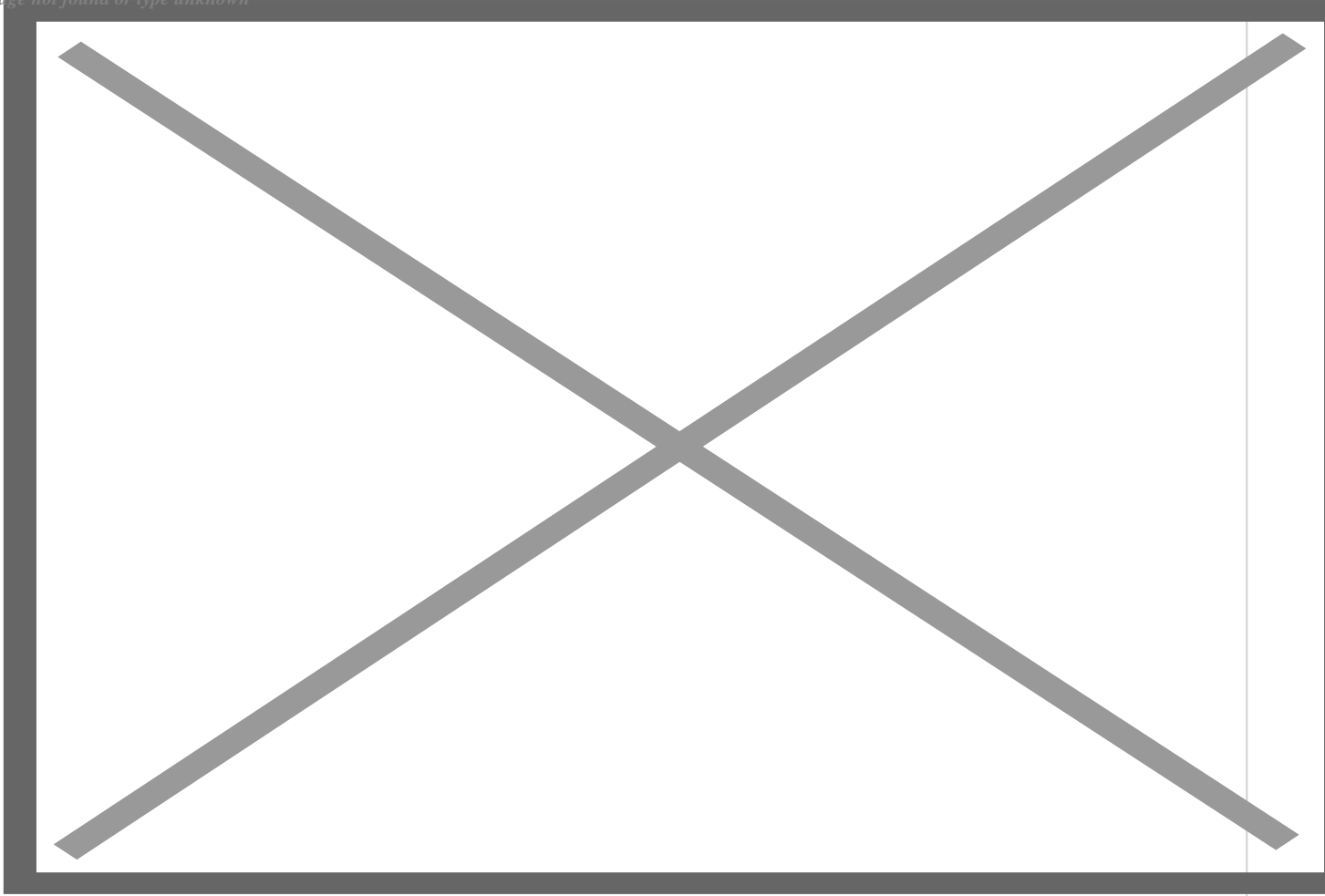


Israeli police repress Palestinian protesters in Sheikh Jarrah

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A member of the Israeli security forces pulls a Palestinian woman during a protest in Sheikh Jarrah, occupied East Jerusalem

Ramallah, February 19 (RHC)-- Israeli police on horseback scattered protesters in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah where demonstrators poured in to support Palestinians facing eviction by Jewish settlers. The scuffles on Friday came alongside protests elsewhere in the occupied West Bank.

Tensions that erupted in Sheikh Jarrah last year – as several Palestinian families faced eviction by settler groups – in part sparked the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip in May. In Jerusalem, Palestinian men laid rugs on the asphalt of a street and carried out prayers. Later, activists who ended up numbering in the hundreds joined them to protest the looming evictions.

Reporters for the AFP news agency observed Israeli border police charging the protesters on horseback after the activists refused to clear a road. Police described the incident as a “riot” and said that “demonstrators did not listen to instructions of police.”

Sheikh Jarrah has emerged as a symbol of Palestinian resistance against Israeli control of East Jerusalem. Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it – a move not recognised by most of the international community.

More than 200,000 Israelis live in occupied East Jerusalem, which many Palestinian groups have claimed as the capital of their future state.

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