

Israeli settlers storm al-Aqsa Mosque amid strict restrictions on Muslims



Jerusalem, August 2 (RHC)-- Israeli settlers have once again intruded into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound under the protection of Israeli forces in the latest act of provocation against the sacred Palestinian site.

Palestine's official Wafa news agency reported that scores of Israeli settlers, escorted by military forces, broke into the compound through the Moroccan Gate on Tuesday and provocatively performed rituals and Talmudic prayers at Bab al-Rahma (Gate of Mercy or Golden Gate) area.

The Islamic Endowment Department in al-Quds said in a statement that the settlers received lectures from rabbis about the alleged Jewish temple at the revered Muslim site. Israeli forces had earlier been deployed at the al-Aqsa Mosque courtyard before allowing settler groups to storm it.

At the same time, the troops prevented Palestinian worshipers from entering the mosque. Hardline Israeli officials and settlers regularly storm the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the occupied city, a provocative move that infuriates Palestinians. Such mass break-ins almost always take place at the behest of Tel Aviv-backed temple groups and under the auspices of the Israeli police in al-Quds.

The Jewish visitation of al-Aqsa is permitted, but as part of a decades-old agreement between Jordan – the custodian of Islamic and Christian sites in al-Quds – and Israel in the wake of Israel's occupation of East al-Quds in 1967, non-Muslim worship at the compound is prohibited.

Back in October 2021, an Israeli court upheld a ban on Jewish prayers at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, after an earlier lower court's decision stirred outrage among various Palestinians and across the Muslim world. Judge of the district court in al-Quds Aryeh Romanov on October 8 confirmed that Jews are barred from worshipping openly at the site, and only Muslims are permitted to pray there.

In May 2021, frequent acts of violence against Palestinian worshipers at al-Aqsa Mosque led to an 11-day war between Palestinian resistance groups in the besieged Gaza Strip and the Israeli regime, during which the regime forces killed at least 260 Palestinians, including 66 children.

Separately, Israeli military bulldozers on Tuesday demolished a Palestinian-owned commercial structure in Deir Ballut town, located 41 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of Nablus. Informed sources told Wafa that the bulldozers demolished a 200-square-meter facility in the town, which belonged to a local resident identified as Ahmad Abdullah.

On July 29, the United Nations announced that Israeli authorities and military forces demolished 54 Palestinian-owned structures in East al-Quds in the largest division of the occupied West Bank during the current month, citing the lack of Israeli-issued building permits that are almost impossible to obtain.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a total of 66 Palestinians, including 34 children, were displaced as a result of the demolitions that took place between July 5 and 24, and the livelihoods of more than 795 others were affected.

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