

*Organization of Islamic
Cooperation condemns Israeli
assault on worshippers at al-Aqsa
Mosque*

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Cairo, April 7 (RHC)-- The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has strongly condemned the Israeli regime's recent restriction and attack on Palestinian worshipers at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied al-Quds, calling on the international community to take immediate action to stop such aggression.

The OIC made the remarks in a statement on Saturday, a day after Israeli troops fired tear gas and poison-gas bombs at Palestinians inside al-Aqsa courtyards, preventing thousands of worshipers from entering the holy site and attending Friday prayers.

The 57-member bloc further denounced Israel's actions which resulted in numerous injuries and arrests as a flagrant violation of international norms, laws and human values, urging the international community to intervene and stop the occupying regime's repeated violations of the freedom of worship and desecration of the holy sites.

The OIC reiterated calls for the full implementation of the United Nations resolutions aimed at halting Israel's ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people, while stressing the need to preserve the longstanding historical and legal status of the mosque. It also renewed its appeal for ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to all areas of the Gaza Strip amid Israel's ongoing hostilities in the besieged enclave.

Earlier in the day, the Jordan News Agency reported that Israeli forces prevented thousands of people from the West Bank from entering al-Quds to pray at the al-Aqsa Mosque on the last Friday of Ramadan.

Israeli soldiers "imposed restrictions on the entry of worshippers into Al-Aqsa Mosque, checked the identities of young men at the entrances to the Old City and the doors of the mosque, and prevented a number of them from entering," the agency said.

Israeli troops turned away dozens of elderly people who were on their way to the mosque from the checkpoints, telling them they did not have the required permits, it added. Israeli forces also fired tear gas into crowds of thousands of worshippers at the mosque after dawn prayers, arresting at least five Palestinians.

According to Israeli police, 3,600 officers were deployed in East al-Quds on Friday amid expectations that tens of thousands of people would travel to al-Aqsa Mosque to pray on the last Friday of the holy month.

Ramadan has often coincided with upticks in violence between Palestinians and Israelis, particularly at al-Aqsa, Islam's third holiest site. Under the protection of Israeli forces, settlers have violently stormed al-Aqsa during Ramadan, attacking Palestinian worshippers inside the compound.

Non-Muslim worship at the compound is prohibited according to an agreement between Israel and Jordan following the regime's seizure of East al-Quds in 1967.

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