

Israeli lawmaker attacked by police for waving Palestinian flag



Jerusalem, August 17 (RHC)-- An Israeli lawmaker has been attacked by police after waving a Palestinian flag during a demonstration in Jerusalem al-Quds. Knesset member Ofer Cassif was attacked while protesting ramped-up settler presence in Jerusalem al-Quds' eastern Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood under the escort of security forces, Israel's Haaretz newspaper reported on Friday.

According to Cassif, the police attacked him and his aide after they objected to the forced seizure of the flag. A video shows police scuffling with the duo, with the lawmaker being held by an officer while the aide is handcuffed in a painful position, prompting him to cry out in pain.

The officers reportedly asked Cassif to present identification proving he was a legislator but didn't give him the chance to do so. "They hit him and pushed me," said Cassif, adding that "I told them that I am a member of Knesset but they did not let me show identification."

The aide, which was arrested, was later taken to a police station only to be transferred to a hospital after feeling ill because of diabetes. The aide was transferred with both hands and feet cuffed, according to Cassif.

Israeli police frequently seize Palestinian flags during protests on the pretext that they were "disturbing the peace." According to Cassif, however, the protest was quiet and peaceful before police officers moved in

to seize Palestinian flags from the assembly.

“If they had waited just another 10 minutes, we would have dispersed. It was unnecessary, stupid and tasteless,” he said. “A police force that is expert at planting weapons in the homes of innocents has no problem planting violence in a quiet protest,” he added, referring to a recently reported incident where police had planted an M-16 rifle in the home of a Palestinian for a docudrama serving Israeli propaganda purposes.

Cassif has been targeted by Israeli authorities before. In March 2019, he was banned from contesting in parliamentary elections by the central election committee for “provocative statements,” only to have the ban overturned when the case was challenged in court.

Israel’s election board has disqualified an Arab party, while approving far-right candidates ahead of parliamentary elections due to be held early next month. Cassif’s remarks regarding the country’s Zionist founding ideology, including the one that Zionism “encourages” anti-Semitism, has enraged Israeli leaders.

The Israeli lawmaker has also described Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an “arch-murderer” and chief of staff of the Israeli army Aviv Kochavi as a “war criminal.”

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