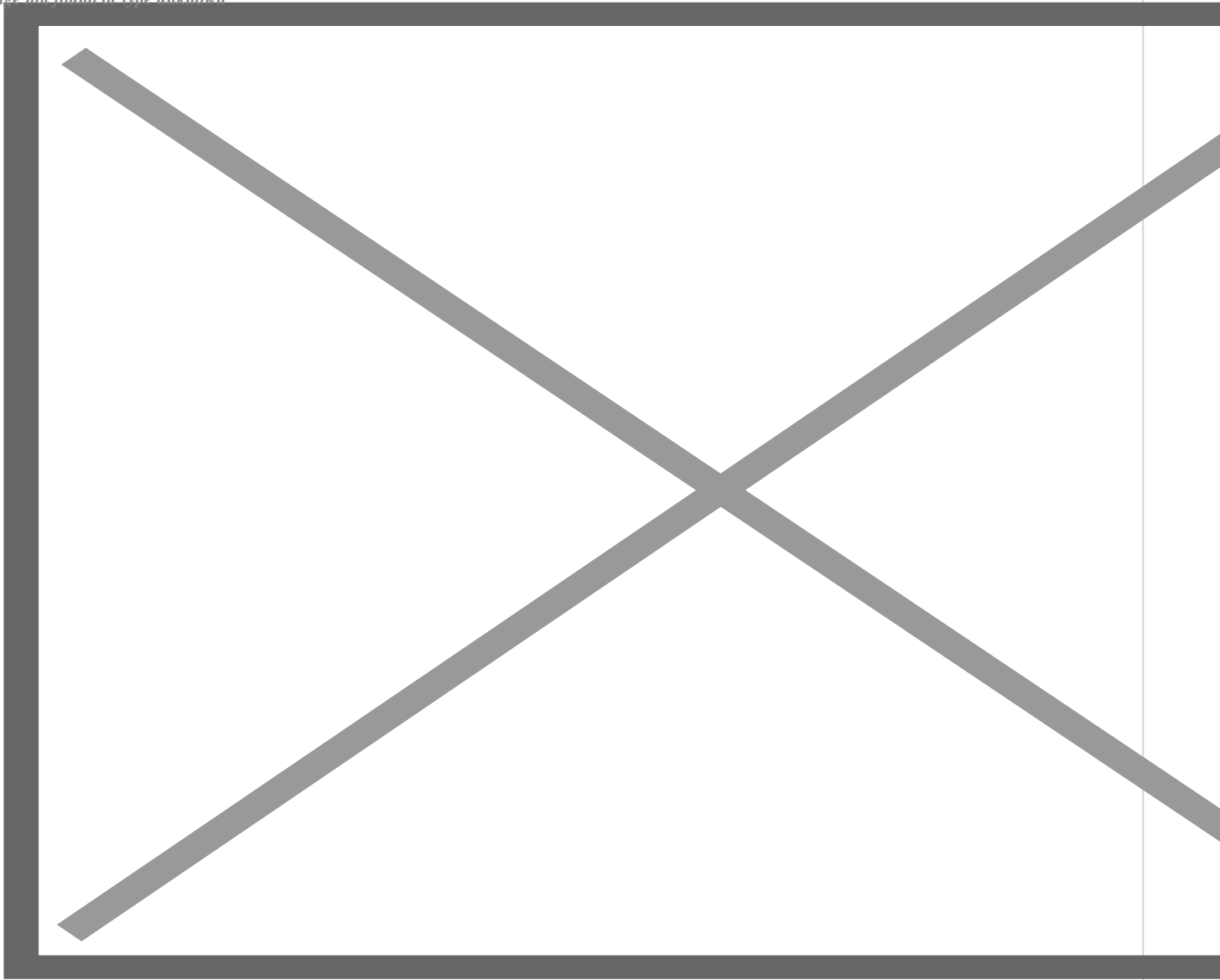


# *Israeli forces attack worshippers at Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron*

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**Israeli police officers confront Palestinians after Friday prayers near the Ibrahimi Mosque, which Jews call the Tomb of the Patriarchs, in Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank [Mussa Qawasma/Reuters]**

Ramallah, August 14 (RHC)-- Israeli security forces used stun grenades to disperse a crowd of Muslim worshippers performing traditional Friday prayers outside the Ibrahimi Mosque in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron.

At least one person could be seen thrown onto the ground and kicked by Israeli forces. It was not immediately clear what sparked the violence.

Sheikh Hefzy Abu Sneina, director of the mosque, told Anadolu Agency that Palestinians responded to the invitation of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs to perform prayers at the mosque in defiance of Israel's plans to go ahead with a construction plan that would change some of its features.

On Monday, the Israeli Defence Ministry said it has started a project at the mosque's courtyards to build a route that directly links the parking area to the mosque and install an electric lift.

Palestinians see the construction as a way to take over the entire site – which is split into separate Jewish and Muslim areas – for Jewish visitors.

On Thursday, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs announced the closure of all the mosques in the city of Hebron and asked the worshippers to perform the Friday prayers at Ibrahimi Mosque as a “denouncement” of the Israeli occupation.

Abu Sneina said accepting the invitation to perform the Friday prayers in the mosque “shows Muslims’ affiliation with the Ibrahimi Mosque.” Before the influx of worshippers to the mosque, the Israeli army added forces at its entrances, spreading iron berms in the courtyard and checking the identities of worshippers and journalists.

A witness told Anadolu the Israeli forces allowed the worshippers to enter the mosque one by one, resulting in congestion at the pre-existing barriers leading to the religious site.

Prayers in the mosque are usually subject to strict security restrictions as worshippers must pass several barriers and electronic gates before reaching the stairs leading to the place of prayer.

The holy site is revered by Jews and Muslims as the burial site of religious patriarchs. Jews revere the site as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, while Muslims call it the Ibrahimi Mosque, after the patriarch Abraham.

The site has been divided into Jewish and Muslim prayer areas since shortly after a settler opened fire on Muslim worshippers at the shrine in 1994, killing 29 people and wounding more than 100 others.

Hebron is a frequent flashpoint between settlers and Palestinians. More than 200,000 Palestinians live in the city, along with several hundred ultranationalist Israeli settlers who live in the downtown area in heavily fortified enclaves protected by the military.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Middle East war and has established dozens of illegal settlements where nearly 500,000 settlers reside.

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<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/266979-israeli-forces-attack-worshippers-at-ibrahimi-mosque-in-hebron>



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