

Armed Jewish Extremists May Ignite a Regional War

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Yesterday, thousands of Israelis have pushed through the Muslim quarter of the Old City in Jerusalem in a Flag March, marking its occupation by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The march was organized by Jewish settler groups who demanded to perform religious rites in the Al Aqsa Mosque, which had been prohibited by an agreement in place since 1967 allowing non-Muslims onto the site during visiting hours, but they were barred from praying there.

“Death to the Arabs...we will demolish Al-Aqsa” was chanted by the Jewish settlers in the Flag March yesterday.

According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, 112 Palestinians were injured by Israeli occupation forces in Occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank in the aftermath of the Flag March.

A Jewish settler pointed a gun at a photojournalist covering the event on Sunday. In Oreef, south of Nablus, Jewish settlers attacked a secondary school, and Palestinians there, while Israeli forces observed the violence, but took no action. At a checkpoint near Nablus, Israeli forces shot and injured a young Palestinian man.

In Shu’fat camp Yusif Hamdi Diab, age 7, was injured when Israeli forces attacked Palestinians. In Sheikh Jarrah, a neighborhood in occupied Jerusalem, Jewish settlers attacked a young Palestinian man and attacked vehicles owned by Palestinians there.

Since 2003, Israel has allowed settlers into the Al Aqsa compound almost daily. The Flag March last year sparked a war with Gaza and clashes between armed Jewish gangs of settlers and Palestinians in mixed cities all over Israel, with 232 Palestinians, including 54 children and 38 women, killed in the ensuing violence. Previous marches have included Israeli chants of “Death to Arabs” and attacks on Palestinian homes and shops in the Old City. Israeli police prevent any Palestinian, or foreign tourist, from waving a Palestinian flag in Jerusalem.

The recent funeral in Jerusalem for the American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, murdered by Israeli forces, was marred by Israeli forces who violently beat mourners who waved Palestinian flags.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is located inside the Old City and is one of the holiest sites in Islam. Israel occupied East Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and annexed the entire city in 1980, which the international community has never recognized.

Israeli government domestic policy calls for the ethnic cleansing of Jerusalem. For decades, the Jews have displaced Palestinians in Jerusalem and their goal is to dismantle the Al Aqsa Mosque compound and create a new Jewish temple in its place. This plan has made the Middle East tense and set the stage for a potential regional war.

On May 26, an Israeli court overturned a ruling on a longstanding ban on non-Muslim prayer at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound. Magistrate Court Judge Zion Saharai ruled in favor of three Jewish appellants who had been banned from the Old City by police for 15 days for praying at the site.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas issued a statement calling the ruling “a grave assault against the historic status quo ... and a flagrant challenge to international law”.

The Palestinian Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs reported that a total of 34,562 Israeli settlers stormed the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in 2021. A tense status quo has been maintained at Al Aqsa; however, Israeli police repeatedly raided the compound during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in April of this year, which coincided with the Jewish Passover festival, to protect settler visits. Hundreds of Palestinians were wounded and arrested.

The US, Egypt, and Jordan have all warned against any violent attacks on the Al Aqsa Mosque and have called for the status quo to be respected and maintained.

Jordan’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Haitham Abu Al-Foul said that the decision is null and void, which “lacks legal status under international law that does not recognize Israeli jurisdiction on territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem.”

Abu Al-Foul stressed that the decision is considered a blatant breach of international legitimacy resolutions related to Jerusalem, including the UN Security Council resolutions that urge all to maintain the status quo of the holy city, while adding that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is “a place of worship for Muslims only,” and the Jordan-run Department of the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs is the only institution for administering the affairs of the mosque.

Christians as well as their Islamic brethren have been oppressed under the brutal Israeli military occupation, and have suffered from ethnic cleansing. In 1948, the Christian community of Palestine was about 20% of the population, but today is less than 2% as the result of the ethnic cleansing campaign.

Father Manuel Musallem, a member of the Islamic-Christian Committee in Support of Jerusalem and its Sanctuaries, has called for civil disobedience in occupied Jerusalem today to protect Al-Aqsa Mosque from illegal Jewish settlers.

“O Palestinians,” said Father Musallam, “block Jerusalem with your bodies, let a million Palestinians ascend to it, and let the people sit in the squares, roads, and doors. Do not leave a space so that not even a Zionist ant can enter Jerusalem.”

Musallam stressed the need to prevent settlers from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque and desecrating the Holy Land. “Jerusalem Day is a day that belongs to the homeland and its people. We will sacrifice our blood for the sake of Jerusalem; if it lives, we live, and if it perishes, we perish with it.”

The current Israeli government is led by Nephthali Bennett, who is opposed to any peace plan with the Palestinians, and opposed to the two-state solution which is the foundation of the US and UN resolutions and policies.

Bennett is currently facing a domestic political crisis, and his government might fall. He and his allies may use the Al Aqsa Mosque flag parade as a source of nationalistic pride and religious fervor. Bennett supports the illegal settler groups, who are mainly American citizens who are well armed and have a long history of violence against Palestinians, and ethnic hatred of all groups who are not Jews.

According to the Geneva Convention, armed resistance to occupation is justified. The Palestinians, and those committed to the end of the occupation of Palestine, will retaliate with more resistance and confrontation to rein in Israel’s plans to remove, kill or imprison all non-Jewish people.

In recent months, 14 Israelis have been killed by lone attackers who were not members of any Palestinian militant groups, and not part of a formal network.

According to news reports after the Flag March, 22 Israelis were injured in the last 48 hours in Jerusalem and the West Bank by Palestinian resistance.

Palestinians see no hope of obtaining freedom or human rights by any means other than resistance against the occupation. They are choosing between a quick death in a resistance operation, or a slow death under brutal military occupation.

The famous American Patrick Henry said, “Give me liberty, or give me death.”

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This article was originally published on [Mideast Discourse](#).

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Featured image: Head band of figure in the poster says “Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades”

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