

Canada Must Condemn, Sanction Brutal Israeli Attack on Al-Aqsa Worshippers

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to condemn the Israeli government in the strongest terms following last night's brutal attack on worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem. Widely circulating [videos](#) from inside the Al-Qibli prayer hall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque show Israeli police brutally beating Palestinian worshippers who had been performing the religious practice of Itikaf during Ramadan. Hundreds of Palestinians, including women, children, and elderly, were staying overnight in the mosque to pray. During the attack, a health clinic was destroyed and media teams were blocked from accessing the injured. CJPME urges Canada to respond to this aggressive attack on a place of worship by imposing sanctions on Israel, starting with an immediate arms embargo.

"Words cannot express the horror of Israel's brutal attack on Al-Aqsa worshippers, which we all witnessed as captured on video," said Michael Bueckert, Vice President of CJPME. "Israel's repeated attacks on religious freedom are fueled by decades of impunity from the international community. Canada must act now to immediately suspend all military trade with Israel to ensure that we are not contributing to this violence," added Bueckert.

Contrary to Israeli reports that Israel was responding to "rioters," the worshippers in Al-Aqsa were practicing Itakif, a common Ramadan tradition in which worshippers stay inside mosques overnight to reflect and pray. To forcibly remove them, Israeli forces attacked the mosque with tear gas, stun grenades and rubber-coated bullets, and beat worshippers with metal chairs, batons, and rifles as women and children were crying in the background, according to video footage and harrowing [eyewitness accounts](#). Israeli forces also [destroyed](#) a health clinic during the assault and denied the Palestinian Red Crescent access to the dozens of injured, in a brazen attack on the health care of an occupied population.

CJPME notes that Israel's latest attack is not unique to its current far-right government, but

follows repeated violent raids on Al-Aqsa in 2021 and 2022. Last weekend, Israeli police in occupied East Jerusalem [killed](#) a 26-year-old Palestinian Bedouin medical student outside of the Al-Aqsa gate as he attempted to stop police from assaulting a Palestinian woman, and Israel's police chief was caught on tape making racist [statements](#) that Palestinians "murder each other. It's in their nature." However, CJPME is deeply concerned about the specific dangers posed by Israel's national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, who is an extremist disciple of the fascist Kahanist movement, with a long history of inciting violence against Palestinians. Ben-Gvir and other ministers also have close ties to the extremist [Temple Mount movement](#), which is threatening to make provocative invasions of the Al-Aqsa compound during Passover, which would inevitably lead to the further repression of Palestinian worshippers on the site. The Canadian government has not yet released a statement on the attack.

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Featured image: Palestinians pray as Israeli security forces take positions at the Al-Aqsa compound [Ammar Awad/Reuters]

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