

# [Egypt slams Israeli storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque](#)

Author:

Sat, 2022-04-16 18:13

CAIRO: Egypt's Foreign Ministry has condemned Israeli forces' storming of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque and violence against Palestinians in its courtyards, which resulted in dozens of injuries and arrests.

Ministry spokesman Ahmed Hafez stressed the "necessity of self-restraint, providing full protection for Muslim worshippers and allowing them to perform Islamic rituals in Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is an Islamic endowment purely for Muslims."

He reaffirmed "the rejection of violence and incitement in all its forms, including calls for storming Al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan," which will affect "stability and security in the Palestinian territories and the region."



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Clashes at Al-Aqsa draw regional, international condemnation Saudi Arabia condemns Israeli raid over Al-Aqsa Mosque and attack on Palestinian worshippers

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## [Egypt approves India as new wheat supplier](#)

Author:

Sat, 2022-04-16 18:00

CAIRO: Egypt has added India to its list of countries from which it imports wheat, Cairo has announced.

El-Said Marzouq El-Qosair, Egypt's minister of agriculture and land reclamation, said this comes within the framework of the state's efforts to secure new sources of wheat.

Egypt is the largest importer of wheat in the world and depends on Russia and Ukraine, which have been in conflict for nearly two months, raising concerns about supplies.

An Egyptian delegation went to India to discuss wheat imports, visiting fields and grain stores in various regions. The two sides also discussed facilitating the flow of Egyptian agricultural exports to India.



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Bloomberg  
Lebanon facing wheat crisis amid Ukraine war, trade minister tells  
CNN

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## [Clashes at Al-Aqsa draw regional, international condemnation](#)

Fri, 2022-04-15 19:51

LONDON: The international community on Friday expressed deep concern over a recent upsurge in violence in the occupied West Bank and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. At least 152 Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli riot police and 400 worshipers have been arrested inside Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque

compound on Friday, the latest outbreak in a recent upsurge of violence that has raised fears of a slide back to wider conflict.

The UN said it was “deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Jerusalem during these holy days,” adding that the provocations must stop. “I call on political, religious, and community leaders on all sides to help calm the situation. Allowing tensions to spiral further only risks another escalation,” Ton Wennesland, UN special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said in a statement.

He said the UN was in close contact with key regional partners to calm the crisis and also urged Israeli and Palestinian authorities to “immediately deescalate the situation and prevent any further provocations by radical actors.”

Deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in [#Jerusalem](#). Provocations on the Holy Esplanade must stop now. [#UN](#) is in close contact w/ key regional partners & the parties to calm the situation. Allowing tensions to spiral further only risks another escalation. [pic.twitter.com/4bu9SUeh20](https://pic.twitter.com/4bu9SUeh20)

– Tor Wennesland (@TWennesland) [April 15, 2022](#)

The clashes come at a particularly sensitive time. Ramadan this year coincides with Passover, a major weeklong Jewish holiday beginning Friday at sundown, and Christian holy week, which culminates on Easter Sunday. The holidays are expected to bring tens of thousands of faithful into Jerusalem’s Old City, home to major sites sacred to all three religions.

The European Union also said it was following the situation with deep concern and called for violence to stop immediately.

“Further civilian casualties must be prevented as a priority,” said Peter Stano, spokesperson for the EU’s external affairs. “The status quo of the holy sites must be fully respected (and) Palestinian-Israeli security

cooperation is essential.”

Stano reiterated the EU’s call on all parties to engage in de-escalatory efforts, and said all leaders have a responsibility to act against extremists.

The foreign ministries of Germany, France, Italy and Spain condemn the violence on Friday in East Jerusalem in a joint statement.

“We call on all sides to exercise maximum restraint as well as to refrain from violence and from all forms of provocation,” spokespersons for the ministries said in their statement.

Neighboring Jordan, which has custodianship over the holy site, and the Palestinian Authority issued a joint statement accusing Israel of “a dangerous and condemnable escalation that threatens to explode the situation.”

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said it “holds Israel fully and directly responsible for this crime and its consequences.”

Israel/Palestine: follows with deep concern latest upsurge of violence in West Bank & clashes at Al Aqsa Mosque. Violence must stop immediately, status quo of holy sites has 2B respected, leaders must act against extremists, all side need to de-escalate  
<https://t.co/ksMCT9Utbe>

– Peter Stano (@ExtSpoxEU) [April 15, 2022](#)

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesperson for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said the international community should intervene immediately to “stop Israeli aggression against Al-Aqsa mosque and prevent things from going out of control.”

Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit warned against igniting the situation in the Al-Aqsa Mosque and blamed the Israeli occupation forces, saying they were committing serious aggression against the Palestinians and their right to

perform rituals inside Al-Aqsa during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. "Israeli attacks on worshipers represent a continuation of the series of Israeli transgressions and provocations that aim to divide Al-Aqsa spatially and temporally," he said, expressing solidarity with Jerusalemites and Palestinians.

Secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council condemned Israeli police and special forces for storming the mosque compound and urged Israel to respect the historical and legal status quo in occupied Jerusalem and its sanctities and to stop all illegal measures.

Nayef Al-Hajjraf also called on the international community to assume its responsibilities to preserve the safety of Al-Aqsa Mosque and worshipers, and the need for Israel to abide by its obligations as an occupying power in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation said it holds Israel "fully responsible" considers this dangerous escalation an attack on sacred sites of the entire Islamic nation, and a flagrant violation of international resolutions.

It also called on the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to put an end to these repeated violations, and to provide protection for the Palestinian people and the holy sites.

Egypt also condemned the Israeli raid.

*(With Reuters and AP)*



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Saudi Arabia condemns Israeli raid over Al-Aqsa Mosque and attacking Palestinian worshippers

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## [Lebanon ready to work with Cyprus on potential offshore gas](#)

Author:

By MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS | AP

ID:

1650030935862292100

Fri, 2022-04-15 16:57

NICOSIA, Cyprus: Lebanon is ready to work with Cyprus to exploit potential gas deposits in waters between the two east Mediterranean countries, Lebanon's top diplomat said Friday, even though a deal on offshore rights hasn't been formally finalized.

Cyprus and Lebanon signed an agreement delineating their respective offshore exclusive economic zones in 2007, but the Lebanese parliament has yet to ratify it amid the country's ongoing maritime border dispute with Israel. Nevertheless, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib said after talks with his Cypriot counterpart in Nicosia that "with Cyprus there's no problem, once we found gas we're ready to go, put it together."

"We talked about it and I can assure you that Lebanon is ready to do it," Bou Habib said.

The Lebanese top diplomat's remarks come as Europe is seeking new energy sources to wean itself off Russian gas in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Cyprus has issued exploration drilling licenses to ExxonMobil and partner Qatar Petroleum, a consortium made up of French energy company Total and Italy's Eni, as well as Chevron and partner Shell, to most of its 13 segments in its exclusive economic zone off its southern coast.

To the north, Cyprus faces an intense challenge from Turkey which claims much of the island's EEZ as its own and has sent warship-escorted survey ships into the area – earning condemnation from the European Union, of which Cyprus is a member.

Cyprus was split along ethnic lines in 1974 when Turkey invaded following a coup by supporters of union with Greece. The breakaway Turkish Cypriot north is only recognized by Turkey.

Lebanon's Bou Habib said a US written mediation proposal submitted earlier this year that aimed at resolving the Lebanese-Israeli dispute, while much better than previous attempts, is "not enough yet."

He said both Lebanon's government and its lawmakers are "all in agreement" on what they seek from a deal with Israel.

"Therefore the response to the Americans hopefully would be soon and it would be one response," Bou Habib said.

Any discoveries within Lebanon's own economic zone would be a long-term boon for the crisis-hit country's beleaguered economy.

Lebanon's economic crisis has been described by the World Bank as one of the world's worst since the 1850s. Tens of thousands of people have lost their jobs since October 2019 and the Lebanese pound lost more than 90 percent of its value.



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# Iran's Quds Force vows to continue 'leading' militias across region

Author:

Fri, 2022-04-15 15:19

LONDON: Iran's Quds Force has vowed to continue "leading" militias across the Middle East.

Brig. Gen. Esmail Ghaani, who heads the elite unit of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, said the Quds Force would back any anti-US and anti-Israel movement in the world.

"The US and the Zionists should know that this is our definite path," he told supporters, including some of the IRGC's most senior commanders.

"The Islamic revolution of Iran knows how to guide young, motivated Muslims to defend themselves," he said.

"Our hands are not tied, and we will respond robustly wherever in the world our interests come under aggression."

Commending the missile-making efforts of Yemen's Houthi militia, which he described as Tehran's "new children," Ghaani said all militias would "undoubtedly" enjoy similar Iranian support.

Having designated the Quds Force as a terrorist organization in 2007, the US took this further in 2019, prescribing the IRGC in its entirety, before assassinating Ghaani's predecessor Qassem Soleimani in Iraq a year later.

Tehran has refused to shift on its nuclear program as long as the terrorist designation remains in place.



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