

# Israeli court ruling on major holy site angers Palestinians

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Thu, 2021-10-07 21:30

JERUSALEM: A ruling by a local Israeli court in favor of a Jewish man who prayed quietly at a flashpoint Jerusalem holy site has angered Muslim authorities. They denounced it on Thursday as a violation of the fragile status quo governing the compound.

The Al-Aqsa mosque compound is the third holiest site in Islam and the holiest site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount because it was the location of the ancient Jewish Temples. It is the emotional epicenter of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and tensions there helped ignite the 11-day Gaza war in May. Under informal understandings, Jews are not allowed to pray there.

The ruling by a magistrate court in Jerusalem concerned a Jewish man who had been barred from the site for 15 days after Israeli police caught him quietly praying there. The court lifted the ban several days early, ruling that the man, "like many others, prays on a daily basis on the Temple Mount."

Noting that he did so quietly and privately, the ruling said "this activity by itself is not enough to violate the police instructions."

Magistrate courts make up the lowest level of the Israeli judiciary and hear cases concerning relatively minor crimes.

Under a longstanding but informal arrangement known as the status quo, Jews are allowed to visit the site but not pray there. The agreement has broken down in recent years as large groups of Jews, including hard-line religious nationalists, have regularly visited and prayed at the site. The Israeli government says it is committed to maintaining the status quo.

The Palestinians and neighboring Jordan, which serves as the custodian of the holy site, fear that Israel plans to eventually take over the compound or partition it – as it did with a similarly contested holy site in Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The Islamic endowment that maintains Al-Aqsa called the ruling a "flagrant violation" of the compound's sanctity and a "clear provocation" for Muslims worldwide.

Friday prayers at the mosque are regularly attended by tens of thousands of Palestinians, and are sometimes followed by protests and clashes with Israeli police. A provocative visit by a right-wing Israeli politician in 2000 helped ignite the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

Israel captured east Jerusalem – including the Old City and its holy sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims – in the 1967 war and annexed it in a move not recognized by most of the international community. The Palestinians want east Jerusalem to be the capital of their future state. The city's status has been among the most divisive issues in decades of failed peace efforts.



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Israeli soldiers attack Muslims as Jewish extremists break status quo at Al-Aqsa  
10 arrested, 9 injured as protesters at Al-Aqsa face rubber bullets

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## [One dead as rain, floods hit south Yemen city](#)

Author:

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1633622961759283700

Thu, 2021-10-07 19:31

MUKALLA, Yemen: Torrential rains caused widespread floods in the southern Yemeni city of Mukalla, where a young man was electrocuted, local official said on Thursday.

The floods added to suffering in the Arabian peninsula's poorest country, which has endured seven years of war.

The rain lashed Mukalla on Wednesday days after a powerful cyclone was downgraded to a tropical storm after making landfall in Oman where 12 people were killed.

A Yemeni official said the rains caused flooding that swept away cars in Mukalla, damaged shops and homes, and knocked down electricity poles.

"At least 10 cars were swept away and (several) homes were damaged, while a young man died of electric shock," said the official who declined to be named.

The cars were left upended in water-logged, muddy streets.

Meteorologists in Aden, Yemen's second city west of Mukalla on the country's south coast, had expected a fallout from Cyclone Shaheen which struck neighboring Oman on Sunday before being downgraded to a tropical depression. Across the Gulf in Iran, six people were reported dead while the United Arab Emirates, which borders Oman, was also put on alert.

Dozens of people are killed each year across Yemen in flash floods caused by heavy rains.

In May, the United Nations reported that around 3,700 families had been affected by torrential rains and floods that had caused havoc in Yemen since mid-April. Authorities said at least four people were killed.

About 80 percent of Yemen's 30 million people are dependent on aid, in what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Yemen's grinding conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced millions since 2015, when a Saudi-led military coalition intervened in the country to shore up the government. Iran-backed Houthi rebels had seized the capital Sanaa the previous year.



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UN envoy calls for 'inclusive settlement' to end Yemen crisis  
Yemeni woman turns home into school

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## [UN envoy calls for 'inclusive settlement' to end Yemen crisis](#)

Wed, 2021-10-06 22:27

LONDON: UN special envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg called for an "inclusive political settlement" to end the conflict as he concluded his first visit to the country on Wednesday.

"There is an urgent need to change course and work toward an inclusive political settlement that comprehensively ends the conflict and allows Yemen to recover and develop," Grundberg said.

During his visit, the UN envoy met with the Yemeni prime minister, the governor of Aden, the chairman of the Southern Transitional Council, the governor of Taiz, and a diverse group of political actors.

He also consulted with representatives of civil society organizations and women's rights activists.

In his meetings, Grundberg emphasized his commitment to inclusivity as a necessity for the sustainability of peace, the statement said.

"Yemen has a rich history of political and social diversity. A durable solution is one that reflects the interests of diverse and broad segments of Yemeni society," Grundberg said.

During his meeting with Prime Minister Maeen Abdul Malik Saeed, Grundberg welcomed his recent return to Aden and stressed the importance of the full implementation of the Riyadh Agreement to support stability and functional state institutions.

He also discussed the deteriorating economic situation and the challenges of delivery of basic services.

"The humanitarian and economic impact of the war becomes more difficult to reverse with every passing day. The war has turned daily life into a struggle in Yemen," he said.



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Yemen's prime minister blasts Houthis for 'sabotaging peace, blackmailing the world'Saudi foreign minister receives UN envoy to Yemen

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## [US leads western praise for Iraqi electoral commission ahead of Sunday's vote](#)

Wed, 2021-10-06 20:10

LONDON: The US and 11 other countries welcomed on Wednesday the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission's preparations for the parliamentary election in Iraq.

The countries said the early election on Sunday is an opportunity for all Iraqis to democratically determine their future.

The joint statement came from the foreign ministers of Australia, Canada,

Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the UK, and the US.

“We recognize the importance of this moment in Iraqi history,” the statement said. “In response to requests from the Iraqi people, substantial resources have been mobilized in support of free and fair elections.”

The UN Assistance Mission (UNAMI) for Iraq is supporting supporting the IHEC. With five times more UN officials than were present during the 2018 election, the UN says it is the largest mission of its kind in the world.

The EU has a separate election observation mission.

## Opinion

This section contains relevant reference points, placed in (Opinion field)

The foreign ministers’ statement said both these missions have already deployed monitors and observers.

“These missions represent a good-faith international effort to fulfill Iraqis’ request and bolster the integrity of the election,” they said.

“The Iraqi people now have an opportunity to exercise their fundamental right to vote. We support the Iraqi government’s efforts to ensure a safe, free, fair, and inclusive electoral environment for all Iraqis, including women and youth, who have long faced violence and intimidation in the pursuit of reform,” the foreign ministers said.

They added that they support the Iraqi government’s efforts to ensure that internally displaced persons can safely participate in the election.

“We call on all parties to respect the rule of law and the integrity of the electoral process,” they said.



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Hundreds of Iraqi protesters march in Baghdad ahead of vote Iraq issues warrants against attendees of Israel normalization conference

## [Red Crescent says bodies of 17 people washed ashore in Libya](#)

Author:

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1633536865301714000

Wed, 2021-10-06 14:59

ABOARD GEO BARENTS: At least 17 bodies, likely of Europe-bound migrants, have washed ashore in western Libya, the Libyan Red Crescent said as authorities began to vaccinate migrants in the North African country on Wednesday against the coronavirus, in cooperation with the United Nations.

The bodies were found Tuesday near the western Libyan town of Zawiya, the Red

Crescent's branch in the town said, and were handed over to authorities for burial.

The migrants likely drowned. The UN migration agency has said that more than 1,100 migrants have been reported dead or presumed dead in numerous boat mishaps and shipwrecks off Libya's coast so far this year.

The Red Crescent posted images purporting to show its workers carrying white body bags with the Mediterranean Sea in the background.

Libya was plunged into turmoil by the NATO-backed 2011 uprising that toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Qaddafi. The North African nation has since emerged as a popular, if extremely dangerous, route to Europe for those fleeing poverty and civil war in Africa and the Middle East.

Oil-rich Libya is largely governed by local militias, many of which profit from the trafficking. Rights groups say migrants traversing Libya have been tortured, raped and subjected to forced labor at the hands of traffickers and inside official detention centers.

UN-commissioned investigators found that the practice of arbitrary disappearances and violence against migrants inside Libyan prisons could amount to crimes against humanity.

Meanwhile, Libyan health authorities started to vaccinate migrants in the country against the coronavirus, in cooperation with the UN migration agency. The campaign kicked off at a health facility in Tripoli, where several migrants got their first shot of the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine.

Federico Soda, the head of the International Organization for Migration in Libya, was present at Wednesday's kickoff of the vaccination drive. "This is a health issue for the migrants that we are extremely concerned about," he said. "But it's also a public health issue ... to overcome the pandemic."

It was not immediately clear how the authorities would go about vaccinating thousands of migrants held in detention centers across Libya. Tens of thousands of others live openly in Libyan cities and towns.

Libya has reported more than 34,400 cases of COVID-19 and 4,720 deaths, but the tally is likely much higher in part due to limited testing as in other impoverished countries.





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43 missing off Tunisia after migrant boat sinks: Red CrescentLibya's migrant roundup reaches 4,000 amid major crackdown