

Israeli soldiers attack Muslims as Jewish extremists break status quo at Al-Aqsa

Sun, 2021-07-18 21:04

AMMAN: Israeli soldiers used force to clear worshippers and protestors from Al-Aqsa Mosque on Sunday morning, to allow over a thousand Jewish extremists to enter Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound.

Members of the Israel Defense Force then failed to stop the extremists from praying at the site, violating a long-standing agreement forbidding Jewish prayer in the compound.

Soldiers fired stun grenades and tear gas into the Muslim shrine, causing injuries to worshippers and damage to Islam's third holiest site.

The Jordanian Foreign Ministry sent an official letter of protest, calling on Israel "to stop its violations and provocations, respect the historical and legal status quo, respect the sanctity of the mosque and the freedom of worshipers, and respect the authority of the Jordan-run Jerusalem Endowment Department and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs."

The Islamic Waqf in Jerusalem said the interruption took place during Islam's holy week leading up to Eid Al-Adha, which will be marked on Tuesday. "Today is the holy day which precedes the ascension to Arafah and Eid Al-Adha," it said.

According to the Jewish calendar, Sunday was the Jewish Tisha b'Av day of remembrance of the destruction of the Jewish temples more than 2,000 years ago.

The first temple is said to have been destroyed back in 586 B.C., and the second temple in A.D. 70.

Daifallah Al-Fayez, spokesman for the Jordan's Foreign Ministry said the "Israeli actions against the mosque represent a violation of the historical and legal status quo, international law, and Israel's obligations as an occupying power in East Jerusalem."

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that Jews who wanted to ascend to the compound should be allowed to do so in an orderly fashion. No official contacts exist between Israel and the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf.

Jordan's King Abdullah had extracted a commitment from the former Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu in the presence of former US Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014 to reserve Al-Aqsa for Muslims to pray at, and for all others to visit.

The public prayer by the Jewish extremists on Sunday, which was displayed on

Israeli media, violates this agreement, and is considered a break with the status quo since the Israeli occupation in 1967.

Jordan's ruling Hashemite royal family is the custodian of Jerusalem's holy sites, and both Israel and the international community accept this.

King Abdullah is expected to meet US President Joe Biden on Monday, and the issue of Jerusalem will most likely be on the agenda.

Meanwhile, Palestinian citizens of Israel flocked to defend Muslim worshippers at Al-Aqsa. Knesset member Ayman Odeh, head of the Joint List, denounced the attacks on the compound, and laid into Bennett's new government, dubbed the "Government of Change" by its members.

"A month after the flag parade, the 'Government of Change' continues with the violence and repression in Al-Aqsa, the Nablus Gate, and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. But shootings, batons, and stun grenades only reinforce the simple truth: There is an entire nation here under occupation and it's our right to be liberated from it," Odeh said.

Knesset member Ahmad Tibi lashed out at the new Israeli government, saying: "The 'Government of Change' has surrendered to right-wing extremists on everything, including the occupied Jerusalem. 'Death to Arabs' and 'Rebuild the Temple' demonstrations are a violation of the historic status quo. They're fully responsible for whatever may happen today," he tweeted.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas held the Israeli government fully responsible for the escalation.

"Attacks by Israeli forces and settlers on Al-Aqsa Mosque compound provoke our people's sentiments and (are) a grave danger to the region's stability/security," Abbas said in a statement.

Sabri Sidem, deputy secretary-general of Fatah, said the silence of the world had encouraged the occupiers. "What is happening at Al-Aqsa clearly shows how the world's silence encourages aggression in Al-Aqsa Mosque."



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Israel proposes new restrictions to combat virus surge

[Yemen to get more COVID-19 vaccines by end of month – health ministry](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-07-18 20:02

ADEN: Yemen expects to get a second batch of COVID-19 shots by the end of this month through the COVAX global vaccine-sharing scheme, the health ministry said on Sunday.

Yemen is expecting to get 151,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson single-shot vaccine, out of an eventual total of 504,000, a spokesperson said.

The desperately poor country, whose health infrastructure has been devastated by six years of war, received 360,000 doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine in March through COVAX.

Another batch of AstraZeneca shots is expected via COVAX in August, according to the health ministry of the Saudi-backed internationally-recognized

government.

So far vaccination campaigns have only begun in parts of Yemen controlled by the internationally-recognized government.

A small number of vaccines, 10,000 doses, were transferred to north Yemen, which is controlled by the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement, but they have not yet been administered.

Yemen's emergency coronavirus committee registered four confirmed cases and no deaths on Sunday. It has recorded 6,981 coronavirus infections and 1,368 deaths in total so far, though the true figure is widely thought to be much higher as the war has restricted COVID-19 testing and reporting.

Houthi authorities, who control the capital Sanaa and most major urban areas, have provided few figures.



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Yemen on alert as currency hits new record lows
Second batch of Yemenis stranded in India due to pandemic arrive in Aden

Magnitude 5.6 earthquake recorded in Iraq's Basra – Iraqi news agency

Sun, 2021-07-18 19:06

LONDON: A magnitude earthquake struck the Iranian southern city of Bushehr on Sunday, 250 kilometers from the Iraqi border, the Iraqi General Authority for Meteorology and Seismic Monitoring announced.

The authority said the tremor recorded 5.6 on the Richter scale, and was felt by residents in Basra, Iraqi News Agency reported.

"We call on citizens to take caution, stay away from rumors and false news, and to abide by the seismic authority's instructions commandments," it added. The quake struck at a depth of 11 kilometers, with the epicenter near the town of Khesht, at around 7 PM (1430 GMT). Several weaker aftershocks followed, according to Iran's seismological center.

The United States Geological Survey put the initial tremor at 5.4-magnitude. There were no reports of casualties or damage, about two hours after the quake.

Rescue and survey teams were sent to the area and hospitals put on alert, Fars province's head of crisis management Rahim Azadi told state television. Iran sits astride the boundaries of several major tectonic plates and experiences frequent seismic activity.

In 2003, a 6.6-magnitude quake in the southeast levelled the ancient mud-brick city of Bam and killed at least 31,000 people.

Iran's deadliest was a 7.4-magnitude quake in 1990 that killed 40,000 people in the north, injured 300,000 and left half a million homeless.

(With AFP)



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Syria, Iraq sign agreement to regulate water resources between the two countries

[Crises will not stop expats visiting Lebanon](#)

Sun, 2021-07-18 00:30

BEIRUT: The endless crises that Lebanon has faced for more than a year have not deterred expatriates from visiting their home country in large numbers, Middle East Airlines officials have told Arab News.

According to the statistics of Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, the number of passengers who came to Lebanon on July 1 exceeded 15,000, including 13,606 Lebanese expatriates. A record number of 20,000 returning expatriates

was registered by the end of this week.

Nisrine, who came back from Germany with her children for a summer vacation, said: "People look tired, nobody laughs, everybody is nervous and tense, they start to complain the moment they see you; no electricity nor gasoline, and life is too expensive."

Loris, a Lebanese woman whose daughter is getting married, said that her relatives coming from Sweden and Canada for the wedding were surprised by the overcrowded coffee shops and restaurants in Broummana, Jounieh, Byblos and Batroun, while darkness prevails in Beirut. The Lebanese capital was hit by a massive explosion last year.

Pierre Ashkar, president of the Association of Hotel Owners in Lebanon, said: "The political and security situation does not seem to make expatriates leave the country after the prime minister-designate Saad Hariri resigned ... They have always been successful in finding solutions."

Ashkar estimated the number of Iraqis who came to Lebanon during June at about 30,000. He said: "These people are fleeing from the security situation in their country, which is far worse than that of Lebanon."

FASTFACTS

- **According to the statistics of Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, the number of passengers who came to Lebanon on July 1 exceeded 15,000.**
- **A record number of 20,000 returning expatriates was registered by the end of this week.**

He said: "As for the Lebanese expatriates if they face a blocked road, they can go to other roads which they know. And if there is tension in the capital, they can go to guesthouses in Ras Baalbek and other remote villages."

Ashkar said: "The explosion of the Port of Beirut last year resulted in the closing of (many) luxurious hotels ... (This situation) reflects the huge economic blow to the capital.

"Prices in Lebanon are much cheaper for expatriates or tourists than for Lebanese people who earn their income in Lebanese pounds. However, the huge increase in the exchange rate of the US dollar in the black market is causing problems for the owners of tourist venues." The US dollar exchange rate in the black market has passed 22,000 Lebanese pounds for \$1.

Most Lebanese people find the price of a meal in a restaurant extravagant. Yet you have to book ahead to reserve a table in restaurants and wedding halls in hotels are fully reserved throughout the summer.

May, a Lebanese lady living in Canada, returned to Lebanon for the summer and did not find the country cheap. She said: "I cannot cope with the increase in the exchange rate of the dollar."

She said: "How can I spend money while my parents' pension is worth nothing ... My daughter could not go to the dentist because there are no antibiotics, and I did not bring medicines with me from Canada."



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Arab League chief backs Libya polls Egypt seeks global push in Ethiopian dam talks

[Arab League chief backs Libya polls](#)

Sun, 2021-07-18 00:20

CAIRO: Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit has reiterated the organization's full support for the Libyan government in leading the current transitional phase and preparing for elections on Dec. 24.

He stressed his full commitment to supporting the Libyans in bringing the country to safety after a prolonged period of turmoil.

He held talks on Friday with Libyan Prime Minister Abdel Hamid Dbeibeh on the sidelines of his visit to New York to participate in a UN Security Council meeting on the country.

The two men discussed the situation in Libya and relations with the Arab League. It was agreed that the secretary-general would visit at the earliest opportunity.

Aboul Gheit said earlier that the league adhered to the implementation of the political roadmap in Libya leading to elections being held on time.

He warned that not holding elections on the date agreed upon by all parties "may once again push the country into a dark tunnel of differences and

political fragmentation, which no party desires.”

He emphasized that holding the presidential and legislative polls on Dec. 24 represented “a watershed on the path to saving Libya and preserving it as a sovereign united state.”



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UN envoy: ‘Spoilers’ are trying to obstruct Libyan elections
Groups blocking Libyan elections reminded of sanctions threat