



Press Release

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Canberra, Australia

Israel's Forced Evictions and Attacks on Palestinian Worshipers During Ramadan

The situation on the ground in Palestine is rapidly destabilizing as a result of escalating violations by Israeli occupation forces and extremist settlers against Palestinian civilians. The forced evictions and displacement of Palestinians in East Jerusalem and increasingly violent attacks against worshippers and raids of Al Haram al-Sharif and Al Aqsa Mosque are deliberate efforts by Israel to consolidate control of the City and to change the demographic composition, character and legal status of East Jerusalem.

The violence against Palestinian worshippers continues to escalate. Since the beginning of the Holy Month of Ramadan, occupation forces have banned gatherings at Damascus Gate and heavily restricted Palestinians' access to Al Aqsa for observance of the Holy Month. The incursion against Al Aqsa by extremist settlers continues under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, who themselves continue to attack worshippers attempting to access Al Aqsa for prayer, using gas grenades and rubber bullets, arresting and illegally detaining hundreds of Palestinians, including women, children, and the elderly. Israeli forces have prevented Red Crescent medical teams and ambulances from entering the compound to assist the hundreds of injured Palestinians.

Thousands of Palestinians are being forcibly evicted and replaced with illegal settlers. There are currently over 200,000 illegal settlers in the occupied City, and an estimated 9,000 Palestinians are in immediate threat of forced eviction and home demolitions to make way for the construction of another 200 illegal settlement units. Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah are experiencing the largest forced mass displacement since 1967.

The Palestinian public have responded to these violations by holding vigils, peaceful protests and demonstrations which have been met with violent suppression by Israeli occupation forces who have arrested and assaulted protesters using skunk water, tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber bullets.

Hamas responded to Israeli violence against Palestinians in Jerusalem by launching rockets towards Israel. No one was injured. Israel's disproportionate retaliation in the form of air raids on Gaza have already killed 20 Palestinians, including 9 children.

The international community has also responded to Israel's violations against Palestinians. A joint statement issued by France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK has urged Israel to "cease its policy of settlement expansion." The UN Human Rights office has warned that these violations could amount to War Crimes. The Envoys of the Middle East Quartet (the EU, USA, UN, and Russia) have expressed concerns, emphasizing that the status quo must be maintained in respect to East Jerusalem and the Holy Sites. Unfortunately, the international community and media continue to approach the situation in Jerusalem with false equivalence, despite there being no parity between Israel, the occupier and oppressor, and Palestinians, the occupied and oppressed.

The international community must act seriously and urgently in support of the Palestinian people against Israeli violence

