

Day 113: Jerusalem during “Al-Aqsa Flood” Operation

January 27, 2024



On the 113th day of “Al-Aqsa Flood Operation,” the occupation authorities continued to impose restrictions on the entry of worshipers into Al-Aqsa Mosque, and continued to deploy in the streets of the Old City and at its gates.

The Wadi Hilweh Information Center - Jerusalem explained that the occupation forces continued to station themselves at the gates of Al-Aqsa, and imposed restrictions on the entry of worshipers to it, stopping all arrivals and checking identities at the gates of the mosque, and specifically prevented boys and young men from entering Al-Aqsa, and removed them outside the vicinity of the gates of Al-Aqsa to prevent prayer on the doorsteps of the mosque.

In the Al-Bustan neighborhood in the town of Silwan, fears and anxiety returned among the neighborhood's residents, after new attempts by the occupation municipality to implement its plan on the neighborhood's lands, establish a “King's Garden,” confiscate property from the residents, and threaten to demolish homes.

Regarding the issue, Fakhri Abu Diab, spokesman for the Silwan Lands Defense Committee, explained to the Wadi Hilweh Information Center that the municipality is trying to force the people of the Al-Bustan neighborhood to sign papers stating that “the buildings belong to the residents while the land belongs to the municipality,” amid the threat of demolishing homes and asking some families to empty their contents in preparation for their demolition.

Abu Diab explained that the lands of the Al-Bustan neighborhood, which are threatened with confiscation, have an area of 57 dunums, and the municipality has for 20 years issued demolition and removal orders for houses, under the pretext of “unlicensed construction,” and has drawn up a plan for “the King's Garden” on the ruins of houses.

Abu Diab added that, as a result of the pressure and steadfastness of the people in their homes and their rejection of all plans on the one hand, and local and international pressure on the other hand, the demolition was postponed over the past years, and several plans were submitted to the municipality to license the buildings built on it.

Abu Diab continued, after years of follow-up, submitting plans and amending them based on the municipality's requests, all of them were rejected, and the municipality claimed that it had a plan prepared by an alternative team to the people's plan.

Abu Diab said: "The residents demanded that the municipal plan be presented to them, and when it was presented they confirmed that the plan does not meet the needs of the residents, noting that the construction "according to the municipality" will only be in the eastern side of the neighborhood, and the rest of the lands are for "a public park and an open park." That plan was rejected by the people of the neighborhood.

Abu Diab added that the residents said that it was possible to come up with a plan to guarantee ownership of the land and license existing buildings, and they offered the municipality to finance construction in the neighborhood on the condition of obtaining licenses and the presence of a private park for the residents, thus ensuring ownership of the building and land.

Abu Diab explained that the municipality today threatens to demolish homes in the neighborhood, pointing out that 22 homes "out of 116 facilities" in the neighborhood are threatened with demolition under the "Kamenitz Law," and the municipality can carry out the demolition at any time, and the rest of the facilities in the neighborhood have been handed demolition orders over the past years.

Abu Diab confirmed that the plan in the Al-Bustan neighborhood is a continuation of the settlement project in Wadi Hilweh and Wadi Al-Rababeh neighborhoods in the town of Silwan.