

Day 118: Jerusalem during "Al-Aqsa Flood" Operation

February 1, 2024



On the 118th day of " Al-Aqsa Flood Operation", the occupation authorities continued to impose their restrictions on the entry of Muslims to Al-Aqsa, and also continued the incursions and raids into the towns and neighborhoods of the city of Jerusalem, and held a session in the "Municipal Court" to discuss the decision to "demolish the Wadi Hilweh Information Center" in the town of Silwan.

Al-Aqsa Mosque

The occupation authorities continued to impose their restrictions on worshipers entering Al-Aqsa Mosque, and continued to center and place the iron barriers on its gates.

The Wadi Hilweh Information Center – Jerusalem met with a Jerusalemite man from the town of Al-Tur, who explained that he has been prevented from entering Al-Aqsa since October 7th, and every time he tries to enter "during prayer times or at any time during the day", he is prevented and forced to leave the area, after an identity check and a field investigation and a physical search most of the time.

The young man said: "Despite the permanent prohibition, I try almost every day, and I try through several gates, but I am forbidden to enter and pray in it."

The settlers' incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque continued, and 194 settlers carried out their incursions into Al-Aqsa during the morning and afternoon incursions, and they held prayers during the incursion.

A session to discuss the decision to demolish the Wadi Hilweh Information Center

The "Local Affairs Court" held a session to discuss the decision to demolish the Wadi Hilweh Information Center in the town of Silwan, and lawyer Sami Arshid explained that the Local Committee for Organization and Construction in the Jerusalem Municipality filed an indictment against the director of the center, Jawad Siam, on the pretext of "building without a license and using the building without a license, and construction is prohibited in this area", and today a hearing was held before the ruling is issued.

Lawyer Arshid added that the municipality claims that Siam uses the building "as a center for visitors to explain the history of Silwan and the conditions in the town, and holds various events there", and the goal is "to demolish the center and end the events that are held".

Arshid pointed out that the decision regarding the center will be made in the coming days.

Jawad Siam, the director of the Information Center, explained that the case dates back to 2009, when the municipality issued a decision to demolish the center which is a room in an old building with a wooden roof, and a year later the file was closed under the pretext of "the sensitivity of the area", and over the past years the center was broken into several times and each time they take photos of the center, its contents from the pictures, the chairs, and walls.

Siam added that in 2019, the court came back with a demolition order, and today a hearing was held before issuing the decision regarding the construction.

Siam said: "Through the prosecutor's claims, the construction was not discussed to a great extent, but the center and its various activities and events were discussed, I was asked several questions about the use of the center, in regards to "hosting gatherings, activities for social occasions, the reason for the presence of "prayer rugs" on the seats, the reason for having a map on one of the walls "a map for one of the settlement projects", and the focus was on the delegations that come to the center and explaining to them about the town's history."

During the session, Siam said, many facilities for the settlers in the town of Silwan are built of wood and zinc, and no demolition orders are issued against them, as for the information center and the building, for years the municipality has been claiming that the construction was without a license.

Siam added that the municipality claims that one of the walls of the center "separates the center from one of the neighbors" and its gate, were built without a license. Siam confirmed that they are old and were built "before the occupation of Jerusalem".

Siam said that the demolition decision is a political decision; the various institutions do not want to present the true story about the town of Silwan.

Raids

For the second time this week, the Israeli occupation forces broke into the house of the Rukon family in the town of Silwan, searched and destroyed all the contents of the house, and arrested Abdul Nasser Rukon and his son Ibrahim, while his son Ahmed was arrested on Monday.

The young man Mohammad Rukon explained that the forces broke into the family's house last Monday, arrested his brother Ahmed, and beat the family members, and the court extended Ahmed's arrest twice, while the lawyer informed the family that the signs of the beating seemed clear on Ahmed's body, noting that the "first extension session" was held in absentia due to his presence in the hospital due to the injuries he suffered during his arrest.

Rukon: "This morning the forces returned and broke into the house, and arrested my father Abdel Nasser and my brother Ibrahim, and during that they vandalized and destroyed the contents of the house."

In the evening hours, the police released Abd al-Rahman Rukon on the condition that he be deported from the Old City for two weeks, and his son Ibrahim "on the condition that he return for investigation."

The forces also stormed the Shu'fat refugee camp and the town of Anata, and raided many shops, and fired the bombs and rubber bullets indiscriminately.

A detainee's testimony

The young man Abd al-Rahman Rukon was released in the evening hours of Wednesday, after the end of the period of his administrative detention. The freed prisoners spoke about the conditions of the prisoners in the prison.

Rukon was arrested on 29/10/2023, and transferred to administrative detention for two months, then renewed for one month.

He said: "At the beginning of the arrest, there were large-scale attacks on the prisoners, intrusions, beatings, insults and numerous provocations and movements of the prisoners inside the prison. The prisoners called it the "Maskobyeh Slaughterhouse or the Negev Slaughterhouse", in reference to the assault, mistreatment and the difficult life that the prisoner lived while in detention at the beginning of the war."

Rukon talked about the insufficient amount of food, and the small amount of water provided for the prisoners "one bottle of water for 6 prisoners", and recently water was available one hour a day that coincided with the evening break time.

Rukon explained that on Wednesday, the prison administration did not inform 6 prisoners whether they will be released or their detention will be extended until late, and it was a difficult time for the prisoners.

Prison sentence

The District Court sentenced the young man Jamal Khaled Al-Batal from the Al-Thori neighborhood in the town of Silwan, to an actual prison term of 32 months.

The forces arrested Jamal on 13/5/2021 and released him after several days on the condition of house arrest, then returned and arrested him in the month of October 2022 for a month, and released him while keeping the house arrest conditions.

The prisoner's family pointed out that their son spent a year and a half under house arrest, and was forced in March 2023 to turn himself in, until the ruling against him was issued today.

The family pointed out that their son is in the Ramon prison, and his last visit was in September of last year.