

Day 161: Jerusalem during "Al-Aqsa Flood" Operation

March 15, 2024



On the 161st day of "Al-Aqsa Flood Operation", tens of thousands of worshipers performed prayers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the first Friday of Ramadan, amid strict measures and restrictions on the entry of West Bank residents and the deployment of forces in Jerusalem, while the raids into the towns and neighborhoods in Jerusalem continued, and the police announced the arrest of 18 Palestinians from the West Bank "on the pretext of illegal presence" and closing a commercial facility for two weeks.

Al-Aqsa on the first Friday of Ramadan

Since the dawn hours of Friday, the forces have set up the iron barriers and barricades in the streets of the city of Jerusalem and its neighborhoods near the Old City, and inside the Old City and at its gates and at the gates of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the forces in their various divisions have been stationed there in addition to tours conducted by senior officers to a number of checkpoints.

Since the morning hours, the forces have closed many streets and roads leading to the Old City, and prevented the movement of vehicles and buses, forcing those coming to Al-Aqsa to walk long distances to reach it.

The Al-Aqsa gates and its main roads were turned into a military barracks due to the large presence of forces and officers.

The forces also made passages from the iron barricades in a number of streets and roads in Jerusalem.

The forces stopped some of the young men at the gates of Al-Aqsa and the Old City, and searched some of them after assaulting and pushing them. They also searched the bags and backpacks of a number of arrivals to Al-Aqsa.

The forces arrested a young man after assaulting him by beating him in the area of Damascus Gate, and arrested the photojournalist Mustafa Al-Kharouf immediately after he left Al-Aqsa.

The Islamic Endowment Department estimated the number of worshipers at Al-Aqsa for the first Friday of the month of Ramadan at 80,000.

The measures taken at the Jerusalem checkpoints prevented thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank from entering Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa, and the occupation authorities had announced that the procedures for entering the city consisted of "obtaining a magnetic card, a permit from the coordinator's application, and the permit would be for one day only from 4 a.m. until 5 p.m., and a total of 10,000 will be allowed to enter. They also specified the ages for those allowed to enter, as men under 55 years old and women under 50 years old are not allowed to enter, while children under 10 years old are allowed to enter.

The streets of Jerusalem, its alleys and its markets did not witness the congestion and the large turnout for Al-Aqsa as every year, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque and its squares and chapels were not filled with worshipers from all the Palestinian territories of all age groups.

As for the people of the city of Jerusalem, they flocked to it from all the neighborhoods, towns and regions, especially the young men who were denied over the past five months from reaching and praying at Al-Aqsa due to the siege and restrictions imposed on the worshipers' entry to it.

Worshippers continued to flock to Al-Aqsa continues during the today, and 90,000 worshippers performed the Isha and Taraweeh prayers, as explained by the Islamic Endowment Department.

Preventing medical crews from entering Al-Aqsa

The occupation authorities prevented the medical crews "from the medical institutions and associations" from entering Al-Aqsa, as they do every year in Ramadan, and assaulted some of them by pushing and detaining them during their attempt to enter Al-Aqsa while wearing the paramedics' uniforms.

The Red Crescent issued a statement clarifying the ban on Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance crews and volunteers from entering the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque, to provide their humanitarian and emergency services to worshipers on the first Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, without giving reasons.

The Red Crescent explained in its statement that the forces previously prevented the Red Crescent crews from bringing in their equipment and equipping their medical points, as was customary every year during the month of Ramadan.

The Red Crescent added that the Ministry of Endowments and the International Committee of the Red Cross began attempts through their interventions to allow the Red Crescent to bring in the necessary equipment to welcome worshipers and provide their humanitarian and medical services, but all these attempts failed due to the occupation's intransigence and refusal to allow their crews to perform their usual humanitarian work in the month of Ramadan. The Israeli occupation forces also prevented the ambulance crews from being at the Zaytoona checkpoint, and from providing medical services to the worshipers coming to the city of Jerusalem through this checkpoint.

The Red Crescent Society considered that this prohibition is a dangerous precedent and a precedent for preventing Red Crescent ambulance crews from working inside East Jerusalem, which according to all international agreements is considered part of the occupied Palestinian land, and therefore the Palestinian Red Crescent is responsible for providing emergency and humanitarian services within the geographical scope of occupied Jerusalem.

The Red Crescent confirmed that there is an international agreement on the presence of its ambulance crews and the provision of its humanitarian services in occupied Jerusalem.

The Red Crescent Society added that preventing their crews from performing their humanitarian work is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, which obliges the

occupation forces not to obstruct the work of the medical crews and prevent them, but rather their mission must be facilitated and respected for its emblem "The Red Crescent Badge" which is the approved and protected international emblem.

The Red Crescent said: "The prohibition of the Palestinian Red Crescent from working in the courtyards of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as is customary every year during Ramadan, poses a danger to the safety of the large numbers of worshipers who are present, especially on Fridays."

Paramedic Abdul Majeed Taha explained that all medical personnel were prevented from entering Al-Aqsa to provide services to the fasting people coming to Al-Aqsa, pointing out that the forces stationed at the gates of Al-Aqsa prevented the entry of crews wearing their official "ambulance uniforms", and assaulted and detained some of them."

Arrests and closure of a commercial facility

The Israeli police said that they arrested 17 Palestinians that are from the West Bank "on the pretext of illegal residence in Jerusalem" as one of the residents of the city tried to bring them into the city. They also arrested a young man working in a store selling construction materials, and the facility was closed for two weeks.

Raids

In the evening hours, the forces stormed the Bi'er Ayoub neighborhood in the town of Silwan, and the forces were deployed in the streets of the neighborhood.