

Day 75: Al-Aqsa Flood Operation in the city of Jerusalem

December 20, 2023



On the 75th day of “Al-Aqsa Flood Operation”, the occupation authorities continue their siege of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and raids, arrests, and summonses continue in the city of Jerusalem.

The Wadi Hilweh Information Center – Jerusalem explained that the forces continue to impose restrictions on Muslims entering Al-Aqsa Mosque, stationing themselves at the gates of the mosque and placing iron barriers over them.

A 52-year-old man explained that he tried to reach Al-Aqsa to perform the afternoon prayer, and the police stationed at the Al-Majles Gate stopped him and checked his identity. During that time, the policeman asked him which area he was from, and he told him from “Issawiya,” and the policeman replied, “Issawiya, you are forbidden to enter.”

The man added that since the beginning of the war, he was able to enter Al-Aqsa on 3 days only, and the rest of the attempts he got denied and was forced to stay away from the gates of Al-Aqsa, pointing out that the restrictions and procedures were doubled on Fridays, and he has not been able to pray for 10 Fridays in Al-Aqsa.

The forces also continue to station themselves at the gates of the Old City, and prevent sitting in the Damascus Gate area.

Raids

The occupation authorities continued to raid towns and neighborhoods in Jerusalem, and the Information Center monitored the storming of the town of Silwan, Shu’fat refugee camp, and Issawiya.

In the morning hours, the occupation forces set up a checkpoint at the entrances to Issawiya, stopped vehicles and buses, and checked passengers’ identities.

In Shu’fat refugee camp, the forces stormed the camp through the Ras Khamis gate, deployed in several areas, and then confiscated a vehicle.

Arresting children

In the village of Issawiya, the occupation forces arrested "Tuesday evening and Wednesday early morning" 4 children, namely: Adam Walid Derbas, 12 years old, Qasim Marwan Odeh, 12 years old, Ammar Maher Obaid, 12 years old, and Mahmoud Maher Obaid, 14 years old.

The children were presented to the court, and the police asked to extend their detention for a period of 6 days "pending investigation on suspicion of throwing stones at settlers' vehicles." After deliberations, the judge decided to release them on the condition of house arrest for 6 days, paying a cash bail of 2,500 shekels for each of them, and a third-party bail of 10 thousand shekels.

Mohammad Mahmoud, the lawyer of the Wadi Hilweh Information Center - Jerusalem, explained that what was surprising was the extension of the detention of the child, Adam Derbas. He was arrested on Tuesday evening, and he was extended and transferred to the Al-Maskobyeh Center. He said: "Extending the detention of children of this age indicates a change in policies for dealing with children, without taking into account the laws of juveniles. And for their ages, this aims to terrorize them, and extending children who are 12 years old rarely happens."

The lawyer explained that the police extended the detention of the child, Derbas, for a period of 12 hours, "which means that it would be at six in the morning, and there could not be a hearing during that time, so an urgent appeal was filed against the officers' decision to extend the boy's detention, and this prompted the police to bring him to court early and hold it in the morning hours."

In a meeting with the children, they talked about the circumstances of their arrest and interrogation. Adam Derbas said: "On Tuesday evening, members of the Musta'ribeen unit (undercover police) arrested me from the Habayil al-Arab area. They put weapons on my back and handcuffs on my hands. All the way they beat me with punches and kicks on my back, stomach, and face. After the investigation, I was transferred to Al-Maskobyeh and slept in a narrow room."

The child, Ammar Maher Obaid, said: "The handcuffs were placed in my hands and I was described as a terrorist in an attempt to force me to confess to throwing stones. The investigator threatened me with the words, 'I will keep you in my mind', and he also told him, 'You are a danger to Israel.'"

He added: "12 years old, what am I going to do? They tied us to the wall, moved us from room to room, pushed me several times, and tried to intimidate me to force me to confess."

Obaid pointed out that he was arrested after his house was broken into while he was sleeping, and he said: "I was prevented from washing my face, from the bed to the police car."

The boy, Mahmoud Obaid, said: "At three o'clock in the morning, they arrested me from the house. They interrogated us and beat us. They wanted us to confess to things we had not done. They searched me and forced me to take off my clothes."

Obaid was accused of being "responsible for a cell in Issawiya, with evidence against him, and the investigator tried to force him to confess."

As for the child Qasim Odeh, who was arrested at dawn from his home, he said: "Unjustly, they arrested me and transferred me to house arrest for a week. I will be prevented from going to school and taking my exams, and they threatened my family to storm the house during that period to ensure and confirm my presence at home and not to violate the conditions of my release."