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07.18.21
Ra'am declares Temple Mount 'sole property of Muslims' in response to visitors

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Ra'am declares Temple Mount 'sole property of Muslims'
Islamist coalition party objects to presence of Jewish worshippers and members of Knesset at holy site and protests police clearing out area of stone-throwing Palestinians
i24NEWS| Published: 07.18.21, 20:47

The Islamic Movement and its political wing, the Ra'am Party, criticized Sunday the government's decision to allow Jewish worshippers to visit the Temple Mount and the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex on Tisha B'Av.

“The Al-Aqsa Mosque, in its 144 dunams [35 acres], is solely the property of Muslims, and no one else has any right to it,” the Islamist party said in response to the ascent of hundreds of Jewish worshippers to the site where the Second Temple stood before its fall by the Roman Empire.

According to the status quo, the Waqf — the **Jordanian** Islamic religious authority — **has responsibility for the site**, which has been in force since Israel decided to not assert its rights over the compound after capturing it in the **1967** Six-Day War.

Any **Jewish presence** at what is Judaism's holiest site is usually **considered a "provocation"** and a convenient reason to begin unrest.

Ra'am objected to Israel Police clearing the area of stone-throwing Palestinians in the morning and the presence of Jewish Knesset members, some of whom sang "Hatikvah," Israel's national anthem.

Ra'am maintained that **such actions could lead to renewed** escalation of **violence** between Israelis and Palestinians.

"The events that may result from it could kindle the situation in Jerusalem and the entire region, leading to a catastrophic religious war," Ra'am added.

For its part, **Jordan too condemned the presence of Jewish pilgrims**, sending a letter of protest against Israeli "violations" on the Temple Mount, including "storming of the holy compound by extremist settlers under Israeli police protection," the Jerusalem Post reported.

It is impossible for Jewish visitors to storm the area; there is but **one entrance via a rickety wooden walkway** in need of replacement and Israel **Police** closely **shadow all groups** — Jews included — who ascend to the holy site.

07.18.21

Hundreds cross Temple Mount bridge as the only way to reach the gate

07.18.21

Hundreds cross shaky Temple Mount bridge despite collapse warnings

PM orders to keep allowing worshippers **access to holy site** on Tisha B'Av using crumbling, temporary wooden structure which is only supposed to serve security personnel

Gilad Cohen| Published: **07.18.21**, 17:58

Despite an immediate danger of collapse, **over 1,600 people** have **ascended** to the Temple Mount **using** an unstable **wooden bridge** on **Sunday** as the Jewish people mark Tisha B'Av — an annual fast day commemorating the destruction of both Jewish temples by the Babylonian and Roman empires.

Notwithstanding warnings, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett ordered on Sunday to keep allowing worshippers access to the Temple Mount using the Mughrabi Bridge — a **wooden walkway connecting the Western Wall Plaza with the Mughrabi Gate** of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The bridge was constructed in 2004 and according to the construct's temporary permit obtained by Ynet, only security personnel are allowed to use it.

The permit stipulates the bridge would only be used until "the permanent earthen ramp leading to the Temple Mount is repaired and maintained." The ramp collapsed in February 2004 due to weather damage and a low-magnitude earthquake.

The local construction council has drawn up plans to build a permanent walkway, replacing the shaky wooden structure, but construction work has been repeatedly deferred and is not expected to begin in the near future.

Jerusalem Municipality and Israel Police cite the site's sensitive political status as the reason behind the delays and claim it is up to the government whether to greenlight the construction of the bridge.

Dozens of Jewish worshipers use the structure daily as the Mughrabi Gate is the only gate to the Temple Mount that the site's Muslim authority, or Waqf, allows non-Muslims to use for visiting the Temple Mount complex. The bridge is the only way to reach the gate.

07.15.21

Pass for inoculated or recovered Guests required for large indoor events

07.15.21

In virus steps comeback, ministers announce 'Revelry Pass' for large indoor events. Guests would have to present a vaccination certificate or negative virus test; PMO says no cap on number of participants in weddings, performances and parties but mask mandate back in place

Adir Yanko, Ran Boker | Published: 07.15.21, 22:39

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Economy Minister Orna Barbivai and Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz agreed on Thursday to initiate a "Revelry Pass" that will put restrictions on large indoor festivities as measures to curb the spread of coronavirus make a comeback.

The outline would only allow Israelis who have been inoculated against COVID-19 or who have recovered from the disease to enter "high contagion risk events" — defined by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as weddings, parties and conferences among other large gatherings indoors. Others will be barred entry unless they take a rapid virus test outside the venue or present a negative coronavirus test taken in the previous 48 hours.

The pass will only be required at events with over 100 participants and will not apply to sit-down culture events such as theater, movies and concerts. It will only apply to events "held standing and with movement — including mingling between participants.

Participants will be **required to wear face masks at all times**, except during permitted activities such as drinking and eating. The ministers stated that they would work to bolster the enforcement of the new guidelines but did not specify how. Ministers have also **decided not to put a cap on the number of participants** at such events, despite concerns voiced by Health Ministry Director General Prof. Nachman Ash, who said Israel **may soon reinstate** its "**Green Pass**" policy.

07.15.21

Israel arrests dozens of Palestinian University students involved in terror activities

07.15.21

Israel arrests dozens of Palestinian students over alleged 'terror' IDF confirms the **arrests**, saying between **20 and 30 'terror operatives'** belonging to 'a **student cell**' had been held in an operation with Shin Bet, police; Birzeit University called on 'international community to intervene' to secure **release of students**
AFP| Published: **07.15.21**, 13:01

The Israeli army said Thursday it had arrested between **20 and 30 Palestinian students** in the **West Bank** it accused of being "**terror operatives**" of Islamist group **Hamas**.

Palestinian sources said dozens of **students from Birzeit** University were arrested as they were **returning by bus** from the village of Turmus Ayya **where** earlier this month **Israeli troops demolished** the family **home** of a Palestinian American awaiting trial on charges of shooting a Jewish student in the West Bank earlier this year.

An Israeli army statement said: "**Some** of the apprehended terror operatives were **directly involved in terror** activities, including **money transfers**, **incitement** and the organization of **Hamas activities in Judea and Samaria**".

Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip and fought an 11-day conflict with Israel in May, is blacklisted as a terrorist organization by the European Union and the United States.

A late Wednesday statement announcing the arrests said "dozens of terror operatives" belonging to "a **student cell**" at Birzeit University had been **detained** in a joint operation involving the **army**, the **police** and the **Shin Bet** domestic **security** agency.

07.13.21

Israel wants UN food & aid voucher system, not cash for foreign aid to Gaza

07.13.21

Israel wants voucher system for foreign aid to Gaza, police minister says
Omer Barlev says PM wants a shift in policy, meant to act as a **safeguard against donations being diverted to bolster the Palestinian** enclave's **Hamas rulers** and their weapons arsenal

Reuters| Published: 07.13.21, 13:58

Israel wants foreign aid to Gaza disbursed through a voucher system, as a safeguard against donations being diverted to bolster the Palestinian enclave's Hamas rulers and their arsenal, Public Security Minister Omer Barlev said on Tuesday.

Humanitarian agencies put the latest reconstruction costs for the impoverished Gaza Strip at \$500 million following 11 days of cross-border fighting in May.

Qatar bankrolled more than \$1 billion worth of construction and other projects in Gaza, some of it in cash, after a war in 2014. The payments were monitored and approved by Israel, and Doha pledged another \$500 million in late May. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett wants a shift in policy, Barlev said.

"The Qatari money for Gaza will not go in as suitcases full of dollars which end up with Hamas, where Hamas, in essence, takes for itself and its officials a significant part of it," he told Army Radio.

He said Bennett envisaged "a mechanism where what will go in, in essence, would be food vouchers, or vouchers for humanitarian aid, and not cash that can be taken and used for developing weaponry to be wielded against the State of Israel".

Hamas, which has previously denied using Gaza aid for its military, did not immediately comment.

Mohammed Al-Emadi, the Qatari aid envoy to Gaza, could not immediately be reached for comment.

A Palestinian official said: "Nothing is final yet."

Barlev said the proposed aid mechanism should run mainly through the United Nations. He did not rule out continued donations from Qatar, and raised a possibility of European Union assistance.

"Should the mechanism be like this, I have no doubt that Israel would help in the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip," he said.

The EU, the United States and some other countries have designated Hamas as a terrorist organization.

07.11.21

Gantz to freeze PA tax transfers equal to martyrs fund incentive to violence

07.11.21

Israel to deduct NIS 597 million from PA tax revenue over terrorist stipends

Security cabinet adopts measure following Defense Ministry report citing sum as amount given to Palestinian families of terrorists jailed in Israel or killed while carrying out attacks on Israelis; Jerusalem says so-called 'pay to slay' funds are reward for or incentive to commit violence

Itamar Eichner, News Agencies | Published: 07.11.21, 22:13

Israel will deduct NIS 597 million from the tax money it collects and transfers to the Palestinian Authority for exports from Gaza, the security cabinet decided Sunday evening.

The decision was made following a Defense Ministry report stating that in 2020 the PA transferred the same amount in stipends to the families of terrorists imprisoned in Israel or those who died while carrying out attacks on Israeli targets.

Under interim peace agreements, Israel collects hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes for the Palestinian Authority, with the tax transfers forming a key source of funding for the Palestinians.

Israel has long objected to the "martyrs fund," which the Palestinians say is a type of welfare system meant to assist families affected by the conflict.

But Israel, which has branded the system "pay to slay," says such benefits serve as rewards and incentives for violence.

In its decision, the security cabinet approved a recommendation by Defense Minister Benny Gantz to freeze the NIS 597 million shekels for what it called "indirect support of terrorism" in 2020.

The cabinet said the funds will be frozen on a monthly basis out of payments that Israel transfers to the Palestinians.

For the Palestinians, the families of attackers are widely seen as victims of a half century of Israeli occupation. The Palestinians say that many Palestinians are unfairly held by Israel and that the number of prisoners involved in deadly attacks is a small percentage of those aided by the fund.

Qadri Abu Bakr, head of the Palestinian commission for detainees' affairs, accused Israel of stealing Palestinians funds, calling the decision a "crime and piracy."

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas spoke by telephone Sunday with his newly inaugurated president Isaac Herzog, the former head of the center-left Labor party.

It said Abbas called for a "comprehensive calm" in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem, and called for steps that would create conditions for a "achieving a just and comprehensive peace."

The statement made no mention of the frozen tax transfers.

07.11.21

Israeli search team heads home weeks after Florida condo collapse

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Miami-Dade mayor thanks battalion for 'unrelenting dedication' and presents them with honorary 'key to the county' after working 12-hour shifts through South Florida's intense summer heat and in pouring rain

Associated Press | Published: 07.11.21, 15:51

An Israeli search and rescue team that arrived in South Florida shortly after the Champlain Towers South collapsed last month was heading home Sunday after an emotional sendoff in Surfside.

During a brief ceremony on Saturday evening, Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava thanked the battalion for their "unrelenting dedication" and presented them with an honorary "key to the county."

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Chief Alan Cominsky honored the team as honorary members of his department.

Members of the task forces that have been searching the site 24 hours a day since the June 24 collapse lined both sides of the street, shaking hands and bidding farewell to the Israeli team.

On Saturday, officials raised the confirmed death toll to 86, with 43 people still missing in the rubble of the 12-story building. While authorities have concluded that there was "no chance of life" in the remaining rubble, the pressure remains for search crews to find victims so families can lay their loved ones to rest.

The Israeli team joined other task forces from around the United States to assist the teams from Miami and Miami-Dade County, working 12-hour shifts. They have searched through South Florida's intense summer heat, and in pouring rain, pausing only when lightning was spotted nearby. They also paused operations as officials made plans to implode the still-standing portion of the condo tower on July 4.

The Israeli team used blueprints of the building to create detailed 3D images of the disaster site to aid in the search. They also gathered information from families of the missing, many of whom were Jewish, to build a room-by-room model laying out where people would have been sleeping during the pre-dawn collapse.