

Ynet News June 4, 2019

Police allows Jews to enter Temple Mount on Jerusalem Day, sparking riots
Palestinian worshippers hurl stones and chairs as non-Muslims are allowed to enter the compound on the last days of Ramadan for the first time in 30 years; Hamas, Islamic Jihad warn of 'consequences' after Israeli security forces enter the holy site to restrain the rioters

Yishai Porat, Ilana Ushomirsky|Published: 06.02.19 , 10:50

Clashes broke out at the Temple Mount on Sunday between Palestinian worshipers and Israeli security forces after some 120 Jews had been allowed to enter the compound as part of Jerusalem Day celebrations.

The rioters apparently began hurling stones and chairs in protest over the police's decision to allow non-Muslims to enter the holy site in the last days of Ramadan for the first time in 30 years, to mark the unification of the capital in the Six Day War.

Following the eruption of the violence at the site, Jerusalem District Commander Maj. Gen. Doron Yadid ordered police officers to be deployed to the compound in order to deal with the disturbances, prompting the forces to use crowd dispersal measures.

The police pushed the Palestinian rioters towards the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where they barricaded themselves, while continuing to hurl chairs and other objects in the direction of the security forces. Several protesters were arrested, one of which was a foreign national.

Jordan slammed Israel's decision to allow Jewish visitors to the Temple Mount, warning it could lead to a fresh round of violence. "We strongly condemn the continuation of the Israeli violations at the Al-Aqsa (Mosque) by extremists who have the backing of the security forces," said the Jordanian Foreign Ministry in a statement.

The statement also warned of "the dangerous consequences of the provocative Israeli policy, which could lead to a new escalation of violence that would threaten the entire region."

The ministry said it has sent a formal protest to the Israeli government and stressed the need "for Israel - as an occupying power - to honor its obligations under international law, cease its provocative conduct on the Temple Mount and respect the feelings of the Muslim people on the holy site."

Hamas spokesman, Sami Abu Zuhri, said there "will be consequences" to what he labeled was an "attack of the Temple Mount's worshippers by Israeli forces ... This constitutes an escalation and a violation of the compound's sanctity," the spokesman said.

The terror group then released an official statement, making further threats. "The occupation's brutal treatment of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the arrival of hundreds of

extremists there during the month of Ramadan contradicts the Muslim spirit of the place, and attests to the attempts made by the Jews to Judaize the Temple Mount."

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group also issued a statement, warning that Israel "will pay a price" for allowing "the settlers" to harm the compound. "Israel is responsible for the current situation in Jerusalem," the statement said. "The Palestinian nation has the right to defend itself and its holy places against the Israeli aggression."

The police said it will keep its widespread presence at the Temple Mount and in the capital in general in order to maintain the order and allow the visits of those wishing to celebrate Jerusalem Day in the holy site and throughout the entire city.

Trump team to meet leaders of Israel, Jordan as it sells Mideast plan

White House adviser **Kushner**, the chief architect of the 'deal of the century,' embarks on a tour in the region in order to rally support for a US-engineered **conference in Bahrain next month**, where the initial stage of the peace proposal is said to be unveiled

Associated Press|Published: **05.29.19**, 08:36

President Donald Trump's top Mideast advisers face skeptical audiences as they visit several locations in the region and in Europe starting Tuesday to rally support for what they have billed as a workshop on the economic foundations of peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

The White House is promoting the **June 25-26 meeting in the Gulf state of Bahrain** as the first phase of its long-awaited Mideast peace plan, which envisions large-scale investment and infrastructure work, much of it funded by wealthy Arab countries, in the Palestinian territories.

But American officials say the Bahrain **conference will not include the core** political **issues of** the conflict: borders of a **Palestinian state**, the status of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees or Israeli security demands.

A White House official said the trip, with **stops in Morocco, Jordan, Israel and Europe** "is part of our ongoing efforts to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians" but offered no specifics. The official was not authorized to speak publicly about the meetings and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Palestinians will not attend the Bahrain meeting, rejecting the parameters of the conference, while key American allies Egypt and Jordan have not announced their plans for participation.

For now, the Americans are pinning their hopes on wealthy Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia, hoping their regional influence and deep pockets can make the conference a success.

The Saudis, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, along with host Bahrain, have accepted invitations to attend. This has fueled Palestinian jitters that they will come under heavy pressure to accept large sums of money in exchange for freezing or abandoning aspirations for an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip.

“The deal of the century or the deal of shame will go to hell, with God’s will, and the economic project they are working on next month will go to hell too,” Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said this week. “Whoever wants to solve the Palestinian issue must start with the political issue, not by selling the illusions of billions (of dollars).”

Jared Kushner, Trump’s senior adviser and son in law, announced the plans for the Bahrain conference last week, saying it would focus on economic issues and investment in the Palestinian territories.

The absence of a political horizon has put American allies in the region in a bind. Heavily reliant on the U.S. for political and military support, it is difficult for countries like Jordan to say no to the invitation. But the Palestinian issue resonates deeply with the Arab public and it is difficult for leaders to embrace a plan that does not promise the Palestinians a state.

In accepting the invitation to the Bahrain conference, Gulf countries have been careful to express solidarity with the Palestinians but have also signaled flexibility.

These countries have forged quiet relationships in recent years with Israel, driven primarily by a shared animosity to Iran. Those concerns, and readiness to engage with Israel, appear to outweigh any sympathies they may feel with the Palestinians.

“Dialogue with Israel is a positive thing,” Anwar Gargash, the UAE’s minister of state for foreign affairs, recently told journalists. “I think this is something that we need to do, but at the same time the dialogue with Israel doesn’t mean that we don’t disagree with them politically.”

Palestinian officials have called on Arab countries not to attend the Bahrain workshop. Abbas is expected to step up those calls at a pair of conferences later this week in Saudi Arabia. But changing their minds may be difficult.

In a recent editorial, the editor in chief of a Saudi newspaper with close ties to the palace urged the Palestinians to give the Trump plan a chance.

“The Palestinians should negotiate hard, and then take what they can to secure a nation state for future generations,” Faisal Abbas wrote in the Arab News. “There is nothing to be gained from a refusal to come to the negotiating table.”

In another important diplomatic breakthrough, Qatar, which has been embroiled in a bitter dispute with Saudi Arabia, has agreed to attend, a possible precursor of a broader reconciliation among Gulf rivals.

Jordan is in an especially sensitive situation. A majority of the population has Palestinian roots, and the kingdom borders the Israeli-occupied West Bank, the heartland of any future Palestinian state. Any perception that Jordan is selling out the interests of the Palestinians would be deeply unpopular and possibly even destabilizing.

Ahead of Kushner’s arrival, Jordan’s foreign minister, Ayman Safadi, indicated he is uncomfortable with the economy-first approach.

The official Petra news agency said that in a phone call with his Irish counterpart, Safadi stressed that “any economic plan to handle the consequences of the conflict can’t be an alternative to a comprehensive political plan that aims at fulfilling the two-state solution.”

“Safadi stressed that all efforts for solving the conflict need to begin from the fact that ending occupation is the path for peace,” the agency said.

Egypt, a key U.S. and Israeli ally that borders Gaza, also has not said whether it will attend. An Egyptian official said businessmen who do business with Israelis might take part in the conference as “individuals.” The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the media.

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has repeatedly called for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Kushner’s visit to the region started Tuesday in Morocco, a moderate Arab state that has low-level ties with Israel. From there he was to head to Jordan, then Israel and on to Europe.

The European Union has not said whether it will attend the conference, while Russia, another key player in the region, late Tuesday called the meeting an attempt by Washington to enforce its views on the Middle East.

A statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry criticized what it called the United States’ “stubborn desire to replace the task of achieving a comprehensive political settlement with a package of economic bonuses that dilutes the principle of two states for two peoples.”

After more than two years of work, Kushner's team still has not unveiled its political vision. But his few public statements have indicated they will focus heavily on so-called economic peace while sidelining or ignoring the longstanding Palestinian goal of independence. The two-state solution continues to enjoy the broad support of the international community.

Abbas and his autonomy government in the West Bank cut off ties with the White House after Trump recognized contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017.

Though Trump said his declaration did not determine the city's final borders, the Palestinians saw the move as unfairly favoring Israel. U.S. cuts in aid, and the closure of the Palestinian diplomatic office in Washington, further deepened their suspicions.

Saeb Erekat, a top Palestinian official, noted this week that the Palestinians were not even consulted about the Bahrain conference. "Let us be clear," he wrote in the New York Times. "There will be no economic prosperity in Palestine without the end of the occupation."

Britain Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn
comment

Report: Corbyn visited Arafat in 2002

The British Labour Party leader visited the besieged PLO president at the height of the Second Intifada, when dozens of suicide bombings struck Israeli cities, to show solidarity with the Palestinians

Ynet|Published: 06.04.19 , 22:17

Freelance investigative journalist Iggy Ostanin posted on Twitter Tuesday that British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn visited Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 2002, at a time that he authorized dozens of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians.

Corbyn said that meeting the Palestinian Liberation Organization leader was surreal and that Arafat was "focused and precise... giving a very strong message of defiance."

Describing Arafat's Ramallah compound, Corbyn said: "We entered the building down a corridor lined with sandbags, beyond which lay piles of broken and burnt vehicles as a result of Israeli bombardment and machine gun strafings which had damaged most of the surrounds."

In response to a series of deadly terror attacks, the IDF entered Palestinian cities, for the first time since the Oslo Accords, in order to root out terrorist infrastructure.

Prime minister at the time **Ariel Sharon ordered the IDF to surround the offices of Arafat** with Israeli armor in order to pressure him to end his support for suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks against Israelis.

"Arafat himself seemed focused and precise in what he had to say, giving a very strong message of defiance of the blockade, despite the arrival of an incoming message — whilst we were there — that Israeli tanks had reentered Ramallah and were one kilometer away from his office," Corbyn said.

Corbyn told Socialist Campaign Group News that he was in Palestine with a delegation that included two other parliamentarians and that they had visited east Jerusalem, Gaza and Nablus as part of "a campaign for peace."

Corbyn stayed at a church guest house in east Jerusalem from where the group would venture out daily to meet with various Palestinian groups and officials.

"As part of a busy schedule I also visited a Red Crescent hospital in Gaza city, a new health development and a water development funded by the British government," Corbyn continued. "The following day, I travelled to Ramallah to visit a number of places, including a Quaker school, and also met with the Union of Women's organization. An office of a busy NGO, which had previously been trashed by the Israeli army was, most impressively, now up and running within just three weeks, such is the determination and zeal of the Palestinians under threat."

Corbyn described the damage to buildings in Jerusalem, Gaza and Ramallah, damaged by the IDF as "quite horrifying."

Corbyn described his visit to the Gaza Strip, several years before Hamas assumed control of the territory: "There was poverty and destruction throughout, and a complete ban on all travel to and from Palestine (West Bank). Foreigners are allowed to travel but spend a great deal of time queuing at checkpoints. The large security point between Gaza and the Israeli state is closed."

This week, President Donald Trump is visiting Britain and he and Corbyn both made it clear that they had no desire to meet each other.

