

Nearly 300 Israeli settlers attack al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem



Ramallah, May 21 (RHC)-- Nearly 300 Israeli settlers have stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Israeli-occupied Old City of East Jerusalem amid frequent acts of violence committed by Israeli forces and settlers against the Palestinian people.

Firas al-Debs, head of the media bureau of the Islamic Endowments Department in Jerusalem, said a total of 284 settlers forced their way into the holy site through the Bab al-Magharibah under the tight protection of several groups of Israeli soldiers and special police forces, Arabic-language Safa news agency reported.

Debs added that the settlers tried to carry out actions deemed provocative by Palestinians in the mosque courtyard, but Muslim worshipers and mosque guards resisted them.

The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed new tensions ever since U.S. President Donald Trump announced his decision on December 6 last year to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and relocate the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the occupied city.

The dramatic shift in Washington's policy vis-à-vis the city triggered demonstrations in the occupied

Palestinian territories, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco and other Muslim countries.

On December 21, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution that calls on the U.S. to withdraw its controversial recognition of Jerusalem al-Quds as Israeli capital.

In an attempt to avert the resolution, Trump had warned that "we're watching," threatening reprisals against countries that backed the measure, which had earlier faced a U.S. veto at the UN Security Council. Israel, however, rejected the world body's resolution while thanking Trump for his decision to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

On January 18, the United States reneged on a pledge to contribute \$45 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which supports more than 5 million registered Palestinian refugees and their descendants.

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