

Israel Arrests 33 Palestinians for Participation in al-Aqsa Mosque Rallies



Ramallah, August 1 (RHC)-- Israeli military forces have arrested nearly three dozen Palestinians during a series of overnight operations in occupied East Jerusalem as the Tel Aviv regime continues to crack down on locals in the wake of large-scale protests over restrictive measures at al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Muhammad Mahmoud, a lawyer for the Palestinian prisoners' rights group Addameer, said Israeli forces detained 18 Palestinians during pre-dawn raids in Arab majority At-Tur neighborhood of East Jerusalem. Mahmoud added that Israeli forces also detained five Palestinians in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Israeli police spokeswoman Luba al-Samri later said 33 Palestinians, including seven minors between the ages of 13 and 17, were detained overnight in the neighborhoods of Wadi Joz, Ras al-Amud, Issawiya, Beit Hanina, the Old City, and Shufaat refugee camp. She made no mention of At-Tur neighborhood.

Samri said the detainees were "key suspects" involved in mass demonstrations over the past few weeks in protest at Israel's measures at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

The measures, which included installation of metal detectors, turnstiles, and additional surveillance

cameras, had been imposed following a deadly attack in the sacred site.

On July 14, three Palestinians opened fire on Israeli forces at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, killing two of them before being shot dead.

The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed new tensions ever since Israeli forces introduced restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem al-Quds in August 2015.

More than 300 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in the ongoing tensions since the beginning of October 2015.

The Tel Aviv regime has tried to change the demographic makeup of Jerusalem over the past decades by constructing settlements, destroying historical sites and expelling the local Palestinian population. Palestinians say the Israeli measures are aimed at paving the way for the Judaization of the city.

The al-Aqsa Mosque compound is a flashpoint Islamic site, which is also holy to Jews. The mosque is Islam's third holiest site after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

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