

Dozens of Israeli Settlers Attack al-Aqsa Mosque



Ramallah, November 29 (RHC)-- Dozens of 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. An unnamed official from the Department of Islamic Waqf and Islamic Higher Council said a total of 52 settlers and an archeologist forced their way into the holy site through the Bab al-Magharibah under tight protection of several groups of Israeli soldiers and special police forces, Arabic-language Safa news agency reported.

The settlers performed acts deemed provocative by Palestinians in the mosque courtyard before leaving the sacred site through the Chain Gate (Bab al-Silsileh). Israeli settlers have reportedly desecrated the graves at a Muslim cemetery in Jerusalem, which marks the latest in a long line of settler attacks in the occupied Palestinian territories. A group of settlers entered the burial site near the Golden Gate on Tuesday, and started trampling on the graves.

Officials from the Department of Islamic Waqf and Islamic Higher Council called Israeli police authorities, who removed the extremists from the cemetery at last. 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. Some 300 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in the tensions since the beginning of October 2015.

The Tel Aviv regime has tried to change the demographic makeup of Jerusalem al-Quds over the past decades by constructing illegal 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 flash-point Islamic site, which is also holy to the Jews. The mosque is Islam's third holiest site after Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

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