

'People can't imagine that there will be an Arab mayor of Jerusalem'
Knesset quietly debates bill that nearly prohibits conceding East Jerusalem to Palestinians in negotiated peace deal

(WASHINGTON DC 07/27/2017) – While the world celebrates the apparent removal of metal detectors, checkpoints and surveillance cameras outside the gates of Al Aqsa mosque sanctuary in Jerusalem, the American Muslims for Palestine reminds its supporters that the Israeli occupation is still in full effect.

In fact, within the last few days:

- The Israeli Prime Minister's Likud party voted to oppose any notion of a Palestinian state.
- The Knesset began debate on a bill that would redraw Jerusalem's boundaries, removing Palestinian areas from the city;
- The Knesset also debated a measure that would make it nearly impossible for an Israeli prime minister to concede East Jerusalem to Palestinians in any future negotiated peace deal.
- And Israeli forces stormed Al Aqsa mosque sanctuary just one hour after it was reopened on Thursday, firing rubber-tipped bullets and injuring at least 100 Palestinian worshippers.

These heinous acts by Israel confirm yet again that the Noble Sanctuary is not safe as long as occupation continues to exit.

The American Muslims for Palestine commends the 'sumud' (patience) of the Palestinians in Jerusalem who protested for more than two weeks by refusing to pass through the metal detectors. While it is good news these obstacles appear to have been removed, AMP reminds its supporters that the reality on the ground has not changed: East Jerusalem is still under Israeli military occupation.

"As we saw this morning when military forces stormed Al Aqsa, Israel still has full control over every aspect of Palestinians' lives," said Osama Abuirshaid, AMP national policy director. "What kind of democracy redraws a city's boundaries in order to significantly change its demographic makeup? What kind of democracy publicly acknowledges a person with a different ethnicity or heritage could not be the mayor of Jerusalem?"

Abuirshaid added: "This is further proof Israel is no democracy, but rather a racist, occupying power that restricts Palestinians freedom of movement, their self-determination and their internationally guaranteed right to return to their homeland."

AMP's policy director was referring to the Knesset bill, which would redraw Jerusalem's boundaries in order to remove Palestinian neighborhoods from the city while keeping them under Israeli jurisdiction. Palestinians in those areas presumably would lose their access to East Jerusalem, including their holy sites such as Al Aqsa mosque or the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. It is in keeping with the Jerusalem municipality's 'master plan' that calls for a demographic makeup of 70 percent Jews and 30 percent Palestinians for the city of Jerusalem.

I have a great love for Jerusalem, but when we dreamed of Jerusalem, we didn't dream of Sheikh Jarrah [Palestinian neighborhood]." ~ MK Miki Rosenthal. (Jerusalem Post)

People can't imagine that there will be an Arab mayor of Jerusalem." ~ MK Michal Biran. (Jerusalem Post)



The bill also would require 80 votes out of 120 to approve any measure to declare East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, making such a move nearly impossible.

For these reasons, AMP is calling its supporters to turn out for Al Aqsa events across the country this weekend, including in Washington DC, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Get details on our [event page](#).

Keep up with developments in Jerusalem on our [Jerusalem Project Page](#).