



مؤسسة القدس الدولية
al Quds International Institution (QII)
www.alquds-online.org



عين على القدس

EYE ON AL-AQSA

August 21, 2009

عين على الأقصى

«سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا
الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنَ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ»



تقرير توثيقي استقرائي يرصد الاعتداءات

على المسجد الأقصى في الفترة بين 2009/8/21-2008/8/21

تصدره مؤسسة القدس الدولية في الذكرى السنوية لإحراق المسجد الأقصى - التقرير الثالث

Eye on al-Aqsa

August 21, 2009

An annual report published by



مؤسسة القدس الدولية
al Quds International Institution (QII)

al Quds International institution
on the 40th anniversary of burning al-Aqsa Mosque.

An Eye on al-Aqsa

August 21, 2009

An annual report published by al Quds International institution on the 40th anniversary of burning al-Aqsa Mosque.

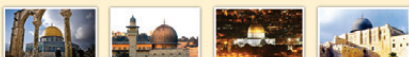
executive summary

Al Quds International Institute has been issuing periodical reports that monitor assaults spawned against Al-Aqsa Mosque¹ (the “Mosque”), aka the, and development of hostilities perpetrated by the Zionist occupation. This is the third report in this series, and it documents assaults occurred during the period of August 21, 2008 through August 20, 2009. The report attempts to address in a compressive approach the Judaization of al-Aqsa Mosque and discusses it from three perspectives in three respective parts.

The first part of this summary discusses the advent and development of Zionist scheme of implanting a Jewish presence in al-Aqsa Mosque at three levels: political, religious and legal.

The second part details works of excavation and construction took place

1) Through out this report the term “Al-Aqsa Mosque” refers to [the Noble Sanctuary](#) located in the [Old City of Jerusalem](#). [The Noble Sanctuary](#) is the third of the holiest sites in Islam, revered as the destination of [Prophet Muhammad’s journey to Jerusalem, and the location of his ascent to heaven](#).



underneath and nearby the Mosque, and the confiscations of Palestinian properties located in the Mosque's vicinity. It tracks progress made during the covered period. It reveals specifics and discloses ambitions based on the latest available information from the field. In this regard, the occupation seeks to establish a Jewish city that encircles the Mosque and expands underneath it, and to create a total infrastructure that makes it viable to sanction and sustain a Jewish presence inside and around the Mosque.

The third part reports on actual and effective Jewish presence sited on the Mosque's ground, and the Jewish attempts to interfere with and influence the administration of the Mosque. The report examines and links incidents of Jewish intrusion into the Mosque with hostile statements given by Israeli official figures, Jewish extremists and security agencies. It shows how the Israelis-official and private entities- are standing united to achieve the same goal: that is to apportion al-Aqsa Mosque between Jews and Muslims at the earliest opportunity. Towards this, the report highlights the Israeli repeated preventions of servicing and maintaining Al-Aqsa facilities and its infrastructure, especially during the period covered by the report; and the ongoing restriction of movement of the employees of the Muslim Waqf², the exclusive and collectively recognized³ authority to manage the affairs of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. The hostile acts aim to paralyze servicing the Mosque, destabilize and incapacitate the authority of the Waqf, and eventually replace it with the Israeli Antiquities Authority. This part, finally, exposes the occupation attempts to direct entry into the Mosque, to control one of its doors, and to restrict the movement of the Muslim worshipers and pilgrims according to their age and residence. As a result, the numbers of Muslim worshipers dropped down to unprecedented levels, especially during the days of Friday of January 2009, which coincided with

2) This Jerusalem-based Department of Muslim Waqf (or Islamic Endowment) is an affiliate of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs of the Jordanian government.

3) The collective recognition by Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians comes in accordance to provisions of the 1993 Oslo Accords (between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Origination) and the 1994 Israel-Jordan Treaty.

the Israeli attack on Gaza. Later, and in a challenge to Israel's grip of security and its discriminatory measures, these numbers grew massively during the Muslim's holy month of Ramadan coincided with September 2009.

The fourth and final part lists recommendations addressed to all local, regional and international parties interested in the state of the Mosque. Tables summarizing the major Israeli assaults in numbers and its rate of annual increase are presented in the appendix.

Part One:

The evolution and the materialization of the idea of "the Jewish right of presence" in al-Aqsa Mosque.

(a) The Political Dynamics:

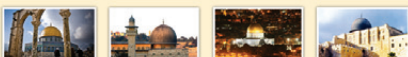
Today, the Zionist project of Judaizing Jerusalem has passed over the bid to prove the preexistence of the Jewish Holy Temple⁴ on the Temple Mount⁵ underneath al-Aqsa Mosque, especially after the failure of repeated Jewish archaeological missions to prove this existence scientifically. Israel has then moved to create this existence by establishing the Jewish "*holy Yerushalayim*"⁶ in the Old City of Jerusalem through two main mechanisms: materializing the idea of "the right of Jews to pray on the Temple Mount" (i.e. Al-Aqsa Mosque), and the creation of remains and effects for the "*holy Yerushalayim*" on the Temple Mount, regardless of the merit that its pre-existence was proven or disproven.

The most related prominent political development during the period covered

4) The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem or Jewish Holy Temple refers to a series of structures presumably located on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem.

5) The Temple Mount is known by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary (al-haram al-qudsī ash-sharīf), is a religious site in the Old City of Jerusalem.

6) Yerushalayim is the pronunciations of the Hebrew name of Yerushalayim.



by the report was the return of the Likud party leader, Benjamin Netanyahu to power following parliamentary elections won by the coalition of the right in March 2009. Netanyahu's return as a prime minister meant the return and the declaration of the political and the official adoption of the idea «to allow Jews to pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque.» It also meant granting the project of creating «the Jewish holy capital» (i.e. Jerusalem with its "*holy Yerushalayim*") a strong momentum due to the fact that Netanyahu is the most supportive of this project. The return of Netanyahu as Prime Minister comes in favorable conditions with regard to the idea of «the sovereignty of the Jews over the Temple Mount.» The mode in Israel today is driving in the direction of completing «the Jewish holy city» project as soon as possible (i.e. partitioning al-Aqsa Mosque, and materializing the «Jewish right of presence» in it.)

These developments were received by an overall official Arab and Islamic ignorance, a popular apathy, and a decline in the ability of the Palestinians to confront this occupation scheme due to both their internal division and the neglect of the Palestinian Authority to the Jerusalem issue.

All this coincided with the emergence of a newly proposed American vision that foresees Jerusalem as a multi-religious city (or capital) that is open to all faiths, and the faithful have the freedom to worship at any place they deem sanctuary to them. The vision proposes a joint management for the city by an international body to permit the variant faithful (i.e. Muslims, Christians & Jews) have a free access its holy sites.

The American proposal received immediate passion from Arab officials without any attempt on their part to assess its dimensions and ramification. It is believed that this proposal, if to be implemented, will not constitute

more than a re-package of the Israeli initiated scheme «*Jerusalem First*»⁷ but sanctioned internationally. This comes at a time when formal Arab and

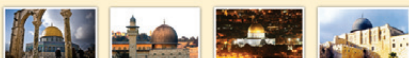
7) More about the Project: "Jerusalem First" is discussed in this report in section (a) of part two.

Muslim regimes, which currently fragmented and divided from one another, are incapable to impose its views on the international community and hence fore on any international body proposed to manage the city. Accepting the American proposal would be a loss for the most strong Arab and Islamic case of Jerusalem, which is their legitimate and non-controversial right to recover the occupied city and to exclusively manage its affairs, especially that currently binding Jordan-Israel peace treaty gives Jordan the exclusive right to manage and care after the city's Islamic sites and endowments. The American proposal is encountering unanimous rejection by Arab and Muslim thinkers, scholars, and civil figures. Imposing it will ensure the transfer of the conflict over Jerusalem with Israel, the occupier, to an internal conflict within the Arab and Muslim societies at their home.

(b) The Religious Dynamics:

The Jewish quest to establish prayers in the Temple Mount (i.e. Al-Aqsa Mosque) is not any more supported only by a small group of rabbis funded by the wealthy and the Zionist Christians. While in 1967 the quest encountered overwhelming Jewish rejection, by time it gained growing sympathy from an off-stream Jewish minority. Now it has become a major movement. Even the advocates for granting the Jews “the right to pray in al-Aqsa Mosque” are ever growing in numbers and expanding in influence since the year 2000. The growth of the religious support to this quest always matched the expansion of the political adoption of it.

At the end of August 2008, and coinciding with the anniversary of the destruction of the Jewish Holy Temple, the Jewish religious community in Israel witnessed a new escalation in the controversy over the “right of Jews to



pray on the Temple Mount” between the camp of the religious but non-Zionist Jews, the «*Hare dim*»⁸, led by rabbis Ovadia Yosef, Shalom Eliyahu, and Haim Kanievsky, and the camp of the religious Zionists (or National Religious) led by Rabbi Moshe Tendler. This escalation was triggered by a televised tour to al-Aqsa Mosque in which rabbi Tendler invited Jews to visit the Mosque. In response, the former rabbis wrote to rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, the Israeli lead rabbi of the Western Wall and the holy places», demanding the renewal of the religious mandate prohibiting of the entry of Jews to al-Aqsa Mosque and to make the prohibition inclusive to all the Jews. In the writing, they reiterated their stand that the entry of Jews to the “sanctum”, even without the intent, is the most forbidden act in the Jewish law. The sought prohibition, they wrote, was meant to not “desecrate the purity of the mountain.”

While the first camp has approximately twenty members of the Israeli Parliament, however, the second camp has more influence on the government, and it manages most of the Israeli-declared Jewish holy places in Jerusalem, including the Western Wall (aka al-Buraaq Wall), the ongoing excavation work around it, the synagogues erected nearby it, and the «City of David». The second camp supports establishing Jewish prayer in the Temple Mount. It enjoys greater influence on the Israeli government due to its organized structured and the substantial funding it receives from wealthy Jews and Christian Zionists⁹ in the United States. In contrast, the first camp depends on local funding and limited aid from the Israeli government. Away from the said controversy, the Temple Mount Faithful Movement¹⁰ and a number of

8) Haredi often referred to as Ultra-Orthodox Judaism, is the most theologically conservative form of Orthodox Judaism. A follower of Haredi Judaism is called a Haredi (Haredim in the plural).

9) Christian Zionism, is a belief among some Christians that the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the establishment of the Israel in 1948, is in accordance with Biblical prophecy. It overlaps with, but is distinct from, the nineteenth century movement for the Restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land which had both religiously and politically motivated supporters. The term Christian Zionism was popularized in the mid-twentieth century. Some Christian Zionists believe that the «ingathering» of Jews in Israel is a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Jesus. The idea that Christians should actively support a Jewish return to the Land of Israel, along with the parallel idea that the Jews ought to be encouraged to become Christian, as a means fulfilling a Biblical prophecy has been common in Protestant circles since the Reformation.

10) The Temple Mount and Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel) Faithful Movement is a fringe Orthodox Jewish movement based in Israel that wishes to establish a Third Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and re-institute the practice of ritual sacrifice. It was founded by former military officer and Middle Eastern Studies lecturer Gershon Salomon.

similar but smaller associations are keeping up their activity towards building the components of «the Jewish Temple» and preparing for the requirements of its erection.

A poll conducted by the Hebrew daily *Yediot Aharonot* and published on the 30th of July 2009 demonstrated decisive prevalence of support for the establishment of the Jewish Holy Temple in the Israeli society today. About 64% of the population of the occupying state (Israel) supported the reconstruction of the «Third Jewish Holy Temple.» The religious Jews, of course, were the most in favor of this idea and the percentage of supporters among them reached 98.5%, while the percentage of support among secular Jews was about 47%, and among the general public (i.e. those who identify themselves as neither secular nor religious) was about 91%.

(c) The Legal Dynamics:

Immediately after the occupation sustained control over al-Aqsa Mosque in 1967, its parliament passed a legislation called the law «to preserve the holy places», which prohibited the Jews from entering the Mosque. Jewish extremist groups have tried to challenge this law, but did not succeed. The legal dynamics has begun to change almost simultaneously with the political and religious ones. In 1993 the Supreme Court of the occupying state issued a ruling that considered the Temple Mount the holiest of the holy sites of the Jews and «the heart of the State of Israel and an integral part of its territory»; meaning that it is subject to Israel's jurisdiction and laws, which guarantees all citizens freedom of worship and freedom of access to all the holy places without distinction.

On the 23rd of March 2003, the court upheld and expanded its previous ruling and allowed Jews to visit al-Aqsa Mosque and pray in it, calling it a «natural right» to them. Finally, in October 2005, the court issued a

ruling permitting the Temple Mount Faithful Movement to pray in al-Aqsa Mosque between the hours 7:00 PM and 9:00 AM, a period during which the number of Muslim worshippers was assumed to be little.

The period covered by the report did not witness any significant legal development. The status quo remained as it is: Jews are legally allowed to freely enter the mosque and pray in it individually or in small groups; and to pray in it in large groups but at specified times. Israeli police have been prohibiting the entry of large Jewish groups and the performance of their public rituals during times of Muslim prayers, in order to prevent any clashes setting the already volatile region ablaze.

As long as the political dynamics is heading toward providing for all the requirements of instituting the Jewish jurisdiction over the Temple Mount, aligning with it mounting supportive religious dynamics, and in light of the rising hard work of the Jewish extremist organizations aiming to instigate problems with the Israeli police and subsequently invite further court rulings in favor of their increasing presence in the Mosque, the issuing of future court rulings in support of a permanent Jewish presence in al-Aqsa Mosque is almost inevitable.

Part Two:

Excavation and construction work underneath al-Aqsa Mosque and in its surroundings:

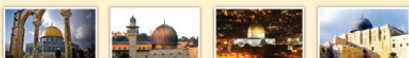
(a)The Excavation Work:

In February 2008, the project to build the “*holy Yerushalayim*” on the grounds and the surroundings of al-Aqsa Mosque witnessed a remarkable and unprecedented development. The project moved from the stage of being classified and grew under cover to the stage of publicity and semi formal adoption. The municipal engineer, Yoram Zamosc, was the first to publically introduce his project: «Jerusalem First». In 2009, the details of the project became public; the effects of its implementation became obvious and received an unequivocal official adoption. The «Jerusalem First» project aims primarily to:

- Accelerate the development of the Holy Basin¹¹ by creating tourist attractions for ten million visitors a year aiming to introduce the Jewish historical heritage. (i.e. the “*holy Yerushalayim*”)
- Promote reaching out and collaboration with the administrators of the Islamic Waqf and the Christian endowments located in the Holy Basin, and to eventually form a collective non-ethnic and non-religious administration that opens up the site in full to all tourists and pilgrims of all nationalities and religions.» (I.e. to co-willingly and officially institute the Jewish participation in managing al-Aqsa Mosque and a free access to it).

According to this scheme, the implementation of the project will be officially awarded to a new company yet to be established and named: «Jerusalem first.” The project will amount to nearly 2 billion shekels (400 million dollars), and will include 15 major subprojects serving the Judaization of Jerusalem,

11) The term “Holy Basin” refers to the geographic area that encompasses the Temple Mount (the Noble Sanctuary:), the Mount of Olives, Mount Zion, and a variety of Christian holy sites.



9 of which targets al-Aqsa Mosque. According to initial estimates, the implementation of the whole project is expected to take 6 years, and to be completed in 2014.

Furthermore, the period covered by the report has witnessed the start of excavation work in 5 new sites, 4 of them are located to the south of the Mosque and 1 to the west of it; and the preparing of an old inactive site located to the west of the Mosque. This brings the total number of excavation sites around the mosque to 25, 12 of them are active, and 13 are complete. Geographically, 11 of the sites are located south of the Mosque, 13 to west, and one to the north.

2. The Excavation Work South of the Mosque:

These excavations are part of the creation of the so-called «City of David. Based on the Zionist allegations the city spreads south to Ein-Silwan compound (in Silwan) and extends north to walls of al-Aqsa Mosque. The *Elad Association* was put in charge of these excavations. The period covered by the report witnessed the start of excavation work at 4 new sites south of the Mosque. Additionally, excavation work is still in progress in 3 other old sites. This brings the total number of excavation sites to the south of the Mosque to 11, 7 of which are active and 4 are completed.

3. The Excavation Work West of the Mosque:

The western area of al-Aqsa Mosque constitutes the backbone area of the “*holy Yerushalayim*” growing underneath al-Aqsa Mosque. It has most of the tourist attractions, the route linking its southern boundaries from Silwan to its northern boundaries at the *Via Dolorosa*

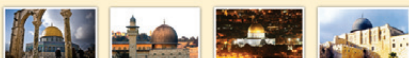
(or the Pain Way)¹², and also has most of the entrances leading to it. These excavation works are primarily managed by *Western Wall Heritage Foundation* and more recently by the *Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim*.

During the period covered by the report, excavation work has begun on a new site west of the Mosque and in another site at the bottom of the western wall of the Mosque, bringing the total excavation sites in this area to 13, 4 of which are active and 9 completed. Ironically, these excavations produced a vast network tunnels that includes the acclaimed Western Wall tunnels. The work on these tunnels believed to have led in the 28th of July 2009 to the fall down of a 300-year old pine tree close to the Dome of the Rock. This incident does not rule out that the excavations will reach underneath the Dome of the Rock in the coming months.

4. The Excavation Work North of the Mosque:

These excavations are concentrated in the north-west corner of al-Aqsa Mosque, and specifically in the area of *Al-Omariyyah School* adjacent to the *Via Dolorosa* (or the Pain Way). The occupation claims the existence of the so-called the «*Skylark Pool*» underneath school. We believe the tunnels being excavated in this area will form the northern entrance to the “*holy Yerushalayim*,” which is excavated underneath al-Aqsa Mosque. The occupation has chosen the school because it overlooks the Christian landmark the *Via Dolorosa* (or the Pain Way), which Israel looks to connect it to the “*holy Yerushalayim*”. The occupation plans to offer future sightseeing tours combining Christian and Jewish landmarks. This to show the “*holy Yerushalayim*” as an integral part of the city of Jerusalem, and to advocate the correlation and the inseparability of Christian and the Jewish cultures.

12) Via Dolorosa is the street in the Old City of Jerusalem which is traditionally held to be the path Jesus walked on the way to his Crucifixion.



(b) The Construction on and Confiscation of lands in the vicinity of the Mosque:

By its constructions on and the confiscation of lands in al-Aqsa Mosque and its surroundings the occupying state aims to make the area of the Mosque looks more Jewish than Islamic. It also aims to strengthen the Jewish presence in the Mosque by using the constructions as staging posts to storm the Mosque, to cover the work of excavation, or as command and control posts to support his security presence in the Mosque.

Despite the passage of more than 42 years of its control of al-Aqsa Mosque and the old city, the Zionist occupation still deals with extreme caution when it comes to construction in the Mosque's precincts and surroundings. This is due to the complex of fear it has accumulated and was caused by a series of massive Palestinian, Arab and Islamic outrages provoked by repeated attempts of constructions and attempts to institute public Jewish presence in the Mosque and its surroundings. This series of massive outrages started in 1929 with the *al-Buraaq* revolution and lasted with al-Aqsa intifada in 2000. In spite of the fact that this fear has deterred and limited the implementation of much of the Zionist schemes, however, it did not stop them completely. Unfortunately, this fence of deterrence is worn today because of the weak reactions to the recent successive and unprecedented Zionist assaults on the Mosque:

1. The scheme to takeover the south-western part of the Mosque:

In the 15th of February 2004 part of the elevated road connecting the *al-Buraaq plaza* (*Western Wall Plaza*) and the Moroccan (Dung) Gate¹³ collapsed during a snow storm. The road was already cracked due to Zionist excavations occurred underneath it. The Palestinians were prevented from restoring the collapsed part, and the occupation replaced it with a wooden bridge. Later in

13) Also known as the Maghariba (Dung) Gate, is one of the walled Old City's eight gates. It opens to the south, and sets nearby the Buraq Plaza (Western Wall Plaza).

February 2007, the occupation started demolishing a major part the elevated road in preparation for expanding the area of the women prayer section of the *al-Buraaq Plaza (Western Wall Plaza)*. The demolished part was to be replaced with an iron bridge, strong enough to bear armored vehicles and large number of soldiers moving into the Mosque, should it be the case. The occupation designated the *Western Wall Heritage Foundation* to demolish the road and construct the iron bridge. While doing so, ancient Islamic chambers were discovered underneath the road. The *Foundation* elected to renovate these chambers and append them to its women prayer section.

In an unprecedented development, scores of independent Israeli Arab figures filed on the 12th of October 2008 a legal memorandum to the occupation central court in Jerusalem to halt the ongoing excavations nearby the Moroccan (Dung) Gate. This was the first kind incident in which Palestinians referred to Israeli courts on matters connected to al-Aqsa Mosque. This development received total rejection from a wide spectrum of Palestinian active organizations and figures, and was perceived as a move to grant the courts of the occupying state jurisdiction over al-Aqsa affairs. The report deplores the filing of the memorandum and considers it a mistake, and calls for its immediate withdrawal.

2. The scheme to control the area surrounding the Chain Gate¹⁴ to the west of the Mosque:

On the 12th of October 2008, the Jewish group Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim offered an official opening ceremony for the Ohel Yitzhak (Isaac's Tent) synagogue located in *Bab Elwad* neighborhood. With this development the occupation made a progressive advancement towards establishing a Jewish foothold and authority in this neighborhood. As is has been the case with

14) The Silsila (Chain) Gate is an internal gate placed inside the Old City. It sets in the **inner western wall** of the Noble Sanctuary (Al-Haram al-Sharief) and opens into the Muslim Quarter.



other synagogues, this one is expected to be used as command and control post to organize future Jewish settlers' assaults against Palestinians, their properties, and al-Aqsa Mosque.

3. The scheme to control the al-Rahmah (Mercy) cemetery east of al-Aqsa Mosque:

Judaizing the area to the east of al-Aqsa Mosque is a major component of the project: "Jerusalem First", which came public and started early this year. The occupation looks to overtake the lands of the *al-Rahmah* Muslim cemetery, located on the footsteps of the eastern wall of the Mosque, and turn it into a Jewish park. During the period covered by the report, the occupation proceeded on this scheme. The Israel Supreme Court ruled in support of the taking over the cemetery and permitted the fencing of 1,800 plazad meters of its lands in order to block out its access by the Palestinian. In addition, the occupation has already started the turning of about 200 plazad meters of the fenced area to a public park.

4. The scheme to enhance the security control of the Mosque:

On the 7th of March 2009, the zoning and construction committee of the Israeli-dominated municipality of Jerusalem approved the establishment of a new police station over 140 plazad meters of land located to the north of the al-Buraaq Plaza (Western Wall Plaza) at the entrance of tunnels leading to the Western Wall. Once completed, it will become the forth Israeli police station posted to surround al-Aqsa Mosque.

Part Three:

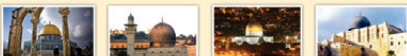
Sanctioning the Jewish presence inside the Aqsa Mosque and the direct intervention in its administration

(a) The incursions into the Mosque and the expressed hostile statements against it:

The breaking into al-Aqsa Mosque by the former Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, on the 28th of September 2000, was a historical milestone. After which, more emphasis and momentum was given to the idea of instituting a Jewish direct presence inside the Mosque and for supporting the “Jewish historical entitlement” of it.

In practice, further successive incidents of breaking into the Mosque by small groups of Jewish extremists accompanied by the Israeli police had occurred, and later crowned on the 23rd of March 2003 by a ruling from the Supreme Court that upheld the rights of the Jews to visit the Temple Mount and pray in it. The ruling invited Jewish extremist organizations to take further more advanced steps. They called for and organized incursions into the Mosque by larger groups of 30 to 50 people. Again, this development was also crowned in October 2005 by a new ruling from the Supreme Court that permitted the performance of collective Jewish rituals in the mosque in the periods in which the number of Muslim worshipers in the mosque a little. Today, the theses organizations are attempting to break into the Mosque collectively at the time of the prime presence of Muslim worshipers. By doing so they hope to create a new precedent, and fulfill the requirements of «the Jewish right presence” in the mosque around the clock.

The mingling between the extremist groups and the Supreme Court was backed and supported by several official leading figures. At the same time,



the repeated incursions were seeking to make the “Jewish presence” in the Mosque natural phenomena.

The occupying security forces, in turn, took the rulings of the Supreme Court as a basis to expand its mandate and reinforce its presence in and around the Mosque. On the 9th of June 2005 it completed a special “security zone” setup to keep an open eye on every movement inside and around the Mosque. It also formed a special rapid-intervention unit and keeps it well-trained and ready to storm the Mosque, if needed.

1. Incursions and the statements by official figures:

During the period covered by the report the number of incursions into al-Aqsa Mosque carried by official figures were 5. The most outrageous of them was the one led by the Minister of Internal Security in the occupation government, Isaac Ohranovic. Practically, he was the most top official figure to break into the mosque since the Israeli occupation in 1967 to this day. The other most important development in this regard was the special session held in the Israeli parliament to discuss and study ways to «institute the Israeli control and sovereignty over the Temple Mount.»

Some Israel official figures that were demonstrating interest in the Mosque formed an umbrella body to coordinate the tireless efforts of the Jewish extremist groups that work on it. The umbrella body is to provide support to the ever-growing fieldwork to institute “the Jewish entitlement of the Temple Mount,» and to lobby the government to deliberate and eventually adopt the notion of «taking over the Temple Mount».

2. Incursions and the statements by Jewish extremists:

The period covered by the report witnessed 30 incursions carried out by groups of Jewish extremists. This happened 4 times more the number of group reported in the previous report. Incursions during this period

were more successive and provocative in nature, lasted longer hours, and targeted new spots in the northern areas of the Mosque. The incursions came in waves at different periods during the year, and were accompanied with less police force. If continues, this is expected to invite more future clashes between the intruders and the Muslim worshipers.

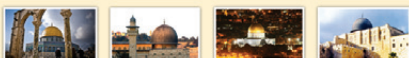
The statements published by the Jewish extremist organizations are self disclosing to their ultimate intentions and goals. It clearly calls for “liberating the Temple Mount from the Muslims,” and for the destruction of al-Aqsa Mosque. It threatens to set off a fire burning the holy city and its inhabitants if the Jews are to be prevented from the performance of collective rituals in the Temple Mount. In public debates on the «best way» to establish and sustain the Jewish presence in the Temple Mount, the views of the leaders of the Jewish organizations ranged from demolishing al-Aqsa Mosque and the constructing the Jewish Temple on top of it, to “resorting to more pragmatic” solutions such as apportioning al-Aqsa Mosque between Muslims and Jews.

3. Incursions and the statements by the security services:

The Israeli occupation forces carried out 8 incursions. With this, the occupation security forces has over doubled it rate incursions during the period covered by the report compared to years of 2006-2008-.

These incursions focused on gathering the largest amount of photos and visual data on the roofed parts of the Mosque, and to prevent organized activities inside the Mosque, and to perform adverse activities insensible to the Mosque to encourage and give cover to others who are do the same.

The most serious activities performed by the occupying security apparatus were field exercises aimed to prepare for the partitioning of the Mosque and the closure of its south western precincts. On the 11th of June 2009 an exercise was held to train the police on how to keep the Mosque closed for long hours



while the Muslim worshipers are inside it. The August 18th 2009 exercise confirmed the said aim. It trained the police on climbing the outer side of the south and south-west walls of the Mosque, and to climb roofs located nearby these walls. These exercises were part the preparation for any needed future rapid interventions in case the gates of the Mosque were closed by Muslim worshipers. These exercises confirm that the Jewish decision to partition the Mosque is ripe and awaiting the next right opportunity to carry it on.

Additionally, it seems that the teams of experts, which accompanied the security forces in their incursions, were busy taking measurements and conducting tests on soil and architecture. Obviously, the tests would be necessary to develop detailed engineering and architectural plans to rehabilitate the place in accordance to the «Jerusalem First» scheme. The scheme calls for augmenting the southern underground chambers of the mosque to the “*holy Yerushalayim.*”

(b) The direct intervention in the administration of the Mosque:

Presently, the Jerusalem-based Department of the Islamic Awqaf, an affiliate of the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf, is considered the official Muslim body to over look and manages al-Aqsa Mosque and the Islamic Endowments in Jerusalem. It enjoys an exclusive right in its management, maintenance and reconstruction of the Mosque; and in administrating its affairs. Under international law, the Department is considered the latest local authority to do so before the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, and hence fore is deemed the legitimate entity to maintain the same role and functions under the occupation. Jordan-Israel peace treaty signed in 1994 entitled Jordan to resume its exclusive pre-occupation managerial role over al-Aqsa Mosque and the Islamic Endowments in Jerusalem, and hence fore, the Jerusalem-based Department of Islamic Awqaf enjoys a local and regional recognition in carrying out its exclusive managerial role and functions. Historically, the Jerusalem-based Department used to be affiliated with Ottoman Ministry

Awqaf until the start of the British mandate over Jerusalem. After then, the Supreme Islamic Council, headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin Husseini became the new body to assume the role in the city up to the year 1948. The role was picked up by the Jordan Ministry of Awqaf after the Israeli occupation of West Jerusalem in 1948 and to this day.

With the escalation of the Zionist ideological and material advances to institute “the Jewish presence in the Temple Mount», it became inevitably necessary for the occupation to move towards curbing the role and the responsibilities of the Jerusalem-based Department of Islamic Waqf and to interfere in its work. This has taken drive on 3 tracks:

1. Preventing the restoration work and interference in the Awqaf:

Since the year 2000, the occupation authorities imposed a total ban on the entry of construction and renovation materials into the Mosque. The occupation authorities had prevented the Awqaf from the restoring the Moroccan hill, which collapsed due to excavation and environmental factors in February 15, 2004. It prevented, over the years, fixing the cracks in the south-western walls of the Mosque. Even as of today it continues to prevent the restoration of the southern wall or performing major repairs in the Mosque’s area. The role of Awqaf today has been confined to emergency repairs only.

These preventions are designed to cause damage and collapse in the Mosque’s facilities, and to create a pretext for the intervention of the Israeli Antiquities Authority with the claim that the Islamic Awqaf is not doing its job, and to break into the exclusive control of the Waqf over the Mosque, and to intervene in its business. The Israeli-dominated municipality of Jerusalem has already claimed the Mosque’s open areas as «public parks» subject to its jurisdiction.

The Israeli preventions continued during the period covered by the report. The occupation authorities prevented the tiling of some areas of the



Mosque, and assaulted the volunteers who tried to bring the tiles in or carry construction materials. In a blatant challenge to the Awqaf, the Israeli Antiquities Authority did some restoration work itself in the Western Wall (aka al-Buraaq Wall), despite the fact that the Awqaf had already repaired it before.

Despite all the restrictions, the Islamic Awqaf has succeeded in the 24th of August 2008 in opening a center for the restoration of manuscripts in the Mosque, and completed the decoration of the wooden ceiling of the 2nd gallery inside the Mosque's main southern prayer hall.

2. Restrictions on the movement of the Awqaf staff:

The developments that have occurred in the period covered by the report are confirming the existence of an Israeli exceptional policy targeting the Awqaf employees for being its work force.

The most serious developments on this front, the detention of the Imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Sheikh Ali Abbasi, on Thursday the 9th of July 2009 at dawn; and ousting him from the Mosque. Sheikh-Abbasi has been leading prayers in the Mosque for many years and has a permanent headquarters in it. In Addition, the Israeli restrictions of movement and assaults are stretched out to target the Mosque's guards, and the Awqaf engineering and technical crews.

As to the Mosque's guards, the occupation has been, for years, adapting the policy of detaining proactive ones, especially those who assist in repelling incursions or prevent Jewish extremists from entering the Mosque. This is meant to neutralize the pro-activists and deter the ordinary ones. Imposing this policy continued during the period covered by the report, as the head of the guards, Mohamed Ismail Al-Turk, was banned from entering the mosque and fulfilling his job duties.

The Awqaf technical and engineering teams are to conduct periodical tests and

take detailed measurements for the Mosque's interior and exterior engineering projects. Today, these teams are banned from taking measurements or conducting tests on or around the perimeters of the Mosque. The entry of their machinery and equipment into the Mosque is subject to the consent of the occupation. In practice, this means not to enable the Awqaf to assume its responsibilities of restoration and reconstruction. With the passage of time, the Awqaf will be accused of being incapable to perform its responsibilities, pretext for the occupation to rally international bodies, particularly the UNESCO, to intervene to «save» the cultural heritage, and to eventually seek their consent to replace the Awqaf with the Israeli Antiquities Authority.

A serious repercussion for restricting the movement of the Awqaf technical teams apply to the Moroccan Hill and the replacement of its wooden bridge. As a consequence, Jordan has not been able until today to provide an integrated engineering proposal for replacing the bridge. This is due to its lack of technical information and photography; although it had conducted, since June 2007, two field visits to the place. During its meetings over the years 2008-2009, the UNESCO Heritage Committee reviewed the case of the Moroccan Hill and its bridge and studied comprehensive proposals presented by Israel, while Jordan was unable to provide any counter alternatives. If the current circumstances preside, Israel proposals will is expected to be approved by the UNESCO and eventually adopted by the international community.

Although the role of the Department of Islamic Awqaf has been reduced dramatically over the past years, and although the reporting period has witnessed unprecedented peeks of squeezing and negating this role, we are yet to witness a stage where we could see the a total halt of the exclusive Islamic control over Mosque, and the taking over the powers of the Jordanian Awqaf irrevocably and for the benefit of the Israeli Antiquities Authority. Over the recent years, the Jordan Ministry of Awqaf has avoided entering into a political confrontation with the occupying state over the restriction of



movement of its personnel. Today, there is an urgent need for a firm and effective reaction against the ongoing Israeli interventions, and to protect the exclusive Islamic control of the Mosque and the Jordanian custody of it.

3. Directing the entry to the Mosque and restricting the movement of the Muslim worshipers:

Based on official contractual terms, the Department of Awqaf enjoys the lone and exclusive authority of managing the gates of the Mosque and directing entry into it. The Department of Awqaf has been in control of the keys to all the 14 gates of the Mosque, except for the Moroccan gate, which has been controlled by the occupation since 1967. Tuesday, the 18th of August 2009, marked a dangerous precedent in changing the rules of control at these gates. The Israeli police forces broke the lock on the Al-Nadher gate, located in the North West of the Mosque, and replaced with a new one and retained its new keys. But the response of the Department of Awqaf, this time, reacted promptly and exceptionally. With the support of the praying faithful who gathered at the scene, the Awqaf managed to installed its own lock and reserved its keys.

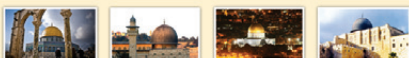
The year 2000 witnessed another important development in this regard, when controlling the tourists' entry into the Mosque was taken up by the Israeli Antiquities Authority. This meant abandoning the monitoring of the insensible acts and fashions, which had been imposed on tourists. Since then, tourists are being told the history of the Mosque from the Jewish perspective, which looks at it as a "temporary" structure on the Jewish Temple Mount. Further, the new measure gave cover for the entry into the Mosque of large numbers of Jewish worshipers who are not Israeli citizens, under the guise of tourism.

In addition, the occupation keeps maintaining a full control of the area around the Mosque. It imposes special restrictions on entry to the old city from all its gates. Stationary and patrolling police units are spread all over the roads inside Jerusalem or leading to it, to impose restrictions on the entry of Muslim

worshippers into the mosque based on age and place of residence.

Geographically, the population of Gaza Strip, and the population of the West Bank, and those who are not carrying the Israeli blue card although they live in areas surrounding Jerusalem are generally banned from entering al-Aqsa Mosque. A certain age group is also banned from entering the Mosque since the beginning of the Al Aqsa Intifada in 2000. All Palestinian men under the age of 40 are banned from entering the Mosque on Fridays. During the early Fridays of 2009 and in conjunction with the occupation war on Gaza, the age-based banning was expanded to include the Israeli Arabs; and the lower age limit was stretched to 55.

The ability of the Palestinians to gain entry into the Mosque has varied from one day to another. While their numbers reached the bottom rock (about 3,000) on Friday the 9th of January 2009, it reached a climax (about 500,000) in the month of Ramadan (or September 2008). Obviously, the occupation police lost its security grip and was unable to control the enormous masses of Palestinians crawling into Jerusalem and the Mosque through its various gates. In the light of this pressing experience, the crawling of massive Palestinian masses into al-Aqsa Mosque remains, practically and unequivocally, the most effective weapon for the protection of the Mosque.



Part Four:

The Recommendations

To this extent, we emphasize that the primary index based on which the occupier peruses the odds of pursuing its hostile advances towards al-Aqsa Mosque is the profit/loss index.

The occupation unprecedented persistent to pursue its agenda against al-Aqsa Mosque is primarily due to the absence of any massive Palestinian outcry, which was long exercised whenever the occupier assaults the Mosque. The present absence of these outcries in one hand, and the poor and ineffective reactions from Arab and Islamic officials contributed to the increased boldness of the recent Israeli advances. We stress that the factors playing into the occupation chances of success or failure in achieving its quest towards building its “*holy Yerushalayim*” are primarily influenced by the unshakable will and determination of the Palestinian (and also Arabs, Muslims, friends and peace advocates) to counter challenge and resist.

On this basis, we present the following recommendations before all those who are interested in and care for the Mosque’s fate and future. The *Al Quds Institution* reasserts its readiness to join hands with any entity who wants to work for the protection of al-Aqsa Mosque and for the support of this noble cause.

A - Recommendations to the Arab and Muslim public:

Public civil assemblies and demonstrations are not quite useless, but are key elements to factor into the occupation’s profit-loss equation. We call upon all active entities to respond in mass rallies gigantic enough to send a clear message of protest against future Israeli attacks on the Mosque. We call for these responses to be unitary and wholeheartedly dedicated for the support of the Mosque, and free of all internal politics. Further, we

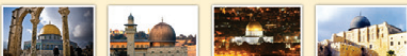
call for long-term actions to raise awareness and knowledge of the Mosque conditions, as it will be the only guarantor for proactive support of the Mosque.

B - Recommendations to the Palestinian public: .

That the Israeli Arabs along with the resilient Palestinian inhabitants of Jerusalem form the first line of defense; that both groups are keeping up with and engaging the threats against the Mosque on daily basis; we commend their ongoing contributions and call upon them to rally more public participation and increased support and protection for all sides of the Mosque, especially in the south western side nearby the Moroccan (Dung) Gate, and the western areas nearby the Chain Gate¹⁴. We appeal to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to not cease interest and follow-up with news and dynamics of the Mosque, for which they launched their second Intifada. The Mosque today is in a far more serious danger than it was at the start of that intifada.

C - Recommendations to the Palestence resisting forces and groups:

The Palestine forces of resistance are the key player in directing the Israeli profit/loss factor, based on which Israel sets out its advances against the Mosque. Accordingly, we call upon all these forces to exercise its at most to influence this factor. We also call upon them to adopt a joint strategy that rises over beyond spontaneous individual ones, but stands up effectively to the ever escalating organized threats encompassing the Mosque. They are also invited to out express their positions on both quests: the one that calls for turning Jerusalem and al-Aqsa into places open for the followers of all religions, and the quest that calls for the free entry to the followers of all religions into their own self-declared sanctuaries in Jerusalem under the auspices of the UN.



D – The Recommendations to the Palestinian Authority (PA):

In the face of the ongoing extreme dangers threatening the sanctity and the fate of al-Aqsa Mosque, and in the face of the official Israeli adoption of movements supportive to the partitioning of the Mosque and the instituting of the Jewish presence in it, we strongly call upon the Palestinian Authority not to waive the «ceasing of assaults on al-Aqsa» as a precondition for any negotiation with Israel.

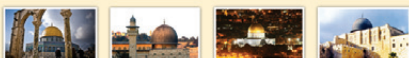
Further, in the face of published statements by some PA officials in which they expressed willingness to transfer the sovereignty of Jerusalem to a third party (in reference to the acceptance of the Obama vision), we call upon the PA officials to closely and carefully review this vision and its implications. Especially that this vision seems to be producing the same outcome of the occupation's scheme: "Jerusalem First," which calls for the Judaization of the city, but under the auspices of the UN. Besides, the Obama vision compromises the exclusive Islamic legitimacy and sovereignty over the Mosque. Especially that any such compromising is expected to face a broad rejection from Muslim scholars and by no means will it be acceptable by the Palestinians as well as Arabs and Muslims at large.

Furthermore, with the full awareness of the terms of the Oslo Accords that brought the PA into existence but also deprived it from its legitimacy to exercise direct influence on the state of Jerusalem; and in light of the Israeli constraints imposed on the PA activists in the city; we call upon the PA to develop more creative alternatives to work on and indirectly influence the state of Jerusalem, even by adopting non-traditional forms and norms of governing.

E – The Recommendations to the Government of Jordan:

The occupation today works in various ways to curb the role of and eventually incapacitate the Jerusalem-based Department of Awqaf by restricting the movement of its personnel and preventing them from performing their work duties. Obviously, the occupation is aiming to create a pretext for the Israeli Antiquities Authority to intervene in the works of restoration and reconstruction of the Mosque, which means ending the exclusive Islamic legitimacy of and sovereignty over the Islamic Mosque. In the face of this historic challenge, we call upon the Government of Jordan to officially engage the occupation politically, and maybe legally, and to take firm stands of rejection to: (i) the occupation's vicious measures and acts of restrictions directed against the works of restoration and the employees of Jordan's Jerusalem-based Department of Awqaf; and (ii) the occupation's obvious intent to replace the Awqaf, and to emphasize Jordan's unequivocal rejection to any attempt to compromise the exclusive Islamic sovereignty over the Islamic Mosque. This stand will require Jordan to employ all its available diplomatic and otherwise resources.

We also call on the Jordanian government to embrace the grass-roots efforts of non-governmental Arab and Islamic organizations that are supportive to the exclusive Islamic sovereignty over al-Aqsa Mosque and to the legitimacy of Jordan's managing role of maintaining and preserving the Mosque. We call on Jordan not to deal with the said organizations in a competitive spirit. Actually, some of these regional and international organizations have a lot to offer in backing the Jordanian government, and are capable of translating the tremendous emotional support of the Arab and Islamic peoples into a viable material support to al-Aqsa Mosque, to the protectors of its sanctity, and to its indigenous inhabitants.



F – Recommendations to the Arab & Muslim governments:

Based on the preliminary indications that suggested a formal willingness on the part of some Arab officials to accept the transfer of the exclusive Islamic sovereignty of Jerusalem to a third party, which meant their implicit acceptance to the Obama vision regarding Jerusalem; we reiterate to those officials the same call extended earlier in this report to the Palestinian Authority: that is to closely and carefully review this vision and its implications. Especially that this vision seems to be producing the same outcome of the occupation's scheme: "Jerusalem First," which calls for the Judaization of the city, but under the auspices of the UN. Besides, the Obama vision compromises the exclusive Islamic sovereignty of the Mosque, for which it faces a broad rejection from Muslim scholars and by no means will it be acceptable by the Palestinian masses and by the Arabs and Muslims at large.

We also call on Arab and Islamic governments to stop looking at al-Aqsa Mosque affairs as an internal Palestinian or Jordanian issue, or as if it is a question to be engaged only by the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) . We call on these governments to collectively develop and put into action a clear effective strategy for at least protecting the Mosque from being partitioned if not liberating it. We call on these governments to back and support Jordan in its guardianship of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, and to support the quest for a total fulfillment to this role. We call on these governments to form a joint front to lobby various international players to pressure the occupation on this subject.

G– Recommendations to the international bodies and organizations:

Regionally, both of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) hold the same clear positions in regard to the Mosque and to the historical Arab and Islamic entitlement of it. Both organizations

have established respected offices and formed respected sub organs to supposedly provide for the supporting of Jerusalem and its holy sites. Actually, the OIC came into existence as a consequence of the burning of al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969. Its subsidiary organ, the Alquds Committee (or the Jerusalem Committee), was formed to lead an official systematical move to protect Jerusalem holy places. Therefore, we call for initiating a more effective joint action plan between the two organizations. We call on the Alquds Committee to fulfill its mandate and to seek full implementation of the international resolutions on Jerusalem and enforcement of the international laws applicable to the city. We also recall the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Al-Aqsa Mosque and its obvious selectivity in enforcing these resolutions, and the inability of the United Nations to implement many its resolutions. We call on these international bodies to at least implement the most critical provisions of its resolutions on Jerusalem. We call for its enforcement of the international laws applicable to the city. We call on the UNESCO and the other concerned international institutions to keep al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem at the top lists of the Threatened World Heritage Sites, and to document and possibly intercept the ongoing Israeli assaults on them.

H – Recommendations to the entities active in and for Jerusalem:

All civil and private institutions and the for-Jerusalem societies are invited to give the priority to efforts of protecting al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy places. They are encouraged to exercise the most vigilant commitment and alert possible (during the upcoming years) to provide al-Aqsa projects with material support, massive upbeat and media backing. They are encouraged to give priority to projects that secure passage and provide for visible mass worshipping inside the Mosque and around the clock. They are also encouraged to give support to projects that offer maintenance, restoration, and renovation work. They are also urged to launch repeated aggressive public-relation campaigns to rally grass-roots and governmental



influence to pressure the occupation and to impact on its interests.

I – Recommendations to the Religious Authorities:

In the face of the Obama vision to transform al-Aqsa Mosque to an open area of worship for the followers of different religions, it is the duty of the Islamic scholars to undertake a campaign to educate the public on the most popular religious (Sharea) stands regarding this vision and regarding the matter of ending the exclusive Islamic sovereignty over the Mosque. At the moment, Muslims, who are already spread over a broad variety of denominations, are in the greatest need to unity, whereas the Mosque is in pounding need for their support and backing. Under the said circumstances, Al-Aqsa Mosque can be a powerful unifying slogan for all.

J – Recommendations to human rights organs and organizations:

In its essence, al-Aqsa Mosque case is a quest for the freedom of believes and the freedom of worship, which is guaranteed by all human rights declarations and recognized by all human rights instruments. Therefore, it's not right to treat the Mosque's case as only a religious matter confined to discussions by religious authorities. Human rights organs and organizations are invited to engage this issue at various international legal bodies to pressure the occupation and to cease it assaults on the Mosque.

K – Recommendations to the media and its workers:

Poor quality and law quantity coverage by most Arab and Islamic media outlets for the affairs of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque was closely monitored and observed, even when news-worthy developments were unfolding. Only few media outlets managed to offer its best possible coverage. We call upon all the media outlets to give Jerusalem and al-Aqsa affairs more coverage

attentive to the city and the Mosque; and to deploy the necessary resources to get it done. The frequent and quality media coverage on Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque in different types of talk, documentary and cultural shows will increase public awareness, a step necessary to ensure that the already offered sacrifices and established success for Jerusalem are furthering a positive change in the current state of both, the Mosque and Jerusalem.



APPENDIX:

The Israeli assaults in numbers

Excavations underneath al-Aqsa Mosque and in its surroundings:

Type of excavation	Its number
Completed	13
Active in progress	12 (5 of which started during the reported period)
Total	25

The Jewish presence inside and around al-Aqsa Mosque:

Type of Assault	Frequency
Constructions in progress	6
Constructions completed	4
Confiscations of property	2
Total	12

Incursions of al-Aqsa Mosque:

Perpetrators	Assaults during Aug. 2008 - Aug. 2009	Assaults during Aug. 2006 - Aug. 2008	Rate of annual increment
Official figures	5	3	333%
Extremists	30	12	500%
Security forces	8	6	267%
Total	43	21	410%



