

# AL-AQSA MOSQUE UNDER ATTACK

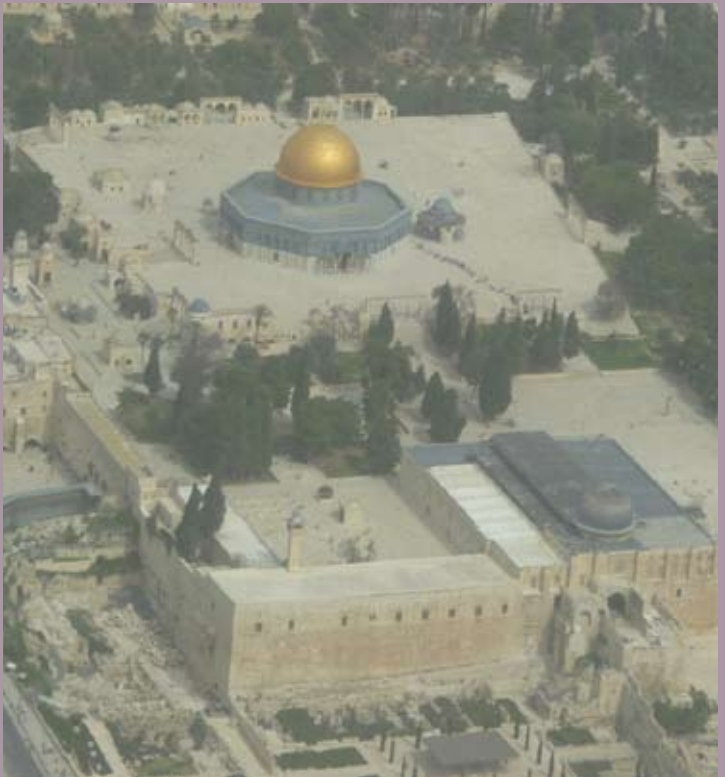
1967 - 2006



**FOA** FRIENDS OF  
AL-AQSA  
PEACE  
IN PALESTINE

Friends of Al-Aqsa is a UK based non-profit making NGO concerned with defending the human rights of Palestinians and protecting the sacred al-Aqsa Sanctuary

Al-Aqsa Mosque was one of the first mosques ever built and marks the spot where the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) was taken on the night journey, known as al-Isra' wa Al-Mi'raj. The whole Sanctuary is therefore hugely significant to Muslims and is a place of sanctity. However the compound has been under repeated attack by the Israeli state.



Before Israel's birth in 1948, threats were made against the Aqsa Sanctuary. In 1928, emigrant Jews tried to take control of the Western Wall of the Aqsa compound, which was resisted by Palestinians. Riots spread across the territories, lasting two weeks.

Following this, in 1930, an independent committee set up by the British, investigated the issue and concluded that since the Western Wall is an integral part of the Aqsa compound, this comes under the ownership of Muslims since the entire area is waqf property.



The committee also stated that instruments of worship placed near the Wall or in the adjacent area by Jews cannot be taken as evidence of Jewish ownership of the Wall or the adjacent area.

When Israel began its occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, not only was control of the wall passed to it, but control of the entire compound came into question.



**1967** In a show of Israeli superiority, Rabbi Shlomo Goren (a chaplain in the Israeli Defence Force), entered the al-Aqsa compound, sparking violence between Palestinian security personnel and Israeli guards. A warning against entering this, followed from the chief Rabbis of Israel at the time. Orthodox Jewish Rabbis still maintain that it is absolutely forbidden for Jews to enter al-Aqsa (known to Israeli's as the Temple Mount).

**1969** Al-Aqsa was attacked by an arsonist and set on fire. The entire south wing was burnt down. The man responsible walked free after receiving psychiatric counseling.

**1970** Members of the 'Temple Mount Faithful' group – a group dedicated to demolishing the buildings within the Aqsa compound - forcibly entered the mosque. Muslim worshippers who held them back, then became targets of Israeli fire.

**1976** Israeli courts passed a law permitting Jews to pray in Masjid al-Aqsa. After a great deal of protest by Muslims, this was later revoked.

**1979** Jewish extremists blocked one of the entrances to the Aqsa compound before Friday prayers, pointing guns at worshippers who were trying to enter.

**1980's** Harassment on worshippers escalated. In August 1981, an Israeli helicopter hovered at low altitude over Masjid al-Aqsa, preventing worshippers inside the mosque from hearing the sermon.

**1981** The adhan or Muslim call to prayer, was prohibited from the minaret overlooking the Western Wall because of a Jewish celebration. Extensive tunnels dug under the Aqsa compound were discovered, thereby weakening the foundations of the mosque. World condemnation followed.

**1982** A parcel with a fake bomb and written threats signed by Jewish extremists was discovered at one of the gates. An ex-Israeli army officer opened fire within the sanctuary, killing two Muslims and filling the interior and exterior of the Dome of the Rock with bullet marks.

An Israeli was arrested for trying to blow up Masjid al-Aqsa. He was subsequently released with no consequence. Other Jewish fundamentalists attempted to enter the al-Aqsa Sanctuary with leaflets inciting Jews to take over the compound.

**1983** The Temple Mount Fund was established in Israel, Europe and America to raise funds for re-building the Jewish Temple on the site of Masjid al-Aqsa. Explosives were discovered at an entrance gate to the al-Aqsa Sanctuary and four armed Israelis attempted to enter the compound. Six months later, they were set free.

**1984** Zionist extremists attempted to climb the walls of the Aqsa Sanctuary with ladders in the middle of the night, armed with ammunition. During this year, armed Israeli guards started patrolling outside the gates of the Aqsa Sanctuary.

**1988** Israeli troops stormed the Aqsa Sanctuary, firing tear gas into groups of worshippers. Later, further tunnels were discovered thereby sparking more unrest.

**1990** Israeli troops opened fire on worshippers murdering 22 and wounding hundreds more in a confrontation with unarmed Palestinians.

**1996** Israel re-opened tunnels under the Aqsa Sanctuary, which resulted in widespread confrontations and the death of more than 70 Palestinians.

**1997** Zionists attempted to lay a 4.5 tonne rock within the precincts of al-Aqsa as a symbolic gesture of laying the foundation of their temple. They were forced back by Muslim custodians of the Holy site.

**2000** Ariel Sharon, then leader of the opposition, stormed into the al-Aqsa Sanctuary with a thousand strong 'security' force. The troops attacked those trying to defend al-Aqsa, killing and maiming many innocent civilians. Clashes permeated throughout the occupied territories and gave rise to the al-Aqsa Intifada.

Palestinians under the age of 45 are barred from praying at the Holy Sanctuary.

**2004** Israeli forces began attacking worshippers at the mosque during the Friday prayers, using live rounds, tear gas, sound bombs and grenades, to instill fear into worshippers.

**2006** Israeli MP Uri Ariel forced his way into the al-Aqsa compound at a time when Palestinians were denied access to it in a show of Israeli authority over the land.

**2008** Persistent tunneling beneath the mosque led to a landslide near the western side, leaving a crater measuring two metres in length and 1.5 metres in width.

**Feb-March 2010** Ongoing excavations led to cracks as long as seven metres along the walls within al-Aqsa.

Israeli forces entered the al-Aqsa Masjid after Friday prayers firing rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades. 60 worshippers were injured, amongst them a woman shot in the eye with a rubber bullet.

The excavations under the al-Aqsa Sanctuary are leading to dangerous cracks in the buildings adjoining the Western Wall. Archaeologists believe that the tunnels have weakened the structures of the buildings within the compound, so that even the slightest tremor could lead to a collapse of the Masjid.

**2011** Incursions in to the sacred al-Aqsa compound continue on a regular basis, and inevitably, Palestinians who attempts to protect the site continue to be injured in the process.

**Attacks on al-Aqsa and its worshippers  
have increased dramatically.**

**The reality is that Israel is in de facto  
control of the Aqsa sanctuary as it  
guards all the gates from the  
outside, deciding who enters and who is  
barred. No consideration whatsoever is  
given to Muslims and Christians who  
have seek to visit these sanctified  
sites.**

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