“Israel’s” Right-Wing Plans Against Al-Aqsa

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Despite international denunciation of the Israeli attempts to desecrate Al-Aqsa Mosque, Israel obstinately continues its policy of nudging extremist Jewish religious groups, albeit covertly, toward Al-Aqsa, the third holiest Mosque in Islam.

On October 24, the Israeli police stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque and opened fires against Muslim worshippers who gathered inside the mosque to ward off one of the Israeli right-wing groups’ frequent attempts of storming the Mosque and performing Jewish rituals by force inside.

“The occupation forces used tear gas, stun guns, and rubber bullets inside Al-Aqsa Mosque to force Muslim prayers outside,” said Hashim Yakoub, the media coordinator of Al-Quds International Institution.

“This is unprecedented. It is the first time that Israel cut electricity lines to prevent (adhan) (calling for prayer) and to prevent worshippers from saying Allah is Great (takbir),”Yakoub added.

International law guarantees that Muslims have full access to Al-Aqsa anytime. Israel, accordingly, is intentionally violating international law in Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

“The record of Israeli security actions with respect to [Palestinian cities] and Al-Aqsa has demonstrated that [Israel] has violated international law on a number of occasions by disproportionate use of force against worshippers, hindrance of access to the sites, and the building of Jewish civilian settlements around Al-Aqsa,” Dr. Michael Lynk, a professor of international law at the University of Western Ontario; Canada, told IslamOnline.net (IOL).

“Palestinians and Muslims are allowed to have full access to their places of worship under international law, which could only be temporarily suspended in cases of important security concerns,” Dr. Lynk continued.

*Al-Aqsa Partition Plan*

With an Israeli right-wing government in power, Israel does not only accelerate its project of judaizing Al-Quds, but also seeks to impose its control over Al-Aqsa in order to partition it between Muslims and Jews.

The current Israeli government is significantly a rightist, nationalist one composed of the Likud Party, chauvinistic Yisrael Beitenu, ultra-orthodox United Torah Judaism, extremist Shas, the national-orthodox Jewish Home, and surprisingly the leftist Labor Party, making it the most right-wing Israeli government ever in history.

In August and October 2008 and 2009, protected and cajoled by the Israeli police, ultra-orthodox and religious-nationalist groups frequently attempted to storm Al-Aqsa during Jewish religious fests.

The Israeli government is more brazenly obdurate in carrying out the Jewish project of partitioning Al-Aqsa Mosque as a preliminary step toward establishing the so-called “Third Temple” on the ruins of Al-Aqsa in Judea and Samara (the biblical name of the West Bank).

“May be that could be a project to partition Al-Aqsa. They [Israeli Jews] believe that the ‘Temple’ is under Al-Aqsa Mosque,” said Dr. Iyad Barghouthi, the general director of Ramallah Center of Human Rights Studies.

“This is unprecedented,” commented Kamal Al-Khateeb, the deputy head of the Islamic Movement (Northern Branch) inside Mandate Palestine, referring to the Israeli police storming and firing into Al-Aqsa.

*Suspicions*

Palestinians in particular and Muslims in general, have credible suspicions that Israel will divide Al-Aqsa in the fashion of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi (Cave of the Patriarchs), especially with a right-wing government always dreaming of establishing an exclusive Jewish state.

After Wye River Accords, Israel unilaterally embarked on gradually cutting parts of Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi, allocating them to Jews.

Yet, with the repetition of such Jewish attempts to perform paryers inside Al-Aqsa, the gloomier prospect lies in the probability that Muslims all around the world could eventually get accustomed to the newly situation imposed on the ground.

Al-Khateeb fears that Israel could divide Al-Aqsa without strong, deterrent reaction from the Muslim world.

“The repetition of such attempts aims to tame the Arab and Muslim public opinion by gradually accustoming them to seeing frequent Jewish attempts of entering and praying inside Al-Aqsa,” said Al-Khateeb.

“Israel tries to create a de facto situation inside [Al-Aqsa] based on its tactic of gradually making Arabs and Muslims acquiesce to Jews praying inside Al-Aqsa,” he continued.

Al-Khateeb warns the Muslim world that Israel moves from imposing its political and military occupation of Al-Aqsa to impose its ‘exclusive sovereignty of worship’.

*Comprehensive Juadization Scheme*

The Israeli project to judaize Al-Quds goes in tandem with its attempts to take over Al-Aqsa.

“Both issues are complementary [for Israel],” Yakoub told IOL.”Dividing Al-Aqsa is a real plan,” he added.

However, Dr. Iyad Barghouthi thinks that although Israel try to practically control Al-Aqsa, may be Israeli actions could be interpreted as an attempt to divert the attention of the world public opinion away from the actual danger of judaizing Al-Quds.

“What is much more dangerous is that media outlets are diverting attention away from the unprecedented expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank,” said Dr. Barghouthi, stressing in this respect that “[attacking] Al-Aqsa is part of judaizing Al-Quds.”

Peace Now Movement states that today, more than 280,000 people live in 121 settlements all over the West Bank (not including Eastern Al-Quds).

In Al-Quds, Israel plans to expand the Ma’ale Adumim’s settlements/colonies at the expense of Eastern Al-Quds, aiming at tilting the demographic balance toward Jews.

“The Fourth Geneva convention and many UNSC resolutions, such as 446 and 465, define Jerusalem [Al-Quds] as an occupied territory under international law,” affirmed Dr.Lynk.

“This forbids any unilateral demographic changes to the occupied territories. The only security interest of the occupied power is to protect the occupied population, not to advance [the occupying power’s] interest [by making] demographic changes,” Dr. Lynk told IOL.

According to Al-Quds International Institution, there are plans for building additional 33,500 housing units in Eastern Al-Quds to accommodate 117,000 settlers — and 140,000 in the coming years — in Eastern Al-Quds.  
According to the Israeli Peace Now Movement, the completion of the Israeli plan of building settlements in Arab neighborhoods, like Sheik Jarrah, Silwan, and the Mount of Olives, will change dramatically the map of Eastern Al-Quds and would prevent a permanent status agreement and a compromise about Al-Quds.

In parallel with judaizing Al-Quds, Israel now is building a 200-meter tunnel passing underneath the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa.

“Despite all excavation and tunnel work, Israel has failed to prove that the so-called ‘Temple Mount’ is beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque,” affirmed Al-Khateeb.

“Some Israeli scientists affirmed that they did not find any evidence of the existence of the ‘Temple’. Some religious Jewish groups believe that the Second Temple was built in Mount Gerizim close to Nablus in which some Jewish groups still dwell,” Al-Khateeb told IOL.

*Rising Extremist Right Wing*

However, the validity of the Israeli/Jewish claims to Al-Aqsa is not so much contested in Israel as long as they are employed by the Israeli government to halt peace process and to strengthen the clout of the right wing, not only in political apparatus, but also at various societal levels.

“As long as there is a right-wing government in Israel, what is always offered [to Palestinians] is only the sovereignty of people, not land,” Dr. Emad Gad, the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ahram-published Israel Affairs (transliterated, Sh’oun Israeliya), told IOL.

“The best for the Israeli right wing is to freeze any negotiations or proposals for final solution, to accelerate the judaization of Al-Quds, and to impose facts on the ground,” continued Dr. Gad, emphasizing that “any right-wing Israeli government carries out major, serious steps against Al-Aqsa”.

More ominously, the so-called Israeli secular public opinion supports such actions carried out by right-wing groups and parties.

Like many contemporary analysts, Dr. Iyad Barghouthi affirms that all the Israeli society is tectonically moving towards the right. “Netanyahu and Lieberman are just in the center right of the political spectrum. All sections of the Israeli society are actually heading toward extremist right and fascism,” he said.

Therefore, there is a genuine link between the Israeli government and extremist Jewish groups.

“Israel gives political and security protection, and even coordinate, with these Jewish right-wing groups that have political affiliations toward many parties in the Knesset,” said Al-Khateeb.

In 1996, Netanyahu was the first Israeli Prime Minister to officially inaugurate a tunnel under Al-Aqsa Mosque.  
Netanyahu has a long history of using Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa to destroy peace efforts by strengthening the right-wing project of building a “Jewish state” at the expense of Palestinian lands.

Peace Now states that immediately after Netanyahu returned from peace negotiations at the Wye Plantation in 1998, he took the decision to build Har Homa settlement, and, more famously, in 1996, he opened the Hasmonean Tunnel under the Muslim Quarter of the Old City.

“[Netanyahu] now ambitiously tries to lay the foundations of the so-called ‘Third Temple Mount’,” said Al-Khateeb.

“We witness the ‘Israeli official adoption’ of judaizing Al-Aqsa. Netanyahu is the only Israeli Prime Minister to call for the right of Jews to pray inside Al-Aqsa,” contended Yakoub.

Israeli actions against Al-Aqsa and Al-Quds are far from political cost-benefit considerations with respect to the domestic Israeli scene. They are based on per se right-wing ideological beliefs.

Dr. Emad Gad does not think that Netanyahu’s actions are reminiscent of Sharon’s abominable storming of Al-Aqsa in 2000 when Sharon used the card of religion to mobilize the Israeli public opinion against Barak — who negotiated peace with Arafat —for political ends. Netanyahu is motivated by extremist religious beliefs.  
Nowadays, “the ideological factor is so eminent, even the labor party, a leftist one, is included. The Israeli public opinion by far moves toward the right while the Israeli left is decaying,” said Dr. Gad.

*Israeli Violations Under International Law*

With such frequent violations, Muslim countries and Palestinians could internationally file a lawsuit against Israel.

Dr. Lynk contends that increasingly a number of countries recognize universal jurisdiction, which allows a lawsuit for damages caused by violations of international law. The first step is to begin with those countries domestic courts.

“It is evident that Israeli courts are not interested in allowing claims of international law for damages caused by the occupation,” said Dr. Lynk.

“The principle issue is to persuade countries, like Canada, France, Australia, England, and other countries that accepted the Rome Status to try Israel,” he continued.