

# Israeli provocations ignite growing Palestinian revolt in Jerusalem

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Following a police crackdown over the shooting of a right-wing Zionist political figure, East Jerusalem, home to a population of 350,000 Palestinians, appears to be on the brink of a new *Intifada*, the third such popular uprising against Israeli oppression since the late 1980s.

Yehuda Glick, an American-born rabbi who has made a career of staging provocations at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque, was shot and seriously wounded Wednesday night. Struck by four bullets, he was reported Thursday to be in critical but stable condition.

His assailant was apparently a former Palestinian political prisoner who worked at a restaurant where Glick and others were holding a conference for those calling for the destruction of the mosque, considered Islam's third holiest site, and its replacement by a Jewish temple.

Attending the conference were leading politicians including Moshe Feigin, the deputy leader of the Knesset. Last summer, in the midst of the war on Gaza, Feigin called for the Palestinian territory to be razed "to its foundations" and survivors to be "concentrated" in "tent encampments" to clear the way for Israeli occupation.

Glick's alleged assailant, Moataz Hejazi, was killed by Israeli police and soldiers, hundreds of whom surrounded his home in the predawn hours Thursday. While authorities claimed that police retaliated after being fired upon, neighbors testified that Hejazi was unarmed and was shot while trying to flee across the roof of his house.

As he lay wounded on the roof, the neighbors said, soldiers finished him off by dropping a water tank on his body. The killing touched off a new round of clashes between stone-throwing Palestinian youth and Israeli security forces using stun grenades, tear gas, batons and rubber bullets.

The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered hundreds of border police transferred from the occupied West Bank to the Old City of Jerusalem in an attempt to quell the unrest. It also ordered the Al-Aqsa mosque site, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, to be closed off entirely to both Muslims and Jews. Late Thursday night, the Israeli police announced that the site was being

reopened immediately, but men under the age of 50 would be barred from the mosque's Friday prayers.

The last time such a complete shutdown was imposed came in 2000, in the wake of the provocative visit to the site by Ariel Sharon, then the leader of the Israeli right-wing opposition, which touched off the second *Intifada*.

Fatah, the main political faction in the Palestinian Authority of President Mahmoud Abbas, called for a "day of rage" Friday. An announcement carried by the official PA news agency, Wafa, stated: "Fatah calls to its fighters and to the masses of the Palestinian people to aid the Al-Aqsa Mosque and occupied Jerusalem."

Glick, a resident of a West Bank orthodox Jewish settlement near Hebron and a political operative within the right-wing Likud party, gained notoriety for staging provocations at the Al-Aqsa mosque, a site that was seized along with the rest of occupied East Jerusalem in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Israel has since annexed East Jerusalem in what is regarded in the rest of the world as a violation of international law.

Until now, the Israeli government has barred Jews from praying at the site. However, earlier this year, the Israeli Knesset began debating legislation that would amend this rule and assert full "Israeli sovereignty over Al-Aqsa. Israeli authorities had previously banned Glick from the site for fear that he would provoke a violent confrontation. Earlier this year, however, Israeli security forces escorted Glick and other Zionist extremists there, touching off confrontations.

His alleged assailant, Moataz Hejazi, had spent nearly 12 years in Israeli prisons, most of them in solitary confinement. Chairman of the Palestinian Department of Prisoner Affairs Issa Qaraqe on Thursday described Hejazi as "one of the heroes of the Palestinian prisoners' movement," who had "faced death slowly in Israeli occupation jails where he was savagely tortured."

Hejazi's fate was similar to that of another Palestinian from East Jerusalem, Abdel Rahman al-Shaludi, 21, who was shot to death by Israeli police after driving his car into passengers getting off a train, killing two, a three-month-old

baby and an Ecuadorean immigrant.

Israeli authorities immediately classified the incident as a terrorist attack and identified al-Shaludi as a Hamas activist. The young man's family, however, denied that he was a member of Hamas. They said he had recently spent 14 months in Israeli prison for throwing stones at security forces.

"They kept on harassing him and summoning him for questioning over and over again and they tried to enlist him into working for them, but he repeatedly refused," his mother told the Palestinian Ma'an News. "They threatened him, saying he would never find work or be able to continue his education or have a normal life," she said.

The news agency quoted relatives as saying that al-Shaludi had been brutally tortured in prison and came out traumatized. The mother recounted that "Only hours before the incident, she had taken her son to the doctor who had advised him to see a therapist after days of exhibiting signs of mental exhaustion."

Silwan, where the al-Shaludi family lives, has been the target of right-wing Zionist settlers who have recently taken over a number of houses in the area. After the incident, the settlers organized a demonstration, chanting "death to Arabs," throwing rocks at homes and cars and attacking several Palestinians.

East Jerusalem has been the scene of continuous confrontations since the kidnapping and murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy who was beaten, doused with gasoline and burned to death by right-wing Zionists last July. The latest incidents have only heightened the conflict. Summing up the situation, Barak Ravid, the diplomatic correspondent for the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, declared on Twitter: "The 3rd Intifada is already here—If there is anybody that still doesn't get it."

Late last week, it was reported that Prime Minister Netanyahu had signed off on plans to speed up construction of 1,060 housing units in East Jerusalem and 2,000 in the West Bank, once again expanding Zionist settlements in the occupied territories. The move, which was reportedly made in response to an ultimatum from Netanyahu's coalition partner, Economy and Trade Minister Naftali Bennett of the HaBayit HaYehudi Party, once again made a mockery of the US-orchestrated "peace process" and the proposal for a so-called "two-state solution."

This humiliating exposure of the fraud of US Middle East policy, particularly as the Obama administration attempts to cobble together Arab support for its latest military intervention in Iraq and Syria, has ratcheted up tensions between Washington and Tel Aviv.

This found expression in the controversy surrounding an article published in the *Atlantic* by Jeffrey Goldberg, quoting

a senior administration official as describing Netanyahu as a "chickenshit" and a "coward," who was only interested in "protecting himself from political defeat" and would do nothing "to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians."

Netanyahu responded to the report by telling the Knesset that he was "under attack simply for defending Israel."

US Secretary of State John Kerry, Thursday, disassociated himself and the administration from the remark, calling it "disgraceful, unacceptable, and damaging" and condemning "anybody who uses language such as was used in this article." He insisted that Washington would continue to work "quietly and effectively" on promoting the "peace process" charade.

*Haaretz* columnist Gideon Levy wrote a telling piece on the verbal clash Thursday entitled "Who's the real chickenshit?"

"There's something absurdly infantile in an administration that utters rude put-downs like a child, hides behind anonymous, cowardly interviews and at the same time promises to provide Israel with another F-35 squadron," he wrote.

The real "chickenshit," Levy concluded, was the US president: "Obama let Netanyahu continue building in the settlements, striking the fatal blow to the two-state solution dead. He allowed Israel to launch another criminal, unrestrained offensive in Gaza without uttering a peep. His administration continued to provide Israel with an automatic shield in the UN and continued preventing Europe from changing its policy. Why did he do it? Out of conviction for his cause? Only out of cowardice."



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