

# ANALYSIS: What's Behind the Crisis Over the Temple Mount?



On Tuesday, Israeli police finally decided to close the Temple Mount in Jerusalem after a Muslim terrorist threw a firebomb at a station of the Border Police near the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

One police officer was seriously wounded by the firebomb while Muslim worshippers engaged in a violent confrontation after police tried to arrest the perpetrator of the attack.

Tensions over full Muslim control of the Temple Mount exacerbated last week when an Israeli court in Jerusalem ordered the closure of the Mount and summoned the Wakf for an explanation about its bellicose policies.

Needless to say, the Wakf refused to comply with the court order and said Israel has no jurisdiction over the Haram al-Sharif, the Arab name for the Mount.

As reported by Israel Today on February 26, tensions over full Muslim control on the Temple Mount spiked last month after thousands of Arab Muslims chanting “Allah Hu Akbar broke the status quo on the Temple Mount again and violently entered an area known as the Golden Gate or Bab al-Rahma (Gate of Mercy) in Arabic.

The Gate had been closed to the public since 2003 when Hamas and the extremist northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel tried to set up camp at the site.

The Wakf, the Muslim custodian of the Muslim holy places on the Mount, openly encouraged the break-in and claimed “settlers” (Israeli Jews) had repeatedly tried to “defile” the Al-Aqsa mosque.

Another false claim made by the Palestinian Authority was that Israel was plotting to build a Jewish house of prayer on the Temple Mount, the holiest place in Judaism which housed the two Temples built by Jewish kings in ancient Israel.

Jordan recently expanded the Wakf council which is administering the Muslim shrines at Haram al-Sharif and added representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood, PLO and one from Turkey to the body.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Islamist Turkish dictator, has been working hard to expand his influence among Jerusalem Arabs and sees himself as the patron of Palestinian terror groups such as Hamas.

Erdogan regularly interferes in internal Israeli politics and the conflict with the Palestinian Arabs and on Tuesday accused Israel of “blatant racism” because of the so-called Nation-State Law.

“Netanyahu says that Israel is ‘a nation state not of all its citizens but only of the Jewish people,” Erdogan’s spokesman Ibrahim Kalin wrote on his Twitter account.

“I strongly condemn this blatant racism and discrimination. 1.6 million Arabs/Muslims live in Israel. Will the Western governments react or keep silent under pressure again?” he added.

The tensions over the Temple Mount have been causing an uptick in terror attacks against Israelis living in Judea and Samaria, generally referred to as the West-Bank by the media.

The Israel Security Agency or Shabak in Hebrew announced that February saw 162 terror-related attacks among them attacks with improvised explosive devices and pipe bomb attacks.

On Tuesday, hours after the shut-down of the Temple Mount, an Israeli man was almost lynched in the Jordan Valley while in Hebron IDF soldiers foiled a major knife attack when they spotted and killed a Palestinian Arab who was in the possession of a large knife and tried to enter a building where Jewish families live.

The beginning of 2019 also saw the re-introduction of shooting attacks and car-ramming attacks by Palestinian Arab terrorists.

The increase in terror is now dubbed “The Silent Intifada” by an online group called “Boomerang Fighting for Israel” (BFI).

The administrators of the group say there have been 360 terror attacks against Israelis since the outset of 2019 and call for a united strong response against

terrorists and their backers.

Hamas and the Palestinian Authority are to blame for the new wave of terror since they incite the Palestinian public against Israel with lies about what Israel is doing in Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

Hamas, in particular, has an interest in stirring up violence against Israelis in the city and in Judea and Samaria since it aspires to broaden the so-called 'Great March of Return' the continuing violent 'demonstrations' along the Israel-Gaza-border.

Hamas was behind the recent deadly car-ramming and shooting attacks in Samaria and Judea and also refuses to give in to the Egyptian demand to end the wave of attacks against Israel emanating from Gaza.

The Sunni Islamist terror group knows it risks a new offensive by the IDF to end the endless cycle of violence but insists on continuing the orchestrated chaos along the border with Israel.

The Jordanian regime, for its part, also has an interest in the escalating crisis about full Muslim control over the Temple Mount.

King Abdullah is under tremendous pressure to find a distraction for increasing popular unrest in Jordan which according to some observers now threatens the King's regime.

The unrest in Jordan is related to the dire economic situation in the country and to the corruption within Abdullah's regime.

Abdullah's alleged addiction to gambling and his lavish lifestyle have even angered the Jordanian tribes which historically form the backbone of the regime.

The King now apparently uses the man-made crisis over the Temple Mount to curry favor in the eyes of his constituents since he knows that there is almost nation-wide consensus over anti-Israel measures.

The same people who during weekly demonstrations demanded a constitutional monarchy were seen demanding an end to 'normalization' with Israel. "Normalization is Treason" was the title of one of these demonstrations on January 31.

Then there is the Palestinian Authority which is struggling to increase its grip on Arab Jerusalem and also pursues an anti-normalization policy toward Israel.

The PA is increasingly working with Jordan to advance its anti-Israel agenda and seeks to obtain support from Arab countries for its total rejection of US President Trump's so-called deal of the century, the not yet published new American peace initiative for the Israeli Arab conflict.

Creating new facts on the ground in Jerusalem and total control over the Temple Mount will complicate any solution for the conflict over Jerusalem the government in Ramallah knows.

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