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Palestine

As if the intifadas never happened

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Israeli politicians and security forces race to outdo each other with proposals of how increased institutional violence against Jerusalem's Palestinian population will “bring quiet” back to the city. With their doctrine of what doesn't work with force will work with more force, it is as if the two Palestinian intifadas had not occurred and Israel has no direct experience that a political conflict can never be solved with military means.

These statements come following Wednesday night's incident in which Abdul Rahma Shloudi, from the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, killed one and injured eight when his car went up on a light rail platform in what Israeli authorities are dubbing a terrorist act. Shaloudi's family insists it was an accident. Shaloudi himself was killed by a police officer on the scene, and eyewitnesses report that the officer continued shooting him even after he was on the ground and disabled.

During a Thursday afternoon meeting with police and secret service heads, Netanyahu ordered that “Israeli sovereignty” be exercised in all parts of Jerusalem

“United Jerusalem was and will remain Israel's eternal capital,” Netanyahu told the press. “Every attempt to harm its residents will be met with the strongest possible response – we will return the quiet and security to Jerusalem. I therefore ordered the augmentation of forces, including additional companies of border police, surveillance means, means of intelligence, means of enforcement, they are things that together with additional means, which I will not detail here, can and will return the quiet to the capital”.

Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman both compared the incident in Jerusalem with Wednesday's attack in the capital of Canada, thus seeking to place Israel's oppression of Palestinians in Jerusalem within the global fight against 'terrorism'. Responding politically, Netanyahu added that “the attack in Jerusalem is supported by the chairperson of the Palestinian Authority, Abu Mazen – he both glorifies the murderers and embraces the organisation to which they belong, the Hamas. And against this action of the PA chairperson we encounter international feebleness, they are not willing to say two words, even one word, of criticism against him. With us there is no feebleness, we will stand firm on our rights and duties to protect our capital. We will do it with power – and we will win”.

Sporadic clashes continued throughout Thursday in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Silwan, Issawiya, Wadi Joz and Jabal Mukaber, amongst others, and the press reports that seventeen Palestinians were detained.

Speaking from Washington, Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon further attacked the Palestinian Authority, claiming “The attack in Jerusalem is a clear result of those who educate the young generation to hate Jews and to throw them out of their homeland. In the Palestinian Authority there is no, and has never been, a culture of peace, but a culture of incitement and of jihad against Jews. It begins with the false statements of Abu Mazen against Israel on the UN stage, and continues with the ongoing Palestinian attempts to implement delegitimation against us on various stages of the international system and ends with incitement in the Palestinian education system, of which these are its difficult implications”. Ya'alon adds that “Therefore we say that the source of the conflict isn't territorial, but the fact that the Palestinians are not willing to recognise our right to exist as a Jewish state at any border”.

Economy Minister Naftali Bennett (Jewish Home), who in recent opinion polls is cited as Israel's most popular politician, stated that “A sovereign state cannot accept such a reality, where we are truly determined to eliminate terror we will succeed. First of all we must apply our sovereignty in Jerusalem. For a long period Jews who enter the

As if the intifadas never happened

Temple Mount are attacked and the Arabs smell this. We must make a switch in the mind, there will be full security here, we will build wherever we want, we will stop being afraid and then our enemies will calm down”.

Transport Minister Israel Katz, who only this week called for entry of the Israeli army into Jerusalem to deal with stone throwing, wrote in Facebook that in response to Wednesday's incident, “the pace of building in greater Jerusalem must be increased, (we must) permit the entry of Jews to the Temple Mount in a free and orderly fashion, to increase police presence in Arab neighbourhoods, to make punishment more severe and to deal with the rioters and their controllers with an iron fist”.

The police issued a statement that “Jerusalem police emphasise that it will demonstrate zero tolerance for every violent event, will find and get its hands on every person who violates order in the city and will act to prosecute them to the full extent of the law”.

Together with police and secret service forces, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat toured Thursday morning the East Jerusalem settlement of French Hills and forcibly entered the nearby village of Issawiya, scene of harsh clashes with Israeli forces. “Today it is clearer than ever that police forces must be brought into the Arab neighbourhoods in which there are disturbances, to place them in strategic points, in substantial numbers”, Barkat told the press. “At my request the prime minister ordered the augmentation of police so that it can implement an operational action plan designed to deal with riots, including additional manpower and special units, use of technological means and an increase in intelligence”, Barkat added.

The use of increasing force against the Palestinians of occupied East Jerusalem will undoubtedly stir even more tension in a city many claim is on the boiling point.

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