



[Israeli Police Commence a Mass Crackdown on Palestinian Social Justice Activists](#)

This week, Israeli police initiated a large-scale crackdown on Palestinian social justice activists who took part in peaceful demonstrations against Israel's recent string of abusive behavior. Over the past month, protesters have been participating in sit-ins and rallies opposing an array of Israeli human rights violations such as the plans to forcibly displace Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem, the violent raids on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, and the bombardment of civilian targets in Gaza. Now, Israeli authorities are launching the mass crackdown in an effort to intimidate and penalize Palestinian activists for voicing their outrage at the flagrant misconduct. Rights groups had already been critical of Israeli forces for their repressive and heavy-handed tactics toward peaceful protesters, and this latest move has also been decried as a blatant attempt to try to terrorize Palestinians and silence dissent. The wave of arrests comes at a time when Israeli authorities are under increased scrutiny for their actions, with ample documented evidence showing security forces engaging in brutal and unprovoked violence against demonstrators.

Throughout the course of the Israeli police raids which were carried out against Palestinian worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during the recently passed month of Ramadan, video footage of the incidents highlighted how the police were the ones instigating the unrest. Israeli security forces violently dispersed peaceful protesters, using tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber-coated bullets – actions which ultimately injured and hospitalized hundreds. Members of activist organizations and journalists were also targeted, and first-hand accounts on the ground by many of these individuals captured proof of officers taking part in abusive behavior. This included arbitrary arrests of peaceful protesters and passersby, breaking in to homes and businesses near the mosque compound to arrest citizens, and violent assaults of worshippers in and around the area.

The storming of the mosque's plaza by Israeli security forces was condemned for its incendiary nature, conduct which undoubtedly resulted in a further escalation of violence. Tensions had already been running high in the preceding weeks due to the planned forcible displacement of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem, and peaceful demonstrations opposing the move had also been met with similar repressive measures by the police. All told, they have come under harsh criticism from both victims and witnesses for their pattern of behavior. Sharing of the video evidence on social media platforms has given worldwide observers an eye-opening glimpse into the circumstances surrounding the violence.

Despite security forces themselves being the ones to provoke the disturbing recent level of violence, authorities have begun a crackdown campaign against Palestinian activists. Rights groups have pointed out that the wave of arrests are a clear attempt to intimidate and deter people from calling out the Israeli authorities for their series of human rights violations – which have been on display for the entire world to see over the span of the past several weeks. They have also questioned the intentional timing of the massive crackdown, and the fact that it is purposely aimed at coinciding with the removal of the global spotlight from the crisis. Additionally, the purge being targeted toward Palestinian citizens and left-wing Israeli Jews protesting the security forces' actions, but not the extremist Jewish supremacist mobs who engaged in violent assaults, shows that there is an obvious bias to the nature of the clampdown as well. In announcing their plans for the campaign, the police stated that thousands of security forces would be deployed to carry out raids in towns and cities with large Palestinian populations, further highlighting the unjust and inequitable motives behind the crackdown.