

Re-liberating Jerusalem

written by David M. Weinberg | 25.01.2026

Three news items of the past week serve as reminders that the security and sovereignty situations in Jerusalem require urgent government action.

First is the passing of the heroic Jerusalem archaeologist Dr. Gabi Barkay, who led protests against Wakf destruction of Temple Mount antiquities and founded the Temple Mount Sifting Project - which for the past 20 years has sought to recover and research the ruined, residual antiquities, with important results.

Barkay played a major role in pushing back against Palestinian ideological violence in Jerusalem and in reclaiming Jewish historical rights.

Second is the notable change in police policy on *Har HaBayit* (the Temple Mount), allowing Jewish/Israeli visitors to bring pages with prayer texts onto the Mount. This is one more blessed step forward toward full-scale and regular Jewish prayer at the site - the holiest place in earth according to Jewish tradition - with all necessary accoutrements (Torah scrolls, prayer books, tallit and tefillin, and more) in a permanent location.

Aside from being essential from a religious perspective, this is long-overdue pushback against the Arab/Islamic denialism of Jewish history in Zion and the Palestinian attempt to turn the Temple Mount into ground zero for warfare against Israel.

Third is the razing of the large UNRWA compound in Maalot Dafna (Sheikh Jarrah) in Jerusalem, the necessary and uber-justified result of new laws passed in Knesset outlawing UNRWA operations in Israel.

This too is long-overdue pushback against the Palestinian refugee-martyrdom narrative, perpetuated by UNRWA's support for the so-called Palestinian "right" of return, and it is punishment for the involvement of UNRWA personnel and administrators in Hamas operations against Israel in Gaza.

A NEXT STEP in the re-securing - dare I say re-liberation - of Jerusalem must include action to counter the subversion of Israeli sovereignty by radical Islamic groups (funded mainly by Turkey and Qatar) and by European nations and NGOs.

According to Dr. David Koren of the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, foreign troublemakers are becoming ever-more brazen and omnipresent. They engage in covert and overt activities, both legal and illegal, ideological and concrete, in the civilian and security spheres. They have little interest in improving the lives of Jerusalemite Arabs but rather seek to undermine Israeli administration of the city. And some of the bad actors pump-out messaging supportive of terrorism against Israel and Jews.

Another critical area requiring government action is wildcat Arab building in the Jerusalem envelope. Palestinians have grabbed over 2,600 dunam of land and built over 30,000 illegal structures in and around Jerusalem. Over the past decade 1,500 unauthorized buildings have shot up in the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Shuafat and Kafr Akab alone, with some of these buildings 15-20 stories tall.

(These were built without heed of engineering standards. God help residents of these buildings if an earthquake hits Jerusalem.)

MOST OF ALL, Israel must boost the manpower, resources, and authority of the Jerusalem police force, and the Border Police and IDF units arrayed around Jerusalem, to prevent infiltration of terrorists.

Everybody knows that the security fence/barrier around Jerusalem is a joke. Aside from the tens of thousands of Palestinians who travel legally into Jerusalem every day through 16 supervised gates, there are thousands of other Palestinians who infiltrate Israel illegally over and through the unfinished fence every month.

Most come to work in Jerusalem, but more than a few penetrate Israel for terrorist purposes, like the terrorists who breached the fence in northern Jerusalem and carried out the terrorist attack at the Ramot junction last September, killing six people.

The IDF says that about 16,000 Palestinians attempted to infiltrate into Israel from the West Bank in 2025, half of whom were apprehended – and mostly in the Jerusalem envelope. But since the IDF is not responsible for the barrier in the Jerusalem area (but rather the Israel Police and the paramilitary Border Police), the actual number of infiltrations is believed to be at least double the IDF number.

Obviously, this is an ongoing, massive security risk, an acute blunder, which must

be addressed, especially as the Moslem month of Ramadan approaches one month from now.

Ramadan may be a holy time in the Moslem calendar - meant as a month of fasting, charity, prayer, contrition, and reflection - but often it has been "celebrated" by Moslem, especially Palestinian, violence, especially in Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount. It is Ramadan exploited as an excuse for ramped-up holy war against Israel.

Those with long memories will remember that Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel on Yom Kippur 1973 - during the month of Ramadan. In many Arab circles, it is still called the "Ramadan War." Somehow the prayer, contrition, and reflection did not inhibit that sneak attack that slaughtered 2,700 Israelis. Neither did the fasting. Egyptian and Syrian soldiers were given an exemption from fasting because they were engaged in the religious duty of killing "infidels."

Hamas gleefully labeled the murderous attack in 2016 on the Sarona Market in Tel Aviv the "Ramadan Operation." The beginning of Israel's "Guardian of the Walls" offensive in 2021 against Hamas in Gaza was marked by barrages of Palestinian rockets fired toward Jerusalem; with 4,400 rockets fired into Israel over that 12-day war. That was also Ramadan.

SO SURE ENOUGH, again this year, everybody fears "escalation" in Ramadan, especially since Hamas and its mouthpiece the *Al Jazeera* broadcasting network are religiously calling for expansion of the "Al Aqsa Flood" (i.e., the war launched by Hamas' October 7 attack) to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria via terrorism and uprising.

Some subsequently call upon Israeli leaders to pay deference to Ramadan, to be extra cautious during Ramadan, to do nothing to "provoke" Moslems on Ramadan - especially in and around Jerusalem's Temple Mount - because Moslem emotions are oh-so-very sensitive during this month.

This is the soft bigotry of low expectations. When so-called security experts, politicians, diplomats, and statesmen nod their heads and say, "Well, of course, tensions always run high during Ramadan, and as such Jews/Israelis should keep a low profile because Moslem violence must be anticipated during the holy month" - they insult the majority of the world's Moslems, as well as our

intelligence. It is the very definition of surrendering to bullies rather than confronting them.

Instead, Israel's security, intelligence, and diplomatic experts should be gathering to secure Jerusalem over Ramadan and beyond.

This means imposing anti-riot limits on Arab visitors to Jerusalem and the two Moslem shrines on the Temple Mount - as has been the case over the past three years. This requires multiple concentric circles of police/army checkpoints in a broad envelope in and around the city.

(Only men over 45 years old and married with families, as well as women and children, should be allowed to visit. This keeps away the population most likely to riot or commit acts of terrorism.)

Furthermore, any Palestinian/Moslem preacher on the Temple Mount or in the city who incites to violence - say, by blaspheming the "Zionists" for "Judaizing" Jerusalem and "storming" its Moslem holy sites - should be swiftly jailed.

Alas, such wretched talk has become almost standard Palestinian discourse. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas continues to stoke a broad-scale campaign against the authenticity of Israel's historic rights in Jerusalem. In 2015 he screeched that "Al-Aksa is ours and so is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. They (the Jews) have no right to desecrate these holy sites with their filthy feet."

Additionally, the Israel Police must act decisively to bar the flying of ISIS, Hamas, Islamic Movement, and Turkish flags on the Temple Mount as well as banners with calls to annihilate Israel and the Jewish People. Again, this has become almost expected behavior during Ramadan.

On the diplomatic level, Israel must be ready to rebuff the despicable denunciations of gullible (and not-so-gullible) Western progressives, who, when there is trouble in Jerusalem, love to blabber about Israel's supposedly (but not really) "unprovoked and unacceptable" actions on the Temple Mount, and about "excessive Israeli force" (again, not), "violations of the status quo," and other such balderdash.

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