

In Israel, These Marathoners Run Where Kings and Prophets Once Walked

More than 35,000 runners took part in this year's Jerusalem Winners Marathon, running through the streets of the city on a chilly and windy morning. A record 4,000 participants came from 72 countries around the world.

This is the eighth Jerusalem marathon but the first since President Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and set a date for moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"It is amazing to see how happy both Israelis and Americans are on this exciting move," Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat told CBN News.

"It's not just the move, it's the recognition. Not that we needed it, but the fact that the United States of America recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish people, and today, you see people run the streets where kings and prophets walked here in the city of Jerusalem. It's very exciting times for us," Barkat said.

Barkat said the marathon is more than just a sporting event.

"You know the race in Jerusalem—the marathon is not just a sportive event. It's a spiritual event, to see, to showcase the city, to go in and out of the Old City, to see the beautiful sites of the most beautiful city in the world is a big deal," he said.

"It's amazing. It's humbling and incredible that you can just run a race through the Old City," one of the participants agreed.

The race begins near Israel's Knesset (parliament) and takes

runners through the Old and New city. The events include a marathon, half marathon, 10-kilometer, five-kilometer and family run—something for everyone.

“I’m here at the Jerusalem marathon with my family. There are three generations running today,” Nanci told CBN News. “I was born in 1948. That was the same year that Israel was reborn, re-established as a state.”

Barkat said the marathon gives runners a better understanding of the city.

“Jerusalem is a marathon you have to do at least once in your lifetime, to understand the challenges, to understand the city, to feel the city, to breathe the city, the spiritual city, the holy city of Jerusalem,” he said.

Linda and Mike Kates from Toronto, Canada, said they had run many marathons in the past, but this was their first time in Jerusalem. “We’ve run a lot of marathons but this is really exciting,” said Linda.

“It’s a bit emotional actually (because) as a kid you know you study it in school, you read about it but to be here, it’s not the same,” Mike added.

The hilly geography of the city is also makes the running unique.

“Jerusalem’s not flat—it’s challenging—and what I always say to my friends (is) that the Jerusalem marathon is breathtaking. You have to manage your breath quite wisely,” Barkat said.

Michael Fredman is from St Louis, Missouri, and has lived here for 30 years. It was his third time running in the marathon.

“Running here is special, you know, the holy city, and just seeing the great sites—a lot of people come from all over the world,” Fredman said. “It’s a wonderful city. It’s a special

activity, a special place, a special run, a special marathon for me and I think everybody else.” {eoa}

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