

Muslim Youth Protest at Jerusalem's Holy Sites

✖ Muslim youth began rioting last week at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem following Israel's decision to include the Cave of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb in its list of national heritage sites.

Israeli police said protesters worshipping at the al-Aqsa Mosque emerged from prayer Friday throwing rocks at police and at Jews praying at the Western Wall, the Associated Press (AP) reported.

Palestinian medics reported 13 people injured, including a Palestinian woman who had been shot in the head with a rubber bullet. Ron Krumer, a spokesman for Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, confirmed the report. But Israeli police, who said 15 officers had been slightly injured, denied using rubber bullets during the riot.

Worshippers turned violent after hearing about Israel's decision to include the two sites in its heritage list during prayer. "The Friday sermon focused on the Islamic sites that are being targeted by Israel and the need to preserve them," Najeh Btirat, of the Muslim clerical authority, told AP.

Israeli officials reportedly accused the Palestinian Authority of encouraging the riots because the prime minister prayed at the disputed site. They say Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad prayed Friday at the Ibrahimi Mosque, a site in Hebron sacredly known to Jews as the Cave of the Patriarchs.

One Israeli official said, "We need to remember that Fayyad's ultimate plan is to unilaterally declare statehood within a year and a half if negotiations do not reach an agreement by then," the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem reported.

[Source: The Associated Press; International Christian Embassy Jerusalem]