

Muslims Target American Politicians at Jerusalem's Temple Mount

A delegation of U.S. congressmen got a taste of Muslim hospitality Tuesday during a visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City.

From the moment they and their guide set foot on the site, they were harassed.

"We walked up there and were almost immediately approached by several men who started shouting," Rep. Keith Rothfus, R-Pa., told the *Jerusalem Post*.

"We were tracked the entire time we were there and found these individuals surprisingly intolerant and belligerent," he said.

Intolerance and belligerence describes the welcome for all non-Muslim visitors to the Temple Mount these days. The site of the first and second Jewish Temples has become increasingly dangerous and unpleasant for Israelis as well.

Elizabeth Jenkins, wife of Rep. Evan Jenkins, R-W. Va., modestly dressed in a calf-length skirt and long sleeves, was the first target.

As the group began walking up to the Mount, a man started yelling that she needed to cover up more. Muslim women in burkas are paid to harass female visitors to the Temple Mount even when they're modestly dressed.

Israeli Police had to intervene to allow the group to continue.

Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., told the *Post*, "There was an effort to completely suppress not only any expression of

religious conviction, but any articulation of historical reality.”

When their tour guide pulled out a map of Israel, a cleaning man signaled another man who approached the guide and demanded to know if any of his material spoke of the (Jewish) Temple. You may not, he was told, refer to the area as the “Temple Mount.” You must only call it the “Dome of the Rock.”

From that point on, the guide was continually harassed by men representing the Wakf, the Islamic trust controlling the day-to-day administration of the site. When some of the Wakf representatives tried to take his maps and diagrams, the guide told them he wasn’t doing anything illegal and would only stop if Israeli officers told him to.

“Our guide was very respectful, but very appropriately strong in his convictions,” Jenkins recounted. “He was not confrontational, but handled it very appropriately.”

But it didn’t stop there. Police were again required to stave off a group of about 20 men who began shouting and interrupting the guide, who quietly assured them “the men running around with walkie-talkies are not the final authority.”

“Despite the screaming and shouting and pointing of men with walkie-talkies, the police were able to exercise their authority and let us proceed comfortably,” Jenkins said.

Nonetheless, a group of Muslim men followed them around for the rest of their visit.

As they left, they saw more Muslim men surround a group of Jewish visitors shouting at them, “Allahu Akbar” (Allah is greater).

The congressmen undoubtedly will never forget their experience on the Temple Mount.

Franks said he wished people were more aware that harassment of an historical site stems from “people who want to rewrite history.”

After experiencing the situation firsthand, he added, “In general, when there is a lack of resolve in protecting religious freedoms, it emboldens those who have no compunction about suppressing it.”

The congressmen are part of a group from the Israel Allies Foundation, which mobilizes political support for Israel based on Judeo-Christian values. The delegation came to learn firsthand why Israel opposes the Iranian nuclear deal.

Following Tuesday’s visit to the Temple Mount, the congressmen met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and later with President Reuven Rivlin.