

Police Detain Female Worshippers at Western Wall

Five women were detained at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on Thursday for defying a court ruling by wearing prayer shawls and reading from the Torah during the Women of the Wall's monthly Rosh Hodesh service.

Dozens of women attended the service, including Meretz Members of Knesset Tamar Zandberg and Michal Rozin.

After the service started, several ultra-Orthodox worshippers hurled insults at the women. One haredi man grabbed a prayer pamphlet and burned it, claiming it contained inappropriate content.

When the women began to put on prayer shawls, police entered the area and detained five of them, including Women of the Wall director Leslie Sachs. They were taken to a police station in the Old City for questioning and were expected to be released later in the day.

Police reinforcements were present at the Western Wall on Thursday morning after calls had been heard in haredi neighborhoods in recent weeks to prevent the women from donning prayer shawls and reading from the Torah, as they try to do every Rosh Hodesh.

Police had earlier announced that the women would be arrested if they wore prayer shawls or read from the Torah in the women's section of the Western Wall plaza. Instead, the police said, the women could conduct those customs in the adjacent Robinson's Arch area of the Western Wall, in accordance with a High Court of Justice ruling on the matter.

Earlier this week, Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky presented to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a proposal to

establish an egalitarian prayer section at the Western Wall that would be open to all without gender or religious restrictions.

Under the proposed compromise, the Western Wall plaza would be expanded to join with Robinson's Arch, with the egalitarian section between them.

For the original article, visit .