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SMH, 25JUL2017, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/israel-to-remove-metal-detectors-from-jerusalem-flashpoint-site-20170724-gxhzus.html>

Israel to remove metal detectors from Jerusalem flashpoint site

Ori Lewis

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Jerusalem: Israel decided Tuesday to remove metal detectors it had placed at the entrance to a holy site in the occupied Old City of Jerusalem with other, less obtrusive surveillance means, a cabinet statement said.

Israel installed metal detectors at entry points to the al-Aqsa mosque compound in east Jerusalem after two police officers guarding the entrance to the site, which is sacred to Jews and Muslims, were fatally shot on July 14, triggering the bloodiest clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in years.

The spike in tensions and the deaths of three Israelis and four Palestinians in violence on Friday and Saturday have triggered international alarm and prompted the United Nations Security Council to convene a meeting to seek ways of calming the situation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet voted to remove the metal detector gates after a meeting lasting several hours convening for a second time on Monday, after they had broken off discussions a day earlier.

A statement issued after the forum of senior ministers concluded their meeting said they had decided to act on the recommendation of the security bodies and replace the metal detectors with "smart checking" means.

Witnesses in the Old City saw municipal workers installing metal beams above some of the narrow stone-paved streets for closed-circuit TV cameras. Israeli media said there were plans to invest in advanced camera systems.

The cabinet statement added that it had allocated 100 million shekels (about \$35 million) for the equipment and for additional police officers.

Reuters

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/israel-to-remove-metal-detectors-from-jerusalem-flashpoint-site-20170724-gxhzus.html>



NEWS.COM.AU, 26JUL2017, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/bds-encourages-israel-to-enter-into-a-twostate-dialogue/news-story/6183852b6ba15870d47b1fa8971427b8>

BDS encourages Israel to enter into a two-state dialogue

NICK RIEMER, The Australian, 12:00AM July 26, 2017

A major national conference on the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign for Palestine will be held at the University of Sydney this week.

Predictably, the conference has been met with stock accusations of anti-Semitism.

With the baselessness of that charge increasingly apparent, it's a good time to consider a more serious objection to academic BDS: the idea that academics' duty is to privilege dialogue and debate, not boycott, as the pathway to a more peaceful world.

In fact, BDS springs from the failure of dialogue to secure peace. Initiated in 2005 by more than 170 Palestinian civil-society organisations, the campaign is a response to the blockade, illegal settlements, home demolitions, water theft, checkpoints and summary killings that turn the everyday life of an entire people into a waking nightmare.

It also demands recognition of the UN-mandated right of return of Palestinian refugees — a right that the refugees may or may not choose to exercise.

Palestine is, of course, not the only human rights and peace struggle today — but it is the landmark international one, and victory would set a powerful precedent. It is also one to which academics can, for once, directly contribute. Academics are regularly urged to maximise their impact, but our work is usually conducted at multiple removes from real-world effect: as researchers and lecturers, we mostly advise and teach others, rather than acting ourselves.

When it comes to the Middle East, however, our professional activity forces us to choose sides. Israel has made its universities key components of the intellectual and material infrastructure of the occupation. They play this role in many ways: in large-scale arms research; military training programs; systematic privileges for students in the army; use of academic capital as international smart-washing; a revolving door between the highest levels of academe and government — and even, in several cases, premises on stolen Palestinian land.

That presents academics outside Israel with a choice: do we maintain business as usual with Israeli institutions, even though doing so supports and normalises Israel's illegal policies? Or do we ethically exert the limited power our profession gives us to advance peace?

The terms of the academic boycott are often misunderstood. The official boycott guidelines ask academics only to boycott Israeli institutions, not individual researchers. No one is boycottable just for being affiliated to an Israeli university. Only officials of Israeli institutions — deans or presidents — or official university-sponsored activities, such as conferences, are subject to BDS.

Academic BDS is not, then, the indiscriminate boycott of all Israeli researchers, as it is often presented. Quite the contrary: it applies only to academics who have chosen to assume leadership roles in key national institutions.

Researchers should ground their politics empirically, in real data. But doing that means abandoning one of our most cherished fictions: the idea that talk will solve the world's problems. International talks since Oslo have only entrenched the status quo. The Israeli government's commitment to a settlement extends only to the illegal ones mushrooming over the West Bank, effectively scuttling the two-state solution. Peaceful pressure needs to be exerted on it to reset the power imbalance.

Attending a conference in Tel Aviv as a physicist or an anthropologist will not advance dialogue on justice in the Middle East. Refusing to do so will: the Israeli government's own response to BDS shows it constitutes a uniquely powerful force for progress in Israel-Palestine.

Academics are usually bit players in the realpolitik of international relations. But boycotting Israeli institutions is one concrete step we can take, in our own domain, to create the conditions in which a real dialogue can start.

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THE AUSTRALIAN, 26JUL2017, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/israel-to-use-smart-surveillance-at-mosque/news-story/e6d87bb0178f6c8665463b83aba93e95>

Israel removes Jerusalem metal detectors

Associated Press, 2:54AM July 26, 2017

Israel has removed metal detectors from entrances to the al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City in favour of CCTV cameras, hoping to calm days of bloodshed, but Palestinians say the modified security measures are still unacceptable.

Israel installed the detectors at entry points to the mosque after two police guards were fatally shot on July 14, setting off the bloodiest clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in years.

The spike in tensions and the deaths of three Israelis and four Palestinians in violence on Friday and Saturday raised international alarm and prompted a session of the UN Security Council to consider ways of defusing the crisis.

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and the senior Muslim cleric who oversees al-Aqsa compound turned down the new Israeli measures and demanded all of them be removed.

"We reject all obstacles that hinder freedom of worship and we demand the return to the situation where things stood before July 14," Hamdallah told his cabinet in Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The Waqf, the religious body that runs the Islamic sites in the al-Aqsa compound, said worshippers would continue to stay away from the elevated, marble-and-stone plaza and pray in the streets outside.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet of senior ministers voted to remove the metal detector gates early on Tuesday.

David Friedman, the US ambassador to Israel, said while visiting Israel's parliament that Washington had talks with Israel and Jordan to resolve the crisis.

A statement issued after the security cabinet meeting said it had decided to heed a recommendation of Israeli security bodies and replace the detectors with "smart checking" devices.

In the pre-dawn hours, municipal workers began work in some of the narrow stone-paved streets around the compound to install overhead metal beams that will hold closed-circuit TV cameras.

Israeli media said there were plans to invest in advanced camera systems.

The cabinet statement added it had allocated up to 100 million shekels (\$A35 million) for the equipment and for additional policing in the next six months.

NEWS.COM.AU, 22JUL2017, <http://www.news.com.au/world/middle-east/palestine-cuts-contact-with-israel-over-haram-alsharif-mosque-compound/news-story/c1b1c87ef3c0a9a2d1870afd7173b3d7>

Palestine cuts contact with Israel over Haram al-Sharif mosque compound

JULY 22, 2017 5:50AM

PALESTINIAN president Mahmoud Abbas has said he is freezing contacts with Israel over new security measures at a highly sensitive Jerusalem holy site, after deadly clashes erupted earlier in the day.

Mr Abbas said in a speech that the freeze would stay in place until Israel lifted the measures at the Haram al-Sharif mosque compound, which Jews refer to as the Temple Mount.

UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters that “ultimately, what is important is for all of the people at the holy sites, including all the worshippers at the holy sites, to feel that their religious liberties are being respected.”

He said the issue is complex and “we do understand legitimate security concerns, but on the other hand it is important that the status quo at the site be retained.”

Mr Haq said the UN wants “all sides to avoid further steps that could lead to violence that could lead to further tensions.

He says: “We want the parties to be able to deal with it and to de-escalate the situation so that there is no threat to anyone there.”

It came as three Palestinians were killed and several dozen injured by live rounds, rubber bullets and beatings, medics said.

The confrontations in Jerusalem and the West Bank erupted after midday Friday prayers, the highlight of the Muslim religious week.

Thousands performed the prayers in the streets, rather than in the shrine, to protest Israel’s decision earlier in the week to install metal detectors at the gates to the walled compound.
