

Friday 14 July

- Two Israeli Police Officers, Hael Sathawi and Kamil Shanan, were killed after they were attacked next to the Lions' Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, near the entrance to the Temple Mount. The three attackers, who were from Umm el Fahm in Israel, were armed with Carl Gustav style automatic weapons and an automatic pistol.
- While it was initially thought that the weapons had been stored inside the Temple Mount compound, subsequent video evidence revealed that they were smuggled onto the holy site by the attackers and an accomplice. The attackers entered the Old City through Herod's Gate individually with an accomplice carrying a bag with weapons entering afterwards. They came to the Temple Mount through the Gate of Remission before entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque with weapons, leaving the Mosque to change clothes, and then returning to the Temple Mount with the weapons hidden on them and killing the officers. They were shot and killed in an exchange of fire with Israeli police officers next to the Temple Mount.
- Following the attack, Jerusalem Police Commander Yoram Halevy evacuated the Temple Mount compound in order for the crime scene to be properly examined. It represented the first time Israel had closed the compound on a Friday in nearly 50 years.

Sunday 16 July and Monday 17 July

- The police opened two gates to Muslim worshippers at 13:00 on Sunday and another three on Monday. Extra security measures were installed, including metal detectors and additional CCTV. Although members of the Waqf – the Islamic trust that administers the site – objected to these measures and refused

to enter the site, several hundred worshippers went through the metal detectors and prayed on the Temple Mount. Sporadic scuffles broke out between security forces and Muslim protesters who were trying to prevent other Muslim worshippers from going onto the site.

- Throughout the week, violent altercations took place between police and worshippers as Muslim clerics and Waqf officials began praying outside the Temple Mount in protest against the introduction of metal detectors. Over one hundred people were injured and firebombs, stones and fireworks were launched at police officers in the Silwan and Issawaiya neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem.

Thursday 20 July

- In the lead up to Friday prayers senior Jerusalem clerics called for the closure of all mosques throughout Jerusalem and threatened to hold a mass prayer service at the gates to the Temple Mount. The IDF announced it was putting five additional battalions on alert in the West Bank and police deployed three thousand additional officers around the Old City on Friday morning.
- The White House said it was “very concerned” and called on Israel and Jordan “to make a good faith effort to reduce tensions and to find a solution that assures public safety and the security of the site and maintains the status quo”.
- President Reuven Rivlin spoke to Turkish President Recep Erdogan and reiterated that Israel respected the status quo on the Temple Mount.
- In the evening, government ministers and security officials met with Prime Minister Netanyahu following his return from Europe in order to decide whether to keep or remove the

metal detectors. According to reports, officials from the Shin Bet, IDF and the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) expressed reservations about the continued use of metal detectors while the Israel Police and Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan insisted they remain in place. A Police statement read: “There’s no other way of ensuring effective inspection to prevent weapons from being brought into the Temple Mount.”

- The security cabinet decided to “authorise the Israel Police to make any decision in order to ensure free access to the holy sites, while upholding security and public order”. Reports suggested that the police wanted the detectors

to stay in place, and that they would use their discretion over who needs to go through them.

Friday 21 July and Saturday 22 July

- Violent clashes between Israeli police and thousands of Palestinian protestors escalated. One Palestinian man was killed by an Israeli civilian in East Jerusalem. Three others were killed during altercations with Israeli police in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis. A fifth died when a petrol bomb he was planning to throw at Israeli security forces exploded prematurely.
- Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas announced the freezing of



What is the status quo on the Temple Mount and is it being undermined?

During the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount which is a holy site to both Jews and Muslims. Under the terms of the “status quo,” which was established following the war, the site is administered by an Islamic foundation (Waqf) with Israel controlling access and security. Non-Muslims have access and visiting rights but are forbidden to pray on the Mount. Jordan, which controlled East Jerusalem from 1948-67, serves as custodian of the holy site.

Palestinians argued that the installation of metal detectors undermined the status quo on the Temple Mount. These arguments synergise with long standing false rumours peddled by extremist Palestinian preachers and the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel who for years have claimed that Israel is planning to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Israel has clearly stated that it has no intention to alter the status quo at the holy site and claims that the metal detectors prevent terror. For many years metal detectors have been placed both at the Mughrabi Gate, where non-Muslim visitors enter the Temple Mount and at the Western Wall. Israel has also pointed out that in other Muslim holy sites around the world, CCTV cameras and metal detectors have been installed. In Mecca there are more than 5,000 CCTV cameras and over 100,000 people employed to provide security during the annual Hajj.

security coordination with Israel until the new security measures on the Temple Mount were changed.

- A terror attack in the West Bank settlement of Halamish/Neve Tzuf on Friday evening killed three members of one family.
- On Saturday evening, Israel installed new surveillance measures near the Lions’ Gate, the main access point for Muslim worshipers to the Temple Mount compound. The Waqf announced that it would reject any new Israeli security measures at the Temple Mount, saying: “We confirm our total rejection of the electronic gates and all new occupation measures that will lead to a change in the historical and religious status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites, especially the Al-Aqsa Mosque.”
- The Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, said “the situation must return to what it was previously. Muslim worshipers must be able to enter all the gates with total freedom and without any security methods or obstacles”.
- The Middle East Quartet released a statement strongly condemning “acts of terror,” and, noting the “particular sensitivities surrounding the holy sites in Jerusalem,” urged all sides to “demonstrate maximum restraint, refrain from provocative actions and work towards de-escalating the situation”.

Sunday 23 July

- A security guard at the Israeli embassy in Amman was stabbed repeatedly with a screwdriver before shooting and killing the assailant. The Jordanian landlord was also injured in the attack and later died of his wounds. The guard was initially prohibited by Jordanian authorities from leaving the country, despite having immunity from questioning and arrest according to the Vienna Convention. Relatives of the attacker have demanded that the guard be sentenced.
- Israel’s security cabinet met but no decision was taken on future security mechanisms at the Temple Mount. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for Monday.
- Over the weekend two rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel. No one was injured and no damage was caused.

Monday 24 July

- A 40-year-old man stabbed and moderately wounded in Petah Tikva by a 21-year-old from Qalqilya, who reportedly shouted “for al-Aqsa” as he began his attack.
- As parts of efforts to resolve the standoff at the embassy in Amman, Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke to King Abdullah, Shin Bet Direct Nadav Argaman travelled to Jordan and Jordanian Ambassador to Israel Walid

Obeidat met Foreign Ministry Director-General Yuval Rotem. While Israel refused the Jordanian request to question the guard, Argaman invited two Jordanian detectives to be present for the debrief as a good will gesture and they were shown photographs of the incident that proved he acted in self-defence. Nearly an hour after hearing the guard's statement, the embassy staff boarded a convoy back to Israel.

Tuesday 25 July

- In the early hours of Tuesday morning in what seemingly constituted part of Israeli-Jordanian understandings (although the Prime Minister's Office denied they were connected), Israel dismantled the metal detectors outside the Temple Mount, with the intention of replacing them with advanced high resolution cameras that would be able to identify whether a person is concealing a bomb or a weapon. According to reports these cameras were due to be placed throughout the Old City rather than at the entrance to the Temple Mount. The security cabinet announced that it "accepts the recommendation of all security bodies to replace the metal detectors with security checks based on advanced technologies, smart inspection, and other means to ensure the safety of visitors and worshippers in the Old City of Jerusalem".
- The White House responded to Israel's decision to remove the metal detectors by "applaud[ing] the efforts of Israel to maintain security while reducing tensions in the region".
- However, the Waqf continued to reject these measures and announced its decision "to reject outright any changes, including technological measures". Muslim worshippers continued to avoid the Temple Mount with evening prayers held outside the entrance to the Lions' Gate and 30 people reportedly injured in violent altercations with police. The Waqf issued a list of additional demands to Israel which included reverting access to its levels prior to July 14, reopening all gates to the Temple Mount, and the removal of new cameras installed in the Temple Mount area and of the metal barriers placed at the entrances.

Wednesday 26 July

- UK Minister for Middle East Alistair Burt said that he welcomed "the progress made to resolve tensions at the Haram Al-Sharif / Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem, including Israel's decision to remove metal detectors".
- Angry at Israeli plans for cameras at the site, both Hamas and Fatah approved plans for mass protests in the West Bank on Friday as part of a "Day of Rage" with Abbas approving meetings between representatives of various Palestinian factions including the Tanzim, a militia loosely affiliated with Fatah.

Thursday 27 July

- 12,000 residents attended the funeral in Umm el-Fahm of the three attackers who committed the terrorist attack on the Temple Mount on July 14th. Sheikh Raed Salah, the leader of the Islamic Movement's northern branch, said a prayer before the three attackers were buried. On their tombstones was written "The graves of the shahids in occupied Umm el-Fahm".
- In the early hours of Thursday morning Israel removed all infrastructure for surveillance cameras and metal barriers, thus returning the security regime to levels before the terror attack of the 14th July as per the Waqf's demands. Jerusalem Grand Mufti Muhammad Ahmad Hussein announced that the Temple Mount crisis had ended as far as he was concerned and that "the situation has returned to what it was previously, we will pray at al-Aqsa".
- Thousands of worshippers streamed into the mosque for afternoon prayers. Palestinians reportedly flew the Palestinian flag from the mosque and threw rocks and bottles at Israeli forces, with some projectiles flying onto the Western Wall plaza below. After the violence subsided dozens of young worshippers barricaded themselves inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque and refused to leave, despite requests from the Waqf. Police were forced to break into the Mosque to arrest them for disturbing the peace. At least 50 Palestinians and 10 Israeli police officers were reportedly injured in yesterday's violence.

- King Abdullah harshly criticised Netanyahu, saying that he used the shooting incident in Amman for political manipulations and described the photo of Netanyahu embracing the security guard as “provocative”. Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said that if the “murderer” security guard is not extradited to Jordan or brought to trial in Israel, the diplomats and Israeli ambassador would not be able to return to Amman.

closed. A police spokeswoman said early Friday morning that following a security assessment, Jerusalem police chief Yoram Halevi decided to restrict access to the Old City and the Temple Mount to women as well as men above the age of 50. Police called on Muslim leaders and public figures to denounce incitement and violence and to act responsibly to calm the situation.

- Thousands unable to enter the Old City prayed outside. Disturbances were reported in neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem as well as in areas of the West Bank. An attempted stabbing in Gush Etzion in the West Bank resulted in the assailant being shot and killed.

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Friday 28 July

- Checkpoints have been set up on the roads leading to Jerusalem and three Border Police forces deployed as reinforcements amid expectations of possible violent protests following midday Friday prayers. The Old City basin and Sultan Suleiman Street was

What now?

Future security measures at the Temple Mount: As tensions continue, it remains unclear whether Israel and the relevant stakeholders will succeed in forging a new agreement on security measures on the Temple Mount. The Waqf’s refusal to implement a 2016 US brokered Israeli-Jordanian-Egyptian accord – in which the sides agreed to place closed circuit security cameras in some parts of the Temple Mount compound – ultimately prevented its implementation. In the current situation, strained Israeli relations with both Jordan and the Waqf, power struggles between Amman and the Waqf, and deep public displeasure – often exacerbated by incendiary comments by leaders in the Arab and Muslim world – over any perceived change to the site, will heavily complicate attempts to agree and subsequently implement new security measures.

Israeli-Palestinian security coordination: Security coordination is deeply unpopular on the Palestinian street but has been termed “sacred” by Abbas and is generally considered mutually beneficial to Israel and the PA. Riding a populist wave of angry over the Temple Mount, Abbas didn’t announce the renewal of cooperation following Israel’s removal of its extra security measures on Thursday morning and it remains to be seen how Israel-PA relations will develop. If demonstrations and riots persist, the PA’s decision to freeze security cooperation and to cease carrying out searches and arrests of suspects will undermine Israel’s efforts to calm the situation and end incitement. It may even lead to Hamas strengthening its position vis-à-vis Fatah in the West Bank.

Netanyahu’s political challenges: Netanyahu finds himself under political pressure from both the Left and Right in Israel for his decisions, with one poll showing that 67 per cent are unhappy with his handling of the crisis. On Wednesday, Israel Hayom, a newspaper generally heavily supportive of the Prime Minister, criticised the premier’s “display of feebleness” and his “helpless” response to the Temple Mount crisis on its front page. Others criticised Netanyahu for his handling of the crisis with Jordan, believing his eagerness for a photo-op with the security guard needlessly caused a crisis with Israel’s neighbour. Former head of Mossad, Efraim Halevy, said the Prime Minister’s behaviour was characteristic of “the unquenchable necessity to placate Israel’s public opinion at every turn ... as opposed to maintaining a relationship with our strategic neighbour”. If Netanyahu fears more attacks from the Right, he may continue with populist statements aimed at shoring up his traditional right-wing base. In any event, the Israeli government will hope that following its acceptance of Waqf demands – a move particularly unpopular given the recent violence in Jerusalem – it will receive international support for coping with any further Palestinian protests.

This briefing was produced by BICOM's research team.

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