

UPDATE

September 18, 2019

Just prior to September 1, [Al-Issawiya residents and the local parents' committee announced they would refrain from sending their children to school](#) due to the unsafe and hostile environment generated by the constant armed police presence on neighborhood streets. Parents conditioned their children's school attendance for the new academic year on the police halting its [daily raids into the neighborhood, which have continued unabated for nearly three months](#).

Due to the potential disruption of the school year, the municipal education board demanded the intervention of Jerusalem Mayor, Moshe Leon, who pressured the police to reduce its activity in the neighborhood to allow for schools to open as scheduled. Consequently, the police agreed to limit its presence and operations, particularly that of the Border Police and Anti-Riot Units and agreed that there would be no armed forces on the streets during children's commutes to and from school. Neighborhood schools subsequently opened September 1.

While there was a modest drop in the police presence and altercations with area residents for approximately one week, hostile police incursions by para-military forces resumed September 7 for no apparent reason, renegeing on the agreement to reduce their operations. Since Thursday, September 12, paramilitary forces have been operating daily in the neighborhood and have employed severe measures, including the use of stun grenades and tear gas in confined spaces. In one incident, the police fired tear gas adjacent to Al-Issawiya's main mosque during evening prayers, injuring dozens of Muslim worshippers praying inside. Despite his intervention prior to September 1, the Jerusalem Mayor has yet to intervene to prevent the agreement he facilitated from collapsing.

Likewise, the Israel Police published on Thursday, September 12, its alleged conclusions from their internal investigation into the [case of police officers planting a military-grade weapon in the home of an Al-Issawiya resident](#) to obtain footage for the Jerusalem District docudrama about the city's police forces. The Israel Police asserted the officers in question bear no responsibility for planting the firearm, acted in good faith and to the best of their ability, thereby absolving them from any potential disciplinary action.

UPDATE

August 28, 2019

Yesterday, August 27, Muhammad Abu Hummus, lead community activist in Al-Issawiya, was released from custody on 1000 NIS bail following a subsequent hearing at the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court. The judge likewise issued a ban on his entry into Al-Issawiya until September 15. The Israel Police had originally demanded a 30-day entry prohibition along with 5000 NIS bail as conditions for his release.

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As previously reported, the situation in Al-Issawiya has continued to deteriorate. According to sources on the ground, there was an acute intensification of police operations in the neighborhood last night. Due to the hostile environment created by the daily police incursions, the start of the school year will be delayed for neighborhood children. According to the local parents' committee, schools will remain closed until all police raids end and calm is restored to the neighborhood.

UPDATE

August 26, 2019

On August 25, Muhammad Abu Hummus, prominent community leader and representative of Al-Issawiya residents, was pulled from his bed in the middle of the night and arrested by Israeli police forces based on unfounded claims of incitement and support of terrorism.

Abu Hummus is a well-known activist and community leader who plays a central role in the nonviolent civil resistance to Israeli policies in East Jerusalem, particularly in the area of Al-Issawiya. Due to his involvement in protests, community organizing and advocacy on behalf of Al-Issawiya residents, he has been targeted and arrested by the police numerous times. A few months ago, Abu Hummus sued the police for false arrest. The case was subsequently dismissed after the police agreed to pay Abu Hummus 4,000 shekels to drop the lawsuit.

[Over the course of the past two and half months of aggressive daily police raids into Al-Issawiya](#), Abu Hummus has worked tirelessly on behalf of his community, playing a key role in organizing protests, protecting neighborhood residents and disseminating crucial information regarding the situation on the ground. Among his activities, he assisted in the facilitation of Ir Amim's recent diplomatic field briefing and discussion with Al-Issawiya residents on July 31.

Following his arrest early Sunday morning, a hearing was held at the Jerusalem Magistrate Court in which the police requested a five-day extension to Abu Hummus' arrest to prevent potential obstruction of the investigation into the charges being brought against him. The judge rejected the request based on several unsubstantiated accusations and instead ruled that Abu Hummus could be released on the condition he stays away from the neighborhood until September 1.

The police subsequently appealed the judge's decision, which prevented his immediate release, forcing Abu Hummus to remain in jail overnight.

Today, the Jerusalem District Court heard the appeal and decided to hold an additional court session tomorrow to hand down a final ruling. Abu Hummus will remain another night in custody.

Ir Amim will update following tomorrow's hearing.

UPDATE

August 21, 2019

Sustained hostile police incursions into Al-Issawiya have continued now for two and half months, severely disrupting daily life and creating intolerable conditions for area residents. [Although the police expressed intent to halt the raids](#) particularly over last week's holiday of Eid-al Adha, the operations on the ground only intensified, precluding the residents from celebrating their holiday in peace.

Over the course of the past two and half months, [the police have effectively imposed a perpetual state of collective punishment on the entire neighborhood](#), marked by nightly police raids, severe limitations on movement, and clashes with residents. Hundreds of people have been arbitrarily detained, while an estimated 250 have been injured as a result of the police's use of excessive force, which already claimed the life of one young man.

There is increasing alarm that the recurring hostilities are liable to claim more lives.

The concerted punitive measures arbitrarily directed at the entire community of Al Issawiya must be immediately brought to an end in an effort to restore calm to the neighborhood and allow the residents to live free from the threat of constant harassment and inexplicable police targeting

UPDATE

August 7, 2019

As Ir Amim previously [reported](#), the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Al-Issawiya has been subject to severe police targeting and harassment for nearly two months now, marked by daily police raids and heavy restrictions on movement.

Following Ir Amim's diplomatic field briefing to Al-Issawiya on July 31, high-ranking police officers, including the Jerusalem District Police Chief, informed neighborhood residents of their intent to halt the operations until at least the end of the upcoming Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. According to residents, a reduction in police presence in Al-Issawiya was observed on Monday, August 5.

A [Haaretz report](#) on Tuesday, August 6, revealed that the Israel Police had planted a military-grade firearm in the home of one Al-Issawiya resident for the means of capturing footage for an Israeli docudrama about the Jerusalem Police called Jerusalem District. The popular TV series follows the activities and operations of the city's police forces, portraying the police as heroic figures fighting crime and terrorism while painting unfavorable and stereotypical images of particular communities, including the Palestinian and Haredi (ultra-orthodox Jewish) populations. The footage of the police "discovering" the M-16 assault rifle in a Palestinian home in Al-Issawiya was aired on an episode just weeks prior to the start of the police raids into the neighborhood.

Following the Haaretz report, the police ultimately acknowledged the allegations and issued a formal apology. All of the show's episodes which were available online have subsequently been removed by Kan, Israel's public broadcasting corporation.

Directly after publication of the exposé, on Tuesday evening, however, the situation in Al-Issawiya deteriorated. There has been an acute intensification of police operations in the neighborhood, including hostile raids, restrictions on movement, imposition of roadblocks, clashes with residents and the arbitrary arrests of three young men.

Just four days ahead of the start of Eid al-Adha, the use of collective punishment employed against Al-Issawiya residents continues. An immediate cessation of these severe measures must be invoked in order for daily life in the neighborhood to return to normal.

July 24, 2019

Since Ir Amim first reported on the events in Al-Issawiya on July 1 [see below], the situation has deteriorated, and tensions have escalated to a near state of emergency. Hostile police raids accompanied by forcible home entries, restrictions on movement, and use of excessive force, including live ammunition, have continued unabated for nearly six weeks, effectively imposing a perpetual state of collective punishment on the entire neighborhood.

Daily life has continued to be disrupted while resident's basic rights infringed upon. There is growing concern that the ongoing hostilities are liable to claim more lives. These actions signal an alarming trend in Israel's treatment and policy towards specific East Jerusalem neighborhoods and likewise serve to further provoke and inflame area residents.

An immediate cessation of these measures must be invoked in order to restore calm and order to Al-Issawiya.

BACKGROUND

[Information from July 1st]

For more than two weeks, Israeli security forces, accompanied at times by municipal authorities, have been daily carrying out alleged law enforcement campaigns in the neighborhood of Al-Issawiya, effectively imposing a state of collective punishment on the population, while generating an environment of friction and hostility. Al-Issawiya, home to approximately 20,000 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, lies to the Northeast of the Old City and is adjacent to the Hebrew University campus on Mount Scopus. According to residents, since June 12, there have been over 40 police raids in the neighborhood, which have included the imposition of "flying checkpoints," road closures, and restrictions on movement, as well as forcible entries into homes where excessive administrative and security checks have been carried out and arbitrary fines, traffic tickets and other sanctions issued. In the clashes which have broken out during these raids, Israeli security forces have used rubber bullets as well as live ammunition. Over 50 residents have been detained so far, while more than 100 have

been injured as a result of the police's use of excessive force, which recently claimed the life of 20-year-old Mohammed Obeid.

To date, no official announcement has been made stating reasons for the police crackdown and recurring mass incursions into the neighborhood. According to residents, some were told by the police that the increased presence of law enforcement was ordered by the Jerusalem District Police Chief until all rock-throwing incidents from Al-Issawiya ceased. However, the raids do not appear to be aimed at any achievable result, such as targeted arrests of wanted individuals and/or the seizure of weapons.

Repeated entry and aggressive police actions directed at the entire community coupled with an increase of municipal enforcement is being used as a form of intimidation and collective punishment, which further inflames tensions and hostilities. In specific cases of disorderly conduct or other violations, it is the police's responsibility to deal with each case individually, rather than arbitrarily employ concerted punitive measures against tens of thousands of the city's residents, disrupting their daily lives and impinging on their basic rights. Instead of working to actually quell the situation, these actions only serve to further provoke and incite, creating intolerable conditions for the entire population of the area.

In order to restore calm and order to Al-Issawiya, these measures must immediately be halted and efforts made to establish dialogue with the neighborhood's representative committee. Yesterday, Ir Amim issued a letter to the acting Israel Police Commissioner, Moti Cohen, and Jerusalem Mayor, Moshe Leon, calling upon the authorities to cease such campaigns and reestablish peace in the area. As residents of Jerusalem under the responsibility and jurisdiction of the municipality, they are not only entitled to its services, but should also be guaranteed full protection and their rights upheld.