

Jerusalem's Popular Movement between Reality and the Virtual world (July 2017)

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Abstract

This study examines the popular movement in Jerusalem against the metal detectors in July 2017 from the Perspectives of Reality and the Virtual world. The movement erupted after the occupation authority closed Al-Aqsa mosque following a shooting accident in its yards killing 3 martyrs from the Palestinian occupied city of Umelfahm, two Israeli soldiers and one soldier injured. The closure was followed by the installation of metal detectors, security cameras and unprecedented security measures. Such measures provoked the Palestinians who broke their silence and embarked on a youthful, and peaceful and popular movement for two successive weeks. The movement included massive worshippers' sit-ins in Jerusalem roads and alleys of the old city.

The aim of this study is to discuss the details of such movement, read beyond it, and to see how the participants reacted to it and how they were influenced by it. The study uses the qualitative method which provides deep understanding of the nature of the movement and the reaction of the Jerusalemites and how they make sense of it. It also describes the conditions of the movement and the proceedings of participation using in-depth field interviews and focus groups.

The study is divided into 4 chapters, so that the first Chapter contains: The theoretical framework and the previous studies which explore the nature of the social movement's formation, their impact and how the youth played influential role in them.

Chapter 2 presents a historical panorama of the metal detectors movement including a description of the situation and reality of the movement in Jerusalem for two successive weeks, and examines the international, Arab and local views on the movement.

Chapter 3, Explain the Role of Social Media in Reach out, organization discrimination during the uprising through the slogans, Hashtags, cheers and caricatures.

Chapter 4, presents the Metal Detectors Movement between the views and attitudes, including analysis of the field interviews, results and study recommendations.

The results revealed that the movement was not an ordinary movement. Rather, it had a quality nature that went beyond the traditional party organizations. It was a spur of the moment and spontaneous. It was mainly a reaction to the occupation measures against Al Aqsa mosque.

The movement was independent of any political parties, characterized by the participation of different segments of the Palestinian society, and it was a general and popular movement.

The youth played a leading part in the movement and their role was an influential force in it as they were always present and volunteered to serve the protestors. The participants' motivations were different. For example, some had religious motivations while others had national motivations. The movement incorporated the Islamic-Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem when the Christians joined in the movement reflecting a sense of loving, synergy and social collaboration to protect the sacred sites.

The social media played a prominent role in covering and spreading the movement at the international and local levels through disseminating and broadcasting it using live transmission applications, hashtags and caricatures. The social media sufficiently documented the cheers which contributed to enhancing participation and presence until victory was achieved and the metal detectors were removed from Alaqsa entrances.

The movement is considered among the unique and quality experiences in the history of the Palestinian struggle. It was not the first but it is characterized and distinguished by the tools it used in the light of the advanced technology. It could've been possible to maintain the continuity of the movement by embracing the youth and invest their energy for making a change, and to work with them as they constitute an active and influential force in the Palestinian question.

Jerusalem experience against the metal detectors could have been invested in different aspects like by forming a unified leadership body that cooperates with the national leadership to advance from the movement victory towards achieving national victories at other levels, and to invest the popular promotion to achieve political and social objectives in Jerusalem.