
Gaza Reconstruction Pledges Surpass Expectations

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?Hundreds of Israeli police raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound at 6 a.m. on Monday following morning prayers, and leading to clashes with Palestinian worshipers. The Israeli forces fired stun grenades, tear gas canisters and rubber-coated steel bullets at Palestinians in the holy site during the clashes. Over 14 Palestinians were injured. Israeli media reported that Palestinian youth threw rocks and fireworks at police officers.

At the same time, several Palestinians were injured early Monday during clashes with Israeli soldiers in Nablus, northern West-Bank. The Israeli military forces escorted over 300 Israelis, traveling in seven buses, to Joseph's Tomb for religious prayers.

Eyewitnesses said that at least 35 military vehicles accompanied the buses.

Meanwhile in Gaza, a positive atmosphere is taking over the coastal enclave, after Gaza's reconstruction conference that was held Sunday in the Egyptian city of Cairo. As the Palestinian Authority asked for donors to give up to USD\$4 billion dollars to rebuild the destroyed Gaza strip. Donors gave over USD\$5.4 billion dollars.

Hamas spokesperson Mousheer Almassri explained "We didn't expect this achievement. We even thought that the Palestinian Authority won't be reaching its 4 billion goal, however they succeeded. And we are happy to see the countries of this world standing with Gaza and helping Gaza. The only thing we fear is for Israel to keep destroying what we are rebuilding! This is so

unacceptable, we can't have such conferences every 2 years!"

Qatar pledged an USD\$1 billion, while Kuwait and the UAE pledged USD\$200 million each. Half of the pledge's USD\$5.4 billion dollars will go for reconstruction and the rest as unspecified aid to the Palestinian Authority.

The conference aimed at financing the reconstruction of infrastructure that Israel destroyed in its July-August assault on the Gaza Strip.

In 2009, the international community pledged \$USD4.5 billion dollars to reconstruct Gaza, however some families got their new homes 4 years after the war.
