6 injured, 5 arrested as hundreds riot in East Jerusalem after Ramadan prayer

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Five people were arrested Tuesday night as hundreds rioted in East Jerusalem after returning from prayers on the first night of Ramadan, police said Wednesday.

Muslim worshipers gathered near the Old City’s Damascus Gate and clashed with cops stationed there, according to police.

Some hurled rocks at passing buses, causing minor injuries to two drivers and three passengers who required medical attention.

Additionally, rocks, glass bottles and firecrackers were thrown at police officers, mildly injuring one of them.

Police said forces dispersed the crowd using riot control means, adding that the clashes occurred shortly before worshipers were required to end their taraweeh Ramadan prayers and leave the area.

Five suspects have been arrested.

The month of Ramadan normally sees increased tensions around Jerusalem’s Old City, which houses the flashpoint Temple Mount site, holy to both Jews and Muslims.

Israel’s military liaison to the Palestinians, COGAT, said Tuesday that up to 10,000 vaccinated Palestinians will be allowed to pray Friday at the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount to mark the first Friday of Ramadan.

“The measures are being taken to allow freedom of worship and religion on one hand, and on the other hand, prevent to the extent possible, the spread of COVID-19 in the region,” COGAT said in a statement.

After Friday, “an additional situation assessment will be carried out to examine the approved outline, taking into account both security and health needs.”

Tensions are also soaring in East Jerusalem over concerns Israel will prevent the area from being included in the national Palestinian legislative elections scheduled for next month. Israel cracks down on Palestinian Authority activity inside Jerusalem, considering it a violation of Israeli sovereignty in its capital.

Fatah and other Palestine Liberation Organization factions said Monday that there would be no Palestinian elections without the participation of East Jerusalem Palestinians.