



## We Must Keep the Pyromaniacs Far From the Temple Mount

By [Kobi Michael](#) On 7/28/17 at 6:29 AM

The Temple Mount of the Jews, the Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) of the Muslims, has always been much more than a religious symbol. Over the years, this site of the two religions has become a national symbol, a political asset and one of the sacred values to both sides. Despite its centrality in the Palestinian ethos, the Palestinians have no official status on the Temple Mount.

Even after the Six-Day War, Israel was careful to preserve the reality in which the Temple Mount was administered by the Jordanian waqf and recognized the special status of Jordan's custodianship—one enshrined in the 1994 peace agreement, which explicitly recognizes Jordan's special interests there.

But the Temple Mount has become an ax to grind, a political lever used to establish public legitimacy and mass mobilization among the Palestinian public for the struggle against Israel, and exploited to mobilize Muslims to both back the Palestinian national struggle and erode Israel's status. And it is done at the cost of undermining security, even if it means the loss of human life.

The political leverage of the Temple Mount since the opening of the exit to the Western Wall Tunnel in September 1996 has been steeped in religious incitement led by Sheikh Raed Salah, leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, who has succeeded in establishing his position in the Islamic world as "Sheikh Al-Aqsa."

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