

With Israeli Flag Parade On-Again, Off-Again, On-Again, Palestinians Announce 'Victory March'

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Eastern Jerusalem Arabs have called for a “victory march” to be held on June 10, following the very route of what was to have been Israel’s Jerusalem Day flag parade. The story of the dueling parades is [here](#).

On the original Jerusalem Day this year Israelis were all set to take part in a “flag parade” that winds through part of Jerusalem’s Old City, including passage through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter. This year the march, originally scheduled for May 10, was postponed because of Hamas rockets, and re-scheduled for June 10. But police then refused to authorize the route, because of fears of violence by Arabs who

had threatened to attack the marchers. There was some discussion of continuing to hold the parade, but having it follow a different route.

In the end, a compromise proposal was brought forth on June 8 by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz, and signed off on by the security cabinet. The proposal says that the parade can go ahead "in a framework that will be agreed upon by police and organizers," according to a statement. The assumption is that the marchers will not be taking the traditional route through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter. The Flag Parade will take place on June 15, not on June 10, because that is when the Palestinians will be holding their "victory march." Holding both marches on the same day, and in the same parts of the city, would greatly increase the likelihood of inter-communal clashes.

Some Israelis deplore the decision both to further delay the flag march so as not to have it coincide with the Palestinians' "victory march" on June 10, and to change its route so as to avoid offending Muslims. They call it a humiliation, in that the route was being changed to accommodate the Palestinians, who now realized that all they had to do was credibly threaten violence, and the Jews' march would be rerouted.

Arab residents of eastern Jerusalem, we now know, have called for their own "victory parade" – presumably, the "victory" is the forced cancellation or, as it has finally turned out, the re-routing, of the Jews' flag parade. Possibly the "victory" was also meant to refer to Hamas' self-proclaimed "victory" in Gaza. The event's Palestinian organizers are in a bellicose mood, and have called for those taking part to engage in "hunting the settlers and deterring them." This sounds like the Palestinian marchers will be looking for trouble as they march through Jewish neighborhoods.

The victory march organizers have also called on the Arabs in

east Jerusalem to demonstrate at the Mughrabi Gate to protest Israel's plans to renovate the entry, the only gate through which non-Muslims are permitted to enter the Temple Mount.

Apparently the Mughrabi Gate, since it is the only gate non-Muslims are allowed to use, in the view of fanatical Muslims must not be repaired but left to become ever more derelict, perhaps even dangerous, for those – Jews and Christians – who are limited to using it. This should remind us that Christians and Jews living in Muslim states as dhimmis were not allowed to repair their churches and synagogues. How propping up walls to avoid potentially catastrophic collapses can be considered a sinister plot to “Judaize” Jerusalem (which, was “Judaized” some 3000 years ago) is entirely unclear. The attempt by Muslims to make trouble at the Mughrabi Gate is not merely to prevent renovation of the entry, but to create difficulties for the non-Muslims using it in a state of dangerous disrepair, an attempt to discourage non-Muslim visitors to the Temple Mount.

That's where things stand as of June 9. There will be a Jerusalem Day march by Jews in their ancient capital on June 15. But the route will be changed to avoid the likely flashpoints for Arab violence, the Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter. And now that the Muslims have announced that their own “victory parade” will take place on June 10, the same day on which the postponed flag march had originally been rescheduled, and will follow the original route that Jews had always used before – through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter – how will Israeli authorities react? The Arab “victory” parade is meant to humiliate the Jews, showing them who had to re-route their march, and who did not.

What about having the Jerusalem Police Commissioner, Yaakov Shabtai, who is now supposed to be coming up with alternative possible routes for the flag march that will be least likely to “ignite violence,” announce that, “given the extreme tensions in many parts of the city, we have decided as a

safety measure to cancel all marches and parades until further notice." He'd have to do it before the Arabs' "victory parade" tomorrow. Neither side be happy, and that's fine. That Solomonic decision won't satisfy the Israeli nationalists, whose parade will not take place this year, but it will also leave the Palestinian Arabs mightily displeased, finding themselves now unable to engage in Allahu-Akbaring as they had hoped to do in their "victory" parade. It's much easier for the police to prevent a parade from beginning at all than to police it, and hold in check the potential for violence among spectators along the route. Sauce for the Arab goose, sauce for the Jewish gander. This year, just this once, No More Parades.

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