

Palestinian and Israeli leaders condemn mosque attack

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Jerusalem, June 7 (ENInews)--Israeli and Palestinian politicians condemned an arson attack on a West Bank mosque on 7 June, but Palestinians also accused Israel of "turning a blind eye" to the attacks, which they suspected were carried out by Jewish settlers.

According to reports, the fire began in the mosque of the West Bank village of al-Mughayyir northeast of Ramallah, in the early hours of the morning and was discovered by Palestinian worshippers who had come for morning prayers. Reports said a burning tire was found inside which had burned the carpet.

Press reports noted that Hebrew graffiti was found on the mosque wall reading "Price Tag -- Eley Ain" which seemed to imply that the attack was in reprisal for the recent removal of some structures in the nearby Israeli settlement of Eley Ain.

"Israeli authorities cannot continue to turn a blind eye, which gives settlers impunity to continue their attacks," the Palestinian government said. "The international community needs to condemn this outrage and insist that Israel is held accountable."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the attack a "criminal act intended as a provocation," adding that "Israel has pioneered respect of freedom of worship and will work decisively against all who harm this principle. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said he had instructed the military to "use all means to apprehend the perpetrators."

The issue of Jewish settlements in the West Bank is a highly charged subject in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and negotiation talks have fallen

apart because of disagreements. Though supportive of the settlers, Netanyahu's government has also dismantled structures in illegal new outposts. An Israeli police spokesman told journalists the police had launched an investigation at the site in the village.

According to the Palestinian government spokesman, this was the fifth mosque arson to take place since 2009. "If Israel once again makes no serious efforts to prosecute settlers, the conclusion will be clear that they are above the law, granted impunity by their own state," they said.