

## ISRAEL: Five women arrested at prayer Wall For Wearing Prayer Shawls

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 11 April 2013 00:00

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### Five women arrested at prayer Wall For Wearing Tallitot



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Police arrest 5 women at Western Wall for wearing tallitot

Haredi man arrested for allegedly lighting woman's prayer book on fire; Women of the Wall

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Director Lesley Sachs among those detained for wearing prayer shawls; Kotel Rabbi Rabinowitz slams "provocation."

Police arrested five women on Thursday morning for wearing tallitot (prayer shawls) traditionally worn by men, while participating in a Rosh Hodesh prayer service at the Western Wall attended by some 200 women.

Police additionally arrested a haredi man who allegedly lit one of the women's prayer books on fire.

Among those arrested was Director of the Women of the Wall, Lesley Sachs. Meretz MK Tamar Sandberg accompanied Sachs after her arrest.

The arrests came following an announcement this week of plans for an egalitarian prayer section at the Western Wall being developed and brokered by Jewish Agency chairman Natan Sharansky.

"It's a joke that a day after Sharansky's plan was published around the world women are being arrested at the Kotel," Zandberg said.

Chiming in on the matter, Meretz MK Michal Rozin said that the fact that a haredi rabbi decides what the customs of the site are must be changed in order to stop arrests.

"This is a political and ideological fight. I am working to changing the regulations so women can pray as they wish at Kotel," Rozin stated.

Western Wall and Holy Sites Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz expressed regret over what he called the women's "provocation."

The rabbi said the women's actions breached the court's decision and disturbed others praying at the Kotel. He added that the fact that they were continuing to act in this way despite the compromise proposed by Sharansky was "clear evidence that their purpose is to stir controversy and hurt other people's feelings while increasing polarization among the people and turning the Kotel into a battlefield of fanaticism."

Sharansky told The Jerusalem Post on Tuesday night that a section for egalitarian prayer must be established at the holy site.

The chairman's plan, devised in cooperation with MK Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid) and Deputy Religious Services Minister Eli Ben-Dahan, among others, involves the expansion of the current Western Wall Plaza to comprise an area from the northern end of the Western Wall site down to the southern end of the wall by Robinson's Arch.

The plan calls for the current prayer area at Robinson's Arch, which was designated for non-Orthodox prayer in 2003 by the Supreme Court, to be elevated to the same level as the current plaza area, and for the area running along the Western Wall to be divided into three

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equal parts -- male, female, and egalitarian -- with one entrance to the entire complex set to be created.

However, Ben-Dahan told the Post on Wednesday that the Mughrabi Bridge, an earthen ramp and wooden bridge leading up to the Temple Mount that constitutes a solid barrier between the current plaza and the Robinson's Arch area, will remain in place.

This may not satisfy the demands of the Women of the Wall group, which has stated that it would find any solution in which the group be forced to pray separately from the main plaza unacceptable.

"אנו מציעים להקים אולם תפילה נפרד לנשים, אך לא נסגור את המזרחי"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Mbi9Fgtjal>