A group of 300 prominent Rabbis, the Rabbinical Congress of Peace, have criticized Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, after it was revealed he has given the go ahead for the Jordanian Waqf to construct a massive fifth minaret on the Temple Mount. The Rabbis have stated that the construction of a fifth minaret will only embolden Islamic terrorism, which uses the Al-Aqsa mosque as a rallying point to start off riots against the Jews. Their words are markedly similar to my own recent comment about Prime Minister Olmert's decision to soften his stance against Hamas. The Rabbis also criticized Olmert for allowing Jordan to construct the minaret on a spot where they had planned to erect a synagogue, which would have allowed Jews to pray on the Temple Mount without the threat of violence.

**Quote:** *""The mere fact of giving up sovereignty of the Temple Mount - the holiest site of the Jewish People - is an indication of how far the Israeli government has deteriorated and is prepared to forfeit Jewish rights and ownership of Israel granted in our holy Torah, the most authoritative book in the world," said Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, son of the chief Sephardic authority on Jewish Law and Shas spiritual mentor Rabbi Ovadye Yosef . Olmert's allowing the minaret to be built is a grave threat to the security of Israel. It will* ***embolden*** *the enemies of the Jewish state to believe their* ***tactics of violence and terrorism are paying off****, and that Israel is in retreat. We have already witnessed in the past the use of the Temple Mount as a pretence to launch violence and murder Jews.*

The criticism comes as Muslim leaders in the region have slammed Israel for its construction work, which isn't even taking place on the Temple Mount, and is needed to replace a wooden ramp that collapsed during a snow storm several years ago. Prime Minister Olmert slammed Muslim leaders who criticized the construction work, saying nobody could tell Israel what to do on its own sovereign territory. Israel took control of the Temple Mount during the Six Day War in 1967. Until that date, Israel was separated from its most holy site by a barrier of barbed-wire and bullets. Before then many of the Jews had not even seen the Wailing Wall or the Temple Mount, nor had the privilege of praying in that place. Israel has sovereignty over the Temple Mount, but handed administration

of the site to the Jordanian Waqf after the war, so as not to inflame Muslim opinion.

**Quote:** *"The Lower Al-Aqsa mosque, which can be used by up to 500 worshippers, is situated on 1000 square meters of ground in the south western corner of the Temple Mount, beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In the days of the second Temple, this was one of the main entrances to the temple. The construction was carried out without any request for permission being made, in complete disregard to building codes and is causing archaeological damage. But as the Moslem workers broke down walls, cleared out dust from knolls and built a new pavement, the Waqf prevented the entrance of inspectors from the Antiquities Authority to the area. "We enter any area in the State of Israel without restriction; the only place where this does not apply is the Temple Mount", says Amir Drori, Director-General of the Antiquities Authority angrily.*

My grandmother, who passed on to be with her Lord three years ago, visited Israel three times and place slip of paper with my name on it in the Wailing Wall when I was a child.

Source Shturem , Jerusalem Post , Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs