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**2000: 'Provocative' mosque visit sparks riots**  
 Palestinians and Israeli police have clashed in the worst violence for several years at Jerusalem's holiest site, the compound around Al-Aqsa mosque.

The violence began after a highly controversial tour of the mosque compound early this morning by hardline Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon.



Ariel Sharon, under heavy guard, insisted his visit was "not provocation"

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## 2000: 'Provocative' mosque visit sparks riots

"Palestinians and Israeli police have clashed in the worst violence for several years at Jerusalem's holiest site, the compound around Al-Aqsa mosque.

The violence began after a highly controversial tour of the mosque compound early this morning by hardline Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon. Under heavy guard, Mr Sharon entered the compound with a right-wing Likud party delegation. He crossed from the west side of the compound to the east and back again, to the sound of enraged protests from demonstrators outside.

BBC correspondent Hilary Andersson said the visit was clearly intended to underline the Jewish claim to the city of Jerusalem and its holy sites.

**'Dangerous step'** *"I came here to the holiest place of the Jewish people in order to see what happens here and really to help the feeling that we are now ready to move forward,"* he said. But Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat described his visit as a "dangerous step".

**Rubber bullets** - Soon after Mr Sharon left the site, the angry demonstrations outside erupted into violence. Israeli police fired tear gas and rubber-coated metal bullets, while protesters hurled stones and other missiles.

Police said 25 of their men were hurt by missiles thrown by Palestinians, but only one was taken to hospital. Israel Radio reported at least three Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets. The violence comes at a highly sensitive time for the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, outlined his vision for Jerusalem for the first time today in a newspaper interview. He said he would be willing to accept two capitals - a Palestinian-controlled Al Quds next to an Israeli Jerusalem - as part of a possible peace agreement. The peace process has been stalled over the issue of Jerusalem since the failure of the Camp David summit in July this year. However, Mr Barak insisted he would not hand over the Temple Mount compound to Palestinian sovereignty. "

### Questions.

1. Underline key information.
2. Introduce the source.
3. Why was Ariel Sharon's visit so controversial?
4. What did this visit trigger in Palestinian Territories? Why?