

UN Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory

Ramallah

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Violence and restrictions in the Occupied West Bank coinciding with ceasefire implementation

The UN Human Rights Office is alarmed by a wave of renewed violence perpetrated by settlers and Israeli security forces in the Occupied West Bank, coinciding with the implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement and the release of hostages and detainees. This has been accompanied by increased restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement across the West Bank, including complete closure of some checkpoints and installation of new gates, effectively confining entire communities.

Public statements by Israeli officials warning against celebrations by Palestinian families whose detained loved ones are being released coincided with calls by settlers for gatherings and attacks at locations where detainees are returning. Settler attacks followed, on 19 January, in several towns including Sinjil, Turmus'ayya, and Qalqilya, where scores of settlers torched Palestinians' houses and vehicles, blocked roads, and threw stones. Six Palestinians were injured in Sinjil, including three children, aged between 14 and 16.

Also yesterday, Israeli security forces raided several Palestinian towns in the West Bank. In Sebastia, Nablus, Israeli security forces shot in the chest and killed a 14-year-old Palestinian boy, reportedly unarmed, in the absence of confrontations or clashes. Public statements by Israeli military officials also raise concern about Israel's plans to expand and increase operations in the Occupied West Bank.

Israeli security forces also closed a number of checkpoints in Jericho, set up flying checkpoints in Tulkarm, and further increased searches and controls at checkpoints around Nablus and Tulkarm governorates. They additionally shutdown all entrances to Hebron, which has effectively cut off thousands of Palestinians from neighboring communities and largely prevented children from attending schools, and residents from reaching work. Thirteen new iron gates were reportedly installed at entrances of towns across the Occupied West Bank.

Palestinian security forces detained several Palestinians, including journalists, covering the release of Palestinian detainees.

While the ceasefire takes hold in Gaza, it is important to stress again that international law binds duty-bearers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel has the obligation to dismantle settlements and evacuate all settlers from the Occupied West Bank and end its unlawful presence

across the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible. In the meantime, Israel has an obligation as the occupying power to ensure the protection of Palestinians from all acts of violence.

Furthermore, Israeli and Palestinian security forces must ensure Palestinians' ability to exercise the full range of their human rights, including freedoms of expression, assembly and movement. They must also ensure their conduct complies with international human rights law, including strict adherence to the rules on the use of force applicable to law enforcement operations. This includes immediately putting an end to the growing practice of unlawful killings of Palestinians both through targeted killings and unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, and conducting thorough, effective and transparent investigations into all possible violations to hold perpetrators accountable.

ENDS

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