

# *Israeli Forces Attack Palestinians on Ramallah Solidarity March*

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Ramallah, May 12 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have clashed with hundreds of Palestinians who had turned out for a demonstration in solidarity with prisoners on hunger strike, injuring nearly a dozen protesters. The scuffles erupted near the Israeli Beit El settlement north of Ramallah Thursday, when Israeli forces fired live bullets, rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas to prevent them from approaching a military checkpoint.

Israeli forces also used water canon containing foul-smelling liquid to disperse the crowd. The Palestinian Ma'an news agency reported that 11 demonstrators had been wounded in the clashes.

Thursday's march was called in solidarity with more than 1,600 Palestinian prisoners, who have gone on hunger strike to express their outrage at harsh conditions in Israeli jails. The protest action, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike, began on April 17. It is led by a jailed leader of the Palestinian Fatah movement, Marwan Barghouti.

"We are entering an extremely critical period" for the hunger strikers," Qadura Fares, head of the Palestinian Prisoners Club, said at the Ramallah rally. "A large number of prisoners can no longer move from their bed or take care of their basic needs."

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