

More than a dozen Gazans injured during protest against Israeli naval blockade



Gaza City, December 4 (RHC)-- More than a dozen Palestinians have been injured and scores of others sustained injuries as hundreds of people staged a demonstration near the Gaza Strip's northern maritime border with the Israeli-occupied territories during a weekly protest against the Tel Aviv regime's 12-year naval blockade.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society said in a statement that two protesters were struck with live bullets, while 15 others suffered wounds after being hit with rubber-coated steel bullets. Another Palestinian protester was injured by shrapnel.

Dozens of demonstrators suffered tear gas inhalation as well, and were transferred to hospitals for treatment. Palestinian sources said 30 boats flying national Palestinian flags attempted to break Israel's naval siege northwest of the city of Beit Lahia.

Israel imposed a limit of three nautical miles on fishing in the waters off the Gaza shore until August 2014, when Palestinian fishermen were allowed to go out six miles under a ceasefire agreement reached between the Israelis and Palestinians following a deadly 50-day Israeli war in the same month.

The fishing zone is supposed to extend to 20 nautical miles under the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords were signed between the Israeli regime and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during the early-mid 1990s to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In May 2017, Israeli authorities increased the fishing area for Gazan fishermen to nine nautical miles.

Over the past few years, Israeli forces have carried out more than a hundred attacks on Palestinian boats, arresting dozens of fishermen and confiscating several boats. The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli blockade since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

Tensions have been running high near the fence separating Gaza from the occupied territories ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in the Gaza Strip on March 30. More than 240 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces. Over 23,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on May 14, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day (Day of Catastrophe), which coincided this year with the US embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East Jerusalem. MSF says around 1,000 Palestinians shot by Israeli forces during anti-occupation protests in the besieged Gaza Strip have infections that could leave them permanently crippled.

The resolution, which had been put forward on behalf of Arab and Muslim countries, garnered a strong majority of 120 votes in the 193-member assembly, with 8 votes against and 45 abstentions.

The resolution called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to make proposals within 60 days “on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation,” including “recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.”

It also called for “immediate steps towards ending the closure and the restrictions imposed by Israel on movement and access into and out of the Gaza Strip.”

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