Israeli forces kidnap Hamas officials, several other Palestinians during West Bank raids
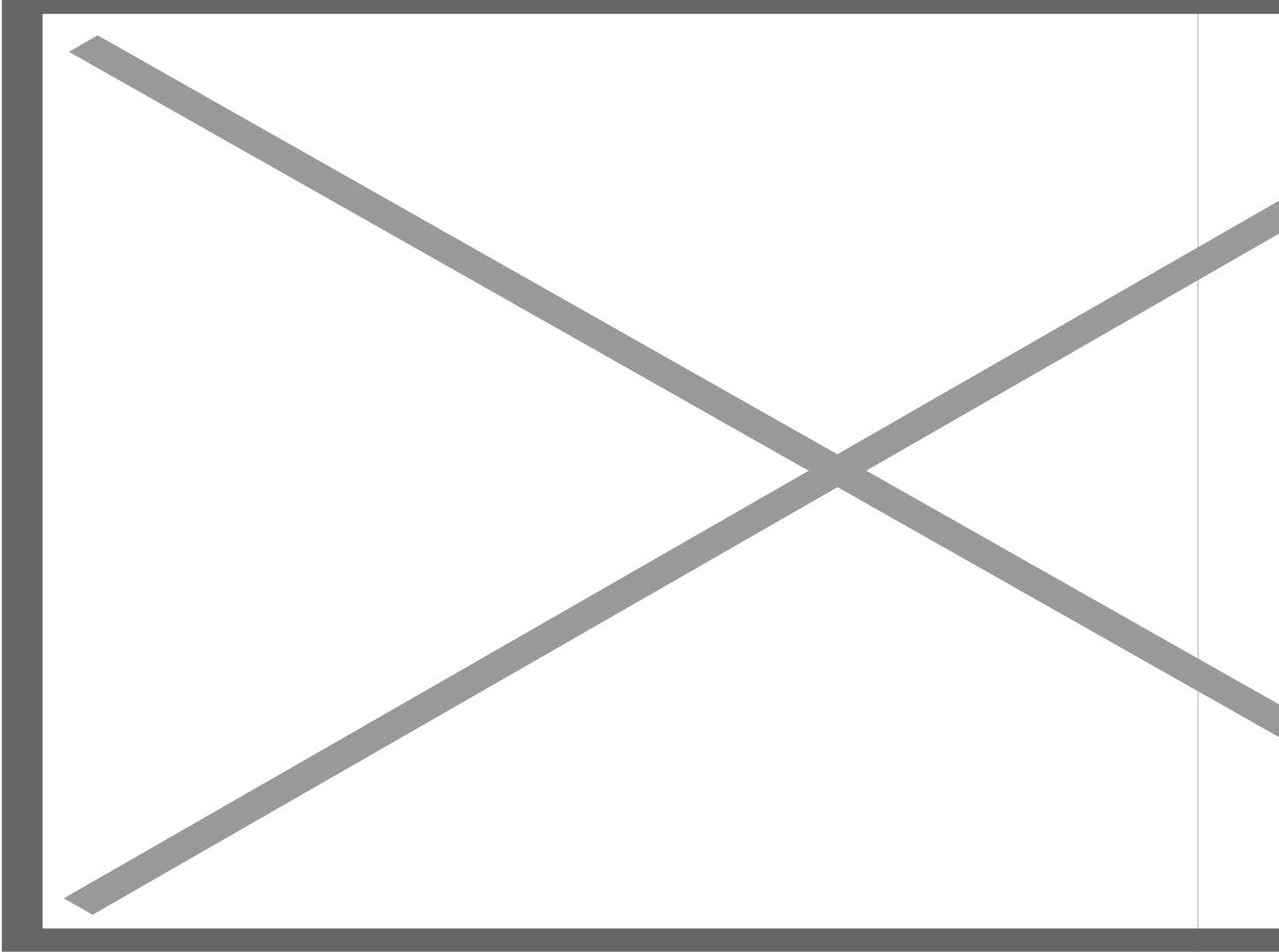
Israeli forces as they storm different parts of the occupied territories on April 12, 2021. (Via Palestinian media)

Gaza City, April 13 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have kidnapped a number of Palestinians, including officials from the Hamas resistance movement, in a series of raids across the occupied West Bank.

The Palestinian Information Center, quoting local sources, reported that Israeli forces abducted three Hamas officials from their homes after storming several neighborhoods of the city of al-Khalil at dawn on Monday.

The arrests come as Palestinian political factions are preparing for general elections on May 22, with Israeli officials reportedly expressing concern about potential victory of Hamas in the upcoming vote.

Last month, the Mddle East Eye quoting a report by Haaretz newspaper said that Israel's internal security agnecy Shin Bet is intimidating members and supporters of the Hamas movement in the occupied West Bank and warning them against running in the upcoming Palestinian legislative elections.

Meanwhile, a young Palestinian man -- whose father had been released two days ago -- was also forcibly taken away from the town of Beit Ummar, northwest of al-Khalil. Israeli forces also arrested a female activist and ex-prisoner after breaking into her house in the village of Arraba near the northern West Bank city of Jenin.

Two brothers were also arrested after Israeli forces raided their houses in Jenin. At least 10 other Palestinians were also detained from an area in the West Bank village of Tuqu, southeast of Bethlehem.

Two more Palestinians were taken away from their home in Deir Jarir village, northeast of Ramallah. Israeli forces also broke into several other parts of the occupied West Bank, with no reported arrests.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces stormed several parts of the Ras al-Amud neighborhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem al-Quds where they arrested an 18-year-old Palestinian youth, after severely beating him.

Three other young Palestinians were also kidnapped by Israeli police from their homes in the East Jerusalem al-Quds neighborhood of al-Tur.

In recent months, Israeli forces have frequently raided the houses of Palestinians in the occupied territories, arresting dozens of people, who are then transferred to Israeli prisons, where they are kept without any charges.

The circumstances surrounding the kidnappings remain unknown, although Israelis carry out such swoops customarily. Israel holds more than 7,000 Palestinians in its jails. Most of the prisoners are being held with no indictment or trial, under a controversial policy known as "administrative detention."

Separately on Monday, Israeli forces detained a Gaza resident after he allegedly tried to infiltrate into the occupied territories. The Israeli military claimed its forces in the north of the besieged Gaza Strip had arrested an unarmed Palestinian for some hours and released him after questioning him.

Gaza has been under Israeli all-out siege since June 2007, which has caused a decline in living standards.

Israel has also launched three major wars against the enclave since 2008, killing thousands of Gazans each time and shattering the impoverished territory's already poor infrastructure.

The crippling blockade has caused a decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty in the Gaza Strip.

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