

At least 10 Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in West Bank protests

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Palestinian youths use a trash bin as a barricade, during confrontations with Israeli security forces near the Hawara checkpoint south of the occupied West Bank city of Nablus [Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP]

Ramallah, May 15 (RHC)-- Israeli security forces have killed at least 10 Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, as multiple protests erupted amid growing anger over Israel's intensifying aerial bombardment in Gaza and the threat of forced expulsion of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem.

Following Friday prayers, thousands of Palestinians protested in more than 200 locations across the West Bank. More than 500 Palestinians were injured across the territory, with protesters hit by Israeli bullets, tear gas and live fire, the Palestine Red Crescent Society said.

Hundreds of Palestinians in Jordan also tried to mass on Jordan's border with Israel on Friday but were stopped by Jordanian security forces, while Palestinians in southern Lebanon tried to breach the border with Israel.

The protests come amid an escalation in days of fighting between Israel and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip. Israel unleashed more barrages of air strikes and tank fire on the Gaza Strip on Friday, while Palestinian armed groups continued to launch rockets into Israel from the besieged coastal enclave.

At the Beit El checkpoint in al-Bireh, near Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, hundreds of Palestinians from rival political factions of Hamas, Fatah and the left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) marched together – alongside those with no political affiliation – chanting in support of Gaza and Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem.

The sound of Israeli live gunfire and rubber-coated steel bullets cracked in the air as ambulances raced back and forth carrying the wounded, while plumes of smoke billowed into the air from tyres set alight by protesters.

The deaths on Friday took the total number of Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in confrontations in the West Bank to at least 12 since Monday, when Israel launched air raids on the besieged Gaza Strip in response to Hamas rocket attacks.

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