

2022 was deadliest year for Palestinians in West Bank since Second Intifada in 2005

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An Israeli soldier uses a weapon amid clashes with Palestinian protesters in al-Khalil in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on April 1, 2022. (File photo by Reuters)

London, January 1 (RHC)-- New data has revealed that 2022 has been the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since the Second Intifada which ended in 2005, with at least 220 people being killed at the hands of Israeli forces across the occupied territories.

According to figures published by the Middle East Eye, Israeli forces shot dead 167 people in the West Bank and East al-Quds, and 53 people in the besieged Gaza Strip, with 48 children being among the total casualties.

The report further noted that in at least five cases, Israeli settlers were suspected of killing Palestinians while the regime's military is responsible for the overwhelming majority of deaths. The London-based news website also said the majority of Palestinian casualties were likely unarmed at the time of their death.

In at least 95 cases, Palestinians were shot by Israeli soldiers as bystanders during military raids or while participating in anti-occupation demonstrations. More than 22 Palestinians were killed after alleged car ramming, shooting or stabbing attacks against Israelis and security forces. In some cases, Palestinians were fatally shot for allegedly "attempting" to carry out such attacks.

Tensions have been running high across the occupied Palestinian territories over the past months. Incidents of sabotage and violence by settlers against Palestinians and their property have become a daily occurrence throughout the occupied territories, particularly in the West Bank. However, Israeli authorities rarely prosecute settlers, and the vast majority of the files are closed due to deliberate police failure to investigate them properly.

Moreover, Israeli forces have recently been conducting overnight raids and killings in the northern occupied West Bank, mainly in the cities of Jenin and Nablus, where new groups of Palestinian resistance fighters have been formed.

Meanwhile, the United Nations says Israeli forces killed more Palestinians in the West Bank in 2022 than in any year since the world body began systematically recording fatalities in 2005. UN experts have held Israel responsible for the recent surge of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories, warning that the brutality could further escalate with the new far-right Israeli cabinet.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Israeli security forces have killed 146 Palestinians in the West Bank and mainly East al-Quds through December 19 of this year, compared with 75 in 2021. Four more Palestinians were killed by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, OCHA added.

Most of the Palestinians were killed during Israeli military raids and clashes in the West Bank cities of Jenin and Nablus, the UN said, adding that more than half were under the age of 25. Earlier this month, UN experts condemned Israeli settler violence and excessive use of force by the Israeli military in the West Bank.

"Unless Israeli forces abandon this dominant settler mindset and rightfully treat Palestinians in the occupied territory as protected persons, Israel's deplorable record in the occupied West Bank will likely deteriorate further in 2023," they said.

Israeli occupation soldiers and Israeli settlers have noticeably been escalating their attacks against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and other areas, in an attempt to forcibly expel Palestinians from their lands and make way for expanding illegal Jewish-only settlements.

Between 600,000 and 750,000 Israelis occupy over 250 illegal settlements that have been built across the West Bank since the 1967 occupation.

The UN Security Council has in numerous resolutions condemned the Tel Aviv regime's settlement projects in the occupied Palestinian lands.

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