

New Israeli air attacks hit Gaza



Gaza City, January 27 (RHC)-- Israel has launched multiple air attacks on the Gaza strip a day after Israeli forces killed 10 Palestinians – including an elderly woman – in the Jenin refugee camp, marking one of the deadliest raids in the occupied West Bank by Israel's military in years.

“The IDF (Israel’s army) is currently striking in the Gaza strip,” the army said in a statement on Friday. Security sources in Gaza told the Agence France-Presse news agency that there had been 15 strikes. Witnesses and local media reported that Israeli drones fired two missiles at targets in Gaza before fighter jets struck, causing four large explosions. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The Israeli army said the air attacks on Gaza – one of the most densely populated areas in the world with 2.1 million residents – followed after two rockets were fired towards Israel at about midnight (22:00 GMT). Air raid sirens had sounded in southern Israel as the initial two rockets were fired and then again after the Israeli air attacks.

The Israeli army said the rockets were intercepted by Israel’s air defence system and the country’s Channel 12 aired footage of Israeli interceptor missiles being launched into the night sky above the city of Ashkelon, about 12km (7 miles) north of Gaza. No group has claimed responsibility for the reported rocket fire.

The Israeli air attacks and rocket fire followed Israeli forces killing 10 people during a raid on the Jenin refugee camp. At least 20 people were also injured in what has been described as one of the deadliest days in the occupied West Bank since Israel ramped up raids at the start of 2021.

Four of those injured in the raid were in critical condition and the dead included an elderly woman who was identified as Magda Obaid by the Jenin hospital authorities.

People filled the streets across the West Bank on Thursday to show solidarity with Jenin as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared three days of mourning.

Palestinian Authority spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh said Abbas had cut security coordination with Israel in “light of the repeated aggression against our people and the undermining of signed agreements”. He also said that Palestinians planned to file complaints with the United Nations Security Council, the International Criminal Court and other international bodies over Israel’s violence.

The United Arab Emirates, China and France have asked the UN Security Council to meet behind closed doors on Friday over the attacks, diplomats said. Tor Wennesland, the UN’s special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said on Twitter he was “deeply alarmed” and “saddened” by the violence and that he was engaged with Israeli and Palestinian authorities to “de-escalate tensions, restore calm and avoid further conflict.”

Israel’s Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir lauded Israeli forces on the Jenin raid, saying those who try to “harm our personnel should know that his blood is forfeit”.

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