

*Legal experts affirm Israeli
military's onslaught on Jenin
amounts to war crime*



Boston, July 15 (RHC)-- The Israeli military's deadly raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the northern occupied West Bank fits into the parameters of war crimes under the Geneva Conventions, legal experts argue.

Susan Akram, a clinical professor at Boston University's School of Law, said the raid, which killed at least 12 Palestinians and wounded dozens more, clearly amounts to a war crime for a number of reasons, including intentionally attacking a civilian population and attacking medical units.

“The Geneva Conventions include as war crimes during occupation, willful killings, willfully causing great suffering to an occupied population and extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity,” Akram said during a webinar hosted earlier this week by the Arab Center Washington, DC. There’s no doubt, she declared, that what Israel carried out in Jenin constitutes a war crime.

Daniel Levy of the US/Middle East Project and journalist Dalia Hatuqa, the other panelists on the webinar, also agreed that Israel’s actions in the West Bank amount to a war crime.

Akram said the narrative used by Israel that the raids on Jenin and other Palestinian cities like Nablus are an attempt to root out resistance groups does not stop its actions from being illegal under international law.

Pointing out that the West Bank is an occupied territory, she said: “Israel’s attacks on an occupied population are criminal in and of themselves because occupation law forbids the occupier to use military attacks against civilian targets in the territory it occupies.”

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), some 900 Palestinian houses were damaged and many of them became uninhabitable in the wake of the Israeli military’s raid on the Jenin refugee camp.

Adnan Abu Hasna, the spokesman for the UN agency, said on Tuesday that his fellow colleagues are still documenting the damage caused inside the camp during the onslaught.

The UNRWA’s priority is to help restore some sense of normality by resuming its services like education, healthcare and sanitation, he added.

“The other urgent priority is to provide cash assistance to families who were displaced from their homes, and help them pay for rent and rehabilitate their residences,” Abu Hasna noted.

Last week, a group of UN experts said Israel’s military raids targeting the Jenin refugee camp “may prima facie constitute a war crime.”

“Israeli forces’ operations in the occupied West Bank, killing and seriously injuring the occupied population, destroying their homes and infrastructure, and arbitrarily displacing thousands, amount to egregious violations of international law and standards on the use of force and may constitute a war crime,” the experts said in a statement.

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