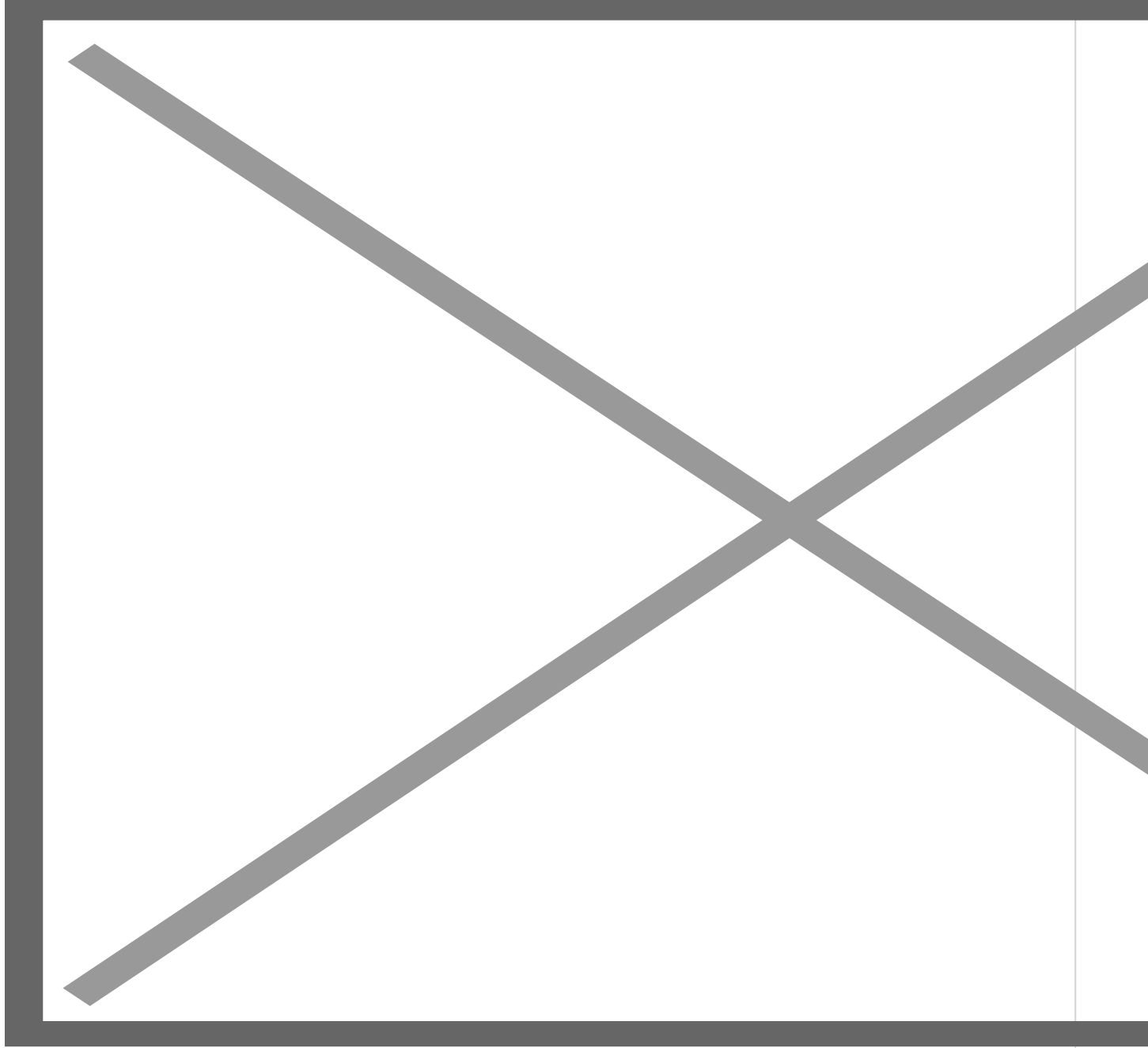


Palestinians strike, protest in occupied West Bank in support of Gaza

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Protesters in Hebron hold signs during a rally supporting the Palestinians in Gaza, where the death toll has risen above 18,200. [Hazem Bader/AFP]

Ramallah, December 12 (RHC)-- Shops, schools and government offices have been shut across the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem as Palestinians stage a general strike in protest against Israel's relentless bombing of the Gaza Strip.

The bloodiest ever war in Gaza has killed more than 18,000 Palestinians in two months, most of them women and children. Nearly 50,000 have been wounded in what some nations have called a “genocide.”

The National and Islamic Forces, a coalition of major Palestinian factions, called Monday’s general strike by people in the West Bank and supporters across the world.

Many Palestinians shut their businesses, and rallies were held, according to Essam Abu Baker, who coordinates the Palestinian factions in Ramallah. “Al-Manara Square, often seen as a place for anti-war demonstrations, was filled today [Monday] by one of the largest crowds we have seen in some time,” Al Jazeera’s Zein Basravi reported from Ramallah. “There were people of all ages here. Children decorated a canvas with messages of love to Gaza. They drew Palestinian flags,” he said.

Basravi said the strike and protest were aimed at reminding people that the Palestinians in Gaza are connected to those in the West Bank. “Raising their voices is the least they can do. In some cases, it is all they can do,” he said.

“A chant we heard people saying was ‘We will die so Palestine can live.’ “We have also heard people say things like ‘Put the bullet in the barrel and fire on us. We are not afraid.’”

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