

*United Nations condemns mass killing, displacement of Palestinians in occupied West Bank*

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United Nations, July 25 (RHC)-- The United Nations says Israeli forces and armed settlers have killed 563 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East al-Quds, since Israel began its war on Gaza in October, highlighting mass killing and displacement of Palestinians in the area.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in its recent report on Wednesday disclosed that Israeli forces have killed a total of 548 Palestinians since October 7, 2023 as the world's attention was focused on Gaza.

Israeli settlers also are responsible for the deaths of at least 10 Palestinians, with 7 cases in which it is unclear if the perpetrators were Israeli forces or settlers, it added.

In the most recent development in the area, an Israeli drone strike killed five Palestinians, including two women and three resistance commanders, in the Tulkarm refugee camp and Tulkarm city.

Tulkarm governorate has seen the highest number of Palestinian fatalities in the West Bank since October 7, 2023, with 115 deaths during Israeli forces' operations and 39 casualties from airstrikes, making up 22 percent of the total.

However, the death toll provided by the Palestinian Health Ministry is slightly different as it says that at least 589 Palestinians, including 142 children, have been killed in the occupied West Bank since Israel began its genocidal war against Gaza.

Moreover, the OCHA reported that Israeli forces have destroyed or ordered the destruction of 1,247 Palestinian-owned buildings in the West Bank, with 481 of them being homes. This has led to the displacement of 2,836 Palestinians, including 1,245 children.

During the same period, the OCHA has documented 1,143 incidents of Israeli settlers' attacks against Palestinians, since the start of the conflict in Gaza. Out of the number, 108 attacks caused injuries, 916 resulted in damage to Palestinian property, and 119 led to both casualties and property damage.

Violence and human rights abuses in the West Bank have sharply risen in the first half of 2024, with a 65 percent spike from the previous year, as stated in recent reports by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an Oslo-based NGO that seeks to protect the rights of people affected by displacement.

Settler attacks have also climbed, with 649 incidents recorded in the first half of 2024, compared to 598 in 2023. "The data indicates that Israeli forces are deploying unwarranted use of lethal force against Palestinian civilians," said Ana Povrzenic, NRC's country director in Palestine. She added that the deteriorating situation in the West Bank is directly linked to the actions of top Israeli officials to assert control over the region in defiance of international laws.

Last Friday, July 19th, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion stating that Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East al-Quds, is illegal and that Israel's settlement policy is in breach of the Geneva Convention and must be terminated promptly.

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