

*Israeli forces kill worshipers and  
burn homes during second day of  
West Bank attacks*

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Ramallah, August 30 (RHC)-- The Israeli military is pressing on with its largest military onslaught across the occupied West Bank in more than two decades despite widespread international condemnation.

The death toll from Israel's major assault on the occupied West Bank, which started on Wednesday, rose to at least 18, Palestinian official Wafa news agency reported on Thursday.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said in a statement that a Palestinian man lost his life in eastern Jenin early Thursday. It came shortly after five Palestinians were killed by Israeli army fire inside a mosque in Nur Shams refugee camp in the northern city of Tulkarem.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said 12 Palestinians were killed on the first day of the raids and assaults.

Israel began coordinated raids in the early hours of Wednesday. Columns of Israeli armored vehicles backed by troops and warplanes were sent in before soldiers encircled refugee camps in Tubas and Tulkarem, as well as Jenin.

The situation in the occupied West Bank is deteriorating dramatically. Local Palestinian media reports say Israeli occupying forces have burned several homes and inflicted extensive destruction to infrastructure in the Nour Shams refugee camp, east of Tulkarm.

Electricity and internet services have been cut in some areas of the West Bank.

The violent raids have caused significant destruction, especially in Tulkarem, whose governor described the raids as “unprecedented” and a “dangerous signal”.

The authorities reported widespread damage to infrastructure, including to water and sewage networks.

Media footage showed bulldozers ripping up the asphalt from streets in the city as a precaution against concealed explosives.

The Hamas resistance movement has slammed Israel’s siege of hospitals in Jenin and Tulkarm which is continuing to prevent injured people from entering the health facilities.

Some media reports quoting witnesses said Israeli forces had withdrawn from the al-Farra refugee camp in Tubas, where several Palestinians were killed on Aug 28.

But clashes were still taking place in Jenin, where a drone was seen flying overhead. Israeli soldiers were also still operating in Tulkarem.

The Palestinian Prisoners’ Club said at least 45 people had been arrested since the start of the Israeli operation in the northern West Bank. The Palestinian Authority (PA) presidency condemned Israel’s assault and warned it could usher in “dire and dangerous” results. Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas returned early from a visit to Saudi Arabia.

The United Nations expressed concern over the Israeli offensive across the occupied territories. In a statement, UN chief Antonio Guterres condemned the loss of lives, including that of children, and urged Israel to protect civilians and ensure their safety.

“These dangerous developments are fueling an already explosive situation in the occupied West Bank and further undermining the Palestinian Authority,” he added. The United Nations says Israel’s raids and assaults on the occupied West Bank risk “seriously deepening” an already “catastrophic situation” there.

Violence by settlers and raids by Israeli forces have surged in the West Bank since Israel launched its barbaric military campaign in the besieged Gaza Strip in early October 2023.

Israeli assaults on refugee camps and towns in the West Bank are a near-daily occurrence and have intensified since October 7th last year. Since then, Israel has killed at least 40,534 people and wounded another 93,778 in the besieged Gaza Strip. It has killed 662 Palestinians and injured about 5,400 in the West Bank during that same period.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, al-Haq and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights have warned of escalating violence in the West Bank and the use of tactics by Israeli forces that the world has witnessed in its war on Gaza.

In a landmark opinion on July 19, the International Court of Justice declared Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land unlawful and demanded the evacuation of all settlements in the West Bank

and East al-Quds.

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