

Israeli forces commit heinous crime by throwing Palestinians' bodies off building in Jenin

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Ramallah, September 20 (RHC)-- Israeli forces killed at least seven Palestinians in a raid on the occupied West Bank town of Qabatiya, with video footage showing soldiers pushing what appeared to be dead bodies off a rooftop.

The military stormed Qabatiya on Thursday, backed by bulldozers, fighter jets and drones in an hours-long assault, with Palestinian news agency Wafa confirming on Friday that seven people had been killed.

Video footage verified by Al Jazeera showed soldiers pushing apparently lifeless individuals off the rooftop of a building that they had earlier surrounded and attacked with antitank rifle grenades, one soldier clearly seen kicking one of the bodies until it fell over the edge.

In a post on X, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the act as a “crime” that exposes the Israeli army’s “brutality.” Wafa reported on Friday that the Israeli army had thrown three men off the building, having earlier shot them on the rooftop, a military bulldozer later taking their bodies away.

Mustafa Barghouti, the secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative, told Al Jazeera that the footage had shown “absolutely savage and inhuman behaviour”.

Barghouti said he was not sure if the soldiers had checked if the people they threw from the roof “were still alive or not.” Under international law, soldiers are supposed to ensure that bodies, including those of enemy fighters, are treated decently.

The Israeli military, which claims it killed four Palestinian gunmen during the clashes, acknowledged the video evidence of the abuses, saying that the incident was “under review”.

“This is a serious incident that is not in line with [Israeli army] values ??and what is expected of [Israeli army] soldiers,” it said in a statement.

Shawan Jabarin, director of Palestinian rights group Al-Haq, said he was doubtful Israel would properly investigate the incident. “The most that will happen is that soldiers will be disciplined, but there will be no real investigation and no real prosecution,” said Jabarin.

“The footage we’ve seen is horrific and it’s making the rounds here in Palestine. But ultimately, Palestinians are not surprised. Israel has a track record of disrespecting the bodies of the Palestinians they kill,” said Leila Warah, reporting from Ramallah, as raids across the territory were ongoing on Friday.

The death toll rose to seven after Palestinian Red Crescent teams recovered the body of a Palestinian man, identified as Shadi Sami Zakarneh, from the building that had been besieged by Israeli forces.

During the attack on Qabatiya, the Israeli military also bombed a vehicle near a commercial complex in the town, setting it ablaze in an attack that killed two young men, according to Wafa.

Medics in the town confirmed another death from “wounds sustained during the Israeli offensive”, said the news agency.

Eleven were injured by live bullets in the clashes. At least 1,000 children were barricaded in two schools and a kindergarten. The children were eventually evacuated on buses with the help of the Palestinian Red Crescent, but the town remained under siege into the night.

Some 200 employees of the Education Directorate were also unable to leave their building as Israeli forces surrounded the compound, Wafa reported.

In a brief voice message, a teacher reached by Al Jazeera described “a very dangerous situation around us.”

The latest raid came less than a month after Israel staged the deadliest assault on cities in the West Bank since the second Intifada.

On August 28, Israeli forces attacked the cities of Tulkarem, Tubas, and Jenin, located in the north of the occupied territory, in raids lasting weeks and killing at least 39 Palestinians.

More than 600 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since October 7 – the deadliest year there since the United Nations began tracking casualties in 2005.

“You cannot say that this is a part of the war because there is no war in the West Bank,” said Barghouti. “There is war from one side, military actions from one side on a civilian population.”

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