Israeli Forces Clash with Palestinian Mourners

Ramallah, July 24 (RHC)-- Thousands of Palestinian mourners have clashed with Israeli forces at a mass funeral held for a Palestinian man killed by the Tel Aviv regime troops in the occupied West Bank.

According to Palestinian media sources, Falah Abu Mariya, 53, was shot three times in the chest during a raid on his home in Beit Ummar, located eleven kilometers (6.8 miles) northwest of the West Bank city of Hebron on Thursday morning. Later in the day, thousands of Palestinian mourners took part in a funeral procession for Mariya. The victim's body was carried by the mourners through the troubled region, with the participants calling for the "avenging" of his death.

The Palestinians chanted anti-Israeli slogans and called on the international community to break its silence on Israel's acts of violence against Palestinians across the occupied lands. The mourners said they were out in the streets to show solidarity with their fellow citizens who are being killed by the Israeli forces nearly on daily basis.

The funeral was largely peaceful until Israeli forces attacked protesters and fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets to disperse the angry crowds. The protesters threw stones at Israeli troops in return. Unconfirmed reports also indicate that the Israeli soldiers also used live ammunition to disperse the crowds.

The Palestinian Authority's official news agency Wafa said Abu Mariya was killed "in cold blood" while trying to protect his two sons. Palestinian medical sources say one of Abu Mariya's sons was being treated for a gunshot wound to the pelvis.

Meanwhile, Palestinian resistance groups - Hamas and Islamic Jihad - strongly condemned the raids in the occupied territories, and hinted at revenge after Thursday's death.

"We hold the Zionist occupation's forces totally responsible for the killing of the martyr Falah Abu Maria in cold blood," they said in a joint statement, adding, "The two movements stress our people's right to self-defense and to a response to the crimes of the occupation, by all possible and available means."

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