

200 Palestinians Arrested in Israeli Crackdown over Missing Teens



Ramallah, June 17 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have continued to round up scores of Palestinians as part of a hunt for three teenagers who went missing in the West Bank. In total, more than 200 Palestinians have been arrested.

Israel has accused Hamas of kidnapping the three young men and has launched a massive crackdown on the group — although it has yet to provide proof.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has backed Israel's claims, saying "many indications point to Hamas' involvement" in what he called "a despicable terrorist act."

One of the teens, Naftali Frankel, is a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen. At least one Palestinian has been killed and another shot and injured amid the search.

Israeli Army Launches More Air Raids on Gaza Strip

The Israeli army has launched several attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip under the pretext of finding three Israeli settlers who have gone missing since a few days ago.

On Tuesday, four airstrikes were carried out in the city of Khan Yunis, the Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip. No casualties have been reported so far. The Israeli air force has recently carried out at least a dozen strikes on the Gaza Strip.

The attack came as rocket fire from the Gaza Strip has escalated over recent days, with the majority of Israeli forces and efforts focused on searching the West Bank for the three teenage Israeli boys presumed to be kidnapped since last Thursday.

Late Monday, a rocket fired from Gaza in the direction of Ashkelon landed in an open field; no injuries or damage were reported.

Earlier Monday a Iron Dome missile defense battery, which was recently transferred to the Ashkelon area, intercepted two rockets fired at the city from Gaza. Fragments of the rockets scattered across the city. There were no reports of injuries or material damages.

Gaza has been blockaded since June 2007, after the Hamas militant group assumed the government of the small coastal enclave. Both its borders with Israel and Egypt remain shut down. This situation has caused a decline in the standards of living, unprecedented levels of unemployment, and unrelenting poverty.

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