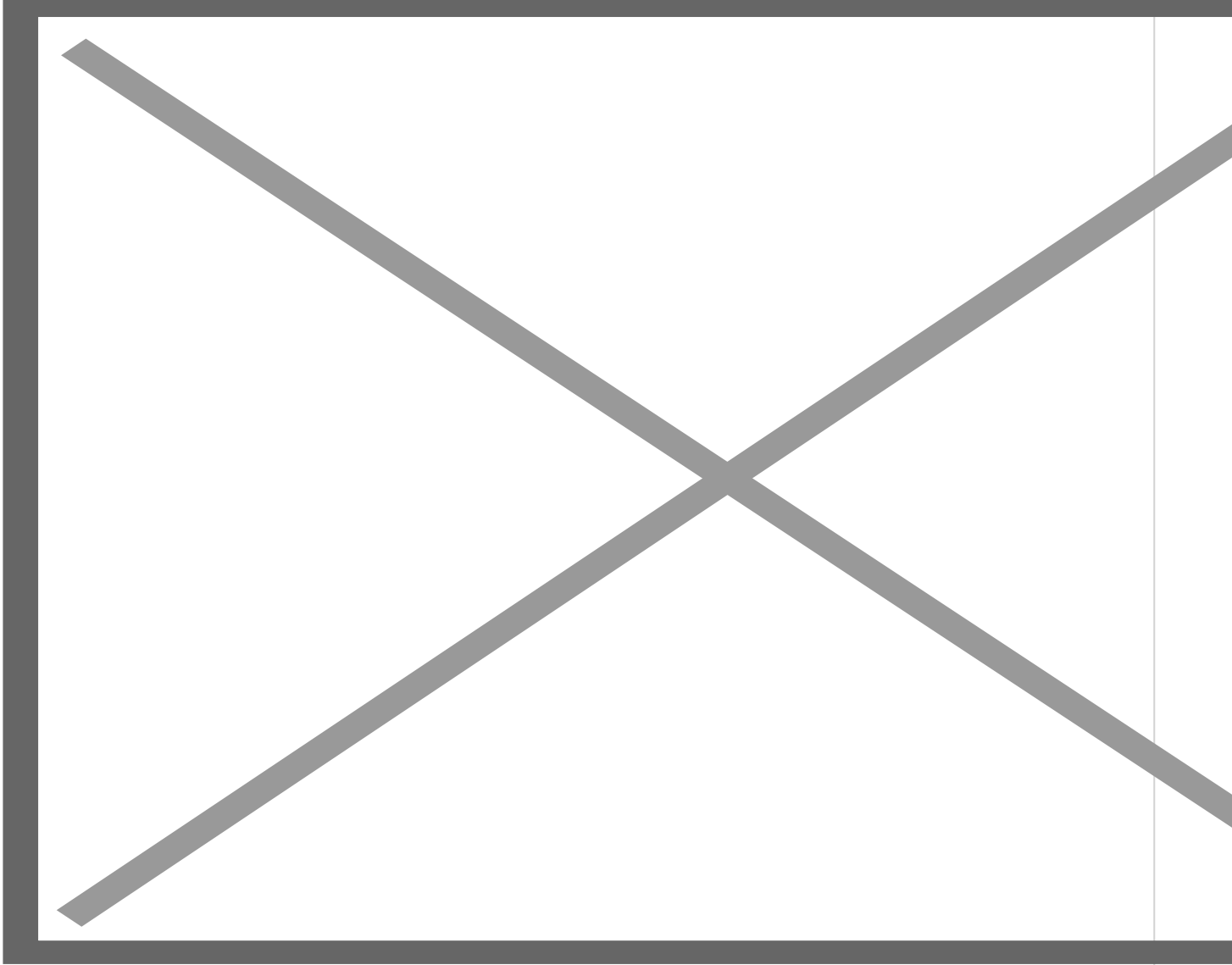


Israeli army fatally shoots Palestinian man in occupied West Bank

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In this file photo, Israeli soldiers aim their weapons at Palestinian demonstrators in Hebron in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on May 18. [File: Mussa Qawasma/Reuters]

Ramallah, July 4 (RHC)-- Israel's army has fatally shot a Palestinian man in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health agency said, as local media reported Israeli soldiers and settlers had opened fire in a village south of the city of Nablus.

Palestinian news agency Wafa said a Palestinian man in his 20s was shot in the chest while standing on the roof of his home in Qusra, a village encircled by illegal Jewish settlements and settlement outposts.

Two other Palestinians were also shot and injured "while fending off an attack" by Israeli settlers on the village, the news agency reported. The Palestinian health ministry identified the slain man as Mohammad Fareed Hassan, 20.

An Israeli military spokesperson said soldiers had been trying to disperse confrontations between Israeli settlers and Palestinians. The troops then saw a man throw an explosive device at them from a rooftop and "responded with fire against the suspect in order to eliminate the danger," the spokesperson said.

Palestinians have been holding weekly protests against the expansion of Israeli settlements at several locations in the West Bank. In April, United Nations human rights experts said Israeli settler violence against Palestinian civilians was on the rise amid a climate of widespread impunity.

Meanwhile, also on Saturday, the Israeli military said it launched air raids on "a weapons manufacturing site and a rocket launcher belonging to Hamas", the Palestinian faction that governs the besieged Gaza Strip. The army said the raids were in response to incendiary balloons launched from Gaza. Local media reports said a Palestinian man was seriously wounded in the raids.

The bombings are the fourth since a May ceasefire ended 11 days of fighting between Israel and Hamas. At least 256 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed in Israel's bombardment that month, according to Gaza authorities.

Egyptian and international mediators have been trying to shore up the informal ceasefire.

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