

Palestinians in Gaza protest against wave of Israeli violence

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Participants in the protest hold a banner that reads 'Al-Aqsa is a part of our creed' [Abdelhakim Abu Riash/Al Jazeera]

Gaza City, October 16 (RHC)-- Thousands of people in the besieged Gaza Strip have protested in solidarity with fellow Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem amid a wave of violence by Israeli forces.

The rallies, called by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, began from mosques in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza and Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, where the demonstrators carried banners that read: "Palestine brings

us together, Jerusalem is ours, We will defend Jerusalem with our hands and souls.”

The protesters held banners of solidarity with the people of Jerusalem and pictures of young men killed by the Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Mosheer Al-Masry, a senior Hamas official, told Al Jazeera the protests affirmed the unity of all Palestinians following a reconciliation deal signed by rival Palestinian groups on Thursday.

“The West Bank and Jerusalem are entering in a new phase that shows Israeli occupation that armed struggle is the choice of our people,” he said. He noted daily incursions by Israeli settlers into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, in the old city of Jerusalem, and other recent Israeli provocations at the site were only driving Palestinian resistance.

“Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque are the core of the conflict and for their sake our people rose up throughout their history,” he said. “The West Bank is rising up again, confirming that the path towards liberation and sweeping the occupier is through the barrel of a gun.”

Israeli forces have been carrying out near-daily raids in the occupied West Bank in recent months, largely focused on the towns of Jenin and Nablus, where a new wave of Palestinian armed resistance is emerging.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of the year, at least 160 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, including 51 Palestinians during Israel’s three-day assault on Gaza in August, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

Tensions have also been high in occupied East Jerusalem since Saturday evening after Israeli police locked down the Shuafat camp on the pretext of searching for a Palestinian suspected of killing a female soldier.

On Wednesday, businesses went on strike and educational institutions closed in occupied East Jerusalem in solidarity with the besieged people in the Shuafat camp and with the Anata, Ras Khamis, Ras Shehadeh and Dahiyat al-Salam neighbourhoods, where the Israeli police have imposed strict restrictions on residents’ movements.

In Khan Yunis, Abu Sufyan Muhammad, 60, told Al Jazeera he was protesting to show his support for the people of the occupied territories in light of the recent wave of violence. “We will not be silent about the Israeli actions against us. We are one people and one suffering, and our protest today is an affirmation of our unity in the face of the occupation,” he said.

Muhammad called on all Arab and Islamic countries to intervene to stop repeated Israeli aggression. “The situation has become unbearable. Enough of the silence and humiliation. The occupation does what it wants without accountability.”

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