

Israeli police accused of executing Palestinian in West Bank

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Israeli security forces aim their guns as they deploy in the occupied West Bank settlement of Huwara, following an incident during which a Palestinian man was shot dead by Israeli police [Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP]

Ramallah, December 4 (RHC)-- The Palestinian foreign ministry has said the shooting of a Palestinian man by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank was tantamount to an execution meant to escalate already spiralling violence in the occupied territory, Reuters news agency reported. The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed the death over the weekend.

On Twitter, the United Nations Middle East envoy, Tor Wennesland, said he was horrified by the latest killing and the European Union said it was concerned by what appears to be an excessive use of force by Israeli security forces towards Palestinians. On Monday, Wennesland warned the situation in the West Bank was “reaching a boiling point.”

The killing on Friday was captured on video and widely circulated on social media. It showed an Israeli soldier holding the Palestinian man in a headlock by a road as two other men try to wrestle him away. The man then appears to strike the soldier and attempt to take hold of his rifle before the soldier pulls out a handgun and shoots him several times as he falls to the ground.

A member of the Huwara municipality, Wajeh Odeh, told AFP news agency the shooting followed “a quarrel.” “An Israeli soldier pushed the Palestinian to the floor and shot him at point-blank range,” Odeh said. The Palestinian Red Crescent said its medics “were prevented from dealing with a wounded person who was later declared dead.”

The shooting marks the ninth Palestinian killed since Tuesday in the occupied West Bank, mostly in clashes with or raids by Israeli forces, and the surge in violence has alarmed the international community.

At least 145 Palestinians and 26 Israelis have been killed so far this year across the West Bank, Israel and Jerusalem.

In Washington, State Department Spokesman Ned Price reiterated that the United States was “deeply concerned” by the violence in the occupied West Bank, pointing in particular to the toll on children. “We re-emphasise the need for all parties to do everything in their power to de-escalate the situation. It’s vital that the parties themselves take urgent actions to prevent even greater loss of life,” Price told reporters.

Rising Israeli-Palestinian tensions have made 2022 the deadliest year since the end of the second Intifada in 2005. An escalation in violence is also likely, as the most right-wing and religious government in Israel’s history is poised to be installed in the coming days or weeks, with former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returning to power.

Forty-nine Palestinians were killed in just three days of fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip in August. The United States Special Representative for Palestinian Affairs Hady Amr said Washington is “deeply aware of the tragic loss of life” in the Palestinian territories.

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