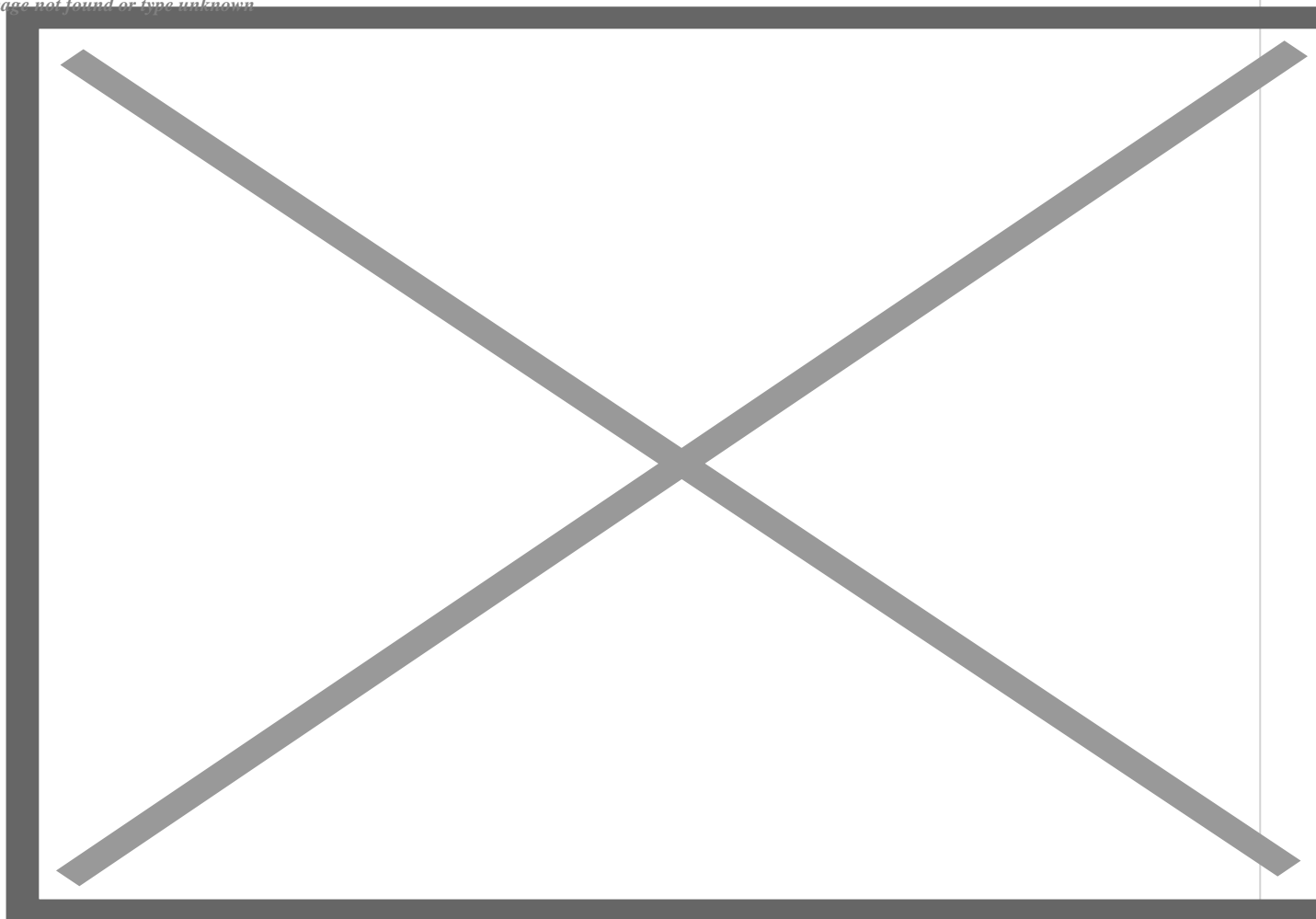


Israeli army kills Palestinian boy in the occupied West Bank

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Israelis have killed 14 Palestinians this year, as the Israeli army continues its near-daily raids on the occupied West Bank [File: Hazem Bader/AFP]

Ramallah, Occupied West Bank, January 17 (RHC)-- The Israeli army has shot and killed a Palestinian child during a raid in the southern occupied West Bank. The boy was identified as 14-year-old Omar Khaled Lutfi Khmour by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which announced his death on Monday afternoon.

The ministry had reported early on Monday that Khmour suffered a serious injury when he was shot in the head by Israeli forces during the raid on the Dheisheh refugee camp in the city of Bethlehem. Israeli forces raided the camp just before dawn on Monday and carried out arrests, during which confrontations broke out with Palestinian youth.

The Israeli army said its troops opened fire in response to having rocks, Molotov cocktails and improvised explosive devices thrown at them. The Palestinian Ministry of Education condemned the killing and said Khmour was a student in the ninth grade at a United Nations refugee agency school in the camp.

Khmour is the fourth Palestinian minor killed by the Israeli army in the occupied West Bank in the first 16 days of 2023. He is also the 14th Palestinian killed by Israelis in total during the same period.

The Israeli army regularly carries out raids, arrests and killings of Palestinians living under military occupation since 1967 in the West Bank. Over the past year, however, Israel has stepped up its operations, leading to near-daily raids and killings in Palestinian villages, cities and refugee camps under the banner of crushing limited armed resistance focused in the north of the occupied West Bank.

Israeli forces have killed civilians confronting them during raids, uninvolved bystanders as well as Palestinian fighters in targeted assassinations and during armed clashes. The majority of those killed, however, have been civilians.

The United Nations said 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank since 2006, with Israeli forces killing 171 Palestinians, including more than 30 children. A total of 224 Palestinians were killed during 2022, including 53 people during a three-day Israeli assault on the besieged Gaza Strip. Of those 53 victims, 17 were children. At least 9,000 Palestinians were injured during the same period.

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