

Israeli soldiers open direct fire at Palestinian journalists near West Bank city of Nablus

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Israeli soldiers take position amid clashes with Palestinian demonstrators following a protest

against expropriation of Palestinian land in the village of Kfar Qaddum in the occupied West Bank, near the illegal settlement of Kedumim (Photo by AFP)

Ramallah, January 29 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have opened direct fire on Palestinian journalists in the flashpoint town of Beita, near the West Bank city of Nablus, as tensions continue to escalate in the occupied territories.

Wahaj Bani Moufleh said he and his colleague Mohammad Sumrin were covering the closure of the town's entrance with cement boulder by the Israeli military on Saturday when the regime's troops directly shot live gunfire in their direction, Palestine's official Wafa news agency reported.

The shooting took place as the journalists were wearing easily-recognizable press attire. Sumrin told Wafa that a number of soldiers first fired teargas canisters at a group of Palestinian youths, then came to where they were and opened fire in their direction but over their heads. The soldiers forced them to pull back immediately and go into the town to avoid being hit, he added.

This is not the first time the Israeli military directly targets journalists while covering the occupying regime's crimes in the occupied territories. In May last year, Israeli forces intentionally targeted veteran Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh while she was covering their raid in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. The 51-year-old journalist was murdered in cold blood as she was wearing press attire. Abu Akleh's tragic death sent shock waves across the region, drawing global condemnation.

Multiple investigations by independent organizations and media outlets concluded that Abu Akleh was deliberately shot by Israeli forces.

Saturday's development took place after an Israeli settler opened fire and injured five people in Beita. Israeli troops then placed the boulders at the entrance of the town, blocking the movement of people instead of arresting the attacking settler.

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