World reacts to Israeli settler terrorist attack in West Bank
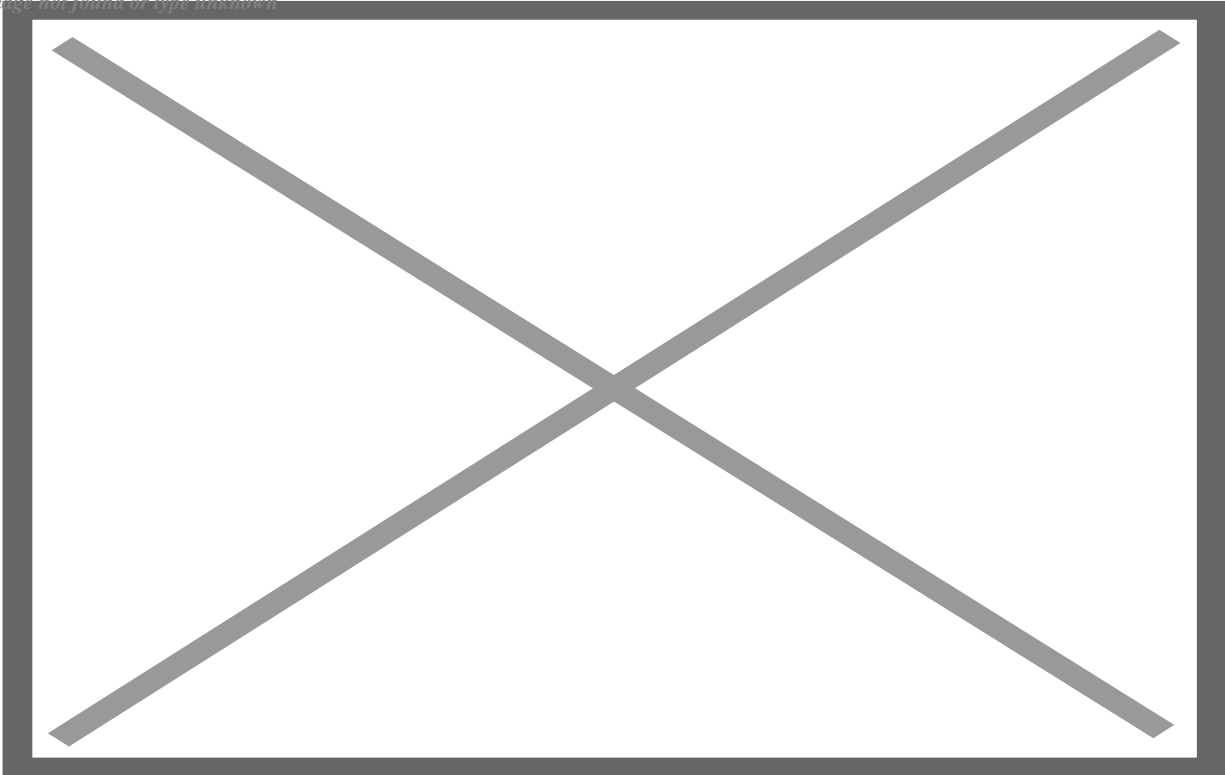

A home torched by masked settlers in the Palestinian town of Jit in the West Bank, August 15, 2024. (Screenshot: X; used in accordance with Clause 27a of the Copyright Law)

Ramallah, August 16 (RHC)-- Palestinians in the occupied West Bank are reeling after Israeli settlers ravaged a village overnight, killing a 23-year-old man and injuring several others in the latest incident of deadly violence against Palestinians in the area.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said on Friday that Mahmoud Abdel Qader Sadda was fatally shot in the attack on Jit, in the northern West Bank about 10 km (six miles) west of Nablus.

Dozens of masked Israeli settlers descended on the village, opening fire on residents, setting cars ablaze and destroying homes and other property, according to witnesses and video footage from the assault.

The attack came amid a surge in Israeli military and settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, which has unfolded in the shadow of Israel's war on the Gaza Strip.

Nearly 600 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank between the start of the Gaza war on October 7 and August 12, according to the latest figures from the United Nations humanitarian affairs office (OCHA).

Rights groups also have criticised Israel for allowing its forces as well as settlers to operate with "endemic impunity" in their attacks against Palestinians.

The assault on Jit drew widespread condemnation from Palestinians as well as foreign leaders, including those from countries that continue to provide military and diplomatic support for Israel amid the Gaza war.

Here are some of the reactions:

Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attack as an act of "organised state terrorism."

"We demand the imposition of deterrent sanctions on the racist colonial system, the dismantling of the terrorist settler militias, and the prosecution of their members," it said in a statement.

Hamas

The Palestinian faction, which governs Gaza, offered condolences to the man killed in Jit.

In a statement, Hamas said the attack was part of Israel's "fascist extermination plans."

"We call on our people in all governorates of the West Bank to rise up in anger to deter the settlers and repel their terrorist attacks," the group said.

Israel's "policy of incursions, assassinations and unleashing settler gangs will only increase our people's adherence to their land and holy sites".

Israel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he viewed "with utmost severity the disturbances that took place" in Jit, "which included attacks on people and property by Israelis who entered the village".

"It is the [Israeli army] and the security forces that fight terrorism, and nobody else. Those responsible for any offense will be apprehended and tried," the statement said.

Yoav Gallant, Israel's defence minister, also condemned the violence, which he attributed to "radical individuals".

United States

A spokesperson for the US National Security Council said that "attacks by violent settlers against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank are unacceptable and must stop".

"Israeli authorities must take measures to protect all communities from harm, this includes intervening to stop such violence and holding all perpetrators of such violence to account," the spokesperson said, as

reported by US media.

The US ambassador to Israel, Jack Lew, added in a social media post that Israeli settler attacks "must stop and the criminals be held to account".

European Union

Josep Borrell, the EU foreign policy chief, said the attack in Jit "aimed at terrorising Palestinian civilians".

"Day after day, in an almost total impunity, Israeli settlers fuel violence in the occupied West Bank, contributing to endanger any chance of peace," he wrote on social media, urging Israel to "stop these unacceptable actions immediately".

United Kingdom

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said he condemns the attack "in the strongest of terms."

"The scenes overnight of the burning and the torching of buildings, of the Molotov cocktails thrown at cars, of the widespread rampage and chasing of people from their homes, is abhorrent," he told reporters in Jerusalem alongside his French counterpart.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu has said that there will be a swift investigation. I hope that that investigation can ensure that those who engaged in this settler violence over the course of the last 24 hours are brought to justice."

France

French Foreign Minister Stephane Sejourne said "any act that would destabilise" negotiation efforts – notably to reach a ceasefire in Gaza – is "unacceptable".

"We are very vigilant and attentive and we denounce this situation," he said, noting that France imposed sanctions against "violent settlers" earlier this year.

Ravina Shamdasani, the spokesperson for the UN's human rights office, said the violence in Jit was "not an isolated attack."

"It is the direct consequence of Israel's policy of settlement in the West Bank. We have been reporting for the past years about settlers attacking Palestinian communities in their land in the West Bank with impunity," Shamdasani told reporters.

"And this really is the crux of the matter: the impunity that the perpetrators of such grave violations have been enjoying." She added that there have been "reports of Israeli security forces standing by as attacks take place", as well as reports of "weapons being distributed to the settlers".

"So there is clearly a state responsibility in this regard."

UN special rapporteur

Francesca Albanese, the UN's special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, said sanctions must be imposed on Israel after the settler attack.

"Time to act was decades ago: as it was not done, that time is now," she wrote on X.

Peace Now (Israel)

The Israeli group described the settlers's rampage in Jit as a "pogrom".

"This is pure settler terrorism—supported by the state, sponsored by our government," Peace Now said on X.

Radio Habana Cuba