

At least four Palestinians killed in Israeli attack near Jenin in occupied West Bank

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Palestinians inspect a bullet-riddled car after an Israeli operation near the southern West Bank village of Sir, south of Jenin [Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP]

Ramallah, December 2 (RHC)-- At least four Palestinians have been killed in an Israeli operation in the occupied West Bank, according to authorities. The attack occurred in the village of Sir near Jenin on Sunday, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. It said the killings were a result of “the occupation’s aggression.” Israel’s military also confirmed that four Palestinians were killed, describing them as “terrorists.”

The Palestine Red Crescent Society, meanwhile, reported that Israeli forces had been “preventing our teams from reaching the bombing site”.

Fares Irshaid, a resident of Sir, described the attack to the AFP news agency. “In the morning, the planes came and started bombing this area,” Irshaid said. “Shortly after that, the army stormed the entire area. They declared it a closed military zone.”

“There was a group of young men, including my nephew and the son of our neighbours, and we do not know their fate,” he told the news agency. Israel has not released the bodies of those killed although the military identified one of the dead as 31-year-old Wael Lahluh.

There has been a surge in Israeli military operations and violence by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank since the war in Gaza began on October 7, 2023. At least 780 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, adding to the 44,429 Palestinians killed in Gaza since the outbreak of the war.

Israel said 24 Israelis have been killed in the West Bank during that period while Hamas’s attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, killed at least 1,139 people.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Willem Marx, a journalist based in the West Bank, said Sunday’s operation was initially “a drone attack, using bullets against cars.” “It seems the men inside [the cars] then fled on foot to a nearby agricultural storage space in quite a remote region just southeast of the city of Jenin,” he said.

He added the Israeli military has said those killed were reportedly responsible for several attacks on Israeli settlers. The military said Lahluh had killed a 23-year-old settler in August.

While Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and are seen as a major obstacle to a future Palestinian state, the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has continued their expansion. The military regularly intervenes to protect Israeli settlers.

The latest Israeli operation was carried out after Israel last month launched several raids in Jenin, killing nine people.

Two Palestinians, including a teenage boy, were also killed during an Israeli raid in the West Bank village of Yabad on November 24, according to the Palestinian Authority.

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