

# *Israeli Troops Fire Tear Gas at Protesters in Qalqilya in West Bank*

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Ramallah, February 27 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have fired tear gas at a group of Palestinian protesters demonstrating against the blockade of their city, Qalqilya, in the north of the occupied West Bank.

Several Palestinians suffered respiratory problems following inhalation of tear gas on Thursday after Israeli forces attacked a peaceful protest in the town of Azzun in Qalqilya Province, al-Quds News Agency reported. The deputy governor of Qalqilya, Colonel Hussam Abu Hamda, was among the victims of tear gas.

The march began from the center of Azzun and continued towards the eastern entrance of the town which has been closed for more than 14 years by the Israeli regime. The protesters called for the opening of the entrance in order to facilitate the citizens' transportation.

Azzun's approximately 10,000 residents have long been subject to Israeli military restrictions. In 2001, all entrances to the town were blocked except for a tunnel leading into neighboring villages. The tunnel was sometimes blocked, as well, forcing locals to travel on foot.

In the last decade, most restrictions on movement have been lifted, but the eastern entrance remains blocked.

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