

At least 22 Palestinians injured in Israeli attack on Gaza naval protest



Gaza City, December 18 (RHC)-- Israeli soldiers have wounded at least 22 Palestinians in an attack on demonstrators that had gathered along Gaza's territorial waters to stage a new protest against the Israeli occupation.

The injuries took place on Monday afternoon, when hundreds of Palestinians participated in the 20th weekly naval march in the northern Gaza Strip against the crippling blockade of the coastal enclave.

The Palestinian Ma'an News Agency said Israeli forces fired live ammunition, rubber bullets and teargas bombs at protesters and boats attempting to break the 12-year siege.

Medical sources in Gaza confirmed on Monday that 22 Palestinians had sustained injuries, three of them with Israeli live bullets and 19 with rubber-coated steel bullets or teargas inhalation.

Israel imposed a limit of three nautical miles on fishing in the waters off the Gaza shore until August 2014, when Palestinian fishermen were allowed to go out six miles under a ceasefire agreement reached between the Israelis and Palestinians following a deadly 50-day Israeli war in the same month.

The fishing zone is supposed to extend to 20 nautical miles under the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords were signed between the Israeli regime and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during the early-mid 1990s to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In May 2017, Israeli authorities increased the fishing area for Gaza fishermen to nine nautical miles. The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli blockade since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standard of living as well as unprecedented levels of unemployment and unrelenting poverty.

Tensions have been running high near the fence separating Gaza from the occupied territories ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in the Gaza Strip on March 30. More than 240 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces. Over 23,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

More than 200 Palestinians have so far been killed and over 20,000 others wounded in the renewed Gaza clashes, according to the latest figures released by the Gaza Health Ministry.

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