

Palestinian authorities say Israel's attack on Jenin constitutes a massacre



Ramallah, July 4 (RHC)-- Israel's bloody incursion against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank continues with growing calls for the protection of civilians and fears the tense situation could explode into another devastating war.

The ground-and-air attack on the Jenin refugee camp on Monday was the largest military operation in the occupied territory since the 2000-2005 Second Intifada – or mass Palestinian uprising against Israel's decades-long occupation.

The ongoing incursion killed at least eight people including two children. A ninth Palestinian was also shot dead by Israeli soldiers near Ramallah.

Nidal Obeidi, the mayor of Jenin, said the attack was “a real massacre and an attempt to wipe out all aspects of life inside the city and the camp.” “Those being targeted now are not just the resistance fighters but civilians are being killed and wounded as well,” he told Al Jazeera.

The municipality of Jenin announced water and electricity services had been cut off from the refugee camp because of ongoing combat. The Palestine Red Crescent said at least 3,000 people were evacuated from Jenin. Deploying hundreds of forces, attacking from the sky with drones, and launching rockets on the densely populated camp of about 20,000 people, the Israeli military also targeted infrastructure by destroying homes and roads.

The hotbed of resistance against the Israeli occupation has repeatedly been a focus. At least seven Palestinians were killed in an Israeli incursion in Jenin just two weeks ago.

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen claimed Tel Aviv is not intending to expand its operation to the rest of the occupied West Bank, but armed confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinian fighters near the refugee camp continued and the military sent reinforcements.

Palestinian fighters were holed up in a mosque, the Israeli military said, adding the operation would continue until suspects belonging to armed groups were captured, which might require another 24 hours to complete.

The two young victims in Jenin were identified as Nouruddin Husam Yousef Marshoud, 15, and 17-year-old Majdi Younis Saud Ararawi, according to the group Defense for Children International–Palestine. The oldest of Monday's nine victims was 23-year-old Mohammed Muhannad al-Shami.

Several journalists said they were directly targeted by Israeli live fire while reporting on the events in Jenin. Al Araby TV channel correspondent Ahmed Shehadeh said the army destroyed his camera with gunfire while he and four other journalists were stuck inside one of the homes in the camp for two hours before being evacuated by the Red Crescent.

It was not the first time media members have become victims in Jenin. Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, 51, was killed by Israeli soldiers while reporting on a military raid on the camp last year. The Palestinian-American correspondent was shot in the head while wearing a blue flak jacket clearly marked with the word “PRESS.”

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