

Israeli forces kill Palestinian woman in occupied West Bank

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Mourners at the hospital where Ghufraan Hamed Warasneh was pronounced dead

Ramallah, June 1 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have shot and killed a Palestinian woman at the Arroub refugee camp in the southern Israeli-occupied West Bank. The Palestinian health ministry identified the woman as 31-year-old Ghufraan Hamed Warasneh, and said that she had been shot in the chest.

In a statement, the Israeli army said “an assailant armed with a knife advanced toward an IDF [Israeli army] soldier who was conducting routine security activity.” However, witnesses told Al Jazeera’s Givara Budeiri that, in their view, Warasneh had posed little threat to the soldiers, and that the knife was small.

Budeiri also added that Warasneh had started a new job at a radio station three days prior to being killed. “She was leaving her home on her way to work, according to eyewitnesses,” said Budeiri.

Warasneh was shot just before 8am (5:00 GMT) at the entrance to the camp, which is located between Bethlehem and Hebron, and where Israeli soldiers are permanently stationed. She was transferred by the Palestinian Red Crescent to al-Ahli hospital in Hebron, but died shortly afterwards, despite efforts to resuscitate her.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said that Israeli forces had obstructed their ability to access Warasneh and took 20 minutes to allow medics to treat her. Doctors at the hospital said the bullet she was shot with had pierced her heart.

The Palestinian Prisoners Society (PPS) said in a statement mourning her killing that she had recently spent three months in Israeli prisons, and was released at the start of April 2022.

Local and international rights groups have condemned what they call Israel’s excessive use of force and “shoot-to-kill policy” against Palestinians, including suspected assailants, in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Senior Israeli politicians – including Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett – have encouraged the use of lethal force and given orders to shoot Palestinians who did not pose an imminent threat.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has noted in reports that Israeli forces “often use firearms against Palestinians on mere suspicion or as a precautionary measure, in violation of international standards”.

There has been an increase in violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories since the start of the year. According to the Palestinian ministry of health, Israeli forces have killed 59 Palestinians since January 1st. A string of Palestinian attacks since March have killed 19 people in Israel.

On May 11, Israeli forces killed Al Jazeera TV correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh, 51, while she was covering a military raid on the northern city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank.

Hundreds of Palestinians have been injured in raids by Israeli forces and settlers at the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound in occupied East Jerusalem during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and Sunday’s Israeli far-right ‘Jerusalem Day’ parade in and around the Old City.

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