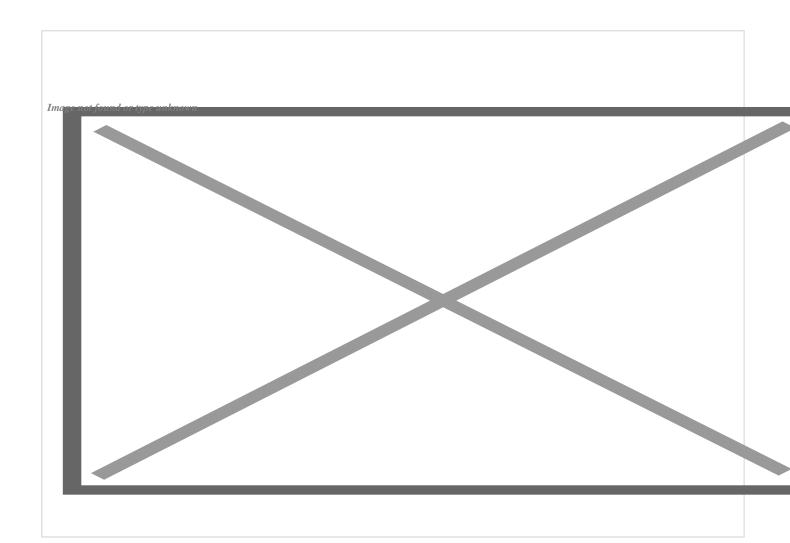# Israeli forces kill 15-year-old Palestinian shot in the back

Ramallah, March 4 (RHC)-- Israeli forces have shot dead a 15-year-old Palestinian in the occupied West Bank, according to Palestinian officials. Ahmad Enaya, the mayor of the West Bank town of Azzoun, said an Israeli military vehicle drove into town late on Thursday and when teens hurled rocks at the car, soldiers responded with live fire.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health said Muhammad Nidal Salim was "killed by bullets in the back fired at him by the occupation [Israeli] soldiers." Two others were wounded, including a child who is in critical condition, the ministry added, without giving their ages.

The Israeli military said in a statement that soldiers shot at suspects who had hurled explosives at forces while they were conducting a search in the area for people who launched fireworks at Israeli vehicles passing near Azzoun. It said it was aware of reports of people being wounded but did not confirm any Palestinian deaths.

Violence in the West Bank has been spiralling, with Israel conducting near-daily raids over the last year, killing hundreds of Palestinians. Late on Sunday, the Palestinian town of Huwara came under attack from Israeli settlers, hours after two settlers were shot dead as they drove through the northern West Bank town.

Hundreds of settlers set homes and cars ablaze and hurled stones in Huwara overnight, and a Palestinian man was killed in the nearby village of Zaatara. The settler rampage was described by Palestinians, and an Israeli general, as a "pogrom" '' with apparent support from some leading Israeli politicians.

Israel's far-right finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, said Huwara should be "wiped off the map" -- leading to a rebuke from the United States.

On Monday, gunmen shot dead an Israeli-American motorist, and on Wednesday Israeli forces searching for suspects in the Aqabat Jaber refugee camp near Jericho killed a Palestinian man.

Israeli forces carried out three large-scale raids in Palestinian cities since Israel's new government took office at the end of last year, including one in Nablus on February 22 that led to the largest Palestinian death toll in a single Israeli military operation since 2005.

New armed Palestinian groups have also emerged, and there has been a spate of Palestinian attacks against Israelis. Fears of escalation before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the Jewish Passover festival have prompted the United States, Jordan and Egypt to appeal for calm.

At least 66 Palestinians, including gunmen and civilians, have been killed since the start of 2023, the Palestinian health ministry said. Thirteen Israelis and a Ukrainian tourist died in Palestinian attacks in the same period, according to official Israeli figures.

On Friday, a top U.S. Army officer, General Mark Milley, arrived in Israel to discuss regional security issues with his Israeli counterparts, his spokesperson said on Friday. "They will address the many challenges and opportunities facing Israel and the Middle East region," Colonel Dave Butler said in a statement, without offering further details on Milley's agenda.

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