



Red Flag Alert for Genocide

Israel

UPDATE 1

Released 5 March 2023

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is alarmed by the news coming out of the West Bank of Palestine in the past week, particularly news of the IDF raid on the city of Nablus on February 22nd, 2023 and the pogrom in a nearby town that followed four days later, on February 26th.

On February 22nd, IDF forces entered the city of Nablus in an alleged anti-militant raid. Eyewitnesses report the soldiers firing indiscriminately into the streets, killing eleven Palestinians and injuring over 100, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. While three of the eleven killed were alleged members of the Lion's Den, a militant Palestinian organization, the other eight were civilians, three of whom were above the age of sixty, and one of whom was sixteen. This indiscriminate killing of militants and civilians alike shows disregard for the life, safety, and continued existence of the Palestinian people and is consistent with prior Israeli actions. In the context, however, of Israel's new far-right government and an escalating cycle of violence over the past two months, in which over 50 Palestinians have been killed, this massacre is a red flag of an early stage of the mass murder form of genocide against the Palestinian people.

Four days following this raid in Nablus, the nearby town of Huwara was attacked by Israeli settlers, who set fire to vehicles, agricultural land, shops, and houses with families inside, and attacked Palestinian residents. One Palestinian was killed, and nearly 400 were injured. The settlers said they were enacting vengeance for the murder of two young Jewish brothers by an alleged member of the Lion's Den on February 26th, who were ostensibly killed in revenge for the Nablus raid on February 22. During the Huwara attacks, eyewitnesses report that the IDF shut down the two entrances to the town, and allowed settlers to enter on foot, standing by and allowing the settlers to commit this atrocity without any intervention. Later, the settlers were seen sharing food with the IDF soldiers. The fact that the IDF not only was present at the attack, but also aided in allowing these settlers to enter Huwara, and that it then took no action to intervene during the ensuing mob violence, is evidence that settler terrorism such as this has the full support and endorsement of the Israeli armed forces.

Unless the international community takes immediate action to address the violence against Palestinians by both Israeli armed forces and settlers, Israel will continue rapidly escalating violence against Palestinian communities, possibly culminating in eliminationist massacres of the Palestinian people across the territory, in which Israel's allies will be complicit. Israel's allies, particularly the United States, must put steady pressure on Israel to immediately cease all military raids in the West Bank and Gaza strip, to stop all new settlement construction, to protect Palestinians against violent settler action, and to require investigations and trials for IDF members and settlers who took part in these raids and pogroms. Israel's allies must make it absolutely clear that they will not tolerate further atrocities against Palestinians and will sanction the Netanyahu government if it refuses to walk back from its escalatory rhetoric and policies.

We implore the international community to continue to support the rights of Palestinians and censure the behavior of the Israeli state and its security forces in no unclear terms. The situation in Palestine is rapidly hurtling towards catastrophe. The reluctance of so many people the world over to call out Israel for its abysmal human rights record and barbaric treatment of Palestinians has contributed to the current regime's sense of impunity. May every voice now be heard for justice and peace.