Statement Condemning Pogroms by Israeli Settlers in the West Bank

On Friday, April 12th, hundreds of armed Israeli settlers violently attacked Al-Mughayyir, East of Ramallah, in the West Bank. According to the head of the village council, Amin Abu-Alia, around midday, 1,000-1,2000 settlers narrowed in on Al-Mughayyir, blocking the surrounding roads. Then, up to 600 "stormed" the Al-Mughayyir village, attacking its Palestinian inhabitants. This attack falls within an ongoing trend of settler violence in the West Bank — last year, hundreds of settlers also violently attacked Turmusayya and Huwara.

During the attack, Israeli settlers "... raided homes, and fired guns at residents," according to Abu-Alia. Settlers stole approximately 70 sheep from the village and reportedly slaughtered scores of sheep and goats vital to Palestinian agricultural life. Israel Defense Force (IDF) soldiers stood aside as settler mobs, attacking with rifles, clubs, and improvised weapons, rampaged through the township, burning down buildings and lighting cars on fire.

The settlers killed two Palestinians, Jihad Abu Alia, 25, from the village of al-Mughayyir, and Omar Hamed, 17, from the village of Beitin, injuring another 25, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Jehad Abu Alia's father told The Associated Press that his son was shot and killed but is unsure whether by an armed settler or an IDF soldier. Casualties from this attack fall within a broader trend of increased settler violence in the West Bank since 7 October, as highlighted by the Lemkin Institute recently in its West Bank AGA. In the period following the 7 October attacks, Israeli forces have killed 460 Palestinians in the West Bank.

According to settlers, the IDF, and an Israeli human rights group, the violence arose following the disappearance of an Israeli teenager from a nearby illegal settlement. The teen's body was later found by Israeli forces in fields between the two Palestinian villages of al-Mughayyir and Beitin. Israeli authorities immediately called the disappearance and death a "terrorist attack," further inflaming tensions in the West Bank.

Ambulances responded to the wounded Palestinians from the Ramallah village, many of whom were injured by bullet fragments, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent. The

Guardian and The Associated Press confirm that the Israeli army has admitted to opening fire at stone-throwers during the attack.

When reached for comment, the IDF claimed that they made attempts to remove the settlers. However, Abu-Alia paints a very different picture of the scene and the IDF's response, or lack thereof. Rather than controlling Israeli settler violence, he explains that the IDF, present at the scene, did not intervene to stop the settlers from attacking the village. Moreover, according to the village leader, beyond failing to mitigate the violence by passively watching and allowing Israeli settlers to raid homes, the IDF soldiers took an active stance by preventing the movement of villagers and blocking ambulances. Abu-Alia's depiction of the scene would not be surprising given that "[r]ights groups have long accused the military of failing to halt settler violence or punish soldiers for wrongdoing," as noted by the Guardian. Settlers also blocked firefighters from attending to fires lit by the mob during the assault.

Following the weekend of violence, the targeted assaults of settler militias continued into Monday. The death toll from Israeli settler and soldier violence since the weekend has ballooned to at least seven following violence on Monday and Tuesday. On Monday, a settler mob, numbering around 50 and armed with rifles, fired on villagers in Aqraba, near Nablus, killing two Palestinians. Salah Bani Jaber, mayor of Aqraba told the Guardian that, "the occupation army is still holding the bodies." Earlier in the day, Israeli military forces raided Nablus, killing a 17-year old in the process and wounding another 3 Palestinians. Israeli raids killed an additional two Palestinian men in the West Bank on Friday, one of which belonged to Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades.

The Mayor of Aqraba succinctly described the underlying motivation of the settlers and the lack of any state restrictions on settler mobs: "The settlers are planning to push us out from our land."

Israeli police and military forces are either unwilling or unable to prevent large-scale violence against Palestinians in the West Bank. The Lemkin Institute joins Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese in calling for the immediate deployment of a peacekeeping force to protect Palestinian civilians in the West Bank. This latest iteration of mob violence by Israeli settler-terrorists displays the impotence of Israeli government forces in protecting Palestinians in the West Bank and highlights the discrimination, abuse, and death inherent to apartheid and occupation.

The Lemkin Institute calls on the UN Security Council to immediately dispatch peacekeepers to protect Palestinian civilians and place sanctions upon the apartheid Israeli government. We also reiterate the importance of the ICC prosecuting Israeli officials and security forces, and call on Karim Khan to immediately live up to his mandate. Justice must also be served at the ICJ, as the Israeli government continues its policies of genocide, apartheid, and territorial expansion in blatant violation of international law.

Social Caption: Last week, Israeli settlers, backed by the Israeli Defence Forces, committed a pogroms targeting around the city of Ramallah in the Occupied West Bank. The settler's rampage was triggered by the disappearance and killing of a teenager from an illegal settlement outside Ramallah. Settlers targeted any and all Palestinians, viewing any person suspected to be Palestinian as a legitimate target. In the process, settlers attacked and beat a cameraman from an Israeli news outlet. The pogrom lasted through the weekend of the 12th before the attacks would eventually cease on the 16th. Through the weekend, at least seven Palestinians were killed by pogroming settlers or the IDF. This adds to over 460 Palestinians killed since the 7 October attacks. The Lemkin Institute condemns any and all extrajudicial killings and calls for an international effort to protect Palestinians in the West Bank.