

Demonstrations against Bush in Palestine

Mahmoud Abbas used force to disperse peaceful Bush protest in Ramallah

By [Global Research](#)

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PCHR Condemns Use of Excessive Force to Disperse Peaceful Demonstration in Ramallah

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) condemns the use of excessive force by Palestinian security forces in order to disperse a peaceful demonstration held in Ramallah on 10 January 2008. The Centre calls on the government in Ramallah to investigate the attack on peaceful demonstrators.

According to PCHR preliminary investigations, and eyewitness accounts from the demonstration, at approximately 11:00am on Thursday, 10 January, a coalition of political parties, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the People's Party, and the National Palestinian Initiative, organized a peaceful demonstration against the visit of US President George W. Bush to the Muqata'a (Palestinian Authority headquarters) in Ramallah. Several members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) also participated in the demonstration. The demonstrators gathered in the Ramallah Orthodox Sports Club. However, as they were attempting to leave the club and move towards Manara Square in the center of Ramallah, the demonstrators were attacked by tens of Palestinian policemen and security forces, who beat them with batons, and threw tear gas grenades into the crowd.

PFLP member Bashir al-Kheiri was seriously injured when his left shoulder was broken. He was admitted to Sheikh Zayed Hospital for treatment. Four other demonstrators, including PLC members Khaleda Jarrar and Bassam al-Salhi suffered tear gas inhalation. Eyewitnesses stated that a large number of security personnel surrounded the demonstrators, forcing them to retreat and confiscating their banners.

A police spokesperson claimed that police did not prevent the demonstration, stating that "Organizers [of the demonstration] were issued a permit to hold a rally at a specific location; however the organizers violated the agreement." The police spokesperson added that, "We had clear instructions to prevent anyone from reaching the Muqata'a."

The destination of the demonstration was three kilometers away from the Muqata'a, which is also known as Yasser Arafat's compound. PCHR believes that Palestinian security forces imposed unprecedented security measures in Ramallah and al-Bireh during the visit of President George W. Bush, including the closure of entire sections of the city.

In light of repeated attacks by security forces in the West Bank against peaceful demonstrators and people attending rallies, PCHR:

- Strongly condemns the ban on peaceful demonstrations and rallies in the West Bank, and the use of force in dispersing demonstrators, including beatings with batons and other forms of violence and inhumane treatment.
- Affirms the full and legitimate right of civilians to hold peaceful general assemblies, demonstrations, and rallies as forms of expression and protest, protected by Basic Law and international human rights instruments.
- Calls upon the Palestinian Authority government in Ramallah to immediately investigate these attacks, prosecute their perpetrators, and to take effective measures to prevent their recurrence.

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