

The West Bank: To End the Violence, Israel Must End the Occupation

By [Steven Sahiounie](#)

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Yesterday, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) [killed nine Palestinians](#) in a deadly daylight attack on Jenin in the occupied West Bank. A tenth Palestinian was shot and killed by the IDF in al-Ram while protesting the attack on Jenin.

The Palestinian health ministry identified three of those killed as housewife Magda Obaid, 61, Saeb Izreiqi, 24, and Izzidin Salahat, 26, while another twenty were wounded. Heavy artillery and explosives were used by the IDF which resulted in substantial property damage to homes and civic buildings.

Overnight, two rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel. The Israeli military responded with airstrikes into Gaza, even though the rockets had been intercepted by the air defense system and no damage had been done.

The IDF also killed a 14-year-old Palestinian earlier in the week during another raid in the southern part of the West Bank.

The violence erupted after the IDF attacked the Jenin refugee camp and local residents took up weapons on their [rooftops](#). The IDF shut off the electricity to the camp and denied both paramedics with the Palestinian Red Crescent and journalists entry.

Jenin has become a hot spot of clashes after the IDF continues to frequently attack it. Local young men have taken up arms in self-defense of the refugee camp which houses over 10,000 Palestinians, with the adjoining city of Jenin home to about 50,000 persons.

The [Jenin refugee camp](#) was established in 1953. In 2002, the IDF occupied the camp after ten days of heavy attacks, which destroyed 400 houses and displaced about 3,000 persons.

The youth of the camp are hopeless. Poverty is caused by unemployment brought on by the Barrier Wall Israel erected that cut off Palestinians from jobs in Israel. The deprivations they

face in Jenin have given rise to resistance to the occupation.

In the past, the western media used a repeated phrase like a mantra, "The violence must stop." This command was never addressed to the Israeli occupation forces, but only to Palestinians throwing rocks, or using guns. The youth in Jenin is not going to stop resisting.

Protests against the new Netanyahu government

For the last three weekends, Israelis filled the streets with more than 100,000 out in Tel Aviv on Saturday. The center-left in Israel has awoken after years of denial.

Benjamin Netanyahu has returned as prime minister for the sixth time, despite the corruption case which dogs him, but this time he heads an extremist government. It is the most ultra-right and ultra-religious in history.

The politicians catering to the extreme right settlers captured key ministerial positions, and even the Likud members appointed as ministers were from the radical right wing.

Israel's new justice minister, Yariv Levin, has plans to drastically change the justice system. Under his plan, all powers would be in the hands of the executive branch, instead of three independent branches. The prime minister and his allies would control the Knesset and the supreme court. Non-Jewish citizens and oppressed Palestinians would have no protections. Judges would be servants of the politicians.

Israel pretended to be a democracy, but they have now removed their disguise and come out of the closet as a dictatorship.

The center-left protesters filled the streets, but only focused on the proposed change in the justice system. They pretend not to see the elephant in the room: the brutal occupation of Palestine, which overshadows everything and defines the Israeli regime. Palestinians are not welcome at the protests, which are for Jews only. The protests focus on justice for themselves, not justice for the Palestinians who share their space, but live under a military dictatorship and without citizenship or civil rights.

Military action used as a political diversion

About 6.8 million Jewish Israelis and 6.8 million Palestinians live today in an area encompassing Israel and Occupied Palestine, which is made up of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Jewish Israelis are privileged, while Palestinians are discriminated against. In the US diversity is the constant goal along with inclusion. However, in Israel laws, policies, and statements by leading Israeli officials make plain that the objective of maintaining Jewish Israeli control over demographics, political power, and land has long guided government policy. In certain areas, these deprivations are so severe that they amount to crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution.

Arab normalization

Netanyahu announced one of his primary goals is to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia under the Abraham Accords, which has seen normalization agreements with

the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan.

Recently, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Affairs Minister Prince [Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud rejected the idea](#) and said, "True normalization and true stability will only come through... giving the Palestinians a state." He added his assessment that, "The new Israeli government is not enthusiastic about finding a solution."

UN resolutions and apartheid

According to the UN, 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since 2006. The IDF killed 171 Palestinians, including over 30 children. In Gaza, the death toll was 224 in 2022.

In March 2022, [UN Special Rapporteur Michael Lynk](#) issued a report which labeled [Israel as an apartheid state](#).

"There is today in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 a deeply discriminatory dual legal and political system, that privileges the 700,000 Israeli Jewish settlers living in the 300 illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank," said Lynk.

Lynk acknowledged that "more than three million Palestinians are living under an oppressive rule of institutional discrimination and without a path to a genuine Palestinian state that the world has long promised, is their right".

Israel, he said, conforms to the definition as a "political regime which so intentionally and prioritizes fundamental political, legal and social rights to one group over another, within the same geographic unit based on one's racial-national-ethnic identity".

Lynk said the international community is responsible and said, "If the international community had truly acted on its resolutions 40 or 30 years ago, we would not be talking about apartheid today."

Israel has violated 28 resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which are legally binding on member nations.

No peace talks, no US broker, no hope

The [rules-based international system](#) was invented after WW2 by western democracies allied with the US. The system depends on peaceful cooperative actions between democratic states, and the rule of law recognized by the UN and NATO. An enduring feature of the rules-based system is advancing democratic values and human rights.

Israel is far, far removed from the rules-based international system, and yet the western democracies, headed by the US continue to call Israel "the only democracy in the Middle East".

US Secretary of State [Antony Blinken](#) will travel to Egypt, Israel, and the West Bank later this week, the State Department announced on Thursday.

Blinken will travel to Jerusalem and Ramallah from Jan. 30-31 to meet senior Israeli and Palestinian officials.

He will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, and other senior officials in Jerusalem “to discuss the enduring US support for Israel’s security, particularly against threats from Iran.”

According to Blinken, Israel has every right to defend itself. The State Department said that all parties must “put an end to the cycle of violence”. The old meaningless mantra is still chanted.

Israel’s far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, vowed to visit the Al Aqsa Mosque compound again.

Ben-Gvir holds extremist views on the Palestinians and has called for their forced deportation. He has repeatedly joined far-right radical Israeli settlers in storming the mosque, which is forbidden under international law. Ben-Gvir and the new radical Netanyahu government don’t recognize the international rules-based system because they are above the law.

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Steven Sahiounie is a two-time award-winning journalist. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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