

Israeli troops shoot 17 Palestinians during protests

Author:

Fri, 2019-03-01 23:22

GAZA CITY: Israeli troops on Friday shot and wounded 17 Palestinians during a protest on the Gaza-Israel border, where rallies have been held for nearly a year, the enclave's Health Ministry said.

A ministry statement reported "17 injuries by the Israeli occupation forces with live ammunition," without giving details on the condition of those shot.

It said that three paramedics and one journalist were hurt by tear gas grenades. The Israeli army told AFP that troops used live fire "according to the rules of engagement" with violent demonstrators.

"There are close to 8,000 rioters who are throwing stones, who are burning tires and throwing explosive devices and grenades at troops and at the (border) fence," a spokeswoman said.

"In response we are using riot dispersal means and also firing, according to the rules of engagement of course," she said.

The conclusions of a UN probe published on Thursday said Israeli forces responding to protests on the Gaza border had committed "violations of international human rights and humanitarian law."

"Some of those violations may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity," said the report, by a commission of inquiry set up by the UN Human Rights Council. Protests and clashes began along the Gaza border on March 30 last year.

Demonstrators have been calling for Palestinian refugees to be allowed to return to their former homes now inside Israel, which Israeli officials say is akin to calling for their country's destruction.

Israel accuses Gaza's rulers Hamas of using the protests as cover for infiltrations and attacks, while rights groups and Palestinians say protesters posing little threat have been shot by Israeli snipers.

At least 251 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since March 2018, the majority shot during weekly border protests and others hit by tank fire or air strikes in response to violence from Gaza.

Two Israeli soldiers have been killed over the same period.

Israeli leaders strongly condemned the findings of the UN inquiry, which investigated possible violations from the start of the protests last March through to Dec. 31.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel “rejects outright the report.”

Foreign Minister Israel Katz called it “hostile, deceitful and biased” and insisted that “no institution can negate Israel’s right to self-defense.”

Israel and Hamas, which has controlled the blockaded Gaza Strip for over a decade, have fought three wars since 2008.



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Palestinians seek prosecution of Israeli leaders for Gaza ‘war crimes’ UN probe finds Israel may have committed ‘crimes against humanity’ against Gaza protests

[British minister urges implementation of Stockholm Agreement on Yemen during Gulf tour](#)

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Fri, 2019-03-01 18:36

LONDON: British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt will meet Yemeni government officials and Houthi leaders during a trip to the Gulf region to urge the immediate implementation of the UN-brokered Stockholm Agreement.

Hunt visited Muscat on Friday where he signed a joint declaration on UK-Omani relations and met Houthi militia spokesman Mohamed Abdul Salem.

He will also visit Saudi Arabia where he will address a global conference on patient safety, and the UAE.

Hunt said his "aim is to build on the UN-backed agreement reached in Stockholm in December," and that he will "urge all sides to accelerate the redeployments they agreed at Stockholm and ensure the flow of humanitarian relief."

British Ambassador to Yemen Michael Aron said Hunt's tour is "very important," and that progress should be made in the coming days.

He told Arab News this week that the international community will react strongly if the Houthis put the peace process at risk.

"It's no coincidence that the number of people in need of aid, now at a staggering 24 million, has increased enormously since the Houthis took over parts of the country," he said.

In an interview with Asharq Al-Awsat published on Friday, Aron also praised the outcomes of the donor conference held for Yemen in Geneva, and said it was a great success for humanitarian relief.

The ambassador added that the Geneva conference "showed that the international community cares about the humanitarian situation in Yemen."

The British ambassador said that the UN regaining access to a grains facility near Yemen's Hodeidah port on Tuesday was a positive step.



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Syria stuck with Assad for now, says UK minister Jeremy Hunt
Iranian-backed Houthis responsible for Yemen woes: UK envoy

[Thousands protest president fifth term bid in Algiers](#)

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Fri, 2019-03-01 12:52

ALGIERS: Thousands of people took to the streets of Algeria's capital Friday to protest against ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term in power, a AFP journalists reported.

"Regime murderers," the demonstrators chanted as police used tear gas to prevent crowds from reaching a central square.



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[Trump says all Daesh territory retaken, contradicting allied commander](#)

Thu, 2019-02-28 22:11

ALASKA: President Donald Trump told American troops on Thursday that US-backed forces in Syria have retaken 100 percent of the territory once held by Daesh militants, contradicting the commander of the US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces, who said it would take another week.

“We just took over, you know, you kept hearing it was 90 percent, 92 percent, the caliphate in Syria. Now it’s 100 percent we just took over, 100 percent caliphate,” Trump told troops at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson during a refueling stop in Alaska.

Earlier on Thursday, the commander of Syrian Democratic Forces, Mazloum Kobani, said in a video released to the news media that the SDF would be able to announce “the complete victory over Daesh in a week.”

Trump made his comments while talking to US troops in Alaska about the progress his administration has made in Afghanistan and the Middle East over the past two years. He stopped in Alaska on his way back from talks in Vietnam with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The US president has been anxious to declare that Daesh has been driven out of all its territory since announcing in December that he would withdraw American forces from Syria, claiming they had succeeded in their mission to defeat the militant group.

While the United States has withdrawn some troops, Trump responded to criticism of his move by deciding to leave some 400 US troops in the country over the longer run: 200 to remain in the northeast as part of a multinational force and 200 to remain at an outpost in the southeast to counter Iranian influence.

The US president said on Feb. 6 he expected a formal announcement the following week that coalition forces had recaptured all territory previously held by Daesh in Syria. That announcement has yet to be made.



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Syria's Bashar Assad invites Iran FM Zarif to visit Damascus
Syria force carries out major evacuation from last Daesh holdout

[Protesters challenge emergency courts in Sudan, police fire tear gas](#)

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Thu, 2019-02-28 16:19

KHARTOUM: More than 1,000 anti-government protesters demonstrated in and around Sudan's capital Khartoum on Thursday, witnesses said, the first rallies since emergency courts were set up nationwide on Tuesday to combat more than two months of unrest.

Security forces fired tear gas at about 400 protesters at Omdurman Grand Market, in Khartoum's twin city across the Nile, witnesses said. The protesters, who are calling for an end to Bashir's 30-year-rule, chanted "Down, that's it."

The protests, initially over high bread prices, have taken place nearly every day since Dec. 19 and have developed into the most sustained challenge that Bashir has faced.

Security forces have responded with tear gas and sometimes live fire. At least 33 people have been killed, according to official statistics, including three security personnel. Protesters believe the true death toll is significantly higher.

Bashir, who came to power in a 1989 Islamist-backed military coup, declared a nationwide state of emergency last Friday and sacked state governors, replacing them with military and security officials.

On Monday, he issued a raft of edicts banning unlicensed public gatherings and awarding tough new powers to police. Emergency courts and prosecutors were also established across every Sudanese state on Tuesday.

Security forces can now search any building, restrict movement of people and public transport, arrest individuals suspected of a crime related to the state of emergency and seize assets or property during investigations.

There was a noticeable increase in the spread of protests across Khartoum on Thursday. Demonstrators were apparently galvanized by a call from the Sudanese Professionals' Association, which has emerged as the main protests organizer, to challenge the emergency courts' establishment.

About 250 people protested on Sahafa Zalat Street, one of the capital's main

arteries. Police fired tear gas after several demonstrators tried to block off side streets using stones and burning tires to prevent security forces from chasing them.

The protesters chanted "Revolution is the people's choice" and other slogans and some carried Sudanese flags. Women ululated as some passing cars honked at them in support.

In the east of the capital, police fired tear gas at some 250 protesters on Sitteen Street, an upscale area, witnesses said.

Police also confronted dozens of protesters in Khartoum's poor area of Al-Daim and the Shambat neighborhood of Khartoum North with tear gas, witnesses said. In Shambat, people stood for a moment of silence for the victims of Wednesday's train crash in Cairo that killed at least 22.

Hundreds of protesters also gathered at several other parts of Khartoum and Omdurman.

Bashir has blamed the protests on foreign "agents" and challenged his rivals to seek power through elections.



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Sudan's Bashir reshuffles senior military staff – statementKhartoum protesters rally against Sudan emergency laws banning protests and regulating foreign currency