

# Israeli gunfire kills three Gazans during border protest

Fri, 2018-12-21 17:56

GAZA: Israeli forces shot and killed three Palestinians, including a teenager, in the Gaza Strip during the latest of weekly protests along the border with Israel on Friday, Palestinian health officials said.

About 8,000 Palestinians gathered near the border fence, the Israeli military said. Most kept their distance, while some burned tires and tried to throw an explosive device into Israel, though it did not land across the border, the military said.

A military spokeswoman said the troops responded with "riot dispersal means" and fired in accordance with Israeli procedure.

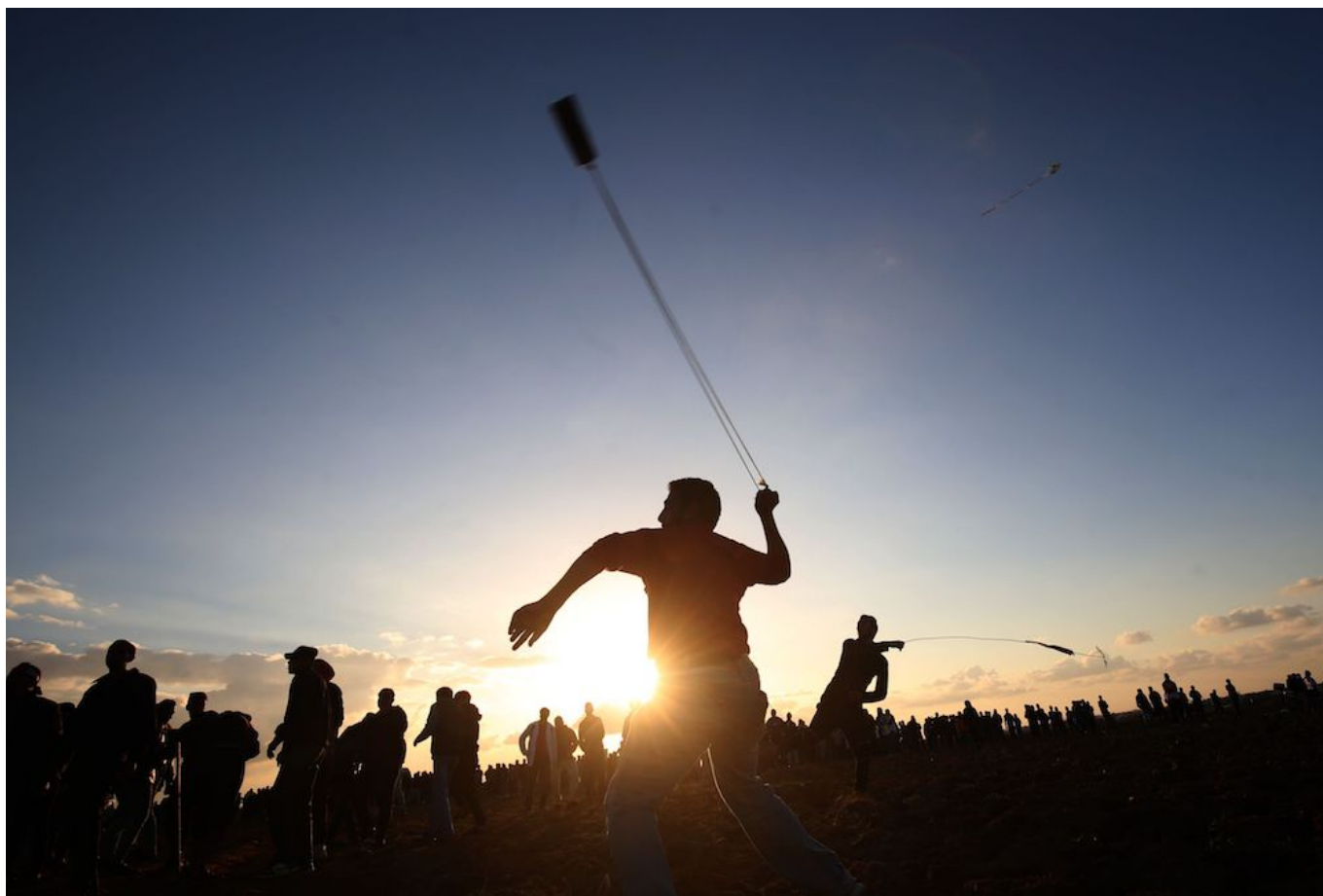
Gaza's health ministry said 16-year-old Mohammad Jahjouh was fatally shot in the neck, while 25 others, including a local journalist, were wounded by Israeli gunfire.

It later said two men, aged 28 and 40, died of injuries they sustained at protests in two separate locations along the fence with Israel earlier in the day.

Health officials in Gaza, which is run by Hamas, say more than 220 Palestinians have been killed since they began weekly border protests on March 30 to demand the easing of Israel's blockade on the territory and the right to return to land lost in the 1948 war of Israel's founding.

Israel has ruled out any such right, concerned that the country would lose its Jewish majority.

Israel withdrew settlers and soldiers from Gaza in 2005 but maintains tight control of its land, air and sea borders. The wider Israeli-Palestinian peace process has been stalled for several years.



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Palestinian child dies of wounds after border clash: Gaza ministry  
For Palestinian children in Gaza, an education in conflict

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## [‘Infiltrators’ derail peaceful demonstrations in Sudan](#)

Author:

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1545398679974749300

Fri, 2018-12-21 12:32

KHARTOUM: A Sudanese government spokesman said on Friday that nationwide protests over soaring prices that have left at least eight people dead in the past two days had been “derailed and transformed by infiltrators.”

“Peaceful demonstrations were derailed and transformed by infiltrators into subversive activity targeting public institutions and property, burning, destroying and burning some police headquarters,” spokesman Bishara Jumaa said in a statement released by the official Sudan News Agency.

He did not name anyone but he also said the protesters, some of whom have called for the overthrow of President Omar Bashir, were being exploited by opposition parties.

“Some political parties emerged in an attempt to exploit these conditions to shake security and stability in order to achieve their political agenda,” Jumaa said. He did not identify the parties.

He added that the demonstrations had been “dealt with by police and security forces in a civilized way without repression or opposition.”

Public anger in Sudan has been building over price rises and other economic hardships, including a doubling in the cost of bread this year and limits on bank withdrawals. At 69 percent, Sudan’s inflation rate is among the world’s highest.

Leading Sudanese opposition figure Sadiq Al-Mahdi returned to Sudan on Wednesday from nearly a year in self-imposed exile and called for a democratic transition in Sudan.

“The regime has failed and there is economic deterioration and erosion of the national currency’s value,” Mahdi, who was Sudan’s last democratically

elected prime minister and now heads the Umma party, told thousands of supporters.

The demonstrations on Wednesday and Thursday were among the biggest since crowds came out against cuts to state subsidies in 2013.

Officials told Sudania 24 TV that six people died in protests in the eastern city of Al-Qadarif and two more in northern Nile River state, without giving details on how they were killed. Police fired teargas to break up a crowd of around 500 people in the capital Khartoum, then chased them through back streets and made arrests, a witness said.

Some of the demonstrators chanted: "The people want the fall of the regime" – a slogan used in the "Arab Spring" protests that unseated rulers across the Muslim world in 2011. Many called for a new government in 2013.

In the northern city of Dongola, protesters set fire to the local offices of Bashir's ruling National Congress Party, witnesses said. To the northeast in Atbara, they hid their faces behind scarves as they came out for a second day, chanting "freedom" and setting car tires alight, video footage showed.

The latest violence erupted in Atbara on Wednesday, where crowds also set fire to the ruling party's office.

Authorities declared a state of emergency in Al-Qadarif, which is near the border with Ethiopia, and extended one in Atbara to the cities of Al-Damir and Berber.

"The situation in Al-Qadarif has become dangerous and the protests have developed to include fires and theft and it's now out of control," its independent MP, Mubarak Al-Nur, told Reuters. He said he was related to one of the protesters who died.

Sudan's economy has struggled to recover from the loss of three quarters of its oil output – its main source of foreign currency – since South Sudan seceded in 2011, keeping most of the oilfields.

The US lifted 20-year-old trade sanctions on Sudan in October 2017. But many investors have continued to shun a country still listed by Washington as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Bashir, one of Africa's longest-serving leaders, took power in 1989. Lawmakers this month proposed a constitutional amendment to extend term limits that would have required him to step down in 2020.

In recent months he has dissolved the government, named a new central bank governor and brought in a package of reforms, but the moves have done little to contain an economic crisis.

In October, Sudan sharply devalued its currency after the government asked banks and money changers to set the exchange rate on a daily basis.

The move led to further price increases and cash shortages, while the gap

between the official and black market rates has continued to widen.

“I went out to protest because life has stopped in Atbara,” said a 36-year-old man who asked not to be named.

He told Reuters he had not been able to find any bread in the shops for four days.

“Prices have increased and I have still not been able to withdraw my November salary ... because of the liquidity crisis. These are difficult conditions that we can't live with, and the government doesn't care about us.”



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At least six killed as thousands protest against price rises in Sudan  
Sudan president lands in Syria in 1st visit by Arab leader

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[Israeli army says destroys Hezbollah](#)

# tunnel from Lebanon

Author:

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1545396946694594900

Fri, 2018-12-21 12:41

JERUSALEM: The Israeli army said Friday it has blown up a cross-border tunnel dug by Hezbollah from Lebanon, the first of four it has uncovered – and pledged to destroy – in recent weeks.

“A cross-border attack tunnel dug from the Shiite village of Ramyeh into Israel was detonated” in an operation on Thursday night, the army said in a statement.

The Israeli military “holds the Lebanese Government responsible for digging the attack tunnels and the consequences of this action,” it said.

A video distributed by the army shows an officer using a megaphone to call on residents of the Lebanese village of Ramyeh to evacuate the area since the military was about to “blow up this tunnel built by Hezbollah.”

Israeli soldiers are also seen inserting rope-like objects into a hole in the ground, while the explosion was documented from a number of angles.

On Thursday night, a military spokesman had said the detonation would be on the Israeli side of the demarcation line with Lebanon, known as the Blue Line.

“We are conducting a defensive activity,” Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus told reporters.

In launching an operation to cut off the tunnels on December 4, Israel’s military said it located four underground passageways infiltrating Israeli territory.

Israel alleges Hezbollah had planned to use the tunnels to kidnap or kill its civilians or soldiers, and to seize a slice of Israeli territory in the event of any hostilities, while noting they were not yet operational.

A month-long war in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers.

The UN confirmed the existence of the four tunnels and its Under Secretary for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix has called them “a serious violation of Resolution 1701,” which ended the 2006 war.



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Israel urges UN action over Hezbollah 'attack tunnels' from Lebanon

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## [Australian PM Morrison visits troops in Iraq](#)

Author:

Thu, 2018-12-20 21:37

SYDNEY: Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison made a pre-Christmas visit to hundreds of troops in Iraq, telling them he wanted to say thank you from "one Australian to another."

But Morrison canceled a planned visit to Afghanistan on the advice of the defense force chief due to operational security reasons.

Morrison traveled to Iraq on Wednesday to meet special forces soldiers and

other Australian military personnel who are training the Iraqi Army to combat the Islamic State group. It was the conservative prime minister's first visit to the Middle East since he took the top job in August.

"I understand it's a sacrifice. I understand it's a big thing to be away from your family at this time of year," Morrison told troops at the Taji military complex north of Baghdad. "And that's why I've decided to come just to say 'thank you' from one Australian to another."

Morrison broke bread with hundreds of soldiers across Iraq from before dawn until after dark. He stressed that he would honor their contributions long after their active service ended.

He said that for many troops, it would be the first Christmas away from their families and friends, while others had endured the tyranny of distance before.

"On behalf of my family, to you and your families, I want to say thank you very much for your service," Morrison said. "But I also want to thank you as a prime minister, as the leader of the government, as a member of the Australian Parliament, on behalf of our entire nation."

There are currently about 800 Australian soldiers deployed in Iraq, including about 300 who are involved in Task Force Taji.



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Australia move on Jerusalem slammed Israel irked at Australia's 'mistaken' W. Jerusalem recognition

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## Mogadishu-backed candidate wins test-case regional election

Thu, 2018-12-20 21:13

MOGADISHU: Lawmakers in a volatile region of Somalia elected the federal government's preferred candidate as its leader on Wednesday after a popular former Al-Shabab leader was barred from running in the vote seen as test of the country's political progress.

As part of an internationally backed attempt to end decades of lawlessness by spreading power more widely among the multiple clans, states are meant to be more independent of central government, with the authority to select their own leaders.

But any sign that that is being subverted in practice or a sense that a leader is being imposed by stealth by the central government could further stoke instability and violence.

At least 11 people were killed last week in the South West state capital of Baidoa in clashes that erupted following the arrest of Mukhtar Robow, the former Islamist militant leader who had tried to contest in the thrice-delayed poll.

The South West state Parliament selected Abdiasis Hassan Mohamed, who has held two national cabinet posts, giving him the necessary two thirds of the vote. State parliaments, not the wider public, vote for regional presidents in Somalia.

Analysts say Mohamed is likely to find it difficult to exert his authority because of his perceived allegiance to the federal government, said Hussein Sheikh-Ali, chairman of the Mogadishu-based think tank Hiraal Institute.

He said the arrest of Robow, a native of South West who was widely expected to win the election, also undermined efforts to end the Al-Shabab insurgency.

The federal government could not immediately be reached for comment on the election.

Al-Shabab has been fighting for more than a decade to topple the weak central government and implement strict Islamic law, often sending suicide bombers against civilian targets.

"The attacks on Robow have shredded this election's credibility," said Judd

Devermont, Africa director at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Somali authorities backed by Ethiopian troops detained Robow after accusing him of bringing extremist militants and weapons back to Baidoa, a charge his representatives denied. Many in South West state saw the move as aimed at blocking his candidature.

“Mogadishu tilted terrain in his favor by off-ramping Robow and providing resources to Mohamed. The hard part will be getting him local clan support,” said Rashid Abdi, Horn of Africa Project Director at the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based thinktank.

Similar elections for state leaders are due early next year.



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