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At least 18 killed in West Bank operation

Israel has [reportedly](#) killed at least 18 Palestinians over two days of raids on the occupied West Bank. The assault – mostly in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Tubas – is ongoing and has already seen at least [20 people detained](#).

The assault, which has included airstrikes and door-to-door raids, has seen most entrances and exits to Jenin [closed off](#). The Palestinian health ministry in the West Bank said Israeli troops had [surrounded two hospitals](#). Israel says the operation intended to stop attacks on Israelis using weapons supplied by Iran, and that the [dead are all militants](#). Among those killed on Thursday was Mohammed Jaber, known as Abu Shujaa, a commander in the group Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Tension in the West Bank has been mounting, even as most eyes remain on the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Last month, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion that said Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal.

According to the [rights watchdog Amnesty International](#), Israeli soldiers and state-backed violent settlers have killed at least 622 Palestinians, including 142 children, in the West Bank – including East Jerusalem – since last October.

“Ongoing military operations on this scale will undoubtedly lead to an escalation in deadly violence, resulting in further loss of Palestinian lives,” said Erika Guevara Rosas, Amnesty International's senior director for research, advocacy, policy and campaigns. “It is likely that these operations will result in an increase in forced displacement, destruction of critical infrastructure and measures of collective punishment.”

UN Secretary-General [António Guterres](#) has [urged Israel](#) to immediately end the operation, saying it was “fuelling an already explosive situation”. [Janez Lenarčič](#), the EU's commissioner for humanitarian aid and crisis management, said Israel's “indiscriminate use of... military force and settler violence against civilians, and extensive destruction of homes and infrastructure” were “in violation of international law and human rights”.

Meanwhile, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell [said on Thursday](#) that he had asked member states if they wanted to impose sanctions on some Israeli ministers for “hate messages” against Palestinians that break international law.