



[Israeli Raid in Jenin Escalates Conflict into a New, Deadlier Stage](#)

With Israel's chief military spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, announcement that Israel has withdrawn from the West Bank city of Jenin this past Wednesday, the violent raid came to an end. The army operation resulted in the death of 12 Palestinians, and one Israeli soldier, and the displacement of thousands from their homes. The attacks in Jenin are indicative of a more significant trend of large-scale violence against Palestinians this year, with the United Nations tracking 2023 as the deadliest year for Palestinians since their record-keeping began in 2005. As initial raids in the city date back to January 26th of this year, the most recent attacks of this past week demonstrate the significant escalation of conflict in both magnitude and measures. The United States' refusal to condemn the invasion will only help begin a new, deadlier stage of conflict.

As initial raids in Jenin date back to January of this year, the continued perpetuation of violence against Palestinians within the West Bank has only aided the escalation to this current point. Following the killing of nine Palestinians and wounding of 19 others on January 26th, what was at the time the deadliest West Bank operation in 20 years signaled a larger pattern of Israeli military presence and violence to continue. With two separate refugee camp raids in March, further casualties were added to the initial toll caused by Israeli forces. The Israeli armed forces attempted to justify their increasingly brutal attacks by claiming they are "apprehending terrorists." The most recent raid before this week occurred on June 19th, with Israeli forces dispatching a helicopter to rescue injured troops, which has not been done for decades. Yet none of these previous raids rivaled the military escalation demonstrated this past week, as starting July 3rd, over 1,000 Israeli soldiers, in addition to drone strikes and the use of an attack helicopter, were utilized to seize the entire city of Jenin. With the intent of this operation being the acquisition of an "operational command center," as well as driving out armed Palestinians in retribution for earlier attacks this year, the goal of destabilizing Palestinian militant groups such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas resulted in greater violence and displacement. Gun battles continued through Tuesday evenings, with Israeli troops withdrawing the next day.

Jenin has long been a symbol of Palestinian resistance within the West Bank, cementing this legacy in 2002 after the 10-day battle during the second intifada, in which Jenin was even colloquially referred to as Jeningrad in reference to the Battle of Stalingrad. This conflict resulted in 52 Palestinian deaths and a permanent attachment of Palestinian resistance to the refugee camp. Today it remains the center of Palestinian resistance forces as it is a stronghold site for both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. It is also home to over 14,000 refugees within the camp. The recent escalation of violence within Jenin spans further than retaliation from the Israeli forces but rather a larger shifting political scheme within Israel. With the increasingly extremist right-wing and Jewish-supremacist government coming into power early this year, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made the persecution of Palestinians a foremost priority to appease those in his government. This, combined with the Palestinian Authority's increasingly

limited capabilities and general dissatisfaction amongst Palestinians, has resulted in the perfect pretenses for the escalation demonstrated within Jenin.

The increasingly brutal attacks will likely continue. The Israeli government seems to be probing for a red line to see how far they can go. The sad reality may be that there is no red line. The lack of condemnation from the United States coupled with the growing economic ties between some Middle Eastern states and Israel have created a general sense of apathy towards the Palestinian plight among government officials in these countries. The United Nations is one of the only governing institutions that has been consistent in its condemnation of the excessive force used by Israel. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres denounced the recent raid on Jenin, calling on Israel “to abide by its obligations under international law”, exercise restraint and use only proportional force. “The use of airstrikes is inconsistent with the conduct of law enforcement operations,” he said. Guterres reminded Israel that “as the occupying power, it has a responsibility to ensure that the civilian population is protected against all acts of violence”.

Israel claims these attacks are for its own defense. In reality, these attacks only create more recruits for Hamas and Islamic Jihad and destroy any chance of peace. The two-state solution is no longer possible as long as Israel continues to escalate their attacks. The United States must reevaluate its support of Israel if it ever wants to secure the lofty goal of peace in the Middle East. Israel is the main obstacle towards this goal, and continued support will only work against American interests in the region. Without this shift, Israel will continue to escalate the situation into another full-blown war.