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## Israeli settlers attack West Bank village, drawing condemnation from top officials

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An assault by dozens of Israeli settlers has devastated a Palestinian town in the occupied West Bank, drawing blistering condemnation from top Israeli officials.

More than 70 armed settlers invaded the town of Jit on Thursday, firing bullets and tear gas at residents and setting several homes and cars and other property on fire, according to the head of Jit's village council, Nasser Sedda.

Sedda said his cousin, Rashid Sedda, was killed in the attack. The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Health confirmed the 23-year-old Palestinian died after sustaining a chest injury.

"We have attacks but nothing to this level," Sedda told CNN. "We haven't seen anything like this before, and without a prior warning. They caught the people off guard – women, children, and elders were there."

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also said dozens of Israeli citizens, some masked, set fires and threw rocks and Molotov cocktails before being dispersed by Israeli security forces.

One person has been apprehended for questioning over the rioting, and authorities are looking into the death of the Palestinian resident, the IDF said, without naming the resident.

It is launching a joint investigation into the attack with security agency ISA and Israeli Police.

Militant group Hamas on Friday called on Palestinians in the West Bank to "rise up against the crimes of the occupation and to confront the terrorist attacks of settlers" after the raid. "The policy of raids, assassinations, and unleashing herds of settlers will only increase our people's devotion to their land and sanctities," it said in a statement.

### 'A serious nationalist crime'

Videos of the attack on Jit showed vehicles on fire and flames on the ground floor of a two-story building. Another video shows three medics performing CPR on Rashid Sedda.

Residents of the town can be seen running toward the burning vehicles and putting out the flames with a fire extinguisher, while someone shouts, "The settlers attacked us and set fire to the cars."

The Palestine Red Crescent Society said it treated three injuries from settler attacks in the town, including an elderly woman affected by gas inhalation and two young men injured by stones.

Disavowal and condemnation came quickly from top Israeli officials.

A statement from the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the attack, warning that he views the incident with "utmost severity."

“Those responsible for any offense will be apprehended and tried,” it read.

Moshe Arbel, Israel’s interior minister, called the attacks a “serious nationalist crime” that runs “contrary to the values of Judaism,” and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant slammed the “violent, radical riots” as “the opposite of every code and value upheld by the State of Israel.”

Israeli President Isaac Herzog also condemned the attack, urging police to swiftly bring those responsible to justice. The attack had harmed “the law-abiding community of settlers and the settlements as a whole and the status of Israel in the world during a particularly sensitive and difficult period,” he said.

The attacks meanwhile drew a qualified response from Itamar Ben Gvir, Israel’s far-right National Security Minister, who said he “told the [IDF] Chief of the General Staff this evening that the fact that we don’t let soldiers shoot any terrorist who throws stones is leading to events of the type that occurred tonight.”

“At the same time, it is unequivocally forbidden to take the law into one’s own hands,” he added.

Another far-right member of Netanyahu’s government, Bezalel Smotrich, said: “The rioters tonight in Jit are in no way related to the settlements and the settlers. They are criminals who should be dealt with by the law enforcement authorities with the full severity of the law.”

Some West Bank settlement leaders also denounced the attacks, seeking to distance themselves from the rioters whom they said were “outsiders.”

There has been strong international condemnation too. The European Union’s top diplomat Josep Borrell said the attacks aimed at “terrorizing Palestinian civilians.”

“Day after day, in an almost total impunity, Israeli settlers fuel violence in the occupied West Bank, contributing to endanger[ing] any chance of peace,” Borrell wrote in a post on X Friday.

Germany’s Foreign Ministry also condemned the attack, writing in a post on X that “this violence is unacceptable and the attacks must stop immediately.”

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, on Friday called on the Israeli government “to stop settler violence.”

For years, Israeli settlers have attacked Palestinian communities in the occupied territory.

From October 7, 2023 to August 5, 2024 alone, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has [recorded at least 1,143 settler attacks against Palestinians](#).

Of those, at least 114 attacks “led to Palestinian fatalities and injuries,” according to OCHA.

The US [imposed a series of sanctions this year](#) on Israeli settlers accused of violence in the West Bank, blocking their financial assets and barring them from entering the US.

“The United States remains deeply concerned about extremist violence and instability in the West Bank, which undermines Israel’s own security,” the State Department said in a statement last month.

Israeli settlements, primarily inhabited by Jewish Israeli citizens, are built on lands controlled by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War. While the international community deems these settlements illegal under international law, Israel disputes this classification.

The controversial settler movement has grown in power over the years and is seen by the outside world as a major impediment to peace in the region.

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