

Israeli defence minister foreshadows Gaza-type genocide in West Bank

Peter Symonds
4 September 2024

As the Israeli military continued its murderous operations in the occupied West Bank into an eighth day, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant yesterday foreshadowed a massive escalation that would inflict death and destruction on the scale being witnessed in Gaza.

Speaking after meeting with senior officers, Gallant described the current military attacks on Jenin, Tulkarm and the Far'a refugee camp near Tubas as “mowing the lawn” of Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants. While supposedly to destroy “terror networks,” the operations have killed men, women and children, old and young, with the aim of terrorising the population.

However, in an unmistakable sign that it is preparing a full-scale invasion of the West Bank, Gallant declared that eventually the military will need to “pull out the roots.” The only way that the Zionist regime can destroy the social roots of the armed opposition to its occupation and repression is the type of genocidal operation that has taken place in Gaza.

Gallant added that “the rise of terror in Judea and Samaria is an issue that we need to be focused on at every moment.” The reference to the West Bank by its biblical names—Judea and Samaria—only underscores that the occupied Palestinian territory is already regarded as part of a greater Israel.

The current West Bank operation—known internally by the Israeli army as “Summer Camps”—is far from being a limited incursion. Gallant declared that the “terrorist organisations” had to be “wiped out,” adding: “Every such terrorist should be eliminated, [or] if they surrender, arrest them. There is no other option, use all the forces, everyone who is needed, with full strength.”

Gallant also revealed he had ordered the military to carry out airstrikes “wherever necessary,” supposedly to “avoid endangering soldiers.” In reality,

indiscriminate Israeli airstrikes will rain death and destruction in the West Bank as in Gaza where the death toll, according to health authorities, is now at least 40,000 men, women and children.

A situation update released yesterday by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) declared that Israeli forces had been using “lethal, war-like tactics across the northern West Bank, deepening people’s humanitarian needs and raising concerns over excessive use of force.”

OCHA reported that the Israeli military had killed 30 Palestinians in the West Bank between August 27 and September 2, including seven children—the highest weekly death toll since November 2023. Ten of the fatalities were the result of airstrikes, which increased sharply in August. Of the 95 Palestinian deaths from airstrikes in the West Bank in 2024, between 41 and 44 percent took place last month.

In Jenin City and Jenin refugee camp, the report catalogued deaths from Israeli airstrikes and ground operations on a daily basis, including children and the elderly. Over the week covered by the report, the Israeli military attacked health workers and those seeking to buy or distribute food. On Monday, troops killed a detained Palestinian man whose body when released showed tell-tale signs of torture. On Tuesday, an assessment mission to Jenin organised by OCHA was denied access by Israeli security forces.

While the Israeli military has focused on Jenin, its attacks have extended throughout the West Bank in the governates of Tubas, Tulkarm and Hebron. While some deaths were the result of clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian militants, others including children have died in strikes or simply been shot by Israeli troops.

On Monday in Tulkarm, for instance, Israeli forces

shot and killed a 14-year-old boy and injured six Palestinians, including a 12-year-old girl. The boy was killed when he and his father, believing that Israeli troops had left, opened the door to their home. During an operation in Tulkarm Refugee Camp, an airstrike injured three, including a female paramedic.

According to the OCHA report, 652 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank from October 7 last year to September 2. Over the same period, OCHA has recorded around 1,300 attacks by armed Israeli settlers, of which over 120 led to Palestinian deaths and injuries, and 1,050 to damage to Palestinian properties. Over the week to September 2, another 16 settler attacks took place resulting in 11 injuries to Palestinians.

The demolition of Palestinian homes and businesses also continues apace. Over the week to September 2, Israeli authorities demolished, destroyed or forced the demolition of 26 Palestinian-owned structures—23 in Tulkarm and the remaining three in East Jerusalem. One demolition in the Al Bustan area of East Jerusalem, where a family of four was displaced, was part of a plan to build and expand an Israeli settlement project with public spaces predominantly for tourists and Israelis.

Since October 7, Israeli authorities have demolished or confiscated 1,478 Palestinian structures across the West Bank, displacing more than 3,477 Palestinians, including about 1,485 children. “The demolitions after 7 October include over 500 inhabited structures, more than 300 agricultural structures, more than 100 water, sanitation and hygiene structures, and 200 livelihood structures,” the report stated.

Israeli military operations continued over the past two days. As reported by the Wafa news agency, Israel’s military assault in Jenin is in its eighth day, and the third day in Tulkarm city and refugee camp, where “widespread destruction” has been inflicted. Its correspondent said that Israeli massive armoured bulldozers tore up tarmac streets and alleyways in the camp and ravaged through public and private properties.

“The heavy machineries blocked the alleyways of the camp with earth mounds, making it impossible for residents to navigate them, even on foot and compounding their suffering,” the agency reported.

“This came as the occupation forces blew up several

houses in the camp, setting them on fire, destroying them and displacing the occupants.

“The occupation forces continue to deploy more military vehicles and bulldozers into the camp and the city, simultaneously while patrolling streets, intercepting vehicles and ambulances, inspecting them and interrogating passengers. The gun-toting soldiers impeded the distribution of relief aid by the Red Crescent crews.”

Al Jazeera correspondents reported an ongoing Israeli raid in the Jalazone refugee camp, north of Ramallah, in which dozens of Palestinians have been detained and questioned in local community centres. At least 20 Palestinians were rounded up from Beit Surik. Other raids took place in Qalqilya, Nablus with a focus on Balata and Askar refugee camps, as well as Al-Khader town south of Bethlehem and Al-Azza refugee camp north of the city.

CNN reported that Palestinian journalists were fired on by Israeli troops during a raid in the West Bank town of Kafr Dan. Mohammed Mansour, a journalist for the Palestinian news agency Wafa, was injured when the car he was driving was struck by gunfire. The four journalists in the vehicle were all wearing flak jackets with “press” labels, and the car was marked “press” on its hood.

The Israeli genocide in Gaza continues unabated, with health officials yesterday reporting another 42 Palestinian deaths in the previous 24 hours, bringing the deaths since October 7 last year to at least 40,861 Palestinians with another 94,398 injured. If such barbarity is waged in the West Bank, home to nearly 3 million, the death toll will be even higher.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)