

**KUWAIT (Dispatches)** -- Thousands of participants took part in a rally in Sanaa, Yemen to support Hamas' "Al Aqsa flood operation" on Saturday while tens of others gathered in Kuwait City for the same reason.

Participants chanted in support of Gaza, Al-Aqsa mosque and Hamas while waving Palestinian flags. Hezbollah issued a statement saying it was closely following the situation in Gaza and was in "direct contact with the leadership of the Palestinian resistance".

**TEHRAN** -- The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps warned the perpetrators and sponsors of a recent deadly attack on a graduation ceremony at a military college in Syria's Homs, saying that resistance forces will exact an awful revenge for the crime. In messages to Syria's defense minister and to chief of the general staff of the Syrian armed forces, Major General Hussein Salami strongly condemned the drone attack that has martyred at least 100 people and wounded 240 more at a military college in Homs province during a graduation ceremony.

## Viewpoint

### Countdown Begins for End of Usurper Israel

### Gen. Bagheri: Iraq Has to Do More to Secure Border



### Yazdani, Emami, Zareh Win Gold Medals at Asian Games



### Report: Pentagon Plans Major Cuts to U.S. Forces in Pivot Away From West Asia



# Heaviest Blow to Zionists in Years

**TEL AVIV (Dispatches)** -- Palestinians on Saturday launched their biggest operation against Israel in years in a surprise offensive that combined fighters crossing the fence into occupied cities with a heavy barrage of rockets from the Gaza Strip.

Videos purportedly showed resistance fighters inside a military base, as bodies of dead soldiers lied on the ground.

At least 100 Israelis have been killed and over 900 injured, Israeli media reported, citing the ambulance service.

"We are on the verge of a great victory and an obvious conquest," Hamas politburo chief Ismail Haniyeh said.

The Times of Israeli said Palestinian fighters infiltrated the town of Sderot and other settlements.

Hamas released a video showing its fighters had captured three Israelis.

"Scenes of Al-Qassam Brigades capturing a number of enemy soldiers in the battle of Al-Aqsa Flood," said a sentence appearing on a black background at the start of the video.

Signs in Hebrew in the background suggested the footage was filmed on the Israeli side of the Erez crossing to the Gaza Strip. Other videos circulating on social media showed bodies of a number of people in military fatigues.

The unprecedented offensive started a few minutes before 7 a.m. as Israelis celebrated the last day of the weeklong Sukkot festival, with hundreds of rockets fired at Israel.

Videos showed young Zionists fleeing in panic when Palestinian fighters raided a music festival in the desert.

Red alert warning sirens were activated in Tel Aviv, Sde Boker, Arad, and Dimona in the south as explosions were



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heard by residents. In Al-Quds, rocket sirens sounded followed by the sound of explosions.

Cars were seen on fire after a rocket landed in Ashkelon, southern Occupied Palestine.

Hamas' armed wing said more than 7,000 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel on Saturday, declaring it had started "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm".

"We decided to put an end to all the crimes of the occupation, their time for rampaging without being held accountable is over," Hamas said.

Gaza-based Islamic Jihad said its fighters had joined the operation as Hamas called on Palestinians everywhere to fight and on resistance groups in Lebanon also to join the fighting against the occupying regime of Israel.

"We are part of this battle, our fighters are side-by-side with their brothers in the Qassam Brigades until victory is achieved," said Islamic Jihad armed wing spokesman Abu Hamza on a post on Telegram.

"This storm which started from Gaza will spread to the West Bank and outside the country and all the places where our people and nation are present," Haniyeh

said. Haniyeh called the operation historic and epic, saying the main reason for its start was the "criminal aggression of the Zionists in Al-Aqsa Mosque, which had -reached its peak in recent days".

Videos showed a bomb dropped from a quadcopter on a Merkava tank and later Palestinians pulling out a soldier from the vehicle.

A witness reporting from the scene was heard saying that the operators of the tank had been captured and taken to Gaza. One video purportedly showed an Israeli soldier being ridden pillion on a motorbike in the custody of two Palestinians and taken to Gaza.

Another video circulating on social media showed large black plumes of smoke and fires from a suspected impact site in Ashkelon.

In Gaza the roar of rocket launches could be heard and residents reported armed clashes along the separation fence with Israel, near the southern town of Khan Younis, and said they had seen significant movement of armed fighters.

Gaza health officials said 198 Palestinians had been martyred in airstrikes as bombardments hit deep into Gaza City, sending clouds of black smoke spiraling into the sky.

Palestinians in Gaza expressed disbelief at the infiltration into the territories occupied by Israel. "It is like a dream. I still can't believe it, fighters inside our occupied land?" said one Gaza shopkeeper, quoted by Reuters.

Senior Hamas military commander Muhammad Deif said, "This is the day of the greatest battle end the last occupation on earth."

## Iran: Gaza Operation 'a Turning Point'

**TEHRAN** -- Iran on Saturday hailed the Palestinian operation against Israel as "a turning point and a new chapter" in their resistance against the Zionists.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm "shows the Palestinian resistance is confidently capable of conducting hybrid and multilateral operations against the occupiers."

Kanaani extended congratulations to the Palestinian people and all resistance groups over the operation.

"What happened today is in line with the continuation of the victories of the resistance in the face of the Zionists in various fields, including in Syria, Lebanon and the occupied territories."

He said the operation once again proved that Israelis are vulnerable in the face of a serious move and lack the spirit to

resist.

The Iranian diplomat expressed hope that resistance would succeed in achieving more victories in the path towards the liberation of Palestine.

A top military adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Iran supports the "courageous" Palestinian operation against Israel.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi said Iran will stand by the Palestinian fighters until the liberation of Palestine and Al-Quds. He expressed confidence the resistance front would also support the operation.

The senior Iranian military official lamented the fact that Israel keeps killing Palestinian children and youths as international organizations keep silent and show no reaction.

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## Significance of Captured Zionists

**GAZA (Dispatches)** -- Israel's military spokesman has so far declined to comment on whether Zionists have been captured during a wide-scale attack launched by Palestinian resistance groups early on Saturday.

Hamas and the Islamic Jihad have said they captured several Israeli soldiers and released videos purportedly showing their fighters holding Zionists in custody.

Hamas's political representative, Saleh al-Arouri, told Al Jazeera Arabic that they have Israeli commanders in custody.

Meanwhile, several Palestinian accounts on social media are posting videos and photos allegedly showing captured Israeli soldiers and settlers being taken back into Gaza.

Online footage on X, formerly known as Twitter, also shows Palestinians taking military vehicles back into the besieged enclave.

An Israeli security source, speaking to Reuters anonymously, said they were aware of reports of captives being held.

Much of the footage remains unverified. In the event that the

reports are confirmed, the number of Zionist being held by the Palestinian groups, dead or alive, will likely become a politically hot-button issue in Occupied Palestine.

In Palestine, the fate of Palestinian prisoners held in Occupied Palestine is also an important issue, increasingly so under the most far-right regime in Israel's history.

Over the past year, Israel's far-right minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, has sought to clamp down on the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

From limiting family visits to moving dozens of Palestinians to Nafha prison, widely considered to be one of the most notorious in the country, Ben Gvir has adopted a policy of making the lives of Palestinian prisoners incrementally more difficult.

There are around 5,200 political prisoners in Israeli jails, including more than 1,264 administrative detainees, according to Palestinian rights group Addameer.

Under the occupying regime's (Continued on Page 7)

## Dozens of Casualties as Quake Hits Herat

**HERAT (AFP)** -- A magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit western Afghanistan on Saturday killing 15 and injuring dozens more, officials said, predicting the toll could rise after reports of landslides and victims trapped under collapsed buildings.

The United States Geological Survey said the epicenter was 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of the region's largest city Herat, and was followed by seven aftershocks with magnitudes between 4.6 and 6.3.

Crowds of residents fled buildings in the city at around 11:00 am (0630 GMT) as the quakes began, lasting just under three hours.

"We were in our offices and suddenly the building started shaking," 45-year-old Herat resident Bashir Ahmad told AFP.

"Wall plasters started to fall down and the walls got cracks, some walls and parts of the building collapsed."

"I am not able to contact my family, network connections are disconnected. I am too worried and scared, it was horrifying," he

said.

Men, women and children stood out in the wide streets, away from tall buildings, in the moments after the first quake and remained wary of returning to homes as aftershocks continued.

"The situation was very horrible, I have never experienced such a thing," said 21-year-old student Idrees Arsala, the last to safely evacuate his classroom as the quakes began.

In a video statement, National Disaster Management Authority spokesman Mullah Jan Sayeq said "around 40" had been injured in tremors felt across three provinces, in addition to 15 killed.

"These are the preliminary numbers. There is the possibility the numbers could increase," he said. Earlier in the day he told AFP there had been landslides in nearby rural and mountainous areas.

Public health director of Herat province Muhammad Taleb Shahid put the fatality figure slightly lower at 14, with 78 injured, but agreed the tally would likely rise.

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