

CURRENT EVENTS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM



<https://images.wafa.ps/album/Details/34456>

*As the highly contagious Coronavirus, COVID-19, is affecting **228 countries and territories** around the world, Palestine attempts to contain a local outbreak that has effectively halted daily life and led to tens of thousands of people entering quarantine.¹*

Although **3,078,533** individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been tested for COVID-19, there remains a deficiency in the amount of testing kits, as there is an increase in the number of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. **2,010,480** individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and **1,774,383** individuals are completely vaccinated.²

Global Level³

of COVID-19 Cases

of Recoveries

of Deaths

of Active Cases

595,403,017

568,805,682

6,454,886

20,142,449

¹<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

²<http://www.corona.ps>

³<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

| Local Level ⁴ | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Location | # of COVID-19 Cases | # of Recoveries | # of Deaths | # of Currently Infected Patients |
| West Bank (including Jerusalem) | 426,048 <i>Including 81,150 in Jerusalem</i> | 418,120 (80,026) | 3,694 (304) | 4,233 (820) |
| Gaza Strip | 262,430 | 248,061 | 1,987 | 12,383 |
| Total | 688,478 | 666,181 | 5,681 | 16,616 |

The Palestinian presidency condemned the closure of (7) human rights and civil society organisations in the cities of Ramallah and Al-Bireh by the occupying forces. The presidency considered this a crime and blatant attack on Palestinian civil society organisations, as well as an attack on the entire international human rights system. The statement also indicated that they stand with these national institutions which carry out their duty to expose the crimes of the occupation and expose them to the world. The presidency called on the international community to take immediate and urgent action to protect the Palestinian people and stop these attacks, because of their serious repercussions and effects, stressing that there will be Palestinian action at all levels to confront this decision. Sources: Wafa News Agency, Ma'an News Agency and Raya News Network

The Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Riyadh Al-Maliki, said that the State of Palestine is preparing to announce a list of Israeli organisations to be placed on the terrorist list, as part of its response to the ongoing occupation crimes against Palestinians, and its denial of international resolutions and laws. Al-Maliki said in an interview with "Voice of Palestine" radio today, that work is underway to complete the legal procedures to put these organisations on the terrorist list, mobilise international support to classify them as such and demand the international community not to deal with them. He also noted that this list will be announced in the appropriate time. Sources: The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates' Website, Ma'an News Agency and Wafa News Agency.

The Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, affirmed the government's support for the (7) human rights and civil society organisations that were closed by the occupying forces, stressing that they are a major component of the Palestinian national fabric. He added: "These institutions are registered with the State of Palestine, and therefore are legal institutions that operate within the framework of the law, so they will resume work despite their closure by the occupying forces." He stressed that the government's work is not limited to licensing these institutions, but rather to defending them because they are the voice of truth. Sources: The Council of Ministers' Website, Ma'an News Agency and Wafa News Agency.

Several attacks and arrests by the Israeli occupying forces took place across Palestine:



1. Today, 132 settlers invaded the courtyards Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
2. Today, the occupying forces notified a halt to construction in (3) agricultural rooms, belonging to Palestinians, in Al-Mughayir, east of Ramallah. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
3. Today, the cities of Ramallah and Al-Bireh, including the Palestine Medical Complex, were invaded and tear gas canisters were thrown at its residents. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
4. Today, Israeli navy boats opened fire towards fishermen in the southern Gaza Strip. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
5. Today, a bulldozer, belonging to the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, was seized in Masafer Yatta, south of Hebron. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
6. Today, (7) human rights and civil society organisations, including: ADDAMEER Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Defence for Children, Al-Haq, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Health Work Committees, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees and Bisan Center for Research & Development, were invaded and closed down in the cities of Ramallah and Al-Bireh.. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
7. Today, (12) Palestinians were arrested across several Governorates in the West Bank, including: Qalqilya, Hebron, Jenin and Bethlehem, in addition to occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
8. Today, Nablus City was invaded, tear gas canisters were thrown at its residents, and a 20-year-old boy was pronounced dead as a result of his wounds. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)

Local and International Events

The Biden administration wants Israel to review its “rules of engagement” during military operations in Judea and Samaria after the killing of Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh. US pressure for Israel to review the guidelines is unusual, but comes as the Biden administration faces pressure to do more to ensure accountability in Abu Aqleh's death. The rules of engagement define the circumstances under which Israeli soldiers can use live fire.

[Sources: Ma'an News Agency, Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

The Palestinian mission at the United Nations is once more pushing for full member status. The U.N. Security Council is against the Palestinians' quest to obtain “full-fledged, voting member-state status,” said Alan Baker, a member of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA) and former Israeli ambassador to Canada. “They tried twice, once in 2009 and once in 2012, but they couldn't get accepted to the U.N. as a full member because the Security Council blocked them,” he told JNS. “They can only turn themselves into a state member of the U.N. through the Security Council and the Security Council won't go along with it.” The United States will veto the attempt as it opposes full Palestinian U.N. membership on the grounds it would undermine future peace talks and should come only after a peace deal is reached. This is also Israel's position. While the Europeans are more sympathetic toward the Palestinians, they, too, would oppose granting full member status as it contradicts their own position, Baker noted. [Sources: Ma'an News Agency, Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas backtracked from accusing Israel of carrying out “50 holocausts” against Palestinians. Following uproar by Israel after he told a German journalist that the Israeli occupation has committed “50 massacres” against the Palestinians. The German journalist asked him whether he is ready to apologise to Israel over Munich attack on the Israeli sport team in 1972, Abbas said: “If we want to dig further into the past, yes, please, I have 50 massacres that were committed by Israel.” While standing beside German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Abbas added: “Fifty massacres, 50 Holocausts, and to this day, every day, we have dead people killed by the Israeli army.” [Sources: Ma'an News Agency, Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz yesterday defended his recent meetings with Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, saying they saved the souls of Israeli soldiers. “Whoever does not send soldiers off to battle, and whoever does not show responsibility for the lives of Israeli citizens and IDF soldiers – better not criticize meetings that prevented and continue to prevent the next war and bring stability and freedom of national action upon us,” Gantz said in a statement. Gantz added: “Thanks to the security coordination carried out at the field levels, by the heads of the security directorates and myself – there are many civilians and lives that were saved.” He continued: “Whoever wants to turn away and ignore the complicated security and national situation – is unfit to take the wheel and lead the State of Israel.” [Sources: Ma'an News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Miscellaneous

Today, the Israeli Ministry of Health confirmed that total number of COVID-19 cases is **4,619,561**, of which **11,524** died and **4,588,893** recovered. According to the Health Ministry's statistics, of the **19,144** active cases in Israel, **266** are in critical condition. Sources: Ma'an News Agency and <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>.

- ❖ Human Rights Watch yesterday called on Israel to release French-Palestinian human rights defender, Salah Hamouri. Hamouri was detained from his house in the occupied city of Jerusalem on 7 March 2022. Since then, he has been held under administrative detention without trial or charge, based on secret evidence.
- ❖ Extremist Israeli Knesset member Itamar Ben-Gvir yesterday said he wants to bring forward a bill that will enable courts to deport Palestinians who attack soldiers and politicians who are disloyal to the state of Israel.
- ❖ German Chancellor Olaf Scholz took issue with words used by Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas following talks in Berlin on Tuesday (16 August). "Of course, regarding the Israeli politics we have a different assessment. I want to say clearly that I won't use the word 'apartheid' and I don't believe it is right to use the term to describe the situation," Scholz said.
- ❖ Former rivals Israel and Turkey renewed full diplomatic relations Wednesday, after years of tension over Palestine, as the two countries agreed to reappoint their respective ambassadors. "The resumption of relations with Turkey is an important asset for regional stability and very important economic news for the citizens of Israel," said Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid following a congratulatory phone conversation with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.
- ❖ New reports, including a secret letter sent by former US President Donald Trump to then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, revealed that everything was ready in Washington to authorize the annexation of about a third of Palestinian land in the West Bank to Israel. The third of Palestinian territory that were up for annexation included the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea areas and Jewish settlements in the West Bank. In exchange for the annexation, Israel would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the remaining two thirds of the West Bank, revealed the Jerusalem Post in a report.
- ❖ On Tuesday, August 16, Israel's Beer Sheva District court extended the solitary confinement of 20-year-old Palestinian detainee, Ahmad Manasra, for an additional six months. Manasra had been moved from Eshel prison in Beer Sheva to Shakima Prison in Ashkelon, last Saturday, August 13. Israel's rejection to remove the 20-year-old from solitary has been condemned by mental health experts and human rights organizations, including Amnesty International.