

Violence spreads to Gaza, Israeli troops kill 6 Palestinians

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Jerusalem/Gaza City: At least six Palestinians were killed and 21 others injured today when Israeli troops opened fire on demonstrators along the Gaza border as a fresh wave of stabbing attacks rocked Israel, exacerbating an already tense situation.

A week of violence between Israelis and Palestinians spread to the Gaza Strip today with clashes breaking out east of Gaza City and Khan Yunis along the border with the Jewish state.

Ahmed al-Hirbawi, Shadi Dawla, Abed al-Wahidi and Nabil Sharaf, all aged 20, were shot and killed east of the al-Shujaiyeh neighbourhood, while 15-year-old Muhammad al-Raqeb was killed after being shot by Israeli forces near Khan Yunis, Gaza's Hamas governed Ministry of Health and medics said.

An unnamed 19-year-old youth was killed east of Khan Yunis, in Gaza's south. 21 Palestinians were also wounded in the firing by Israeli forces.

Israeli security officials said that about 400 Palestinians approached the security fence and hurled rocks and rolled burning tyres at Israeli forces in an attempt to break into a no-go buffer zone.

Islamist faction Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, had declared Friday a day of rage against Israeli actions in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

The violence came even as stabbing incidents perpetrated by both Arabs and Jews against each other continued in Israel with tensions escalating, adding to the three weeks of violence that has marred the region.

In the Israeli city of Dimona, an Israeli teenager stabbed four Palestinian Bedouins who worked for the local municipality, seriously injuring two.

The 17-year-old stabber, known to police, admitted in questioning that he believes "all Arabs are terrorists" and that is the reason why he stabbed them.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office strongly condemned the attack against innocent Arabs.

"Israel is a country of law and order. Those who use violence and break the law -- from whatever side -- will be dealt with to the fullest extent of the law," the Prime Minister said.

In yet another attack on Arabs, some Jews tried to lynch three Arabs at Kikar Haatzmaut in Netanya, shouting "death to the Arabs".

Two of the three Arab youngsters managed to escape, but the third was injured. Israeli Police rescued him and saved his life. No suspects have been arrested yet.

In a third incident, a Palestinian was shot and killed in the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba after he attacked an Israeli border officer and tried to steal his weapon.

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