

# Palestine: The Third Uprising Declared

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/09/hamas-leader-gaza-declares-intifada-deadly-attacks-continue>

Ismail Haniyeh says Gaza is 'more than ready for confrontation', as six Palestinians shot dead by Israeli troops at border fence

Hamas's leader in Gaza has declared the current unrest in Jerusalem and the West Bank an intifada, as six Palestinians were shot dead protesting at the border fence, further raising the stakes after a week of escalating violence.

The comments by Ismail Haniyeh contradicted recent remarks by Fatah's leadership, including the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas. There has been increasingly widespread use of the hashtag #intifada on Palestinian social media.

In a sermon for Friday prayers at a mosque in Gaza City, Haniyeh said: "We are calling for the strengthening and increasing of the intifada. It is the only path that will lead to liberation. Gaza will fulfil its role in the Jerusalem intifada and it is more than ready for confrontation."

Israeli troops fired across the border into Gaza, killing six and wounding 23 others among a group throwing stones and taking part in a rally, hospital officials in Gaza said.

The rally had been called in support of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem and followed a spate of attacks by Palestinians against Israelis and reprisals by Jews against Arabs.

An Israeli military spokeswoman said around 200 Palestinians massed at the border fence in northern Gaza, throwing rocks and rolling burning tyres toward troops stationed on the other side.

In the southern Israeli city of Dimona, a Jewish attacker stabbed two Palestinians and two Arab Israelis and later told police: "All Arabs are terrorists."

A Palestinian stabbed a policeman near the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, and was shot dead by the policeman, who was lightly wounded. A

16-year-old Israeli was lightly wounded in a stabbing in Jerusalem and an 18-year-old Palestinian suspect was arrested.

A woman was shot after a stabbing attempt in the northern Israeli town of Afula. Video of the incident at a bus station showed the woman surrounded by police and security guards, apparently raising her hands before being shot multiple times.

The violence has been characterised by seemingly random and low-tech attacks with knives and screwdrivers. Israel has installed metal detectors at the gates of Jerusalem's Old City and deployed extra security forces.

The so-called seam line between the Jewish west and largely Palestinian east Jerusalem close to the Old City – the scene of a number of attacks and attempted attacks over the last year – was eerily quiet on Friday.

The mounting tension has empowered hardliners on both sides. Supporters of Nechamia Lavie, the rabbi stabbed to death last week, have established a presence in the Old City's Al-Wad Street, near the corner of the Via Dolorosa in the Muslim Quarter. There have also been visits by prominent politicians including Yitzhak Herzog, the Israeli Labour party leader, and Yair Lapid, former journalist and leader of centrist party Yesh Atid.



A Palestinian man is arrested by Israeli border police at Friday prayers in Jerusalem.

Another camp protesting at Binyamin Netanyahu handling of the crisis has been established by supporters of the settlement movement outside the prime minister's home in Jerusalem's Balfour Street. There have been visits by rightwing members of Netanyahu's own cabinet including the education minister, Naftali Bennett.

Among those visiting the camp on Thursday evening was Eitan Schulman, 34, and his family, who had travelled from the settlement of Eli, in the central West Bank. Schulman said: "We feel strongly that the government is not acting strongly enough. We voted for a rightwing government but we are not getting rightwing policies."

He added: "We should build, build, build in response to each attack. Jews are too accustomed to being merciful with our enemies. We have to know how to fight hard."

Bennet, visiting the protest tents, told supporters that Palestinians had "been trying to kill Jews for 120 years" but that Jews would keep building and continue to live there.

A few days earlier, a senior Fatah official, Issa Qaraka, said: "I don't like to put big names or slogans like intifada. All I can say is that what is happening right now is a popular rage. In order to bring this under control [the Israelis] need to control the settlers. We cannot control people on our side if they fail to control their side."

The reality is that neither side appears fully in control amid "lone wolf" stabbing attacks by Palestinians and attempted lynchings by Israelis – including an incident in the seaside town of Netanya on Thursday night when a mob attacked three Palestinians.

Underlining these concerns, the Israeli public security minister, Gilad Erdan, said at the scene of an attack on a 15-year-old yeshiva student in Jerusalem that "Jewish terrorists are also taking part in attacks. We won't allow anyone to take the law into their own hands."

Palestinian anger is largely derived from events at al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City and fears that Israel is trying to change the status quo at the holy site, revered by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and by Jews as the Temple Mount. Netanyahu has denied wanting to change conditions under which Jews are allowed to visit the site.

Both Netanyahu and Abbas have called for calm, and Palestinian police continue to coordinate with Israeli security forces to try to restore order, but there are few signs of the tension and violence dying down.

Palestinian protests were planned in Jerusalem and West Bank cities after Muslim prayers on Friday, and Israel has deployed thousands more police and soldiers. Muslim access to al-Aqsa has been restricted solely to men over 45 and women.

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