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ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS CONDEMN ISRAELI CRACKDOWN IN NI'LIN



Ni'lin, West Bank: Human rights advocates in Israel and the West Bank are calling for an end to the violence in Ni'lin village, after two Palestinian boys were killed within a week in clashes with Israeli soldiers.

Ahmad Husam Yousif Musa, 10, was shot in the head at close range by a soldier July 29. At a demonstration following his funeral the next day, 17-year-old Yousef Ahmad Younis Amira was struck in the head with a rubber bullet. He died Monday. Dozens more were injured in the demonstration, according to news reports.

Israeli forces have been cracking down on Ni'lin, a village of about 5,000 located west of Ramallah, since residents there began protesting a separation wall being built to protect Israeli settlements. The barrier of razor-wire fences and concrete barricades, which residents call the "apartheid wall," cuts into their land and has been deemed illegal by the United Nations' World Court.

"The struggle of Ni'lin residents to safeguard their homes and livelihoods is recognized in international law and we stand in solidarity with them," said Connie Hackbarth, director of the Alternative Information Center (AIC), an Advocacy Project (AP) partner in Jerusalem. "As a joint Palestinian-Israeli organization, we are concerned at the long-term impacts of Israel's inability to recognize Palestinian human and national rights...our ability as Palestinians and Israelis to live together in equality and peace is fundamentally eroded with each army action such as those against Ni'lin."

AP's partners in the Middle East, including the AIC, Democracy and Workers' Rights Center (DWRC), and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), have condemned the

violence in Ni'lin. The DWRC is working on a coordinated response with other West Bank human rights organizations to improve the situation there.

Willow Heske, an AP Peace Fellow volunteering with the DWRC this summer, has been following the wall's effects on the workers of Ni'lin and knew the 10-year-old who was killed. In her [blog](#), she remembers the last time she saw Ahmad – the Friday before his death, when the army had blockaded the entrance to the village:

“He smiled at me and gave me the two-finger V. Everyone stood there, in the road for a while, and finally we turned around to leave. He was sitting on the top of a brick wall, watching the army, I waved goodbye, and once again he gave me the V.”

On Monday, the funeral procession for 18-year-old Yousef Amira was greeted by Israeli soldiers with guns, dogs, tear gas, and an industrial-strength water cannon. Dozens of Israeli activists were also arrested in Zikhron Yaakov Tuesday for protesting at the home of the army commander in charge of Ni'lin, according to news reports.

As Ni'lin mourns, residents have been advised to stay in their homes for their own safety. The two recent deaths followed an incident in early July where a 27-year-old Palestinian was bound by soldiers and shot at close range with a rubber bullet. That shooting was caught on film by a 14-year-old girl.

Hannah Wright, an AP Peace Fellow volunteering with the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) in Ramallah, traveled to Ni'lin recently and interviewed the girl. She had hoped the video would draw international attention and deter Israeli soldiers from further violence, but events of the past week have proved otherwise.

“The world watches, the violence continues, the world gets bored and turns away...” Ms Wright wrote in her [blog](#). “For the children of Ni'lin, this is home, and the perceived inevitability of the violence doesn't make it any less devastating. Ahmad Musa and his peers did not ask for this life. Will they ever know anything else?”

- Read the blogs of Peace Fellows [Willow Heske](#) and [Hannah Wright](#).
- Learn more about the [DWRC](#).
- Learn more about the [WATC](#).
- Learn more about the [AIC](#).