

‘The gravity of the situation cannot be understated’: An Eyewitness Account From the Israeli Assault on Jenin

As the occupation relentlessly tightens its grip on the Jenin refugee camp, the message is crystal clear – punish the stronghold of popular resistance. But they will not succeed and will only breed a new generation to carry the torch.

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Today, Monday, July 3, 2023, I stand before you to share my personal account of the [events that unfolded](#) in Jenin refugee camp early this morning. The Israeli military operation commenced with an aggressive assault on sites believed to be affiliated with the Palestinian resistance. They claimed these locations as their targets, launching three missiles that resulted in the loss of innocent lives and left many wounded.

Soon after, a full-scale invasion ensued, with an overwhelming presence of military forces. Jeeps, armoured vehicles, and military bulldozers stormed into Jenin, asserting their dominance over the ground. The skies above were not spared either, as a multitude of drones hovered ominously.

During this tumultuous time, it was impossible for the inhabitants of Jenin to sleep, young and old alike. My daughter, Salma, was terrified by the blaring warning sirens that announced the army’s incursion, her tears flowing uncontrollably. Meanwhile, my son, Adam, displayed a mix of fear and curiosity, trying to comprehend the gravity of the situation.

Isra Awartani, The Freedom Theatre’s accountant, hastily created a safe space within her home to shield her three daughters from harm. Ahmed Tobasi, artistic director of The Freedom Theatre, found himself face-to-face with an armoured vehicle stationed right outside his house, its barrel aimed at his window. Rania Wasfi, TFT former colleague, frantically tried to reach her mother and sister after news that their house was bombed.

The morning brought news of a devastating attack on The Freedom Theatre, where a group of families sought refuge amidst the turmoil. The occupying forces callously targeted them with missiles, shattering their hopes for safety. Adnan, who lives next door to The Freedom Theatre, huddled together with his family in one room, struggling to find comfort in the midst of chaos. Adnan's niece Sadeel, 14 was murdered by an Israeli sniper less than two weeks ago. Her family lives in the same neighbourhood.

Update From Mustafa Sheta: The yard of The Freedom Theatre has been bombed, dozens of residents in Jenin camp live all around. They are trying to flee their homes because of the bombing that is targeting anything living in the camp. At least 7 people have been killed so far pic.twitter.com/jf9ragKl3f

— The Freedom Theatre (@freedom_theatre) [July 3, 2023](#)

The gravity of the situation cannot be understated. The occupation relentlessly tightens its grip on the refugee camp, decimating its infrastructure and obliterating the main roads in the camp. The message is crystal clear – punish the stronghold of popular [resistance in Jenin](#), and project an image of invincibility to Israeli society regarding their military prowess.

What lies ahead? For me, the answer is nothing. The occupation's attempts to eradicate the resistance in Jenin will not succeed, just as their predecessors failed in 2002. Buildings may crumble, cars may be reduced to wreckage, and countless individuals may be detained, wounded and even martyred. However, these actions will only serve to breed a new generation that will carry the torch of resistance passed down by those who came before them, as we do today, and as our children will do in the future. It is a relentless pursuit, driven by the aspiration to reclaim our land and restore the dignity of every human being.

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Featured image: An Israeli military bulldozer seen leveling roads and destroying the center of the Jenin refugee camp during a raid on the camp near the West Bank City of Jenin, July 3, 2023. (Photo: Nasser Ishtayeh/SOPA images via ZUMA Press Wire/APA Images)

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