

Israeli forces arrest Palestinian minister of education, former minister of public works, mayors and PLC members

By [Global Research](#)

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Israeli forces launched an extensive arrest campaign in several West Bank cities on Thursday morning, culminating in the arrest of the Palestinian minister of education, Nasser Addin Ash-Sha'er, and former minister of public works, Abdur-Rahman Zeidan, in addition to a number of Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) members and mayors. Some 33 Hamas-affiliated politicians and activists are reported to have been arrested in this most recent attack on the democratically elected Palestinian government.

Our Nablus correspondent reported that the minister of education was apprehended from his home in the Mu'ajeen area of Nablus in the northern West Bank after the Israeli forces broke into the home.

Furthermore, the Israeli forces arrested the Hamas members of the PLC in Nablus, Hamid Al-Beitawi and Dawood Abu Seir. They also arrested the mayor of Nablus, Adli Ya'ish; the mayor of Beita, Arab Ash-Sharafa; the director of the Islamic endowments office in Nablus, Fayyad Al-Aghbar; and several other Hamas-affiliated activists.

Also on Wednesday night, dozens of Israeli military vehicles invaded the Rafidia and Al-Makhfiyya areas of west Nablus city and apprehended Khalid Abu Sharikh in Rafidia, our Nablus correspondent reported.

In Qalqiliya in the northern West Bank, the Israeli forces also arrested the mayor of the city, Sheikh Wajih Qawwas, in addition to an employee in the directorate of education in Qalqiliya district, Muhammad Zeid, aged 36.

In Hebron in the southern West Bank, the Israeli troops apprehended a Hamas political leader, Sufyan Jamjoom, in the Rumman Hill area.

In the Tulkarem area of the north-western occupied West Bank, the Israeli forces invaded the city, the refugee camp and the towns of Deir Al-Ghusun and 'Illar. The forces arrested three Palestinian men including the former Hamas minister of public works, Abdur-Rahman Zeidan.

Palestinian security sources and eyewitnesses told our Tulkarem correspondent that an Israeli force broke into the home of PLC member Abdur-Rahman Zeidan in Deir Al-Ghusun and arrested him after carrying out a thorough search of his home.

Another Israeli force broke into the home of an activist of the Fatah-affiliated Al-Aqsa Brigades, Osaymar Al-Ashqar, in the village of Seida, north east of Tulkarem. The soldiers broke the doors and destroyed the furniture in the house, but failed to arrest Al-Ashqar because he was not at home. The Israelis also broke into the homes of Ahmad Odah, Majdi Al-Ashqar, Jamil Al-Ashqar, Muhammad Al-Ashqar and Isa Al-Ashqar without arresting any of them.

The Israeli forces also invaded the village of Beit Rima, north west of Ramallah city, and arrested two members of the Bani Zeid municipality.

Eight Israeli military vehicles invaded Beit Rima at around 2:00 am and broke into the homes of Mazen Radwan Rimawi, 27, and Muhammad Al-Asmar Rimawi, 29, before taking them to detention centres for interrogation.

Muhammad Rimawi has been arrested five times before and he has served nine years in Israeli jail. Mazen Rimawi is the director of Hamas' 'Change and Reform' office in Ramallah. Another member of the Bani Zeid municipality, Ala' Rimawi, is already in an Israeli prison serving administrative detention.

The Palestinian minister of education, Ash Sha'er, was apprehended in a previous Israeli sweep against Hamas legislators and politicians in 2006 following the capture of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit by Palestinian armed factions in the southern Gaza Strip in June 2006. At the end of June 2006, the Israeli army seized eight members of the Hamas cabinet, the speaker of the PLC, and over 20 legislators.

As for the mayor of Qalqiliya, Wajih Qawwas, he was arrested three times during the second Palestinian intifada, and he was elected mayor of the city whilst in prison after he got the highest number of votes in the 2005 elections. He was also arrested in the June 2006 sweep of Hamas politicians.

Palestinian minister of information Mustafa Barghouthi described the arrest of senior Hamas leaders on Wednesday as a "massacre against democracy."

A group of Palestinian doctors and academics have issued a press release condemning Dr. Ash-Sha'er's arrest and calling on "the international community, all academic institutions and all international civil society organizations" to demand his release and the "protection of civilian lives and property, as stipulated in international humanitarian law and international human rights law such as the Fourth Geneva Convention."

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