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Pal^estine

West Bank: faced with attacks by the Israeli army and settlers, fear, despair and anger among Palestinians

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The massacres of the Palestinian people in Gaza are unspeakable, but the news from the West Bank is equally terrifying. Towns, villages and refugee camps cordoned off day and night; daily arrests and killings; threats; constant attacks and expulsion of the inhabitants from their villages by the Israeli army and the settlers.

Friends in Beit Jala/Bethlehem and in the Dheisheh refugee camp confirm this dramatic situation for the Palestinians. Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, a mainly Christian town with a population of 12,000, is located 10 kilometres from Jerusalem. Tens of thousands of Palestinians left Beit Jala for Chile after 1948, and since then they have continued to go into exile to escape the constant threats from the Zionist state. There is talk of 100,000 people from the Beit Jala/Bethlehem region being exiled or descended in Chile and the Americas. Spanish is spoken by many people in these towns. The houses abandoned by the exiles have taken in refugees from the Nakba.

Ten kilometres from Jerusalem

The town and refugee camp are surrounded by settlements, and the wall of hatred and shame built by Israel cuts through, encircles and imprisons the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Since the wall was built, people have had to spend hours at checkpoints to get from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, 10 km away. Today, Palestinians have nowhere to go. They are prisoners of a permanent state of siege.

The images they were able to send us confirm the state of occupation and siege: threatening settlers, villagers violently chased from their fields at olive harvest time; deserted streets crossed by overarmed Israeli soldiers; Palestinians violently arrested at dawn, hands and feet tied, blindfolded...

Michel*, who lives in Beit Jala, talks to us about all the army checkpoints in the town and tells us that horrible things happen everywhere in the Bethlehem region, especially in the villages and near the settlements.

Exile? Where to?

Hassan* lives with his wife and their three very young children in Dheisheh. Stuck in their small flat. They have not been able to see the rest of the family for several weeks. Armed soldiers and settlers, settler leaflets ordering Palestinians to leave for Jordan, three people murdered in a fortnight, including a 16-year-old boy. We see the lifeless body, the blood, the funeral...

When asked about work, he replies that there is "simply no more" and that it's not easy to manage to provide for his family.

The Zionist and colonial state is waging an all-out war in Gaza. It is also attacking all Palestinians. The situation in the West Bank is equally serious. Fear, despair and anger are palpable in our exchanges. Our friends are asking the question: "Should we also leave, as the settlers and the Zionist state want us to, before it's too late. But where should we go?"

They would still like to believe in international solidarity and keep a little hope alive. It's our duty to demonstrate our solidarity en masse, to put pressure on our government to say: "Stop this situation". That's the least we owe the Palestinian people.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

*First names have been changed.

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