



By: TA | AP Brief

Israeli settlers attacked European diplomats in the West Bank



Masked settlers wielding metal bars attacked a group of European diplomats during a visit to the occupied West Bank on Saturday, one of those assaulted said, on a second straight day of violence against Palestinians and foreigners during the sensitive olive harvest.

At least four people have been killed and over 100 injured since the harvest began earlier this month, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

Activists say Israeli authorities do little to stop attacks that involve weapons ranging from slingshots to guns.

An **attack on Friday** seriously injured a Washington Post photographer and others.

In the attack in the **Christian village** of Taybeh on Saturday, settlers targeted Belgium's consul general, French and Polish diplomats and Catholic representatives, Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot said.

He linked the attack to Israel's "illegal settlement policy" and pledged to push for further European Union sanctions. "Impunity for violent settlers must end," he added.

Bernard Baudoux, a French mayor among those attacked, described it in a Facebook post. "Three vehicles arrived. Several masked individuals, armed with metal bars, got out and came toward us with extreme aggressiveness," he wrote.

Baudoux said he put on his French tricolor sash. "That didn't stop them. I was struck with metal bars and kicked before being thrown to the ground. We were finally able to get back to our vehicles."

He said he was fine. He and others had traveled to Taybeh to formalize a twinning agreement between the village and his community, and then participated in the residents' olive harvest. Religious leaders in Taybeh also confirmed the attack.

Video shows masked men

approaching a vehicle

Video shared by an activist at the scene, Amit Orfali, shows Baudoux leaning against a vehicle while sitting on the dusty ground.

Other clips showed young masked men knocking insistently on a driver's side window and asking for IDs, while other masked men carrying sticks advanced in the distance.

Orfali said the masked men "threatened to kill us."

The attacks came less than two weeks before closely contested **elections** that could end Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's time in office.

His government, the most nationalist and far-right in Israel's history, faces domestic criticism over security failures and international criticism over the treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Some of the government's senior officials are settlers themselves.

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The French mayor was "violently assaulted by extremist settlers," France's foreign minister, Jean-Noël Barrot, said on X, adding that Israeli authorities "must urgently put an end to this criminal violence and ensure the safety of civilians, as they are required to do under international law."

"We are deeply outraged by this incident," Poland's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Israel's military in a statement confirmed the attack on the diplomats and called it a "severe act of violence," but said the visit had not been coordinated with it and no soldiers were at the scene.

Israeli police said they had opened an investigation and vowed to work "until everyone who took part in these cases is

brought to justice.”

Foreign Minister Gideon Saar on X condemned the "severe acts of violence by Israeli rioters," adding that his ministry was in contact with ambassadors from the countries concerned.

But Netanyahu's office later issued a statement warning against “premature conclusions” in the incident and noted concerns about “a coordinated campaign to smear Israel.”