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Gazans Mark One Year Anniversary of March of Return Rallies

US praises 'Israeli restraint' for not killing large numbers of demonstrators Posted on [March 31, 2019](#) [March 31, 2019](#) Categories [News](#) Tags [Gaza](#), [Israel](#)

Over the weekend, tens of thousands of demonstrators [marked the one-year anniversary of the March of Return protest rallies](#), which were begun in the Gaza Strip on the previous Palestinian Land Day, and have continued weekly since then.

Demonstrators routinely march near the Israeli border fence, and are often shot with live ammunition by Israeli snipers for doing so. The anniversary rally was expected to be a particularly violent day, but ultimately was a comparatively normal day, with [Israel killing only four demonstrators, who they accused of rock throwing](#). Dozens of others were hospitalized, mostly shot with live ammunition.

That Israel managed to kill four protesters, three teenagers, was enough that the US issued a statement praising them for “restraint,” while [Israel praised the “restrained” Gazans for only provoking them to kill four of them](#). Officials made a point of saying that the expected “escalation” by the Palestinians didn’t happen, and that this was “not something extraordinary.”

The lower death toll than expected is particularly surprising because of the timing, as an upcoming Israeli election has Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu keen for shows of force, and the Palestinians are always a popular target for that.

Instead, the anniversary rally has ended with hope for an easing of tensions, with Israel opening a [border crossing into Gaza](#), and also easing restrictions on Gaza fishermen for the time being.