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## Dozens hurt in Israel Druze village clashes

JERUSALEM (AFP) — Dozens of police and protestors were injured on Tuesday in clashes in a Druze village of northern Israel where demonstrators charge a mobile phone mast has caused an outbreak of cancer.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said 30 people were hurt in the unrest when police went to Pekiin to make arrests over the uprooting two days ago of a mobile phone transmission antenna outside the village.



Druze clerics

"The rioters were masked, and they threw rocks, stones, and metal bars," Rosenfeld said, adding that the police were currently looking into reports that the crowds threw one or two grenades at police officers.

"Calm has returned for now and police are trying to engage in dialogue with local officials," Rosenfeld said, adding that some 200 police officers had taken up positions outside the town.

Sixteen police officers were among the injured, he said. Six people were arrested.

Israeli public radio said they were later released, but Rosenfeld could not immediately confirm the report.

Local leaders said police came to the town after residents destroyed a cellular phone tower they believed was causing cancer.

"There have been a lot of complaints about cancer cases here and youths destroyed a mobile phone mast... Clashes broke out this morning when police arrived," Mohammed Khir, head of the Druze community, told public radio.

A spokesman from Magen David Adom, Israel's paramedic service, said one of the rioters had been shot and seriously injured, while Rosenfeld said the police were still looking into reports of injuries.

"Some police officers were forced to open fire with live rounds because their life was in danger and we are checking whether this fire caused any injuries," Rosenfeld said.

The National Democratic Assembly, an Arab-Israeli political party with three Knesset members, sent a letter to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert demanding the immediate creation of a committee to investigate the incident.