**IDF soldier killed by rock thrown at his head during West Bank arrest raid**

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An Israeli soldier was killed in the northern West Bank in the predawn hours of Tuesday morning, after being struck in the head by a large rock during an arrest raid, the Israel Defense Forces said.

The soldier, Sgt. First Class Amit Ben-Ygal, was a member of the Golani Reconnaissance Battalion, which was carrying out a series of four arrests overnight in the West Bank village of Yabed, west of Jenin, IDF Spokesperson Hidai Zilberman told reporters.

As the troops were making their way out of the village on foot following the arrests, a small group of roughly 10 Palestinian youths began throwing rocks at them.

Zilberman said the rock that killed Ben-Ygal appeared to have been thrown from the roof of one of the homes on the outskirts of the village, which has often seen clashes between residents and IDF troops.

“The rock hit the soldier directly in the head. The soldier was wearing a helmet. But it hit him at an angle,” he said.

According to some media reports a preliminary army probe showed the assailant had waited for the soldier to lift his head to look up before hurling the rock at him.

Ben-Ygal received treatment from medics at the scene before being taken by helicopter to Haifa’s Rambam Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

He was scheduled to be buried at 6 p.m. on Tuesday in the military plot of the Be’er Yaakov cemetery in central Israel, the army said.

Ben-Ygal, from the central Israeli city of Ramat Gan, was the first IDF soldier to be killed in action in 2020. He was posthumously promoted from staff sergeant to sergeant first class.

His father Baruch told the Kan radio station that Amit was his only child, requiring him to receive special permission in order to serve in a combat unit. Ben-Ygal had two sisters on his mother’s side.

“He came from a Zionist household. He loved the people of Israel, the land of Israel,” he said.

“We don’t have anything else. I am broken, I am broken, I am broken, I am crushed,” he said. “I don’t have words for it.”

The spokesman said no suspects had yet been arrested but that the military had launched an investigation and that troops were operating inside Yabed to find the culprits. Palestinian media reported that Israeli troops arrested a number of suspects in the village throughout Tuesday morning.

“The IDF and security forces will get their hands on the degenerate terrorists who are responsible for this, we’ll settle the score,” Defense Minister Naftali Bennett said in a statement Tuesday.

As the Palestinian who threw the rock was apparently standing on a roof, the soldiers were not able to see him and were therefore also unable to open fire at him, Zilberman said.

President Reuven Rivlin sent condolences to Ben-Ygal’s family. “Our hearts are broken from the splendor of youth that was cut down, from the terrible loss. I trust and am sure that our forces will catch the degenerate terrorists and bring them to justice,” he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also offered condolences to the family and vowed that the country’s security services would find those responsible.

“As has happened in every case in recent years, the long arm of Israel will reach the terrorist and settle the score,” he said in a statement.

Ben-Ygal’s death came two years after IDF soldier Ronen Lubarsky was killed when he too was struck on the head by a marble slab that was thrown at him from the third floor of a building in the al-Amari Palestinian refugee camp near Ramallah.

On May 24, 2018, Lubarsky — a member of the elite Duvdevan commando unit — was taking part in an arrest raid when Islam Yousef Abu Hamid threw the large slab at him. The 20-year-old Israeli sergeant — promoted posthumously to staff sergeant — died of his injuries two days later.

Hamid was convicted of murder last April.