IDF: Palestinian gunman opens fire at troops in Ramallah, is shot dead

December 22, 2021

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The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-gunman-opens-fire-at-idf-troops-in-ramallah-is-shot-dead/>

A Palestinian gunman opened fire at Israeli troops Wednesday night from a passing car as they entered the outskirts of Ramallah, the Israeli army said. The soldiers returned fire, killing the assailant.

According to the military, Israeli soldiers entered the city’s al-Bireh neighborhood to detain several Palestinians who had approached the boundaries of the nearby settlement of Psagot.

During the search, the gunman opened fire, the army said. The soldiers shot back, wounding him. The man, identified as 26-year-old Mohammad Issa Abbas, later perished in a Ramallah hospital, the Palestinian Authority health ministry said.

It was not clear whether the gunman was connected to the suspects sought by the soldiers. No Israeli soldiers were injured, according to the army.

The military said the incident was followed by a riot, with troops responding to the dozens who surrounded them with riot dispersal measures.

Recent weeks have seen an uptick in Palestinian attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians. At least nine incidents have taken place over the past month and a half, many of them in Jerusalem.

Two Israeli civilians have been killed so far in the violence. Eliyahu Kay, a South African immigrant, was gunned down in the Old City by a Hamas member in mid-November. And last Thursday night, Yehuda Dimentman was killed near the Homesh outpost in the West Bank, allegedly by members of the Islamic Jihad terror group.

Hamas officials were quick to praise the reported attack on Wednesday night, pledging that more would soon follow. The terror group did not claim Issa as a member, however.

“The occupation must expect more such responses of resistance,” Hussein Abu Kweik, a senior figure in the group’s West Bank division, told official Hamas television.

Abu Kweik added that the coming days would be “pregnant” with “resistance activities.”

“Our people will not wave the flag of surrender and will continue to resist by every means,” Abu Kweik said.