**2 Palestinians killed by IDF tank fire on border, Gaza health ministry says**

Times of Israel

February 18, 2018

https://www.timesofisrael.com/2-palestinians-killed-by-idf-tank-fire-on-border-gaza-health-ministry-says/

Two Palestinians were killed by IDF tank fire in Gaza early Sunday, Gaza medical sources said, during a flareup that came after four Israeli soldiers were wounded by an explosive device along the Strip’s border and as a rocket hit an Israeli border town.

According to Palestinian eyewitnesses, the two were killed by shots near the border.

The Israeli army said that its forces had fired warning shots at a number of Palestinians approaching the border fence in a suspicious manner.

The fatalities were identified by the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry as Salam Sabah and Abdullah Abu Sheikha, both 17, who were killed during a strike east of Rafah in southern Gaza.

Israeli fighter jets also launched a series of airstrikes over the weekend targeting 18 “Hamas targets” in the Gaza Strip, after four Israeli soldiers were injured, two of them seriously, by explosives planted on the border.

Ten “terror targets” linked to the Hamas terrorist group were destroyed in the early hours of Sunday morning, the army said. Eight were hit by air force strikes while two by cross-border tank fire, according to the IDF.

Earlier in the night, eight other sites, including one that the army said was managed by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, were destroyed in response to the bomb attack on the IDF patrol.

The targets included observation posts, an attack tunnel and Hamas weapons factories, the army said.

The army also said that a number of rocket sirens heard across the border region overnight were false alarms.

“There was no rocket fire shot towards Israeli territory,” the IDF spokesperson said of the sirens heard hours after one rocket fired from Gaza hit a house in the community of Sha’ar Hanegev, causing significant damage but no injuries.

In the fourth warning signal of the night, residents of the southern cities of Ashkelon and Sderot were sent running to bomb shelters shortly after 3 a.m. Moments earlier, similar signals were heard in the Sha’ar Hanegev and Hof Ashkelon regions.

Earlier, a rocket hit a house in the community of Sha’ar Hanegev, causing significant damage to its roof but no casualties, with several residents of the community treated for anxiety.

On the bomb attack, the army said the soldiers were hit when a patrol stopped along the border to remove a flag that had been placed at the fence a day earlier during a protest, and that a device planted below the flag then detonated.

The spokesperson said that the patrol — made up of Golani infantry soldiers and members of a combat engineering unit — was operating according to standard procedures to remove any foreign object from the border fence, but that the procedures would now be reviewed.

The soldiers were evacuated by helicopter to Soroka hospital in Beersheba for treatment, where three of them were rushed into surgery. The soldiers were not in life-threatening condition, hospital officials said later Saturday.

Hamas’s military wing, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam brigades, claimed that it had used anti-aircraft missiles against Israeli jets flying over the coastal territory.

Hamas will not allow Israel to “impose any new equation on the ground or export its internal crises and the corruption cases of its leaders by escalating the aggression on our people,” Abd al Latif Kanou, a spokesman for the terror group, said.