Soldier seriously hurt in West Bank stabbing attack; assailant shot dead

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An Israeli soldier was stabbed and seriously wounded in an attack carried out by a Palestinian teenager in the northern West Bank on Tuesday, the military and medics said.

According to the Israel Defense Forces, the assailant approached an army post at the Yitzhar Junction, close to the settlement of the same name, and stabbed one of the soldiers.

Other troops, of the Kfir Brigade’s Nahshon Battalion, shot the stabber dead, the IDF said.

The assailant was named by Palestinian media as Muhammad Shehadeh, 17.

The victim was taken to Beilinson Hospital in Petah Tikva, which listed him in serious condition. The IDF said the soldier’s family was updated on his condition.

Earlier Tuesday, the Border Police, Shin Bet security agency, and IDF said troops detained a prominent terror operative in the Balata refugee camp near Nablus in the northern West Bank in an overnight raid.

In a joint statement, authorities said Muhammad Tanji was planning an “imminent” terror attack with other operatives.

Tanji was “one of the main operatives in the terror infrastructure in Balata over the past year,” the statement said.

Palestinian media identified Tanji as a leader and founder of the so-called Balata Battalion, a local wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group in the refugee camp.

The IDF said troops also operated in the northern West Bank village of Kafr Dan overnight, to demolish the home of a Palestinian accused of taking part in a deadly terror attack last year.

Abed Massad was allegedly involved in the killing of Shay Silas Nigreker, 60, and his 28-year-old son, Aviad Nir, in the West Bank town of Huwara last August. The attack itself was carried out by Osama Bani Fadl, whose home was demolished by authorities in December.

As a matter of policy, Israel regularly demolishes the homes of Palestinians accused of carrying out deadly terror attacks as well as their accomplices. The efficacy of the policy has been hotly debated even within the Israeli security establishment, while human rights activists denounce the practice as unjust collective punishment.

In other raids across the West Bank, another 20 wanted Palestinians were arrested, the IDF said. Since October 7, the IDF has said troops have arrested some 3,450 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including more than 1,500 affiliated with Hamas.

Separately, late Monday, the IDF said it was investigating the death of a Palestinian boy amid clashes in a West Bank village hours earlier.

On Monday afternoon, Palestinian media and the Yesh Din rights group reported that an 11-year-old boy, Amr al-Najjar, was shot dead by IDF troops in Burin, close to Nablus.

In response to a query by The Times of Israel, the IDF Spokespersons Unit said troops were operating in Burin when several suspects began to hurl stones at them.

The IDF said the soldiers returned fire, and a short while later it received reports of a Palestinian minor being hit.

“The circumstances of the incident are under investigation,” the IDF added.

At his funeral on Tuesday, al-Najjar’s body was draped in a Hamas flag.

Yesh Din said al-Najjar was shot as he got out of a vehicle with his family in the village center to go shopping.

The rights group claimed that another two Palestinians were wounded in Burin, one of whom was shot and seriously hurt and one who was allegedly beaten by troops.

Tensions between Israelis and Palestinians have risen in the West Bank since the breakout of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza following the October 7 massacre, which saw Hamas terrorists kill about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and kidnap 253.

According to the Palestinian Authority health ministry, more than 400 West Bank Palestinians have been killed since October 7, most of them during violent clashes with Israeli forces.