Body of Israeli teen found in West Bank; IDF says he was murdered in terror attack

April 13, 2024

By Emanuel Fabian

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/body-of-israeli-teen-found-in-west-bank-idf-says-he-was-murdered-in-terror-attack/>

The Israel Defense Forces on Saturday found the body of a 14-year-old Israeli who went missing while shepherding in the West Bank a day earlier, as renewed clashes were reported between settlers and Palestinians.

Jerusalem resident Benjamin Achimeir was murdered in a terror attack, the IDF and Shin Bet security agency said in a joint statement.

Amid violent clashes on Saturday afternoon by settler extremists with Palestinians after the body was found, with the Palestinian Authority news agency reporting one Palestinian shot in the head and critically injured, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appealed to the public not to hinder the work of the security forces in apprehending the murderers and maintaining security.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant issued a similar plea, but also specifically warned the public: “Revenge attacks will make it harder for our forces in their mission. Do not take the law into your own hands.”

According to the IDF, Achimeir set out in the early morning hours of Friday from a farm near the outpost of Malachei Shalom to go shepherding. Hours later, the sheep returned to “Gal Farm” without him.

Malachei Shalom is located near the West Bank town of al-Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah.

Achimeir’s body was spotted on Saturday morning by a drone operated by the Border Defense Corps’ 636th Combat Intelligence Collection unit, close to the farm where he initially went missing.

The murder was believed to have been carried out by Palestinian terrorists, and taken place in the late morning hours or early afternoon of Friday, according to an initial investigation.

Next to the teen’s body, troops found his personal belongings that were handed over to police for investigation.

“Security forces are continuing the pursuit of those suspected of carrying out the attack,” the IDF and Shin Bet said, adding that they “send their heartfelt condolences to the family.”

Netanyahu said “the heinous murder” of Achimeir was a “serious crime.”

“I send my heartfelt condolences to his family,” Netanyahu also said in a statement published by his office.

“We will get the murderers and those who helped them, as we do to anyone who harms the citizens of the State of Israel,” the statement continued.

Security experts have long warned that Hamas wishes to ignite tensions in the West Bank, with concerns that settler reprisals could play into the terror group’s hands.

To that end, Netanyahu also added that he “calls on all citizens of Israel to allow the security forces to do their work unhindered.”

Amid the searches Friday, Israeli settlers rampaged in al-Mughayyir. The settlers set fire to houses and cars and sparked clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, in which a Palestinian man was killed and dozens of others injured.

The deceased man was identified by his family as 26-year-old Jihad Abu Alia.

Renewed clashes between settlers and Palestinians were reported on Saturday in the towns of Beitin and Duma, close to Ramallah.

Six Palestinians were injured, one of them critically after being shot in the head, as Israeli settlers rampaged through al-Mughayyir, the Palestinian Authority official news outlet Wafa reported on Saturday afternoon.

Wafa said that settlers torched a home in al-Mughayyir as well as the firetruck that came to try and put out the blaze. It said settlers also opened fire on the funeral procession of Abu Alia.

Tensions in the West Bank have remained high since October 7, when terrorists burst through the Gaza border into Israel in a Hamas-led attack, killing at least 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and seizing 253 hostages.

Since October 7, troops arrested some 3,600 wanted Palestinians across the West Bank, including more than 1,600 affiliated with Hamas, according to the IDF.