Israeli Army Officer Seriously Wounded in Blast at West Bank Checkpoint

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An Israeli officer was seriously wounded Tuesday by an explosive device at the West Bank checkpoint of Hizme, north of Jerusalem.

An initial army investigation into the incident said the officer was on patrol when he identified a suspicious object. He exited his vehicle and began approaching it when it detonated. He was then evacuated to Hadassah University Hospital, Ein Karem in Jerusalem for medical treatment.

After the blast, several other suspicious objects were found at the scene and safely detonated. Security forces began searching for those responsible and for possible additional devices.

Overall, five other explosives were discovered at the scene, along with an unexploded gas canister. The IDF is also looking into the possibility the explosive was detonated remotely with a mobile phone.

Earlier on Tuesday, two elderly women in their 70s were stabbed in what the police are calling a terror attack in Jerusalem's Armon Hanatziv neighborhood.

The two suspects arrested in the wake of the attack were subsequently released.

Israel has imposed a closure on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, starting Tuesday midnight and ending midnight on Thursday, after Independence Day.

The defense establishment usually imposes a general closure on the territories during major Jewish holidays, mainly during Yom Kippur and Passover. According to a defense establishment source, the decision originated with the political leadership, and was designed to reduce the friction between Palestinians and Israelis.