Three Israeli Soldiers Wounded, Attacker Killed After Gaza Border Breach, Army Says

August 1, 2019

By Jack Khoury, Almog Ben Zikri and Yaniv Kubovich

Haaretz

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-clashes-between-hamas-and-israeli-military-reported-at-gaza-border-1.7611259>

Three Israeli soldiers were shot and wounded by a Palestinian who infiltrated the Gaza border fence east of Khan Yunis on Thursday, the army said in a statement.

According to the [Israel Defense Forces](http://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-idf-1.5598943), the Palestinian, was subsequently killed by Israeli fire and his body was captured in Israeli territory.

Palestinian social networks have identified the man as Hani Abu Salah, who belonged to Hamas' border patrol. Abu Salah's brother, Fawdi, who was disabled, was killed 14 months ago by Israeli troops during Gaza border demonstrations.

IDF Spokesman Brig. Gen. Ronen Manelis said Abu Salah was wearing a [Hamas](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-hamas-1.5598922)uniform and armed with an AK-47 and grenades. Preliminary investigations assess that the assailant acted independently.

One Israeli officer, wounded moderately, and two combat soldiers, lightly wounded, were taken by helicopter to Soroka hospital in Be'er Sheva.

The Israeli military said it shelled a nearby Hamas target as part of the fire exchange. Following the incident, a tank attacked a Hamas outpost east of Khan Yunis in the Strip's south. Palestinian media reported that many shots were heard and Israeli aircrafts dropped dozens of flash bombs by the village of Khoza'a in the southern Gaza Strip.

An IDF spokesperson said that prior to the incident, around 2 A.M., the army identified a suspicious figure heading toward the border fence. In response, a military unit was called to the scene. As the soldiers reached the area, the figure appeared and opened fire.

The first IDF unit deployed to the area could not stop the man, who continued to shoot and throw grenades, the army said. The man was shot only after second unit arrived. The IDF is now investigating why the first force did not open fire at. Initially, the soldiers did not believe the man was armed.

According to his Salah's relative, "We saw the name on the networks but we didn't receive any official information from any Palestinian or international cause if he was killed or injured and where he is being held."

The border fence through which the man crossed is easy to break through. In February, the Defense Ministry announced that work was underway to erect a more stable border fence, on top of the 65-kilometer-long (40 miles) underground infrastructure that is meant to prevent the digging of cross-border tunnels. The upper barrier will be six meters high. So far, ten kilometers of construction has been completed.

On Friday, one Palestinian was killed and [56 were wounded](https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/palestinian-dies-of-gunshot-wound-sustained-by-israeli-fire-in-gaza-border-protests-1.7578869) in clashes with Israeli forces in demonstrations along the Gaza border fence. 38 were wounded by live gunfire, and 22 of those wounded were under the age of 17.