Israeli woman killed, man seriously wounded in terror shooting near Hebron

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By Emanuel Fabian

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An Israeli woman was shot dead and a man was seriously wounded in a terror attack close to the southern West Bank city of Hebron on Monday morning, the military and medics said.

The pair, both in their 40s, came under fire from a passing vehicle while driving on the Route 60 highway, close to the Beit Hagai junction, south of Hebron, according to the Israel Defense Forces.

The Magen David Adom ambulance service said the woman, initially listed in critical condition, was declared dead at the scene shortly afterward.

She was later named as Batsheva Nigri, a mother of three and a kindergarten teacher from the West Bank settlement of Beit Hagai, and a former resident of Efrat.

The wounded man was taken to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba for treatment, where he was listed in serious condition, medical officials said.

Nigri’s 6-year-old daughter, who was in the car during the attack, was unharmed, MDA said.

The vehicle was hit by at least 22 rounds, with another three bullet impacts found nearby, according to the military’s initial investigation.

IDF soldiers at a nearby post heard gunfire but did not immediately identify that an attack had occurred. By the time troops reached the scene, the terrorists had fled, according to the preliminary probe.

The IDF said it had launched a manhunt for the terrorists and closed off a number of roads in the area. The military encircled Hebron and was questioning Palestinians entering and leaving the city.

The IDF had been given a description of the suspected vehicle used by the gunmen to carry out the terror attack. The vehicle had no license plates and was believed to have fled toward the Hebron area.

Security forces later found a burnt-out vehicle near the Palestinian town of Halhul, which apparently matched the description of the terrorists’ car.

Hebrew-language media reports said that Nigri and her young daughter had hitched a ride with the Israeli man who was wounded in the attack.

The Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror groups praised the attack as a response to Israel’s expanding settlement enterprise in the West Bank, but stopped short of claiming responsibility.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was set to hold an assessment with top military and defense officials later Monday, his office said.

The attack came two days after a Palestinian terrorist killed two Israeli men, a father and son, while they were doing errands in the northern West Bank town of Huwara. Shay Silas Nigreker, 60, and his 28-year-old son Aviad Nir were shot to death at a carwash on Saturday afternoon.

Violence has surged across the West Bank over the past year and a half, with a rise in Palestinian shooting attacks against Israeli civilians and troops, near-nightly arrest raids by the military, and an uptick in revenge attacks by extremist Jewish settlers against Palestinians.

The IDF said Monday it was bolstering the West Bank with an additional infantry battalion and two companies, following the two recent deadly terror attacks.

The military said the additional forces would assist in the manhunts for the terrorists who carried out the attack near Hebron on Monday and the shooting in Huwara on Saturday.

The forces would also be tasked with carrying out guard duty in the area, as the military feared that the ongoing escalation in violence, mostly in the northern West Bank, could spread to its south.

Typically, the IDF’s West Bank division has 13 battalions. Over the past 18 months, that number has fluctuated amid an increase in Palestinian terror attacks, reaching a high of 26 battalions in October 2022. Following Monday’s deployment, there will be 23 battalions in the West Bank.

Palestinian attacks in Israel and the West Bank have left 29 people dead and several others seriously wounded since the beginning of the year, including in Monday’s shooting.