

Palestinian police kill Jewish worshipper at West Bank shrine



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A Jewish man was killed and four of his friends were badly wounded when they came under attack on Sunday after visiting the tomb of the biblical patriarch Joseph in the Palestinian-controlled town of Nablus (biblical Shechem) in the so-called "West Bank."

One of the victims told Israel's Channel 2 News that the attackers were Palestinian Authority police officers.

"We entered the tomb, everything was as usual, give a kiss to the grave. We go out, we enter a car, and see the victim's vehicle drive past us," the man said.

"Suddenly a policeman draws his gun shoots into the rear window and shouts Allahu Akbar (Allah is Great)."

Killed in the initial burst of fire was 25-year-old Ben Yosef Livnat, nephew of Israeli Minister of Culture and Science Limor Livnat (Likud). Livnat leaves behind a wife and four young children.

One of the other Jewish men wounded in the attack reportedly remains in critical condition.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to do everything possible to bring the murderers to justice. But because the perpetrators are Palestinian police officers, it is extremely difficult for Israel to go after them.

Netanyahu has demanded that the Palestinian Authority take "severe" action against the terrorists, but the latest reports from the Palestinian media are that the PA has "no leads."

Given its location in a fully Palestinian-controlled area, Joseph's Tomb is off-limits to Israelis without prior coordination with the Israeli army. But that doesn't stop groups of Hassidic Jews belonging to the Breslov sect from regularly visiting the holy site.

When Israel signed the Oslo Accords with the Palestinian Authority in 1995, it was determined that Joseph's Tomb would remain an Israeli enclave under the control of the IDF so that Jewish worshippers could continue to visit.

It remained that way until the start of the Al Aqsa Intifada (or Oslo War) in 2000, when a Palestinian mob backed up by Palestinian Authority paramilitary forces attacked the Israeli soldiers stationed at the tomb.

An Israeli soldier of Druze ethnicity was killed in the battle.

Following the assault, Israel agreed to hand Joseph's Tomb over to the Palestinian Authority with the promise that it would be preserved and that Jews would continue to be able to visit.

Just hours later, Palestinian police officers and civilians ransacked the tomb, pickaxed its dome and set fire to the small compound.