

Jerusalem: At least four killed in Palestinian truck attack, Israeli PM says accused IS supporter

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Jerusalem: A truck driven by a Palestinian man rammed into a group of Israeli soldiers on a popular promenade killing four of them and injuring 17 others in an attack that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said was likely inspired by Islamic State.

4 dead in Palestinian truck attack

The military said an officer and three officer cadets were killed and that 17 others were injured. Police said three of the dead were women. Police identified the truck driver as a Palestinian from Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem and said he was shot dead.

Notably, it was the deadliest Palestinian attack in Jerusalem in months and targeted officer cadets as they disembarked from a bus that brought them to the Armon Hanatziv promenade which has a panoramic view of the walled Old City.

Xinhua news agency quoted Israeli police spokeswoman Luba Samri as saying that the incident -- which took place in Armon Hanatziv, a popular promenade that overlooks East Jerusalem's Old City -- was a "terrorist attack", although the investigation has yet to be concluded.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu however said the perpetrator of the attack was an apparent adherent of the Islamic State.

Palestinian media identified the perpetrator as Fadi al-Qanbar from East Jerusalem's Jabel Mukaber neighbourhood.

At noon, the assailant drove his truck into pedestrians, killing four soldiers, three of them women, and wounding 15 more, Samri said.

Israel's Channel 2 TV news broadcast security camera footage showing the truck driving at high speed off the road and ploughing into the crowd. The truck is seen reversing quickly, apparently attempting to drive over more people, before the driver was shot dead by soldiers.

Addressing a press conference at the site, Netanyahu said: "We know the identity of the attacker, and all signs suggest that he was an Islamic State supporter."

"This is part of the same pattern inspired by Islamic State that we saw first in France, then in Germany and now in Jerusalem," he said.

"This is part of the same ongoing battle against this global scourge of the new terrorism," he said, calling for a global action against these attacks.

Israeli security forces took several "punitive measures", including closing all the exits and entries of Jabel Mukaber.

Interior Security Minister Gilad Erdan said Israel will not transfer the body of the attacker to his family. Israel has been withholding bodies of dozens of attackers and suspects as a measure the authorities say aims to "deter" more attacks.

The attack was one of the deadliest amidst a more than year-long wave of violence. Last June, two gunmen killed four

persons at a trendy recreation compound in Tel Aviv.

An ongoing wave of violence in the West Bank and Israel has claimed the lives of at least 235 Palestinians and 34 Israelis since September 2015.

Israeli leaders accuse the Palestinian National Authority of "inciting" the unrest, while the Palestinians say it is the result of nearly 50 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, home to more than five million Palestinians, where they wish to establish their state.

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