Soldier lightly wounded in West Bank shooting; IDF: Civilians also targeted

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/soldier-lightly-hurt-in-west-bank-shooting-after-earlier-attack-nearby/>

An Israeli soldier was lightly hurt after shots were fired at a military checkpost in the northern West Bank on Sunday evening, the military and medics said, hours after a shooting left another person wounded nearby.

The Israel Defense Forces said the attack, which wounded a combat soldier, was aimed at both Israeli civilians and soldiers near Nablus.

According to the Rescuers Without Border emergency service, the soldier was struck in the leg by gunfire on a road between the settlement of Itamar and the military’s Samaria regional brigade base.

The Samaria Regional Council said the attack occurred at the end of a demonstration it held in the area, after another shooting Sunday morning, when Palestinian gunmen opened fire at several Israeli vehicles driving close to the nearby settlement of Elon Moreh.

Footage published by the council showed its chairman, Yossi Dagan, and several other Israelis — including children — taking cover behind vehicles as shots rang out in the area.

The wounded soldier was taken by ambulance to the Beilinson Hospital in Petah Tikva, the emergency service said.

In the shooting attack Sunday morning, a taxi driver was lightly hurt, and a bus driver reported that the windshield of his vehicle was damaged.

Hours after that, a 24-year-old Israeli man was lightly hurt when Palestinians hurled stones at his vehicle, close to where the shooting took place, medics said.

Troops were operating in the area following the shooting and stone-throwing.

An armed Palestinian faction calling itself Lion’s Den claimed responsibility for both shootings in separate statements.

The group — based in Nablus’ old city — was established in recent months by members of various terror groups. Some of its members were apparently previously affiliated with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

It has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in the northern West Bank in recent weeks.

According to the Kan public broadcaster, police were worried the group may attempt to commit attacks in Israel proper, rather than continue to focus on the Nablus area in the West Bank.

The shooting came amid a surge in violence in the West Bank.

Later on Sunday, Palestinian gunmen fired volleys of gunfire into the air in Hebron, which according to local officials was directed at the settlement of Kiryat Arba.

And in another incident, a 25-year-old pregnant Israeli woman was lightly hurt after Palestinians hurled stones at her vehicle on Route 3157 near the Gush Eztion settlement bloc. The Magen David Adom ambulance service said it was taking her to the Shaare Zedek hospital in Jerusalem with injuries to her face.

Palestinian gunmen in recent months have targeted military posts, troops operating along the West Bank security barrier, Israeli settlements and civilians on the roads.

The Israel Defense Forces and police have been on heightened alert since last week’s beginning to the Jewish holiday season, with tensions already high due to an Israeli anti-terror offensive that has seen over 100 Palestinians killed and more than 2,000 arrested in nightly raids in the West Bank.

Israeli troops have also repeatedly come under gunfire during nightly raids in Palestinian cities in the West Bank.

The military launched the arrest operations after a series of attacks that killed 19 people between mid-March and the beginning of May.