Palestinian with knife nabbed among Hebron tourists

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-with-knife-nabbed-among-hebron-tourists/>

A young Palestinian man trying to gain access to a West Bank holy site on Sunday aroused the attention of police when they spotted him in the middle of a group of tourists entering the Tomb of the Patriarchs, police said.

Border Police officers arrested the suspect, a man in his twenties, after noticing he didn’t belong with the group and was acting suspiciously in an apparent bid to gain entry to the site, in the West Bank city of Hebron, police said.

The cave is revered by both Jews and Muslims as the biblical burial place of the Jewish patriarchs and matriarchs.

Police officers called him aside for a more thorough inspection before realizing he was carrying the blade.

“When the suspicion grew stronger, the soldiers aimed their weapons and at that point the suspect drew the knife that had been concealed in his clothes, threw it to the ground and raised his hands,” a police statement said.

Police said the suspect, a resident of Hebron, admitted during his initial questioning that he intended to carry out a stabbing attack.

In the divided city of Hebron, Palestinians live in close proximity to settlers who are guarded by Israeli troops, and the city has been the scene of numerous stabbings and attempted stabbings in recent years. In October, a Palestinian was shot dead while attempting to stab an Israeli soldier at the Cave of the Patriarchs.

The city is also an ideological [battleground between Fatah and Hamas](https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-hebron-they-support-hamas-but-dream-of-tel-aviv/), with the two vying for the hearts and minds of the Palestinian population.

Last week Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced [Israel would not extend the mandate](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-boot-international-observers-out-of-hebron-netanyahu-says/) of an international observer group in Hebron, following a number of incidents over the past year in which its members scrapped with settlers in the flashpoint West Bank city.