Reserve soldier killed, 10 hurt, in Hezbollah drone attack on northern town

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An Israel Defense Forces reserve soldier was killed and 10 other people were wounded in a Hezbollah-claimed attack with explosive-laden drones on northern Israel on Wednesday, the military and medics said.

The IDF announced the death of the soldier on Thursday morning, naming him as Staff Sgt. (res.) Refael Kauders, 39, from Tzur Hadassah.

Kauders served in the Alon Brigade’s 5030th Battalion as a Military Rabbinate coordinator.

The IDF said it was investigating why sirens did not sound when at least two drones slammed into the Druze-majority town of Hurfeish, located several kilometers from the Lebanon border.

Lebanon’s Hezbollah terror group took responsibility for the attack, saying it launched several explosive drones at an army position in the area.

According to initial military assessments, the two drones impacted within a few minutes of each other, with the second seemingly targeting rescue crews who arrived to treat those wounded by the first. Hezbollah has employed such a tactic several times amid the war.

The terror group said the attack was a response to recent deadly IDF strikes in southern Lebanon, including an attack on Tuesday in Naqoura that left a Hezbollah member dead.

Magen David Adom director-general Eli Bin told Channel 12 news that 11 people were wounded in the attack, including one in critical condition, who later died.

Three people were listed in moderate condition and the rest were lightly hurt, Bin added.

Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya said seven victims were brought to the medical center, three of whom were moderately hurt and four others in good condition. Another two lightly injured Israelis were brought to Ziv Hospital in Safed, the medical center said.

At least nine of those wounded were soldiers, the military said.

Following the attack, the military announced that it had carried out strikes against a series of Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon throughout the day.

The IDF said the targets included Hezbollah infrastructure in Naqoura and Matmoura, buildings used by the terror group in Ayta ash-Shab, and an observation post in Khiam.

Troops also shelled a number of areas in southern Lebanon with artillery to “remove threats,” the IDF added.

Since October 8, Hezbollah-led forces have attacked Israeli communities and military posts along the border on a near-daily basis, with the group saying it is doing so to support Gaza amid the war there.

The terror group in recent months has increasingly been using explosive-laden drones, alongside anti-tank guided missiles and barrages of rockets.

So far, the skirmishes on the border have resulted in 10 civilian deaths on the Israeli side, as well as the deaths of 15 IDF soldiers and reservists. There have also been several attacks from Syria, without any injuries.

Hezbollah has named 330 members who have been killed by Israel during the ongoing skirmishes, mostly in Lebanon but some also in Syria. In Lebanon, another 62 operatives from other terror groups, a Lebanese soldier, and dozens of civilians have been killed.

Israel has expressed openness to a diplomatic solution to the conflict, but has threatened to go to war against Hezbollah to restore security to the north of Israel, where tens of thousands of civilians are currently displaced.