



Soldier killed in stabbing attack in Carmiel; another killed in Gaza

Noa Shpigel, Deiaa Haj Yahia and Yaniv Kubovich

A soldier was killed and another seriously wounded in a stabbing attack in a shopping mall in the northern city of Carmiel on Wednesday. The soldier fatally shot the assailant at the scene.

The army also announced on Wednesday that Capt. Elay Elisha Lugasi, a soldier from Kiryat Shmona, was killed in fighting in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday. He was 21.

The victim was later identified as Sergeant Aleksandr Iakiminskyi, a 19-year-old from Nahariya. He shot and killed the assailant before succumbing to his wounds. He was a truck driver in the 71st Battalion of the 188th Armored Brigade. The other person who was stabbed and seriously wounded is a member of Iakiminskyi's battalion.

The police reported that the assailant was Jawad Rabia, a 21-year-old resident of the village of Nahf, which is adjacent to Carmiel. Several family members were arrested by the police at the scene of the attack, and later police entered the village and apprehended additional family members. The Shin Bet is involved in the investigation.

The commander of the Carmiel police station, Deputy Superintendent Itzik Abu Hatzaira stated that the assailant's mother, brother, and sister were arrested at the scene. According to him, they arrived after identifying the assailant in footage circulated on social media. All three were handcuffed, his brother's legs were also cuffed, and their eyes were



Zaka workers removing the body of the assailant from the mall in Carmiel on Wednesday.

covered with blindfolds. Abu Hatzaira added that there are considerations to legally demolish the assailant's home in Nahf.

The wounded soldiers were evacuated to the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya and received medical treatment. Iakiminskyi was pro-

nounced dead at the hospital

Security camera footage from one of the stores in the mall shows Rabia trying to escape – and a soldier chasing him and shooting him with his personal gun from close up.

The police said it suspected that there were other

armed men involved in the incident. Police Northern District Commander Maj. Gen. Shuki Tahauka said that the stabber arrived to the mall by foot, ascended to the second floor and stabbed two people. He added that one of the wounded managed to regain his composure, and shoot and

kill the attacker. Tahauka added that the numerous Carmiel roads have been closed for traffic, and stressed that the area was being searched for other suspects.

Police northern district operations officer, Commander Ran Ofir, said that the district was on high alert, and that the

organization is still making sure that no other attackers were at large.

Nahf, an agricultural community of about 15,000 people, is thought of as relatively quiet with low levels of crime.

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Optimism expressed over Hamas reply to cease-fire proposal

Jonathan Lis and Yaniv Kubovich

The Prime Minister's Office said Wednesday night on behalf of the Mossad that a response has been received from Hamas on the hostage release proposal.

"The mediators in the hostage deal conveyed Hamas' response to the hostage release proposal to the negotiating team," the statement said. "Israel is examining the response and will communicate its reply to the mediators."

Sources familiar with Hamas' response to the hostage release proposal expressed optimism following the group's remarks on the deal's outline on

Wednesday, which were communicated to Israel through Qatar. According to one of the sources, Hamas' response is a "positive document" and its response could form the basis for advancing negotiations toward a deal.

The Mossad's official statement also clarified that the dialogue with mediators will continue after Israel studies the full response.

Hamas' remarks were delivered to Israel hours before the Mossad's announcement, and Jerusalem said that it is too early to determine how Israel will respond to the remarks, adding that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will formulate his position in due course.

Senior Hezbollah commander killed in drone strike

Jack Khoury and Yaniv Kubovich

A senior Hezbollah commander was killed on Wednesday by an Israeli drone strike on his car in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre.

Hezbollah confirmed the death of Mohammed Nasser, who commanded a unit responsible for the Bekaa Valley region of Lebanon and the southeastern part of the border with Syria.

Following his death, sirens sounded in Kiryat Shmona warning of incoming missiles from Lebanon.

The Aziz unit Nasser headed was one of five units responsible for the five

zones into which Hezbollah has divided the territory it operates. Two weeks ago, the Israel Defense Forces announced that it had killed the commander of another sector, Taleb Abdallah, and in the following days, Hezbollah's attacks on Israel's north were significantly intensified.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told soldiers in a staging area near the Gazan border on Wednesday that the army "is hitting Hezbollah every day, very tough blows."

"The tank that's sitting here that you take care of after it's been in battle can also reach the Litani. And we're

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PM's nightmare: IDF and the Biden administration banding against him

Anshel Pfeffer

The rift between Benjamin Netanyahu and the generals of the Israel Defense Forces, which has been on public display for nearly two months now, broadened this week when the prime minister decided to respond publicly to a report in The New York

Times that the generals are in favor of a truce with Hamas in Gaza.

Netanyahu's response is telling, as the Times report largely repeated what had already been reported in Haaretz and other news outlets over the past six weeks

on the growing difference of opinion between Netanyahu and the military over the war's direction. The one major difference is that while the former reports said that the IDF's support for a truce was motivated largely by the generals' belief that it was the only way to secure the release of the 120 hostages still in Gaza, according to the Times it was based on their concern

over Israel's depleted stocks of munitions in advance of a possible escalation with Hezbollah on the northern border.

But Netanyahu nonetheless responded, lambasting "anonymous sources [who] briefed The New York Times," and insisting that Israel "will not capitulate to the winds of defeatism, neither in The New York Times nor anywhere else. We are inspired

by the spirit of victory."

Why did Netanyahu choose to respond to this report when the argument between him and the IDF has already been reported so extensively?

It came out nearly seven weeks ago when the IDF sent forces back into the Jabalya in Gaza City, and top generals blamed him for not agreeing to an alternative force in Gaza which would fill the vacuum

left after the IDF destroyed Hamas' military structure there. It came out again last month following the successful rescue operation of four hostages, when the IDF openly reiterated its position that while it hoped to carry out more rescue missions, the only way to rescue all 120 remaining hostages was through a deal with Hamas.

Two weeks ago the rift was

once again evident in the exchange of statements in which IDF spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, one of the officers closest to Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, said "the idea of destroying Hamas or making it disappear is to throw sand in the eyes of the public." To which Netanyahu responded that "the cabinet led by me has defined destroying Hamas'

military and governing capabilities as one of the war's objectives and the IDF is committed to it."

The discord between Netanyahu and the IDF's upper echelon has been rumbling of course since October 7, with the prime minister seeking to place all the blame for the tragic failure of that day on

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Killings of top Hezbollah figures take place of strategy in Lebanon



Fires in the Golan from rocket attacks, Wednesday. Rabih Daher/AFP

Zvi Bar'el

Diplomatic efforts to prevent an all-out war between Israel and Lebanon haven't stopped, even though military clashes with Hezbollah are once again on the brink of escalation.

Hezbollah predictably responded to Wednesday's assassination of one of its sector commanders in southern Lebanon, Mohammed Naima Nasser (Abu Naima), with a massive attack on Israel, and we still don't know how extensive it will end up being. Meanwhile, Israel's assassination of senior Hezbollah commanders is looking more and more like a substitute for strategic achievements, or

like a tranquilizer meant to calm Israelis' demands for launching a war in Lebanon that would deal with Hezbollah "once and for all."

This isn't to downplay the importance of removing experienced senior commanders like Nasser from the theater, or like Taleb Abdallah, another sector commander who was killed in June, or Wissam al-Tawil, commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, who was assassinated in January.

Moreover, Israel's deep intelligence penetration of Lebanon, even after the organization implemented a series of strict defensive and

preventive measures, add to the blow to morale caused by its attacks on senior commanders. These measures included orders regarding movement and concealment for commanders at all levels, orders to residents of southern Lebanon to stop using their cellphones, and increased surveillance of "suspect" areas where people might be collaborating with Israel.

Nevertheless, Hezbollah's senior command has developed and expanded greatly compared to the early 1980s, back when Hassan Nasrallah commanded the entire southern sector, before he became the organization's leader. It is now multilayered in a way that enables the organization to immediately fill holes in its ranks.

Despite the current escalation, this assassination isn't expected to change the strategy that has guided Hezbollah and Iran anymore than those that preceded it did. This strategy makes stopping the fire from Lebanon conditional on Israel ending its war in the Gaza Strip. Nasrallah's deputy, Naim Kassem, made this very clear in an interview with The Associated Press. "If there is a cease-fire in Gaza,

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New study: Earliest narrative cave art of pigs older than once thought

Ruth Schuster

The earliest narrative art in the world is thousands of years older than first thought, researchers reported on Wednesday.

In 2021, the image of a warty pig observed on the wall of Leang Tedongnge Cave on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia was dated to at least 45,500 years ago, a surprisingly early date. Other images of pigs and humans found elsewhere on the island of Sulawesi, Indonesia were estimated to be almost as old.

The original porcine portrait wasn't redated for technical reasons, but others were and were found to range in age from at least 48,000 to as much as 54,000 years old, according to an analysis published Wednesday in Nature.

A hunting scene in the cave of Leang Bulu Sipong, originally estimated to have been painted about 43,000 years ago, is over 50,000 years old, Adhi Agus Oktaviana, Adam Brumm and Maxime Aubert of Australia's Griffith University and colleagues report.

A scene of a big pig with three people in the hilltop cave Leang Karampuang is 51,000 to 53,500 years old.



Karampuang Hill, now the site of the earliest known art in the world.

Courtesy of Griffith University

A hunting scene in Leang Bulu Sipong is redated from 44,000 to between 50,000 to 54,000 years (we rounded out a bit.)

The finds point to the deep origin of visual storytelling in human history, the team sums up.

The super-early art found to date is in a 450-square-kilometer lowland with karst outcrops in the Sulawesi peninsula of Maros-Pangkep. There could be more,

Brumm adds, pointing out that it's the 11th biggest island in the world. His team also dated animal art in the Sangkulirang-Mangkalihat peninsula in Borneo to at least 40,000 years.

Europe also boasts awesome early works such as the Lion Man of Hohlenstein and Venus of Hohle Fels statuettes found in Germany, from roughly 40,000 years ago, Chauvet Cave paintings from over 30,000 years ago

and later spectacular cave art in Spain and France. (We exclude non-figurative cave décor such as hand stencils and geometric forms). Both the Venus and the Lion Man were made of mammoth ivory, by the way. If there was earlier art, it may not have survived. Unsuitable preservation conditions may also explain the non-discovery of prehistoric cave art in Israel.

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