

Beat: Miscellaneous

Israeli warplanes strike Gaza after sniper kills Israeli civilian

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USPA News - An Israeli man was killed by a Gazan sniper on Tuesday while working on a border fence, prompting a series of Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip that resulted in the death of a Palestinian toddler, marking the region's worst day of violence in nearly two months. The first incident happened on early Tuesday morning when a sniper in Gaza killed an Israeli civilian by firing a single bullet at his chest.

The victim was identified as 22-year-old Salah Shukri Abu Latyef, from the city of Rahat, who was doing maintenance along the Israel-Gaza border fence. Hours later, Israeli forces retaliated by using warplanes and tanks to strike Hamas targets across the Gaza Strip. "The sites targeted were a weapon manufacturing facility and a terror infrastructure in the southern Gaza Strip, a terror site and another terror infrastructure in the central Gaza Strip, and a concealed rocket launcher in the northern Gaza Strip," the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement. Officials from Hamas, the Islamic group which rules the Gaza Strip, said a three-year-old girl who was standing with family members outside their home was killed by shrapnel when Israeli warplanes bombed the group's training camp in al-Bureij. Two of her brothers were injured, Hamas said, describing the toddler's death as a "criminal and cowardly act." Israeli President Shimon Peres, addressing recent events, which includes Sunday's bombing of a bus near Tel Aviv that caused no casualties and Monday's stabbing of an Israeli policeman, said Israel will continue to defend itself. "If Gaza wants quiet then they should act accordingly, and if not then it will bear the results," he warned. "Gaza is not under any occupation. If they think the world will continue to support them while they create more victims then they are wrong. We will guarantee our security." IDF spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Lerner added that Israel is not interested in an escalation in Gaza, but emphasized the military will not tolerate aggression towards Israel. "The IDF will continue to operate against those who use Gaza as a safe haven for terrorism against our civilians," he said. Tuesday's violence marked the first killing of an Israeli civilian in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip since November 2012, when an Israeli offensive set off eight days of fierce cross-border fighting. At least 174 Palestinians and 6 Israelis were killed while hundreds more were injured until an Egyptian-brokered truce was reached with Palestinian militants. In the region's most recent outbreak of violence, three Hamas militants were killed in early November when Israeli forces carried out an airstrike on a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip. It came just hours after a fourth militant was killed when he threw an explosive device at IDF forces which were working to destroy another tunnel on the Israel-Gaza border, injuring five Israeli soldiers.

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