Two Killed in Stabbing Attack at Tel Aviv Office Building

November 19, 2015

By [Judah Ari Gross](http://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/judah-ari-gross/), [Adiv Sterman](http://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/adiv-sterman/) and [Stuart Winer](http://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/stuart-winer/)

The Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/one-israeli-dead-as-stabber-attacks-tel-aviv-office-building/>

Two Israelis were killed and at least two others wounded in a stabbing attack in southern Tel Aviv Thursday afternoon.

The incident took place in the Panorama office building at an entrance to a room used for prayer services next to the parking lot as afternoon prayers were taking place, according to reports from the scene.

One victim was declared dead at the scene and a second died after being rushed to a hospital with serious injuries.

Two more people suffered light and moderate injuries, according to officials. The identity of the victims was not immediately released.

The Palestinian attacker was caught by passersby and arrested by police at the scene. He was taken to a hospital with light injuries.

Police identified him as Raid Halil bin Mahmoud, a 36-year-old father of five from the West Bank village of Dura, near Hebron, and said he did not have a criminal record.

He possessed a permit to work in Israel and was employed by a restaurant in Tel Aviv, police said. Shortly after the attack, officers led away in handcuffs Palestinian employees of Samarkand, a restaurant near the scene of the attack, although the stabber did not work there.

“They just rounded up three employees. These aren’t guys who just showed up today, they’ve worked here for years,” said an employee of the restaurant who asked to not be named.

Workers in the large office building were told to stay inside and lock their doors as police hunted for a possible second attacker. They later said there was only one assailant.

The attack broke several days of relative calm following a spate of stabbing attacks in Jerusalem, the West Bank and elsewhere over the last two months.

Shimon Vaknin was attending afternoon prayers along with 20-30 other people when one of the victims staggered into the room and collapsed.

“We were praying the Mincha [afternoon] services,” he recalled. “In the middle of the prayers, suddenly we saw a man fall down wounded at the entrance to the synagogue and behind him a man with a knife who was trying to get inside.

“Someone shouted ‘there’s a terrorist!’” he said.

As some of the worshipers tried to assist the injured man, the rest quickly closed the doors to the room, he said.

“We managed to close the doors and he tried to force them open. If he would have managed to get inside he would have slaughtered the worshipers. We used all of our strength to not let him inside and then he went on to the nearby shops to try and hurt someone there.”

After a few minutes, the men armed themselves with bars and left the room, looking for the stabber. As they emerged, they saw another man on the floor, also badly injured. He later died at the hospital.

The Palestinian Hamas group said it welcomed the attack. “We welcome the heroic operation in Tel Aviv that killed two people,” read a tweet on the Gaza-based group’s official account read. “We call on the Palestinians to continue such activities.”