**IDF officer hurt in stabbing attack in Efrat, West Bank**

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A Palestinian man stabbed an Israeli IDF officer outside the West Bank settlement of Efrat, south of Jerusalem, at 6 a.m. Sunday, the army said.

The officer, a reservist, was said to be in moderate-to-serious condition by Magen David Adom emergency medical personnel, but he was later upgraded to moderate condition at the hospital.

The incident occurred near the entrance to the settlement, where the officer’s unit had been carrying out a sweep of the area.

According to the message sent to Efrat residents, the assailant who had been “hiding in some bushes jumped out and stabbed the officer.”

The victim was stabbed “near the armpit” and has been taken to Jerusalem Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital, according to a spokesperson for the medical center.

The 30-year-old officer “communicated with us the whole way to the hospital and was in stable condition,” MDA paramedics Issa Dawith and Moshe Benita said.

The attacker, identified as Baha a-Din Muhammad Khalil, was shot immediately after stabbing the victim, the army said.

Khalil, approximately 30 years old, was also taken to Hadassah Ein Kerem for treatment, the army said.

He was moderately injured, with a gunshot wound to the head, a hospital spokesperson said.

The stabbing came approximately four hours after the community’s security system picked up movement some 440 yards (440 meters) from the settlement’s fence, according to the note sent to resident.

“Forces are carrying out a sweep in order to secure the area,” the army said in a statement.

Oded Revivi, the head of the local council, told Army Radio that the settlement’s schools would open as usual, despite the attack, albeit with increased security.

“We’re preparing for a regular day,” Revivi said.

The IDF deployed an additional infantry battalion to the southern West Bank city of Hebron on Saturday evening, following two days of attacks against soldiers and civilians, the army said.

The decision to reinforce the flashpoint locale with the Kfir Brigade’s Shimshon Battalion was made “in accordance with situation assessments following recent terror attacks,” the IDF said in a statement.

“The motivation and inspiration to carry out attacks against Israelis remains strong. That’s why the IDF is strengthening its operational and intelligence efforts to stabilize the situation on the ground and deter these acts of terror,” a military official said, speaking anonymously.

Five attacks on Friday and Saturday — three stabbings, a car ramming and a rock throwing — caught many Israelis by surprise, as the violence that marked 2015 and early 2016 appeared to have waned in recent months, and raised fears that regular attacks could return.

“[The Eid al-Adha holiday] and September are always more susceptible to spikes in violent Palestinian activities,” the official said.

However, he noted, though the attacks over the weekend were “of course a change from recent weeks, we can not currently point to any major change on the ground that indicates it will increase.”

The Hebron area, where Palestinians, Israeli settlers and soldiers live in close proximity, has been a frequent scene of clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians, as well as terror attacks by Palestinian assailants.

In the past year, Israel saw a wave of so-called “lone wolf” Palestinian terror attacks, which claimed the lives of 35 Israelis and four foreign nationals since October 2015. Over 200 Palestinians have also been killed in the past year, with the Israeli army and police saying that most of those killed were attackers or involved in clashes with security forces.