**Settler attacked by Palestinian rioters opens fire, kills 1 man, injures journalist**

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An Israeli man whose car was attacked by rioters shot dead a Palestinian man and injured an Associated Press photojournalist during a violent protest in the northern West Bank town of Hawara on Thursday, officials said. His car was pelted with stones and he said he believed he was going to be killed, and that he fired in self-defense.

As the Israeli civilian, a resident of a nearby settlement, drove through a demonstration in the Palestinian village outside Nablus, the protesters turned violent, kicking his car and pelting it with rocks.

The man tried to plow through the crowd, but his way was blocked by an ambulance, which had crossed into his lane. The ambulance appeared to be attempting to get around the protest, but the settler later claimed that the medics had deliberately tried to bar his passage.

During the attack on his vehicle, the Israeli man opened fire with his handgun, the army said.

The man’s shots hit two people, killing one of them and lightly injuring a second, according to eyewitnesses and Palestinian officials.

A military jeep pulled up seconds after the man’s car came under attack, and the soldiers inside it quickly dispersed the crowd with tear gas and other riot dispersal means.

Afterwards, the Israeli driver, a father of eight who lives in the settlement of Itamar, told Channel 2 news that the Palestinians “almost lynched” him. “Thank God I managed to get out of there… I looked death in the eyes,” he said.

The Israeli man later told the army he had “fired into the air.” The military said, however, that it was aware of two casualties on the scene, apparently from his gunshots. “That’s being looked into,” the army spokesperson added.

Following the shooting, Israeli troops cleared protesters away with tear gas, as more people throw rocks at the car, breaking the back window.

The driver was questioned in a police station on Thursday afternoon over the incident. Police said he was not under arrest, but was being asked to verify accounts provided by some of the journalists at the scene.

The protest was held in support of hundreds of Palestinians in Israeli jails on hunger strike since April 17. A spokesperson for the Samaria Regional Council said in a statement that it was the third day in a row of riots along the highway near Hawara.

According to a military spokesperson, “hundreds of Palestinians threw rocks at passing vehicles” during the violent demonstration.

The killed Palestinian man was identified by the Palestinian Health Minister as 23-year-old Muataz Hussain Tayeh, of Beita outside Nablus.

The photographer was identified by the Associated Press as Majdi Mohammed.

A video posted to social media shows the lead-up to and aftermath of the shooting. A group of Palestinians can be seen protesting with signs and flags, then surrounding the man’s vehicle and attacking the car, which is blocked by an ambulance.

A short while after the shooting, a group of Israeli settlers handed out candy bars to IDF soldiers near Hawara. They candy bars were of the same brand that Marwan Barghouti, a Palestinian leader serving a life sentence for orchestrating terror attacks, was caught on film eating while ostensibly on the hunger strike.

The head of the ambulance unit for the Red Crescent, Ahmad Jibril, told the official Palestinian Authority’s Wafa news agency that Mohammed, the AP photographer, was shot in his hand and taken to the Rafidia hospital in Nablus for treatment. He was said to be lightly wounded. The Associated Press said in a statement: “We are awaiting further details on his condition and the events leading up to the shooting. AP urges a full investigation into the incident.”

The spokesperson for the Samaria Regional Council said the Israeli man was on his way home from the grocery store when his car was attacked. He was identified as a resident of the Itamar settlement, located southeast of Nablus.

A video of the damage to the man’s car shows the smashed windshield and dents along the door, apparently from the rock attack.

“They are blocking the road that goes from the Gav Hahar settlements to the center of the country. They throw rocks at cars full of families and children,” the spokesperson said.

The Gav Hahar settlements — Yitzhar, Alon Moreh, Har Bracha and Itamar — are located in the northern West Bank, near Nablus.

The head of the Samaria Regional Council, Yossi Dagan, said he “totally supports the resident who defended his life and the lives of those around him against attackers.”

Another incident occurred on Wednesday near the Palestinian town of Silwad, in the central West Bank.

An Israeli settler shot and moderately wounded a Palestinian who thew stones at his car as he drove along a road near the town.

Police detained the shooter and a passenger who was in the car with him, but they were later released after their attorney, far-right activist Itamar Ben Gvir, argued that they opened fire in self-defense because they were attacked with rocks. Police also detained the Palestinian.