Five Palestinians Arrested for Making Pipe Bombs Out of Fireworks

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The Israel Defense Forces broke up a cell of Palestinian men who are suspected of making pipe bombs and using them in several attacks in the northern West Bank, an army officer said Tuesday.

Last month, the army arrested a group of four Palestinian men who had made and used pipe bombs in attacks on Israeli troops in the Tulkarem area.

During their interrogations, the four suspects revealed the origins of their homemade explosive devices: an illegal fireworks dealer.

According to the IDF officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, the suspects’ testimonies led the security services to a fifth Palestinian man in the Tulkarem area who was selling large quantities of fireworks in the knowledge that they were being used for terror attacks, “not for something innocent.”

The army raided the building from which the fireworks dealer was peddling his goods on Thursday and found 10 boxes of pyrotechnics, the officer said.

Fireworks are illegal to own in the West Bank. The army is now investigating how the dealer acquired the merchandise.

According to the officer, the four suspects used the explosives inside the fireworks to craft “classic” pipe bombs.

“They made bombs with a very, very large amount of the explosives from the fireworks, cramming it into pipes and sealing it on both sides with screwed-on caps,” the officer said.

The four Palestinian men are suspected of using these pipe bombs in the weeks before their arrest to attack military positions in the northern West Bank, not in attacks against civilians, the IDF official said.

No soldiers were seriously wounded in these attacks; however these kinds of pipe bombs have been known to cause serious injury and even death in the past.

Last year, an IDF officer was seriously injured in [a pipe bomb attack](http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-wounded-as-bomb-goes-off-at-west-bank-checkpoint/) that was perpetrated by [a group of five Palestinian men](http://www.timesofisrael.com/trio-of-palestinian-dentists-arrested-for-pipe-bomb-attack/).

The four suspects in the Tulkarem area were not trained members of a terrorist group, though they did have some connections with one, the officer said.

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“But I can’t say which as it’s still being investigated,” he added.

In their interrogations, the suspects said they carried out their attacks out of a combination of nationalistic motivations, as well as a general sense of frustration with the situation in the West Bank, the officer said.

The suspects, all of them between the ages of 17 and 24, were residents of the city of Tulkarem and the Nur a-Shams refugee camp, he said.