

Four killed in Jerusalem synagogue terror attack

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JERUSALEM (RNS) At least four worshipers were killed in an attack on a west Jerusalem synagogue Tuesday (November 18).

The incident was the latest violent event in the tense city where relations between Arabs and Jews have been deteriorating for months over a contested shrine holy to both Jews and Muslims.

Police spokeswoman Luba Samri said eight people were wounded in the assault, including police officers. Samri said the attackers were Palestinians from east Jerusalem.

The victims included Moshe Twersky, 59, a rabbi, according to *Haaretz*. Others were Aryeh Kupinsky, 43; Kalman Zeev Levine, 55; and Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, 68.

The attack took place in the Jewish neighborhood of Har Nof in the western part of the city. The attackers were shot and killed by police following a shootout. Police were searching the area for other suspects.

The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claimed responsibility for the attack, according to the BBC.

Yosef Posternak, who was at the synagogue at the time of the attack, told Israel Radio that about 25 worshipers were inside when the attackers entered.

"I saw people lying on the floor, blood everywhere. People were trying to fight with (the attackers) but they didn't have much of a chance," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel will "respond harshly" to the attack. He said the international community "irresponsibly ignores" Arab attacks on Jews around the world and said "the cruel murder of Jews who came to pray and

were caught by dark, murderous hands” would not go unpunished. Netanyahu called an emergency meeting of his Security Cabinet.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the attack, the first time he has done so since a recent spike in deadly violence against Israelis began. He also called for an end to Israeli “provocations” surrounding the sacred site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. Abbas said it was wrong for either side to kill civilians.

Sami Abu Zuhri, a spokesman for Hamas, wrote in a post on Facebook that the incident in Jerusalem was a reaction to Israeli “crimes” and called for further attacks and bloodshed to take place.

Secretary of State John Kerry, who is on his way to Vienna for nuclear negotiations with Iran, said Tuesday’s attack was an “act of pure terror and senseless brutality and violence.”

The violence comes amid a wave of attacks by Palestinians on Israelis that has killed at least six people in recent weeks.

On Monday, a Palestinian bus driver was found hanged in his vehicle. Israeli police said the death was a suicide, citing autopsy results. Palestinians suspect foul play, which has led to protests.

The latest cycle of violence began in June after the murder of three Israeli teens and a Palestinian teen erupted into a war over the summer between Israel and Hamas that led to the deaths of over 2,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, and 72 Israelis, according to the United Nations.

Contributing: Associated Press.