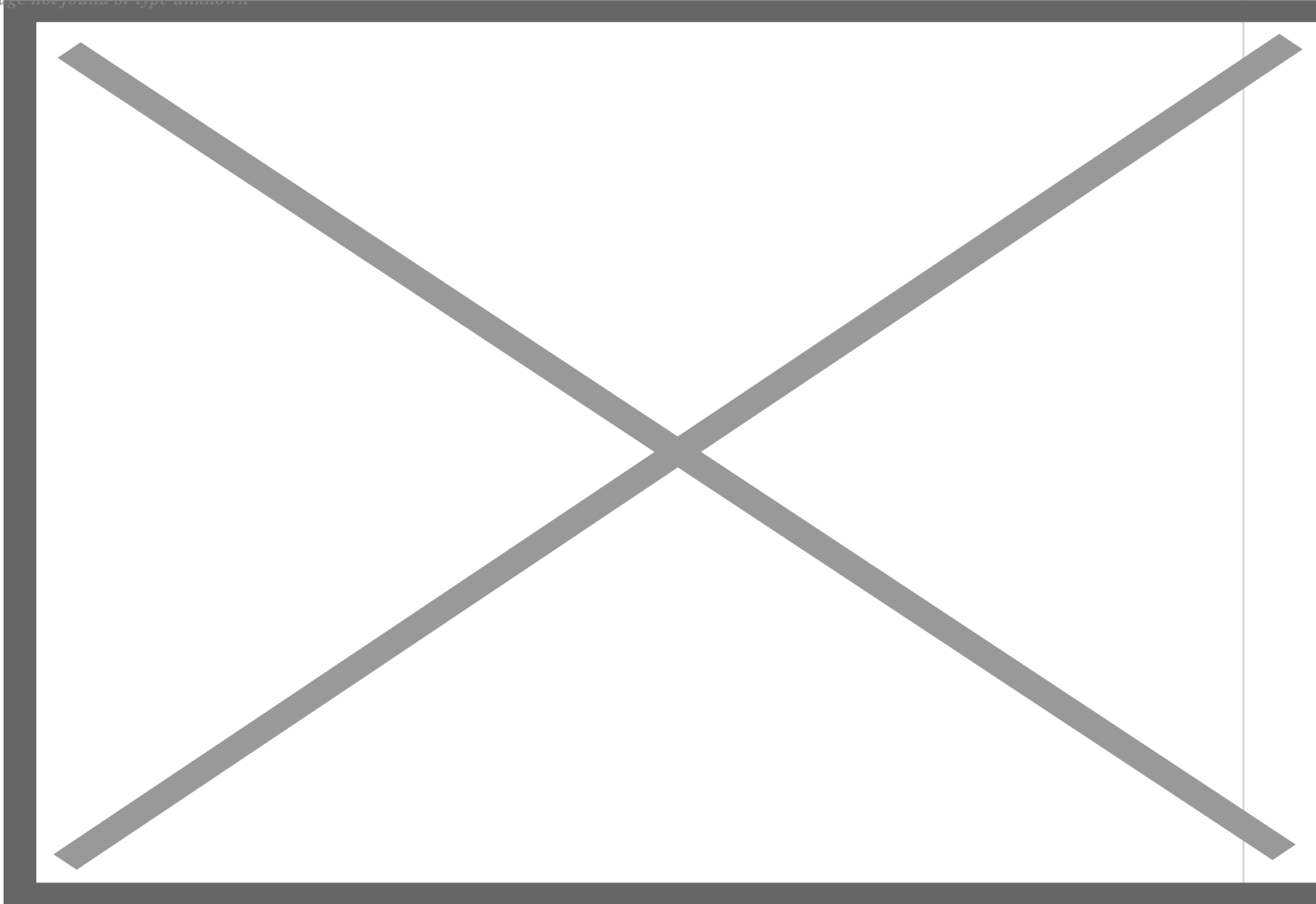


Israeli soldiers open fire at car in Nablus killing Palestinians

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People look at a cracked windscreen with bullet holes at the scene where three Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces in Nablus in the occupied West Bank [Mohamad Torokman/Reuters]

Nablus, February 9 (RHC)-- Israeli security forces have killed three Palestinians in the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Ministry of Health said on Tuesday, drawing condemnation from Palestinian Authority (PA).

“Three citizens were martyred as a result of direct shooting by Israeli forces in the city of Nablus,” the ministry said in a statement. It identified the victims as Ashraf Mubaslat, Adham Mabrouka, and

Mohammad Dakhil, according to the Palestinian Wafa news agency.

Wafa, quoting witnesses, reported Israeli soldiers opened fire at the car in the northern city. The car was riddled with bullet holes, according to the footage shared by the agency. Witnesses told Anadolu Agency that the incident involved a member of Israel's special forces in a civilian vehicle storming the city's al-Makhfieh neighbourhood, and opening fire at a Palestinian car.

The PA's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has called for an international investigation into the killings while the PA cabinet described it as a "heinous crime." The foreign ministry held the Israeli government and Prime Minister Neftali Bennett "fully and directly responsible for this crime".

"The silence of the international community to Israeli violations and crimes provides a cover to these criminal acts and encourages the Israeli occupier to continue in its open warfare against the Palestinians," it said in a statement.

Israel, on its part, said the three men were Palestinian "militants" who were responsible for recent shooting attacks. The Shin Bet internal security agency said the three were in a vehicle and were killed in a clash with security forces. No Israelis were killed or wounded in the shooting, it added.

Palestinian and international rights groups have long condemned what they see as a policy of shoot to kill and excessive use of force. B'Tselem, the Israeli rights body, said it had recorded 77 Palestinian deaths at the hands of Israeli security forces in the West Bank last year. More than half of those killed were not implicated in any attacks, it added.

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