

Three Palestinian men shot in U.S. state of Vermont

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Burlington, November 27 (RHC)-- Three young Palestinian men have been shot near a university campus in Vermont in the United States, according to media reports. Reports said the incident took place on Saturday evening near the University of Vermont's campus in the city of Burlington.

The three were identified as Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdel Hamid and Tahseen Ahmed. They are studying at three different universities in the US. According to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), two of the victims are in intensive care while one was due to be released on Sunday.

“[We] are deeply distressed by the recent incident involving three of our graduates,” the Ramallah Friends School in the occupied West Bank, where the three studied, said in a statement on Facebook.

“While we are relieved to know they are alive, we remain uncertain about their condition. We extend our thoughts and prayers to them and their families for a full recovery, especially considering the severity of the injuries – as Hisham has been shot in the back, Tahseen in the chest, and Kinnan with minor injuries.”

The motive behind the attack is unknown. When contacted by Al Jazeera, the Burlington police did not immediately respond to a request for further information.

The ADC said it was contacted about the shooting earlier on Sunday, and that it has “reason to believe [it] was motivated by the three victims being Arab.” “According to the information provided, the three victims were wearing a keffiyeh and speaking Arabic. A man shouted and harassed the victims, then proceeded to shoot them,” the group said in a statement.

“Given the information collected and provided, it is clear that hate was a motivating factor in this shooting,” said ADC’s Director Abed Ayoub. “We call on law enforcement to investigate it as such. The surge in anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian sentiment we are experiencing is unprecedented, and this is another example of that hate turning violent.”

The incident came amid a rise in anti-Palestinian sentiments in the US, with both Republican and Democratic politicians backing Israel’s war in Gaza despite the mounting Palestinian death toll and growing accusations of war crimes.

Israel’s ground and air assault on the besieged Gaza Strip has so far killed more than 15,000 Palestinians, and left vast swathes of the Strip in ruins.

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