

Terrorists Try to Hide From IDF in Church Near Bethlehem, Causing Clashes Between Muslim & Christian Palestinians

In an unusual incident on Tuesday evening, Muslim and Christian residents of the town of al-Khader near Bethlehem clashed after Palestinian terrorists tried to hide from the Israel Defense Forces in a monastery church.

According to the IDF, two Palestinian militants hurled Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles at the al-Khader junction in Judea's Gush Etzion, near the town of al-Khader, which is a suburb of the Palestinian Authority-controlled city of Bethlehem.

The attack caused no injuries, and Israeli troops launched a pursuit after the terrorists, who fled into the town's Saint George's Church.

At the same time, residents of al-Khader, which is named after the Arabic name for the Christian saint, St. George, were celebrating the annual Feast of Saint George in the town's medieval monastery.

Christians attacked by Muslims at St George's Church near Bethlehem. I doubt this will get shared by the big podcasters.

– Luke Moon (@lukemoon1) May 5, 2026

According to the IDF, the terrorists tried to hide themselves among the crowd that was celebrating the feast in the monastery's church. The military stated that troops reached the church but chose not to enter the building, withdrawing instead and breaking off the pursuit for the terrorists, which remained at large on Wednesday.

However, Palestinian media outlets reported that the "occupation forces" closed off parts of the town and fired "tear gas and sound bombs" before withdrawing. They also claimed that one person among the hundreds of participants in the celebration was wounded after being "beaten" by the IDF.

The IDF stated that violent clashes only erupted after its troops withdrew, and were caused by the act of terrorists trying to hide among the Christian population celebrating a feast in a church.



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The governor of Bethlehem confirmed that a "normal dispute" erupted when clergy tried to remove a man from Beit Jala from the church, but blaming the escalation of the situation on the IDF raid of the town.

The earliest parts of the modern-day Greek Orthodox Monastery of Saint George (Deir al-Khader) were built in the 16th century, but a church had stood at the site since the times of the crusaders. Today's church was built in 1912.

The feast of Saint George draws thousands of pilgrims from the region, including Muslims who also revere al-Khader, who is mentioned in the Quran.

The legendary dragon slayer George was an early Christian martyr from Lydda, the modern-day Israeli city of Lod. According to Christian traditions, he was a soldier in the Roman army who was executed for refusing to recant his faith

during the persecution under Emperor Diocletian.

The attempted use of a church to hide from Israeli troops has a long tradition among Palestinian terrorists.

Terrorists famously exploited several churches in the Bethlehem area to this effect during the Second Intifada (2000-2005).

The most prominent incident came in 2002, when some 50 armed terrorists affiliated with Hamas, Fatah and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades fled into the Church of the Nativity and took some 200 monks as hostages. After a tense standoff that lasted 39 days and drew international attention, the IDF reached an agreement to exile the terrorists to Europe or the Gaza Strip.

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