

Armed With His Koran and a Knife, Teen Slashes Family to Death in Their Home

Thousands of Israelis traveled to Modi'in—a city about halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv—Sunday to attend the funerals of three members of the Salomon family murdered in the Samaria Jewish community of Halamish on Friday evening.

Yosef Salomon, 70, a founding member of Halamish; his daughter Chaya, 46; and son Elad, 35, were stabbed to death as they celebrated the Sabbath and the birth of the family's newest grandson. Elad, his wife, Michal, and their five children had planned to spend the Shabbat at his parents' home.

Salomon's wife, Tova, 68, who survived multiple stab wounds to her upper body, was released from Jerusalem's Sha'are Tzedek Medical Center to attend her husband and children's funerals. She returned to the hospital afterward.

At the weekly cabinet meeting, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said members of the government extended their deepest condolences to the Salomon family, calling their murderer "a beast incited by Jew hatred."

"The home of the loathsome terrorist will be demolished as soon as possible. We are also taking action against those who incite toward acts of murder and those who praise them," Netanyahu said.

President Reuven Rivlin admonished the international community to speak out against terrorism.

"Those who do not denounce terrorism in effect cooperate with it," Rivlin said.

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman called on Palestinian

Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to “explicitly and clearly condemn this massacre committed against an innocent family that posed no danger to anyone.”

And Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz recommended the death penalty for 19-year-old Omar al-Abed, who carried out the attack.

Armed with a recently purchased knife and his Koran, Abed walked the mile and a half to Halamish from his home in the Arab village of Kaubar.

Less than 15 minutes after breaching the community’s security fence, Abed entered the Salomon home and began slashing his victims to death. The security monitor had alerted an emergency response team, which was tracking him down when the attack took place.

The family’s neighbor, an off-duty soldier home for the weekend, heard the screams and rushed to the scene with his father, shooting and wounding the terrorist through a window. Abed was later transported to Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikveh, where he’s recovering.

Times of Israel military correspondent Judah Ari Gross interviewed the soldier, who kept his back to the camera for security purposes.

Within hours of the investigation, police learned that Abed had close ties with Hamas—the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood controlling the Gaza Strip—and had announced his plan only two hours before carrying it out.

The heroine of the day is Elad’s widow, Michal, who rushed the couple’s three older children upstairs to the bedroom where the two youngest, twins, were asleep. She instructed them to be quiet as she held onto the doorknob and pressed against the door, which had no lock, with all the strength she could muster.

The off-duty soldier and his wife, Miri Maoz-Ovadia, live in a nearby community. She serves as international spokesperson for the Binyamin Regional Council. Her mother alerted her to the attack, instructing her to call for help. She later told The Israel Project by phone, "It's been extremely traumatic."

"I was born here, and like I said, my family lives across the street [from where the attack took place]. This is a community of wonderful families. Such a wonderful place that many, many of young couples who live here are people like myself, who chose to come back and live in the community where we were raised," she explained.

"We are shocked; we are heartbroken; we are traumatized, and we know that we have a lot of support from people all over Israel and from all over the world who suffer from terror," she continued.

"Our request and our demand from the State of Israel is to help us feel secure in our homes all over Israel. There is no reason why a person should be terrified to go to sleep, to go visit a shopping mall, to drive in a bus—and I'm sure that we will manage to grow stronger and nothing will bring us down. We're here to stay. Like I said, this is our home." {eoa}

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