

Israeli troops kill wrong man in Hamas raid

Israeli Army regrets killing of a Palestinian man during a raid. The incident the third civilian death in a week

- Agencies
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Hebron: Israeli troops killed a 65-year-old Palestinian in his bedroom on Friday during a pre-dawn raid to seize a Hamas suspect who lived in the same building in what the army admitted was a mistake.

The man was shot as troops swooped on houses in the occupied West Bank to re-arrest five members of the Hamas group who had been freed from Palestinian jails just the day before.

The dead man, Amr Qawasme, was asleep when soldiers broke into his home before dawn. His wife, Sobheye, said they brushed past her into the bedroom, where she heard several shots fired. When she went in, she found her husband in a pool of blood.

"I was praying when they entered. I do not know how they opened the door. They put their hand to my mouth and a rifle to my head," she told *Reuters* after Qawasme's body was removed.

"I was shocked. They did not allow me to talk. I asked them, 'What did you do?' They asked me to shut up."

Television footage showed Qawasme's sodden bed and bullet casings on the floor.

A statement by the Israeli army said that soldiers who went to arrest Wael Mahmoud Said Bitar - who it said had helped plan a 2008 suicide bomb attack in which an Israeli woman was killed - had killed a man in the house during the raid.

The army "regrets the outcome of the incident," it said. An investigation was ordered and conclusions expected next week.

Israel and the US-backed West Bank administration of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have a common foe in Hamas, which rejects Middle East peace efforts and controls the Gaza Strip, the other half of the Palestinian polity.