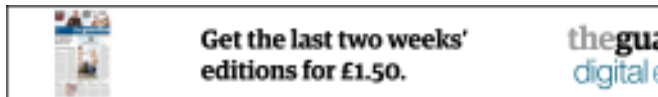


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The Palestinian Authority today refused to arrest people named on a list of seven activists that the Israeli government claims pose the greatest threat of terrorist attack in Israel.

The Palestinian information minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, said that Israel would have to arrest armed Jewish settlers before his organisation would pursue people named on the Israeli list.

Israeli security forces have killed 50 people under a strategy of targeting Palestinian activists they say are responsible for orchestrating attacks on Israelis.

The Israeli army claimed to have thwarted a suicide bomb attack when it arrested a suspected bomber earlier today.

The army said he was on his way to Tel Aviv, where he planned to mount a suicide bomb attack.

Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority has refused to agree to Israeli demands that it arrest about 100 suspected militants.

Israel has responded by targeting individuals, a move that opponents describe as state-sponsored assassinations.

Even ardent supporters of Israel, including the United States, have criticised the policy.

Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon, insisted that the policy would remain in force unless the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, reins in Islamic militants.

"One must understand that Arafat could avoid it," Sharon told Fox News on Sunday. "What [Arafat] has to do is just to stop them."

Sharon also reiterated his opposition to Palestinian calls for international observers to monitor the actions of Israeli soldiers.

"We will not be able to accept international forces or international observers," he said.

Three Palestinians and one Israeli woman were killed as the violence escalated on Sunday.

A Palestinian gunman was shot dead in Tel Aviv after he opened fire on crowds outside the defence ministry, wounding 10 people, most of them soldiers.

Another gunman in the West Bank opened fire on three vehicles carrying Israelis near the Jewish settlement of Alfei Menashe, killing a pregnant woman and injuring three others.

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Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian who they said was laying a bomb near another Jewish settlement in the West Bank, Einav. Israeli helicopters also killed a member of the Hamas militant group in a missile attack on his car in the town of Tukarem.

The suspected suicide bomber arrested today was not carrying explosives, but was on his way to collect a bomb that he planned to detonate in Tel Aviv, a defence ministry spokesman said.

Israel's defence minister, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, feared a rash of bomb attacks in the country's most populous city.

"Tel Aviv has turned into a target because there are hundreds of people on every corner," Mr Ben-Eliezer told Israeli radio. In June, the city suffered the bloodiest attack in the past 10 months of Israeli-Palestinian fighting, when a suicide bomber killed 21 young people at a nightclub.

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