

Israeli warplanes launch airstrikes on Gaza, killing 3 terrorist leaders

May 9 (UPI) — Dozens of Israeli warplanes bombed Gaza early Tuesday, killing at least three senior members of the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization, authorities said.

Operation Shield and Arrow began about 2:15 a.m. local time with the Israeli Air Force hitting targets in the Palestinian-populated enclave on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Officials said the airstrikes, conducted by some 40 warplanes, had ceased more than four hours after they had begun though assets remained in the air to respond to any retaliatory attacks.

Shortly before 8 a.m., security forces had begun an unspecified operation in the Kasbah area of Nablus, a Palestinian city in the occupied West bank, according to a timeline of the operation by the Israeli Defense Forces.

Officials said the strike was a response to rocket attacks that have targeted Israel from Gaza in the past month. Killed were Khalil Bahitini, 44, Tarek Ezzaldin, 49, and Jihad Ghanem, 62.

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