

security



Eden Natan-Zada, killed 4 and was lynched

Shfaram attack

Arab victims of attack by extremist Jew not recognized as terror victims

By Associated Press August 30, 2005

The teenage Israeli soldier who killed four Israeli Arabs in a shooting rampage on a bus has been branded a Jewish terrorist, but the people who died cannot be recognized as terrorist victims, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

Under current law, an assailant must be a member of the "enemy forces" against Israel for the action to be considered terrorism, said Mayan Malkin, a spokeswoman with the Defense Ministry.

But in this case the shooter was Jewish and his attack cannot be designated as terror, said Malkin.

The four Arabs from the Israeli village of Shfaram were killed by a 19-year-old Israeli who had deserted the army and had professed anti-Arab views. Authorities later said he was trying to thwart Israel's evacuation of Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called the shooting "a despicable act by a bloodthirsty terrorist."

"The law doesn't cover Jewish terror," said Orna Kohn, a lawyer with the Adalah legal center for minority rights in Israel. "If this had been the same bus and same attack but committed by a Palestinian terrorist, then they would have been covered by the law."

Terror victims or their relatives are entitled to monthly compensation for the rest of their lives.

A committee lead by Defense Ministry officials decided to give the Shfaram victims a lump sum amount rather than a lifelong monthly payment, a ministry statement said without mentioning an amount.

But the committee did not agree to call them victims of a terrorist act. "It is not possible to recognize them as falling under this law," it said.

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