



**PRESS RELEASE**

December 19, 2023

IDF: Following the reports of two women that were shot in the area of the Latin Church in Shejaya, the IDF has finished conducting an initial review of the incident. The review found that on December 17th, in the early afternoon, Hamas terrorists launched a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) at IDF troops from the vicinity of the church. The troops then identified three people in the vicinity, operating as spotters for Hamas by guiding their attacks in the direction of the IDF troops. In response, our troops fired towards the spotters and hits were identified.

While this incident occurred in the area where the two women were reportedly killed, the reports received do not match the conclusion of our initial review which found that the IDF troops were targeting spotters in enemy lookouts. We are continuing our examination of the incident.

The IDF takes claims of strikes on sensitive sites very seriously, especially churches that are the holy sites for the Christian faith. The IDF directs its operations against the Hamas terrorist organization and not against civilians, regardless of their religious affiliation. The IDF takes many measures to mitigate harm to civilians in the Gaza Strip. These efforts stand in contrast to Hamas that does everything in its power to endanger civilians and exploits them, as well as religious sites, as human shields for their terrorist activities.