

## Hamas says dead militants ready for attack

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- Hamas officials Friday confirmed militants killed in an explosion in northern Gaza were preparing for a terror attack. The explosion Thursday at a Hamas leader's home in Beir Lahiya killed three people, including high-ranking members of the organization, Ynetnews.com reported. A wounded Hamas militant died Friday. Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades confirmed that those who died were making last-minute preparations for a "special mission," which Ynetnews.com said was Hamas code for a "high-quality" attack. Israel has denied involvement in the incident. In a statement, Hamas said its followers would "continue following in the path of those killed." Meanwhile, one woman was injured as mortar shells and Qassam rockets peppered the Israeli side of the border with Gaza, Ynetnews.com said. During a visit at a military prep school at the Shoval kibbutz in the Negev region Friday, Israeli Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz criticized the Israel's decision to negotiate with the Palestinians. "(The) cabinet's decision is problematic and unfavorable for Israel," Mofaz said. "We needed to change our policies regarding the Gaza Strip a year ago when the Hamas rose to power. Today, we are a year late and we still have not reached the right decision."

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