

Palestinian shot near Rafah Crossing

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
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A Palestinian official at the Rafah border crossing with Gaza was wounded in shooting Friday that Egyptian security and border officials described as an assassination attempt.

Mustafa Saad Jbour, a 25-year-old Palestinian officer on the Rafah checkpoint sustained several bullet wounds to the leg, Capt. Mohammed Badr of the Egyptian Sinai security service said.

Badr said that Jbour, who was in hospital in the nearby El-Arish town, came under machine gun fire Friday evening in the Egyptian district, just a few hundreds meters (yards) from the Egypt-Gaza crossing, when masked militants in a speeding car sprayed him with bullets and fled the scene.

The shooting came after Jbour had informed Egyptian authorities earlier in the week about uncovering a tunnel in the border city of Rafah, that allegedly was used to smuggle weapons and Palestinians from the Sinai Peninsula into Gaza.

Hospital officials at El-Arish said that Jbour has lost a lot of blood and would be transferred to another hospital for surgery.

Badr also said that the tunnel discovered by Jbour contained over 30,000 bullets and was located in the middle of a field, about 5 kilometers (3 miles) north of Rafah and within meters (yards) of the boundary.

Egypt was coordinating with Palestinian authorities in Gaza to close the newly discovered tunnel from the other end, Badr added.

Israel has long accused Egypt of not doing enough to stop the smuggling of weapons to Palestinian militants. Egypt has rejected the allegations but recently said it would make a greater effort to crack down on the trafficking.