

# Funeral for 3 slain Palestinians draws large crowd in protest

DURA, West Bank (AP) — The funerals of three Palestinian workers shot and killed by Israeli soldiers brought cries for vengeance Wednesday from fellow Palestinians — and grim promises from Israel that force will be met with force.

"Blood leads to blood!" white-scarved Palestinian schoolgirls screamed as they marched through the winding streets of Dura, the hometown of three laborers slain Tuesday night at an Israeli roadblock on their way home from jobs in Israel.

The deaths set off the West Bank's worst day of violence in months, leaving 32 Palestinians and an Israeli border policeman hurt in a series of clashes Wednesday.

More ominously, the chain of events raised fears that the two sides were returning to the kind of confrontations common before the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which has been stalled for more than a year.

In Dura, where nearly everyone claims kinship or friendship with at least one of the dead workers, every shop and business was shuttered as the entire town mourned.

Thousands of people — little boys holding hands, old men leaning on canes, angry masked youths — marched in a funeral procession or lined the streets to watch it pass.

At the home of Adnan Abu Zneid, one of the slain men, his black-robed widow Rima stood on the steps with village women ulu-

lating shrilly at her side. Thirty-four years old, she is a mother of nine children, including a boy born just six days ago.

"The soldiers killed my husband," she wailed. "Why, why?"

The bodies, shrouded in white and draped in the Palestinian flag, were paraded into the town's rocky burying ground after prayers in the eucalyptus-shaded mosque.

Palestinian teacher Fahmi Rayan, 47, gestured bleakly toward the three waiting tombs. "I think peace is going in there too," he said.

The burials, as is customary in Muslim tradition, came less than 24 hours after the men met their violent end at the army roadblock near the village of Tarkoumiah, west of Hebron.

# Burial delays hope for massacre probe

PREKAZ, Yugoslavia (AP) — Villagers lifted the coffin lid and gazed inside Wednesday. The charred child's torso had no head to turn toward the Islamic holy city of Mecca as tradition requires, so they left the remains untouched and lowered them back into the loamy earth.

For days, residents had refused to bury those killed during a Serb crackdown on militant separatists from the southern province of Kosovo. But after Serb police did so Tuesday night — dumping coffins in a mass grave — the people of Prekaz surrendered their fight for the autopsies they hoped would show the world that the Serb crackdown on ethnic Albanians was a massacre.

Prekaz men wielding shovels and pickaxes worked beneath the gaze of Serb sharpshooters Wednesday — while the rebel group the Serbs claimed to have smashed said it would fight on for independence.

More moderate Kosovo Albanians reacted coolly to Serbia's offer for an open dialogue, even though Serb officials said talks would begin Thursday. Ethnic Albanians want independence for Kosovo province, not a return to the broad autonomy that President Slobodan Milosevic abolished in 1989.

Kosovo, a southern province where 90 percent of the population is Albanian, exploded into violence

nearly two weeks ago. The Kosovo Liberation Army attacks on police prompted bloody sweeps through villages they said harbored about 80 people died.

Outside powers fear the worst: a Balkan war. Asked if the United States would send a military mission to the region, President Clinton said "no options should be ruled in or out."

NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana said ever, that talk of sending troops to neighboring Bosnia was premature. He was heading to Thursday to address the crisis.

Despite Serbs' claims to have "liquidated" the guerrilla group surfaced Wednesday, the show of new defiance. In a statement published in the *Bujku* newspaper, it urged all Albanians to campaign, and demanded world recognition as a state and punishment for "Serb crimes."

Serb police units had buried the Prekaz bodies Tuesday night after the Albanians refused to allow them to be buried in the village. The United States had called for international experts to perform autopsies to determine whether they died in battle or were massacred, as the Albanians claim.

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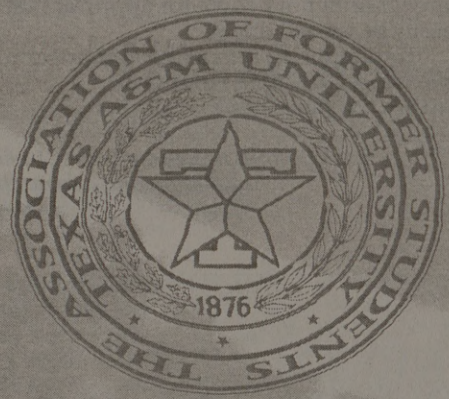
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