



February 5, 2008

**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center  
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage  
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

**Suicide bombing attack in the Dimona commercial center kills one city resident and wounds many. Although a number of terrorist organizations claimed responsibility, it was apparently carried out by a Hamas terrorist squad from Hebron.**

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The scene of the suicide bombing attack (Info-live TV, February 4).

## Overview

1. **At 10:30 a.m. on February 4 two suicide bombers wearing explosive belts** reached the commercial center of the southern city of Dimona. One of them blew himself up but wounded the other, who was shot and killed by a police officer, preventing him from detonating his belt. A woman was killed and ten civilians were injured. It was apparently carried out by a Hamas Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades terrorist squad from Hebron.

2. **The last suicide bombing attack in Israel was on January 29, 2007**, when a suicide bomber from the Gaza Strip blew himself up at local bakery in the southern city of Eilat, killing three Israelis. The attack was carried out by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad collaborating with a Gaza-based Fatah network. **The last suicide bombing attack carried out by Hamas** was on August 12, 2005, when a suicide bomber blew himself up at the Central Bus Station in Beersheba, wounding 40 civilians. He came from Dahariya, south of Hebron. After the attack responsibility was falsely claimed by the PIJ.

## The Events

3. Two suicide bombers wearing explosive belts reached the Dimona commercial center at 10:30 on the morning of February 4. One of them detonated his explosives, killing Lyubov Razdolskaya, 73 and wounding ten civilians, one of them, the husband of the murdered woman, critically.



**Evacuating the wounded to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba (Info-live TV, February 4).**

4. The other suicide bomber, who was apparently supposed to detonate his belt a few minutes later, was wounded by the first. He was killed by a police officer who was present at the time preventing him from blowing himself up. His belt was neutralized by a police robot.



The body of one of the suicide bombers (Info-live TV, February 4).

## Claiming Responsibility

5. On the evening of February 4 Reuters reported that the attack was carried out by a **terrorist squad belonging Hamas's Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades** which came from Hebron (Reuters, February 4). Senior Hamas figures interviewed about the attack denied Hamas's involvement or claimed it had been carried out by Fatah.

6. Immediately after the attack three organizations claimed responsibility: Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, and an organization calling itself the National Resistance Battalions. The suicide bombers' names were given and they were filmed before the attack, reading their "wills," a customary practice in suicide bombing attacks. The two were from Gaza City and Khan Yunis. It may have been a case of a different terrorist squad, which left the Gaza Strip when the border fence collapsed and lost contact with its dispatchers, who mistakenly thought they had carried out the attack in Dimona.



Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades spokesman Khaled al-Jabbari (Abu al-Walid) holding a press conference after the event and claiming responsibility for an attack which was apparently carried out by Hamas (Al-Jazeera TV, February 4).

## Palestinian Reactions to the Attack

7. Palestinian Authority Chairman **Abu Mazen** condemned the attack but **at the same time condemned the IDF action at Qabatiya**.<sup>1</sup> He made no distinction between a counterterrorist activity against armed terrorist operatives and a suicide bombing attack which was premeditated to kill innocent civilians in Dimona. The PA's statement condemned any attack whose objective was to kill civilians, whether Palestinian or Israeli (Wafa News Agency, February 4).<sup>2</sup>

8. **A spokesman for Fatah** denied any connection between the organization and the attack, saying that those who carried it out "were known by their position and resistance to any lull in the fighting." After the government meeting the Salam Fayyad government's information minister said that as far as the PA was concerned, the attack in Dimona was not a violation of PA commitments because the operatives came from the Gaza Strip, not Judea and Samaria. (Wafa News Agency, February 4).

9. **Gazans expressed their joy** at the suicide bombing attack. In the streets of Gaza City of children handed out flowers and candy to celebrate the killing and wounding of Israelis, a familiar ritual after mass casualty attacks.



**Children distributing flowers and candy to celebrate the suicide bombing attack (Info-live TV, February 4).**

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<sup>1</sup> During an IDF counterterrorist activity in Qabatiya (south of Jenin) the soldiers identified three armed terrorist operatives, shooting and killing two of them. They were found to have rifles in their possession (IDF Spokesman, February 4).

<sup>2</sup> Abu Mazen and PA spokesman generally condemn the killing of Palestinian terrorist operatives, representing it as the killing of "Palestinian civilians."

10. Hamas spokesmen praised the attack but avoided linking it to the movement.<sup>3</sup> **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that it was “the natural reaction to the crimes of the occupation,” and that the Palestinian people had no choice but to take the path of resistance (i.e., terrorism). He denied the claim that the open border with Egypt had been exploited for terrorist attacks. He said that such claims were an Israeli attempt to justify its shock at the attack. **Fawzi Barhoum** called the attack “a natural reaction to the occupation, aggression and blockade.” He said that it had restored the honor of the families of “the shaheeds, the wounded and the besieged” (PalMedia Website, February 4).



**Fawzi Barhoum (Info-live TV, February 4).**

11. **Osama Hamdan**, the Hamas representative in Lebanon, described the attack as an act of bravery which sent three messages: the first was that it was a reaction to the stalled negotiations with Israel, the second that all the roadblocks and obstacles could not deter the terrorists and the third that “resistance” (i.e., terrorism) was still a strategic option (Al-Jazeera TV, February 4). Hamas spokesman **Ismail Radwan** said that the attack was “the natural reaction of the Palestinian people to attacks against it” (Al-Alam TV, February 4).

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<sup>3</sup> It is unclear whether that was done to gloss over the movement’s responsibility or because they did not know that a Hamas squad had in fact carried out the attack.