

Mass-casualty attack in Jerusalem using a construction vehicle

1. Close to 2:00 p.m. on July 22, an East Jerusalem resident took a construction vehicle from a site near the Yemin Moshe quarter in Jerusalem and began racing along the street, ramming into cars. A civilian who saw what he was doing shot the terrorist, but he continued, hitting cars and a bus at the corner of Keren Hayesod and King David streets. After he had driven about 250 meters (275 yards) a border policeman shot and killed him. Twenty-eight people were injured, one of them seriously.

2. The terrorist was **Ghassan Abu Tir**, 22, from **Umm Tuba in southeast Jerusalem, who had a criminal record**. He was a relative of Hamas Palestinian Legislative Council representative Mahmoud Abu Tir, currently imprisoned in Israel.

Reactions to the attack

3. No Palestinian terrorist organization claimed responsibility. Responsibility for this attack and the other two in Jerusalem was claimed by a group calling itself the Imad Moughnieh Squads of the Brigades of the Liberators of the Galilee (Ramattan News Agency, July 22). In our assessment, the claims are **false**.

4. **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** praised the attack, saying it was “the natural result of the occupation’s crimes” and of Israel’s refusal to stop its activities against the Palestinians, especially in the West Bank (Palestine-info website, July 22). Palestinian Authority chairman **Abu Mazen**, who at the time of the attack was holding a conversation with Israeli president Shimon Peres, condemned it, saying that he condemned every attack against civilians. He said that the attack tarnished the good name of the Palestinians and damaged the efforts for peace. He also wished the injured a speedy recovery (Wafa News Agency, July 22).

Previous mass-casualty attacks carried out by East Jerusalem residents

5. The current attack is the second of its type carried out in the last month and the fourth mass-casualty attack carried out by an East Jerusalem resident in recent months. The previous attacks were the following:

- i) **Mass-casualty construction vehicle attack:**
On the afternoon of July 2 a terrorist from East



The construction vehicle used in the mass-casualty attack in Jerusalem on July 2.

Jerusalem carried out an attack in the center of Jerusalem using a large construction vehicle. He began by racing along the street ramming everything in his way, **killing three Israeli civilians** and wounding about 40, most of them not seriously. A security guard and an off-duty soldier eventually managed to kill him. The terrorist was **Hussam Taysir Ibrahim Dawiyat, 30, a resident of Sur Baher in southeastern Jerusalem**, who carried a blue Israeli identity card, enabling him to move freely through the city. He had a criminal record and worked at the construction site from which he took the vehicle.¹

ii) **Shooting attack:** On July 12 a terrorist went to the Lions Gate, near the Muslim cemetery, and opened fire. Two policemen were wounded, one critically who died of his wounds of his wounds 12 days later (July 23). The terrorist escaped.

iii) Mass-casualty attack: On March 6 a terrorist used a Kalashnikov assault rifle to carry out a mass-casualty attack at Jerusalem's Mercaz Harav Yeshiva, a center for religious Zionism.

Eight yeshiva students were killed and 10 wounded, four of them critically. The terrorist was **Ala'a Hashem Abu Adhim**, a resident of Jabel Mukaber, southeast of Jerusalem.²



The scene of the terrorist attack at Mercaz Harav Yeshiva (Government Press Office, March 6).

6. A conspicuous feature of the attacks is that they were apparently carried out on the personal initiative of East Jerusalem residents, two of whom had criminal records and all of whom had nationalist motives to attack Jews. The “established” terrorist organizations were not behind the attacks and the announcements of the group calling itself the “Brigades of the Liberators of the Galilee” are baseless.

Significant rise in East Jerusalem residents' involvement in terrorism³

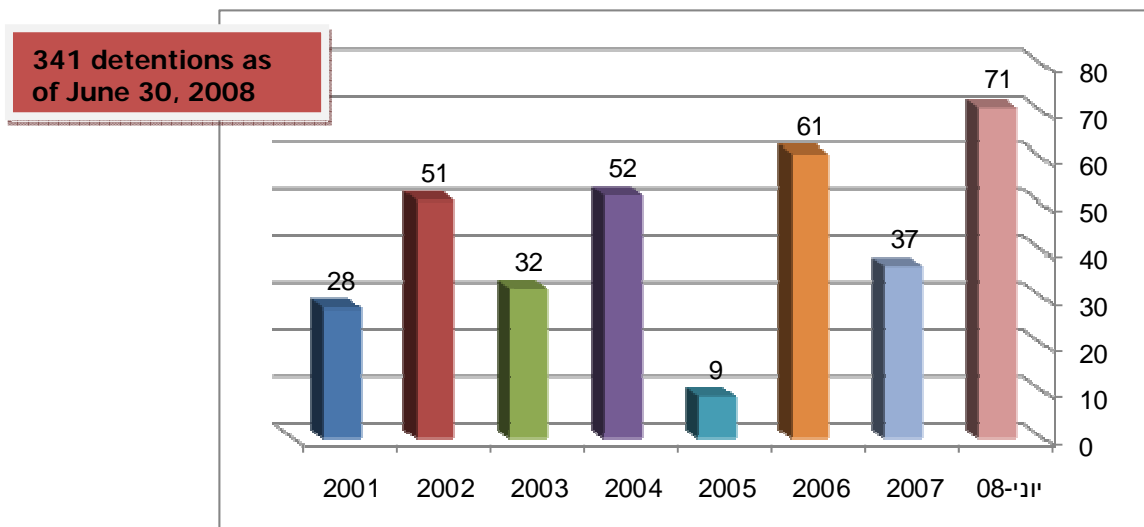
¹ For further information see our July 3 Bulletin entitled “Mass-casualty terrorist attack on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem.” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/ct_030708e.htm.

² For further information see our March 9 Bulletin entitled “Terrorist shooting at Yeshivat Mercaz Ha’Rav in Jerusalem leaves eight students dead.” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/ct_090308e.htm

7. According to data from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (June 1, 2008), there are 290,000 Palestinians living in greater Jerusalem who hold ordinary Israeli identity cards ("blue cards"). Palestinian holders of such cards can move freely throughout Jerusalem and all Israel and can even leave the country without difficulty. They also entitle their holders to the national insurance and medical benefits given by the State of Israel to its citizens.

8. According to data from the Israel Security Agency, **during 2008 there has been a significant rise in the number of East Jerusalem residents involved in terrorist activities.** One indication is the number of East Jerusalem residents arrested for involvement in terrorism: during the first half of 2008 (as of June 30) **71** Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem were arrested for terrorist involvement, as opposed to **37** in all of 2007.

Annual distribution of the detention of East Jerusalem residents involved in terrorism since the beginning of the confrontation



9. The involvement of East Jerusalem residents in terrorist attacks is especially conspicuous in view of the relatively small number of such attacks from Judea and Samaria and the quiet in the western Negev as a result of the lull arrangement. One of the main reasons for their involvement is the easy accessibility they have to the western part of the city, and in Israel in general, enabling them to carry attack with relative ease (exploited during the height of the confrontation to escort terrorist squads to their targets). However, the terrorist organizations

³ Source: an Israel Security Agency report entitled "The involvement of East Jerusalem residents in terrorist activity" (ISA website, July 23).

operating in Judea and Samaria have to cope with various difficulties, including the Israeli security forces' effective counterterrorism activities, the security fence (even though it has not been completed) and to a lesser degree, the activities of the PA's security forces, especially against Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.