



The Meir Amit Intelligence and
Terrorism Information Center

September 1, 2010

On the eve of the summit meeting in Washington to relaunch the direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, a shooting attack was carried out targeting an Israeli vehicle southeast of Hebron. Four Israeli civilians were killed. Hamas' military wing claimed responsibility; the Palestinian Authority condemned the attack.¹



The car at the scene of the terrorist attack (Photograph by Ruby Reuven, ZAKA, August 31, 2010).

¹ Update for the weekly News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, August 24-31, 2010.

Overview

1. On the evening of August 31 a terrorist shooting attack was carried out against an Israeli vehicle near Bani Naim, southwest of Hebron. The four Israeli passengers in the vehicle were killed. **The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, issued an announcement claiming responsibility for the attack.**
2. **The heads of the Palestinian Authority condemned the attack.** Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said that the attack was contrary to the Palestinian national interest and meant to disrupt the peace process. He added that the Palestinian Authority would take all the necessary steps to prevent such events. A spokesman for the American State Department said that the United States was aware of the negative influence of the attack on the peace process and that such attacks were carried out to sabotage it.
3. It was not the first shooting attack on Route 60, which joins Jerusalem and Hebron with Beersheba, this year. On the morning of June 14, 2010 a police car going from Beersheba to Jerusalem was attacked. The four passengers, all of them Israeli policemen, were wounded; one of them died. On June 22 the Israeli security forces detained the Hamas squad which had carried out the attack.
4. **The August 31 attack was carried out on the eve of the opening of the summit meeting in Washington, whose objective is to relaunch the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.** Before Mahmoud Abbas left for the talks, senior Hamas figures, including Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniya, strongly condemned the Palestinian Authority and represented the direct negotiations as having no legitimacy and having been forced on the PA by the United States. Hamas called on the residents of Judea and Samaria to rebel against the PA, stressing Hamas' commitment to terrorism ("resistance") as the means to establish the Palestinian state, which would extend from "the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river" (Al-Aqsa TV, Safa News Agency, Hamas' Palestine-info website, August 26, 2010).

The shooting attack

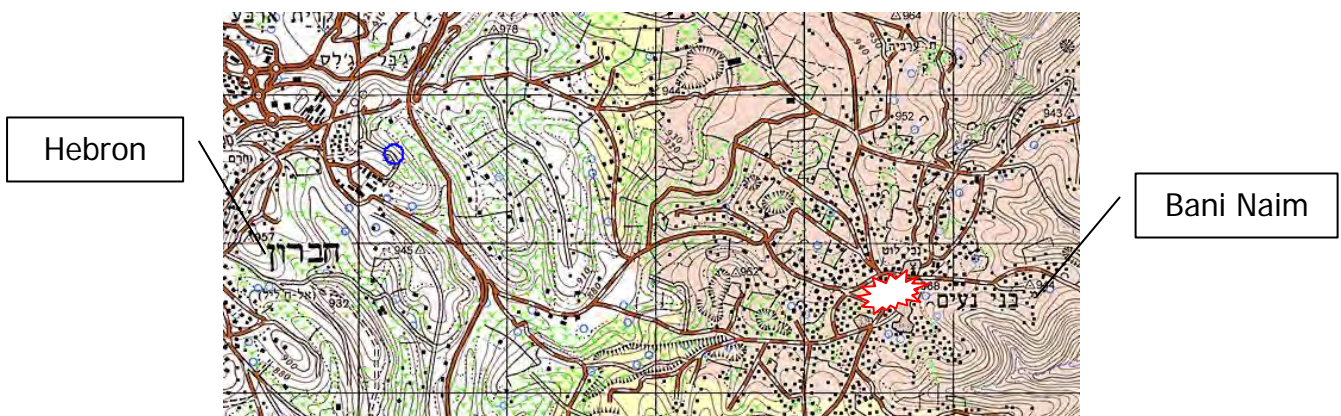


The car at the scene of the terrorist attack (Photograph by Ruby Reuven, ZAKA, August 31, 2010).

5. On August 31 at 19:30 hours an attack was carried out against an Israeli vehicle driving along the road southeast of Hebron. It was apparently a drive-by shooting. The four passengers were sprayed with bullets and **dozens of cartridge casings** were found in the area. They were shot at close range and according to the Israeli media, the terrorist ascertain their deaths by shooting them again. The attackers fled the scene. The Israeli security forces who arrived on the scene set up road blocks and searched the area to locate the terrorists who carried out the attack.

6. The gunfire killed all four Israeli passengers. They are:

- A. Talia and Yitzhak Ames, residents of Beit Hagai, parents of six children.
- B. Cochava Even-Haim, a resident of Efrat, married, mother of one.
- C. Avishai Schindler, a resident of Beit Hagai, married.



The area where the attack took place.

Hamas claims responsibility for the terrorist attack

7. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, issued a statement claiming responsibility for the attack. According to the statement, the "Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades bear full responsibility for the heroic operation in Hebron." It also said it was **one in a series of responses to "the crimes of the occupation" and against those who were "led astray by the illusion of negotiations"** (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, August 31, 2010).

8. In an interview after the attack, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida confirmed that the Brigades were responsible. He said that it was **one in "a series of actions" carried out in response to the "crimes of the occupation" against the residents of Judea and Samaria and the Muslim holy places, and that more attacks would follow.** He also said that the "action" sent a message to the Palestinian Authority that security coordination with Israel was not to its advantage, and that the "natural choice" was "jihad and resistance" [i.e., terrorism] (Al-Aqsa TV, August 31, 2010).

<p>Ezzedeem Al-Qassam Brigades Military Wing of Hamas Movement information Office</p>		<p>كتائب الشهيد عز الدين القسام الجناح العسكري لحركة حماس المكتب الإعلامي</p>
1008-03	2010-08-31	
<p>{أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ} بيان عسكري صادر عن : ... :: كتائب الشهيد عز الدين القسام :: ...</p> <p>عملية "سيل النار" ..كتائب القسام تثبى عملية اخليل البطولية وتؤكد بأنها حلقة من سلسلة ردود على جرائم الاحتلال ويتواصل العطاء القسامي مع نفحات أيام شهر البطولات والانتصارات، ويأبى القساميون الأفضاذ إلا أن يحضوا على درب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم والصحابة والتابعين فيسطروا أسمي آيات البطولة، ويجعلوا شهر رمضان شهر عزة وكرامة لشعبنا الفلسطيني ولأمتنا العربية والإسلامية، يحضون على ذات الدرب غير آبهين بالملاحقة والاعتقالات والاختيالات، ورغم ضراوة المعجزة على المجاهدين في الضفة الغربية المحتلة من قبل الاحتلال وأعوانه من اللاهثين خلف سراب المفاوضات العيشية، يبقى أبطال القسام يقودون دفة الجهاد والمقاومة في كل مرحلة وفي كل ميدان، وتبقى خليل الرحمن في كل مرحلة محضن القساميين، وعاصمة الثأر والانتقام، وعنوان الرد المزلزل الذي لطالما أرق قادة الاحتلال ومغتصبيه، التي لن يتوقف جهادها ولن تصدأ بنادق مجاهديها حتى يندحر آخر مغتصب صهيوني عن أرض فلسطين الحبية.</p>		

A section of the announcement claiming responsibility for the attack, posted on the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website (August 31, 2010).

First reactions to the terrorist attack

Palestinian Authority

9. **The heads of the Palestinian Authority condemned the attack**, saying that its objective was to disrupt the peace process:

A. **Salam Fayyad**, Palestinian prime minister, said in a statement that the attack was contrary to the Palestinian national interest and meant to disrupt the peace process. He said that although the attack had been carried out in a region not subject to Palestinian security responsibility, the Palestinian Authority would take every step to prevent other such attacks. He called not to be drawn into a cycle of violence (Wafa News Agency, August 31, 2010).

B. **Mahmoud Abbas**, currently in Washington, said that he was opposed to attacks on civilians, both Palestinian and Israeli (Wafa News Agency, August 31, 2010).

10. On the ground, according to the Israeli media, the Palestinian security forces initiated an investigation and are trying to locate those responsible for the attack. Dozens of Hamas activists have been detained for interrogation (Ynet, September 1, 2010).

The United States and the international community

11. The White House issued a statement condemning "in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack today perpetrated by Hamas in which four Israelis were killed the terrorist attack carried out by Hamas...On the eve of the re-launch of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, this brutal attack underscores how far the enemies of peace will go to try to block progress. It is crucial that the parties persevere, keep moving forward even through difficult times, and continue working to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region that provides security for all peoples" (White House website, August 31, 2010).²

12. Robert Serry, special UN coordinator for the Middle East, condemned the terrorist attack and said he was "shocked" by it and called "for those responsible to be brought to justice." He urged all sides "not to allow the enemies of peace to affect the negotiations about to be launched..." (UN website, August 31, 2010).³

² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/08/31/statement-press-secretary-todays-attack-southern-west-bank>

³ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35787&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>