



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

July 18-24, 2012



The Hezbollah terrorist attack in Bulgaria: Remains of the bus at the Burgas airport (ZAKA spokesman, July 19, 2012).

Overview

- This past week terrorist events focused on the Hezbollah bombing of a bus full of Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria, part of a global terrorist campaign being waged against Israel by Iran and Hezbollah. Five Israeli citizens, one Bulgarian and the bomber were killed in the blast. It was the first "successful" terrorist attack Hezbollah and Iran had managed to carry out after a series of failures.
- This past week there was also a terrorist attack along the Israeli-Egyptian border. Shots were fired at a bus carrying IDF soldiers in the region of Ein Netafim. There were no casualties.
- Sporadic rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory continued. This past week three rocket hits were identified in Israel's south.

Deadly Attack on Israeli Tourists in Bulgaria – Initial Report

Overview

- At around 1730 hours on July 18 there was an explosion at the Burgas airport aboard a bus about to carry newly-landed Israeli tourists to their hotel, the second of four buses. **The explosion killed five Israeli citizens and one Bulgarian, the bus driver.** The bomber who blew up the bus was also killed. **Thirty-six Israelis were wounded, three of them seriously.**
- **It was the most recent in the series of terrorist attacks and attempted attacks against Israeli tourists and official Israeli representatives carried out in last year (in Turkey, India, Thailand, Kenya, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Cyprus). All signs indicate that it was another terrorist attack in the campaign being waged by Iran and its proxy, Hezbollah.**



The burned-out bus at the airport in Burgas, Bulgaria (ZAKA spokesman, July 19, 2012).

- Israeli spokesmen, among them Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have stated that **Israel has firm intelligence proving that Hezbollah carried out the terrorist attack in Burgas** (according to the prime minister, interviewed by Fox News on July 22, it is "absolutely rock-solid intelligence"). **Note:** A Hezbollah terrorist operative was recently detained in Cyprus. He had been collecting intelligence about Israeli tourist venues. In addition, **Hezbollah participated in other terrorist attacks** as part of the Iranian terrorist campaign against Israel.
- The remains of the terrorist operative were found near the bus. So far it is unclear whether he planned to blow himself up near the bus or planned to put the bomb into

the bus' baggage compartment and it detonated prematurely. There is also the theoretical possibility that the terrorist was a dupe and blown up by remote control by another terrorist operative.

■ According to the Bulgarian minister of the interior, the bomber was carrying an estimated three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of explosives (Agence France-Presse, July 20, 2012). At the scene of the explosion a driver's license belonging to an American citizen was found. Senior American sources reported that no such license could be found in the data banks in the United States (AP, July 19, 2012). The Bulgarian authorities are of the opinion that he had not been working alone and that **at least one other person had provided him with logistic support**. It was that person, according to the Bulgarian authorities, who had tried to rent a car in the port city of Varna (AP, July 19, 2012).

The Victims of the Attack

■ Five Israeli citizens and the Bulgarian bus driver were killed in the attack. The Israelis were:

- **Amir Menashe**, 27, from Petah Tikvah, married, father of ten month-old boy.
 - **Yitzhak Kolangi**, 28, from Petah Tikvah, married, father of a four month-old girl. His wife was also injured in the explosion.
 - **Maor Harush**, 26, from Acre.
 - **Kochava Shriki**, 44, from Rishon Lezion, married, pregnant
 - **Elior Preis**, 26, from Acre.
- The Bulgarian bus driver was **Mustafa Kyosev**, 36, married and father of two.

The Victims (Pictures from the Israeli Foreign Ministry website, July 19, 2012)



Amir Menashe



Yitzhak Kolangi



Maor Harush



Kochava Shriki



Elior Price

Israel Sends Medical Assistance

- As soon as news of the attack reached Israel, Israeli Chief of Staff Benny Gantz ordered the IDF to organize a medical delegation, which would be flown to Bulgaria on transport planes. Their mission was to evacuate the wounded to Israel as rapidly as possible and bring back the bodies of the murdered victims (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2012). In addition, Israel sent medical teams and experts in identifying the remains of bodies.
- On July 19 two Israeli Air Force planes took off from Bulgaria for Israel carrying the wounded Israelis accompanied by doctors and soldiers from the IAF's Rescue and Evacuation Unit. One plane took off from Burgas with 33 wounded and the other from the capital city of Sofia with three critically wounded Israelis who had been evacuated to hospitals there. A third plane carried the victims' coffins (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2012).



Israeli medical assistance delegations in action in Bulgaria (IDF Spokesman, July 18, 2012).

Initial Reactions to the Terrorist Attack in Bulgaria

- Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said "**All signs point toward Iran**. Over the past few months we have seen Iran's attempts to attack Israelis in Thailand, India, Cyprus and other countries...**This is a global Iranian terror onslaught** and Israel will react firmly to it." The prime minister sent his condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery to the wounded (Prime Minister's website, July 18, 2012).
- In the international arena the attack was strongly condemned but official reactions did not mention Iran or Hezbollah:
 - The **UN Security Council** condemned the attack in a press release and "underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of this reprehensible act of terrorism to justice, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in this regard."¹
 - **American President Obama** said, "I strongly condemn today's barbaric terrorist attack on Israelis in Bulgaria. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of those killed and injured, and with the people of Israel, Bulgaria, and any other nation whose citizens were harmed in this awful event. These attacks against innocent civilians, including children, are completely outrageous. The United States will stand with our allies, and provide whatever assistance is necessary to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of this attack."

¹ <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10717.doc.htm>

Important Terrorism Events Israel's South

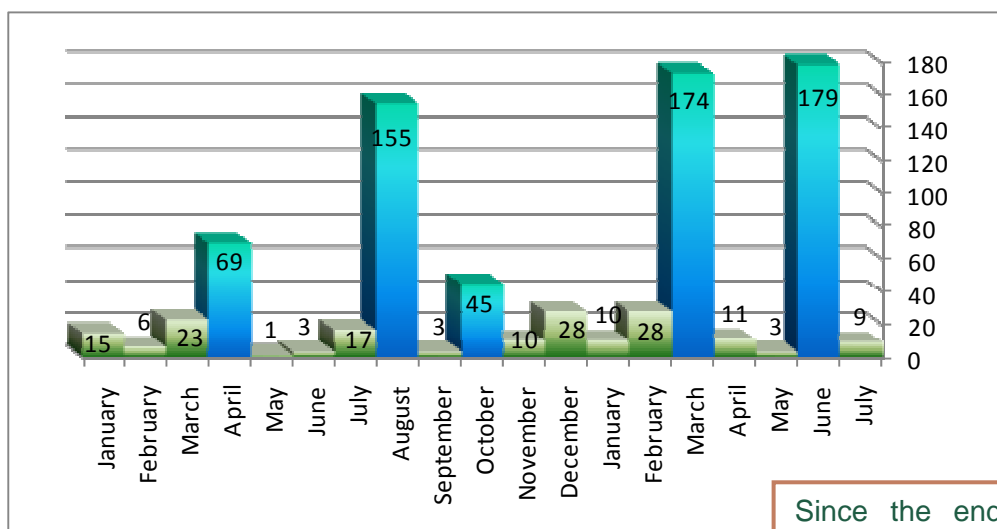
IDF Bus Shot At near the Israeli-Egyptian Border

■ On the afternoon of July 22 shots were fired at a bus carrying IDF soldiers. The attack occurred in the Ein Netafim region near the Israeli-Egyptian border. There were no casualties but the bus was damaged. IDF forces were brought to the site and conducted a search (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2012). **Note:** On June 18, 2012, a squad of three terrorist operatives carried out a similar attack, killing an Israeli civilian. The events again illustrate that the **Sinai Peninsula has become an arena for launching terrorist attacks against Israel.**

Rocket Fire

■ This past week **three rocket hits were identified in Israel's south.** They fell in open areas; there were no casualties and no damage was done.

Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory Since the Beginning of 2011²



Since the beginning of 2011, 793 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 508 since the beginning of 2012.

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,054 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

- **Note:** 162 of the rockets which landed in Israeli territory in June were fired during the round of escalation.

² As of July 24, 2012.

Judea and Samaria

Easing Conditions for Judea and Samaria Residents for Ramadan

■ In view of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (July 19 to August 22), a number of steps have been authorized to ease conditions for the residents of Judea and Samaria (Website of the Coordinator for government activities in the territories, July 18 2012):

- **Roadblocks:** A number of roadblocks in Jericho and northern Samaria will be removed and checkpoints in the Jerusalem and Jenin districts will be open longer. The roadblock at the entrance to Ramallah will be open 24 hours a day.
- **Going abroad:** Restrictions will be eased for VIPs and businessmen flying out of Israel through Ben-Gurion International Airport.
- **Prayers and family visits:** Men and women over the age of 40 wishing to pray in Jerusalem will not need special authorization. Authorization will be given to 5,000 worshippers a day to attend prayers on the Temple Mount and visit friends during the holiday.

Events on the Ground

■ This week as well there were riots at the traditional friction points in Judea and Samaria, especially the villages of Bila'in, Nili'in and Nebi Saleh. Rioters threw stones at the IDF forces, who in certain instances used riot control equipment to disperse the demonstrators. In addition, in some cases stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli civilian and security vehicles.

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

Attacks on Christians in the Gaza Strip

■ **Alexios**, Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox church in the Gaza Strip, accused a Muslim group headed by Salem Salameh, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and chairman of the Palestinian council of religious sages, of **kidnapping young Christians and forcing them to convert to Islam**. Dozens of Christians staged a sit-down strike at the Orthodox church in Gaza in protest (Al-Ayam, July 17, 2012).

■ **Ayman al-Batniji**, spokesman for the Hamas police, denied that Christians were being kidnapped in the Gaza Strip and said there had been a fight in one of the Christian families and that the police had intervened. He also appealed to the

Christians not to damage their relations with the Muslims in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an News Agency, July 17, 2012).

■ Since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, there had been an increase in the number of attacks on Christians and Christian institutions, although in the past few years no serious events occurred.³

The IHH Finances a Mass Wedding for Palestinian Islamic Jihad Operatives

■ On July 17 the **Palestinian Islamic Jihad** held a wedding for 50 couples in the Gaza Strip. The event was financed by the Islamist Turkish IHH and a Yemeni welfare organization. It was attended by senior PIJ figures as well as Muhammed Kaya, the IHH representative in the Gaza Strip. After the ceremony each couple was awarded \$1000 (Paltoday website, July 17, 2012).



Mass PIJ wedding financed by the Turkish IHH, whose logo appears at the right. The flags bear the Turkish crescent (Picture from the Paltoday website, July 17, 2012).

End of Camp Party for Scouts in the Gaza Strip

■ This year, as in the past, terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip exploited summer camps to **give the children of the Gaza Strip paramilitary training and brainwash them with radical Islamic doctrines**. At the end of camp party at a scouts' summer camp in the Gaza Strip the children **wore uniforms**, held training exercises and stood at attention in military formation (PALDF forum website, July 22, 2012).

³ For further information see the June 2, 2008 bulletin "An increase in attacks on Christian and institutions identified with the West in the Gaza Strip."



Children at Hamas summer camps undergo paramilitary training (Pictures from the PALDF website, July 22, 2012).

Palestinian Meetings with Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi

Mahmoud Abbas Meets with Mohamed Morsi

- **Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas met for the first time with Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.** He congratulated the new president on his election victory and said that the Palestinians regarded relations with Egypt as deeply strategic, and that they had to be preserved and fostered. He also said the Palestinians regarded negotiations as the only way to achieve peace in the region. He stressed the importance of implementing the internal Palestinian reconciliation by means of elections (Ma'an News Agency, July 19, 2012).
- **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and head of its delegation to the reconciliation talks, said that **the Egyptian president had told Mahmoud Abbas that he would maintain neutrality during the internal Palestinian reconciliation** (PalPress website, July 19, 2012). Mahmoud Abbas emphasized that he had not asked Mohamed Morsi to exert pressure of Hamas regarding the reconciliation (Ma'an News Agency, July 19, 2012).

Hamas Meets with Mohamed Morsi

- On July 19, immediately after meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, Mohamed Morsi met with **a Hamas delegation headed by Khaled Mashaal**. Also present at the meeting was **Musa Abu Marzouk**, deputy chairman of Hamas' Executive Committee, and other senior figures. The main issue discussed was the internal Palestinian reconciliation

between Fatah and Hamas. The situation in the Gaza Strip was also discussed, with an emphasis on the energy crisis and Hamas' expectations that restrictions concerning the Rafah crossing would be abolished (Egyptian satellite television and Al-Quds TV, July 19, 2012).

Ismail Haniya Expects to Meet with Mohamed Morsi

■ **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, announced that he expected to meet with Mohamed Morsi in the coming days. He said he had received an official invitation from the president's office (Al-Hayat, July 19, 2012).



Khaled Mashaal and the Hamas delegation meet with new Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi (Pictures from the Hamasinfo.net website, July 10, 2012).

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad

The PIJ Leadership Leaves Syria

■ "Palestinian sources" reported that after many years of using Syria as its central base, the PIJ's leadership had left the country. According to the sources, **Ramadan Shalah**, the secretary general of the organization, and Ziyad Nahleh, his deputy for the past several weeks, were no longer in Syria. However, the sources said that relations between the PIJ and the Syrian regime remained good. That was in contrast to Hamas, whose relations with the Syrian leadership have become strained because of the organization's implied criticism of the Syrian regime.

■ Sources within the PIJ were quick to respond that the organization was not leaving

Syria, but that the two had left to "deal with external matters" because the situation in Damascus made it impossible for the organization to operate from there (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, July 21, 2012).