



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

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**A suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv
was prevented by the detention of a
 Hamas operative which led to the
discovery of an explosive belt hidden in
the southern part of the city. Its
existence was revealed by an intensive
security forces operation in Nablus.**



**The building in south Tel Aviv where the explosive belt
was found (Photo: Yuval Er'el, the Israeli Police).**

Overview¹

1. A suicide bombing attack planned for Tel Aviv was recently prevented by the Israeli security forces (Israeli Security Agency, the IDF and the Israeli Police). It was prevented when a Nablus resident working in Tel Aviv was detained. His interrogation provided information which led the security forces to an **explosive belt** weighing 10 kilograms (22 lbs) hidden in an apartment in the south Tel Aviv. The belt was discovered on Yom Kippur (September 22) and detonated in a controlled explosion.

2. The discovery was the outcome of a intensive counterterrorist operation carried out by the security forces during the three days before Yom Kippur (September 18-21) in the Ein Beit Alma' refugee camp on the outskirts of Nablus. During the operation First Sergeant Ben-Zion Henman of the paratroopers reconnaissance unit was killed and four other soldiers were wounded. Dozens of terrorist operatives were detained, **most of them belonging to Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.**



Sergeant Ben-Zion Henman, who was killed, on his way to the operation, photographed by an IDF cameraman (Photo courtesy of the IDF Spokesman, September 20).

¹ This document is based on Israeli Security Agency and IDF Spokesman reports.

3. A **combined Hamas-PFLP squad** from the Ein Beit Alma' camp was responsible for the planned suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv. The facts revealed illustrate that the terrorist organization networks in Samaria (especially **Nablus, which is a hotbed of terrorist activity**) continue their efforts to carry out mass-casualty suicide bombing attacks in Israel.²

Description of the Events

4. During a September 18-21 operation, whose objective to expose terrorist networks in the Ein Beit Alma' refugee camp in Nablus, the **security forces detained 49 terrorist operatives**, among them high-ranking operatives belonging to Hamas and the PFLP. The operation came after warnings had been received that the terrorist organizations in Nablus, **especially Hamas**, were planning to carry out terrorist attacks within Israel.

5. On the morning of Friday, September 21, the security forces detained **Nihad Rashid Hassan Shkirat**, a high-ranking member of the Hamas terrorist network in the refugee camp, who was hiding in a residential building. **During interrogation he revealed that he had given an explosive belt to Mahdi Aashour, who worked in Tel Aviv and who sometimes stayed at an apartment in the southern part of the city.** Mahdi Aashour was then interrogated, and led the security forces to where the explosive belt was hidden.

² For further information about prevented suicide bombing attacks, see our January 7, 2007 Bulletin entitled "The arrest of Fatah Tanzim operatives in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus, one of the major hotspots of terrorism in Judea and Samaria, prevented a suicide bombing attack in Israel," at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ct_fatah_e.pdf. Also see April 11, 2007, "Interrogations of Hamas terrorists detained in Qalqilya revealed that the organization's infrastructure there has been planning mass attacks against Israel," at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_qalqilya0407.pdf.



Left: Cabinet in the apartment's kitchen. Right: Arms store and weapons laboratory found behind the cabinet (Photo courtesy of the IDF Spokesman, September 21, 2007).

8. During the operation the security forces killed two armed terrorist operatives, including the one who shot and killed First Sergeant Ben-Zion Henman. Three explosive charges were used to attack the security forces operating in the Ein Beit Alma' refugee camp. There were also many exchanges of fire between the security forces and terrorist operatives.

Nablus as a Focal Point for Terrorist Activity

9. It should be noted that for a long time **Nablus**, especially its refugee camps, has been the **most prominent terrorist center** in Judea and Samaria. To prevent terrorist attacks originating there from being carried out, the Israeli security forces maintain intensive counterterrorist activity and, during the past months, have uncovered large quantities of weapons and detained dozens of wanted Palestinians, among them high-ranking terrorist operatives. The security force operations have prevented terrorist attacks, including suicide bombing attacks, from being carried out within Israel.

10. According to data provided by the IDF Spokesman, since January 2007 there were **123 shooting incidents** between terrorist operatives and the IDF forces operating in Nablus. Some of the more important counterterrorist activities since the beginning of the year were the following:

1) **February 2007:** during a security force operation five laboratories for the manufacture of weapons, a LAU missile, many pipe charges and materials for the production of explosive devices were found. During the operation three IDF soldiers were wounded, one seriously and two slightly.

2) **March 2007:** a broad security force operation was carried out during which 18 wanted terrorist operatives who were hiding in military intelligence headquarters in Nablus were detained. During the same month Muhammad Qatanah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad head in Nablus, was also detained.

3) **June 2007:** the security forces detained three terrorist operatives belonging to Fatah and the PFLP in the Ein Beit Alma' refugee camp in Nablus. One of them was an explosives expert who had been involved in planning attacks and manufacturing explosive devices and belts.