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Two Israelis arrested for allegedly selling sensitive information to foreign agent

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Trump Florida home under FBI raid; dozens of boxes taken by agents

08.17.22

Two Israelis arrested for allegedly selling sensitive information to foreign agent

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Two Israelis arrested for allegedly selling sensitive information to foreign agent

Suspects arrested on suspicion of gathering information about security facility where one of them works and handing documents over to foreign agent in Egypt; two released to house arrest

Haim Goldich | Published: 08.17.22, 23:30

Israel Police arrested two men early last week for allegedly selling information about a sensitive security facility in central Israel to a foreign agent, Ynet learned on Wednesday.

The suspects, two relatives in their 20s from northern Israel and a town near Jerusalem, are said to have collected information about the facility where one of them worked and conveyed it to foreign actors.

The two are suspected of a laundry list of offenses - national security, collecting and possessing classified information, making contact and passing information concerning national security to a foreign agent, conspiracy, making threats and assault causing grievous bodily harm.

According to the suspicion, one of the suspects gathered information about the facility when he worked there seven years ago, and his relative helped him store the material for him.

The material was then handed over to the relative's 14-year-old sister so she would keep it. She handed the material to a friend, who was asked to return the same material to the suspect who did not work at the facility.

After the girl failed to return the materials in a timely manner, the suspects allegedly conspired together and attacked her during a school trip to northern Israel.

Several weeks ago, the relative drove toward the Egyptian border with the materials from the facility in his possession.

After crossing the border to Sinai, the suspect handed the documents over to a foreign agent.

The suspect's parents contacted the police after they were unable to reach him. Law enforcement discovered that he had crossed into Sinai without notifying anyone.

The two suspects were arrested early last week, and their remand was extended several times. They were released on parole to house arrest earlier this week.

The names of the suspects, details about the security facility and the contractor company that employed the suspect at the facility remain under a gag order according to the decision of the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court for national security concerns.

Attorney Yehuda Shoshan, who represents one of the suspects, called the case a "purely coincidental sequence of events" that Israel Police made a movie out of, which could be a comedy at most and has no connection to the suspicions."

Shoshan further stated that his client has no previous criminal record and denied he ever received or handed over any classified information.

08.17.22

Abbas walks back Holocaust remarks & Knesset eyes Gantz frequent favors

08.17.22

Abbas walks back Holocaust remarks after pressure from Israel

PA president says Holocaust is 'the most heinous crime in modern human history,' and he had no intention to deny the genocide; clarification allegedly made after correspondence with Gantz and his office

Itamar Eichner, Liad Osmo | Published: 08.17.22, 13:32

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday walked back his statements made earlier that Israel committed "50 Holocausts" in response to a question about the upcoming 50th anniversary of the attack on the Israeli team at the Munich Olympics.

Abbas's remarks, made in Berlin during a press conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, drew strong condemnation by leaders across Israel's political spectrum.

"The Holocaust is the most heinous crime in modern human history.," he said in the written statement, adding he did not intend to deny "the singularity of the Holocaust that occurred in the last century, and condemning it in the strongest terms."

According to the clarification statement, "the crimes Abbas spoke of were the massacres perpetrated against the Palestinian people since the destruction of Palestinian society and homeland in 1948, and the permanent displacement of a majority of the Palestinian Arabs by Israeli security forces."

The clarification was published by Abbas himself, and not by his office - as is usually the case - and appeared in Palestinian Authority-run news outlets.

The clarification was allegedly issued following heavy pressure from Israel. Ynet learned that Defense Minister Benny Gantz's office contacted Abbas, and made it clear that his statements were unacceptable - demanding him to renounce his words.

Gantz also received harsh criticism from his Knesset colleagues over frequently meeting with Abbas to discuss security concerns.

In response, Gantz said: "Whoever does not send soldiers off to battle, and whoever does not show responsibility for the lives of Israeli citizens and IDF soldiers - better not criticize meetings that prevented, and continue to prevent, the next war and bring stability and freedom upon us.

"Whoever wants to turn away and ignore the complicated security situation - is unfit to lead the State of Israel."

08.16.22

Hamas blames Israel; 200 PA rockets fell short & killed 5 minors in Gaza

08.16.22

Reports: Israel carried out Gaza strike that killed 5 minors

Regardless of scant evidence provided from Gaza, several reports pin blame for strike on IDF rather than Palestinian misfire despite not bear tell-tale signs of Israeli attack

Associated Press| Published: 08.16.22, 23:04

A Palestinian human rights group and an Israeli newspaper reported Tuesday that an explosion in a cemetery that killed five Palestinian children during the latest flare-up in Gaza was caused by an Israeli airstrike and not an errant Palestinian rocket.

It was one of a number of blasts during the fighting that did not bear the tell-tale signs of an Israeli F-16 or drone strike, and which the Israeli military said might have been caused by rockets misfired by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group.

The five children, aged 4 to 16 years old, had gathered in the local cemetery, one of the few open spaces in the crowded Jebaliya refugee camp, on Aug. 7, hours before an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire ended three days of heavy fighting.

Residents said a projectile fell from the air and exploded in the cemetery. Upon visiting the site, none of the usual signs were present of an airstrike by an Israeli F-16 or drone, adding to suspicions that the blast was caused by an errant rocket. Both the Israeli military and Palestinian rights groups said at the time that they were still investigating the blast.

On Tuesday, the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights said its investigation of shrapnel and other evidence led it to conclude that the blast was caused by an Israeli airstrike.

"This was a missile fired from an Israeli aircraft," said Raja Sourani, the director of the group, as he displayed pictures of what he said was a fragment showing the missile's serial number.

Israel's Haaretz newspaper meanwhile cited unnamed Israeli defense officials as saying the military's investigation had concluded that the five were killed by an Israeli strike. Asked about the Haaretz story, the military said it was still examining the event. It said that throughout the latest round of fighting, it had targeted militant infrastructure and "made every feasible effort to minimize, as much as possible, harm to civilians and civilian property."

At a sit-in held by family members at the site of the explosion on Tuesday, Sahar Nijm said the loss of her son Mohammed was made even more painful by the suggestion he was killed by a Palestinian rocket.

"We always heard about other massacres, but when it happens to you, you really feel the oppression," she said. "Especially when (Israel) denies this in order to portray us as oppressors and terrorists before the international community."

Diana Nijm said her son Hamid was desperate to go outside after sheltering indoors for the first two days of fighting. She said he and the other children went to the cemetery because it was the only open space in the neighborhood where they could play.

"This is the cruelest crime in the world," she said. "This is deliberate. They want to uproot us."

The latest fighting in Gaza began with a wave of Israeli airstrikes on Aug. 5 that killed a senior Islamic Jihad commander as well as several civilians. Israel said it was responding to an imminent threat days after the arrest of a senior Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank.

Over the next three days, Israel carried out dozens of airstrikes across the narrow, crowded coastal strip. Islamic Jihad fired some 1,100 rockets at Israel, around 200 of which fell short and landed inside Gaza, according to the Israeli military.

Hamas, a larger and more militarily advanced group that has ruled Gaza since 2007, sat out this round of fighting. apparently in order to maintain understandings with Israel that have led to an easing of a blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt after it seized power. Israel and Hamas have fought four wars and several smaller skirmishes over the last 15 years.

A total of 49 Palestinians were killed in the latest fighting, including 17 children. Palestinian rights groups say at least 36 were killed in Israeli airstrikes, with investigations still underway into the deaths of 13 others. No Israelis were killed or seriously wounded.

The Israeli military said early estimates showed that at least 20 of those killed were militants, and that 14 people were killed by errant Islamic Jihad rocket fire. That count did not include the five killed in the Jebaliya cemetery.

The day before the blast at the cemetery, seven people were killed by an explosion on a busy street elsewhere in Jebaliya. The Israeli military blamed it on a rocket misfire by Islamic Jihad, saying the army had not carried out any strikes in the area at that time. The military later released video that appeared to show a militant rocket falling short. Video footage of the aftermath of that blast showed what appeared to be a rocket casing sticking out of the ground. Upon reaching the site, visitors saw that the casing was gone and the hole had been filled in. Palestinians are usually keen to display evidence of Israeli airstrikes to international media.

Palestinians with direct knowledge of the suspicious incidents have been reluctant to speak on record. The Hamas-run Interior Ministry directed journalists not to report on rocket misfires in media guidelines that were rescinded after an outcry by foreign media outlets.

Many Palestinians view Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other militant groups as freedom fighters resisting decades of Israeli military rule, and believe that criticism of such groups undermines the struggle for independence. Israel and Western countries consider them terrorist organizations because they have carried out scores of deadly attacks on Israeli civilians.

The four Gaza wars have killed more than 4,000 Palestinians, the vast majority of whom died in Israeli strikes. More than half were civilians, according to the U.N. Over 100 people have been killed on the Israeli side, including civilians, soldiers and foreign residents.

08.16.22

In Berlin, Abbas had no regret for Munich attack by PA at the Munich Olympics

08.16.22

Abbas skirts apology for Munich attack, blames Israel for 'Holocausts'

Standing next to German chancellor Scholz during Berlin visit, Palestinian leader lashes out and cites '50 slaughters that Israel committed' when asked to apologize for massacre of Israeli athletes by Palestinian militant half a century ago

Associated Press| Published: 08.16.22, 22:33

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas expressed no regret Tuesday for the deadly attack by Palestinian militants against Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics half a century ago, countering that Israel had committed "Holocausts" against Palestinians over the years.

Eleven Israeli athletes and a German police officer died after members of the Palestinian militant group Black September took hostages at the Olympic Village on Sept. 5, 1972. At the time of the attack, the group was linked to Abbas' Fatah party.

Asked whether as Palestinian leader he planned to apologize to Israel and Germany for the attack ahead of the 50th anniversary next month, Abbas responded instead by citing allegations of atrocities committed by Israel since 1947.

"If we want to go over the past, go ahead," Abbas told reporters after a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin. "I have 50 slaughters that Israel committed." Standing next to Scholz, Abbas explicitly used the word "Holocausts" in his reply, drawing a grimace from the German chancellor. Germany has long argued the term should only be used to describe the Nazis' singular crime of killing six million Jews before and during World War II.

While Scholz did not publicly rebuke Abbas for using the term "Holocaust," he earlier rejected the Palestinian leader's description of Israel's treatment of Palestinians as "apartheid." Scholz also said he did not believe the time had come to recognize Palestinian statehood, which Abbas repeatedly called for.

The Palestinian president did say he was committed to building trust and achieving a peaceful solution to the conflict with Israel.

"Please come to peace," he said. "Please come to security, let's build trust between us and you. This is better than other kinds of talking."

Weeks before a planned somber commemoration marking the 50th anniversary of the Munich attack, Germany has also found itself embroiled in controversy in its dealings with the relatives of the Israelis who were killed.

House where eleven members of the Israeli Olympic team were kidnapped and then killed by the radical Palestinian group Black September

Victims' families announced last week that they planned to boycott the ceremony after failing to reach an agreement on bigger compensation from the German government.

Relatives of the athletes have long accused Germany of failing to secure the Olympic Village, refusing Israeli help and botching a rescue operation in which five of the attackers also died.

08.14.22

Israel week on record with 19 road deaths; bus drivers longer hours, less rest

08.14.22

Israel sees one of deadliest weeks on record with 19 road deaths

Critics lament underfunding for traffic police, poor working conditions for bus drivers and sidelining of important reforms after 365 Israelis killed on the road over the past year
Udi Etzion| Published: 08.14.22, 12:27

Israel saw one of its deadliest weeks on record after 19 people lost their lives in a series of fatal traffic accidents over the span of several days.

In the past year, 365 Israelis were killed in road accidents, averaging one fatality a day.

Fatalities included a mother and her two young children who were killed on Thursday after a bus lost control and slammed into a store in Jerusalem.

Also on Thursday, a 54-year-old woman and her seven-year-old niece, both residents of the Arab city of Qalansawe, died when a car and a truck collided at the Be'erotayim Junction along Route 57 near Netanya in central Israel.

On Wednesday, a 70-year-old pedestrian was killed by a bus in Jerusalem.

The Traffic Department of the Israel Police has come under fire over soaring death fatalities, with critics arguing the department is underfunded and ill-equipped to properly deal with the matter.

The National Road Safety Plan (Sheinin Committee) recommended as early as 2005 that at least 450 police vehicles be present on Israeli roads during the day, and 300 at night. However, the police received funding for only 150.

Critics also lamented poor working conditions for Israeli bus drivers, who are working substantially longer hours and get less rest time than their European counterparts, causing fatigue buildup that could lead to deadly errors on the road.

Transportation Minister Merav Michaeli's attempts to implement reforms to address the issue have mostly gone underfunded and sidelined due to political wrangling.

President Isaac Herzog on Saturday urged Israelis to be cautious on the road.

"The fight to eradicate traffic accidents is the fight for all our lives," he wrote on Twitter.

"I implore all of you - drive, bike and walk carefully. Safeguard yourselves, those who are close to you and all of us!"

08.09.22

Russia launched Iran satellite into space to monitor Israel & Middle East

08.09.22

Russia launches Iranian satellite into space under shadow of West's concerns

U.S. officials concerned satellite will not only help Russia in Ukraine but also provide Iran 'unprecedented capabilities' to monitor potential military targets in Israel, Middle East

Reuters| Published: 08.09.22, 12:42

A Russian rocket carrying an Iranian satellite successfully launched into space on Tuesday as Moscow and Tehran seek to build closer ties in the face of Western sanctions.

The remote sensing satellite, called "Khayyam" was launched by a Russian Soyuz rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, the home of Russian space launches located in southern Kazakhstan, at 08:52 a.m. Moscow time (0552 GMT) on Tuesday, according to a video broadcast by Russia's Roscosmos space agency on YouTube.

Tehran has rejected claims the satellite could be used by Moscow to boost its intelligence capabilities in Ukraine, saying Iran will have full control and operation over it "from day one."

The Washington Post reported last week that U.S. officials are concerned by the fledgling space cooperation between Russia and Iran, fearing the satellite will not only help Russia in Ukraine but also provide Iran "unprecedented capabilities" to monitor potential military targets in Israel and the wider Middle East.

Iran says the satellite is designed for scientific research including radiation and environmental monitoring for agricultural purposes.

Russia has sought to deepen its ties with Iran since Feb. 24, when the Kremlin ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine.

In July, President Vladimir Putin visited Iran in his first international trip outside the former Soviet Union since the start of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine.

While there, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Putin that Tehran and Moscow needed to stay vigilant against "Western deception".

Space has been one field where the United States and Russia have traditionally maintained cooperation and strong ties despite geopolitical tensions between Moscow and Washington.

Roscosmos and NASA recently inked a deal to carry each other's astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS), but Moscow has made noises about quitting the ISS at some stage in the future.

Putin recently removed the outspoken Dmitry Rogozin as head of Roscosmos, replacing him with a former defense advisor in a shake-up of the agency.

08.09.22

Trump Florida home under FBI raid; dozens of boxes taken by agents

08.09.22

Trump says Florida home under siege in FBI raid

Search by federal agents said to be linked to former president's alleged illegal removal of documents from White House when leaving office; son says Trump had cooperated with National Archive seeking records

Reuters| Published: 08.09.22, 09:52

Former President Donald Trump said his Florida home was under siege as FBI agents raided his Mar-a-Lago estate on Monday.

Agents were said to have broken into a safe in what his son acknowledged was part of an investigation into Trump's removal of official presidential records from the White House to his Florida resort.

Dozens of boxes were taken by the federal agents in the unprecedented search of a former president's home, which would mark a significant escalation into the records investigation, which is one of several probes Trump is facing from his time in office and in private business.

The U.S. Justice Department declined to comment on the search, which Trump in a statement said involved a "large group of FBI agents." The FBI's headquarters in Washington and its field office in Miami both declined comment.

Eric Trump, one of the former president's adult children, told Fox News the search concerned boxes of documents that Trump brought with him from the White House, and that his father has been cooperating with the National Archives on the matter for months.

A source familiar with the matter also confirmed the raid appeared to be tied to Trump's removal of classified records from the White House.

Trump said the estate "is currently under siege, raided, and occupied." He did not say why the raid took place.

"After working and cooperating with the relevant Government agencies, this unannounced raid on my home was not necessary or appropriate," Trump said, adding: "They even broke into my safe!"

Trump was not present at the time as he was in New York on Monday, Fox News Digital reported, publishing a photo of Trump that a Fox reporter said showed him leaving Trump Tower.

Trump, who has made his club in Palm Beach his home since leaving the White House in January 2021, has generally spent summers at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, because Mar-a-Lago typically closes for the summer.

A federal law called the U.S. Presidential Records Act requires the preservation of memos, letters, notes, emails, faxes and other written communications related to a president's official duties.

Any search of a private residence would have to be approved by a judge, after the investigating law-enforcement agency demonstrated probable cause that a search was justified.

It almost certainly would also be approved by FBI Director Christopher Wray, a Trump appointee, and his boss, Attorney General Merrick Garland, who was appointed by Trump's successor and political rival, President Joe Biden.

Democratic supporters of Biden have criticized Garland for being overly cautious in investigating Trump over his attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Biden. But Trump supporters in turn have accused the Democrats of weaponizing the federal bureaucracy to target Trump, even as Biden has taken steps to distance himself from the Justice Department.

"Make no mistake, the attorney general had to authorize this," said Phillip Halpern, a former federal prosecutor who specialized in public corruption cases, adding that Wray and a host of prosecutors would also be involved.

"This is as big a deal as you can have, and ... every single person in the chain would have had to sign off on this," Halpern said.

In February, Archivist David Ferriero told U.S. House lawmakers that the National Archives and Records Administration had been in communication with Trump throughout 2021 about the return of 15 boxes of records. He eventually returned them in January 2022.

At the time, the National Archives was still conducting an inventory, but noted some of the boxes contained items "marked as classified national security information." Trump previously confirmed that he had agreed to return certain records to the Archives, calling it "an ordinary and routine process." He also claimed the Archives "did not 'find' anything."

The Justice Department launched an early-stage investigation into Trump's removal of records to the Florida estate, a source familiar with the matter said in April. Lara Trump, the former president's daughter-in-law, said he only removed mementos that he was legally authorized to take.

"Look, my father-in-law as anybody knows who's been around him a lot loves to save things like newspaper clippings, magazine clippings, photographs, documents that he had every authority to take from the White House," Lara Trump told Fox News.

"And you know, again, he's been cooperating every single step of the way with the people that have questioned any of this."

Besides the presidential records case, Trump is under investigation on a number of other fronts, including a congressional probe into the Jan. 6, 2021, assault by Trump supporters on the U.S. Capitol and accusations that Trump tried to influence Georgia's 2020 election results.

In addition, the U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., is probing a scheme by Trump's allies to submit slates of fake electors in a failed bid to overturn the 2020 presidential election.

In an interview in July with NBC News, Garland was asked whether the Justice Department would indict Trump over the events of Jan. 6 if evidence supported such an action.

Garland replied, "We intend to hold everyone, anyone who was criminally responsible for the events surrounding Jan. 6, for any attempt to interfere with the lawful transfer of power from one administration to another, accountable. That's what we do. We don't pay any attention to other issues with respect to that."

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Ynet-News, August 11, 2022 – Friday

08.11.22 – Th- - - News Placed in August 10 spot – Wednesday
Denial over misfiring rockets; Hamas journalists not reporting PA rocket fails

08.11.22 – Th- - - News Placed in August 11 spot – Thursday
Netanyahu diehards take top spots in Likud primaries, after all votes counted

08.10.22 – We- - - News Placed in August 10 spot – Wednesday
Immigration from Russia, Ukraine jumps amid conflict, data show

08.08.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in August 08 spot – Monday
In 55 hours, 1100+ rockets, 170 targets, two senior Jihad commanders killed in Gaza

08.08.22 – Mo- - - Live Reports Placed in August 09 spot – Tuesday
Trump residence invaded by FBI with obscure warrant for documents

08.08.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in August 08 spot – Monday
IDF bulldozed homes of Elad terrorists & arrest 40 PA since start of Gaza offensive

08.07.22 – Su- - - News Placed in August 07 spot – Sunday
Palestinians fire over 50 rockets on Tel Aviv just minutes before a cease fire

08.06.22 – Sa- - - News Placed in August 06 spot – Saturday
Sirens blare in Tel Aviv as Gaza militants launch more than 350 rockets

08.04.22 – Th- - - News Placed in August 05 spot – Friday
Israel border closure may force Gaza power plant shut with 3-day fuel supply from Egypt

08.04.22 – Th- - - News Placed in August 04 spot – Thursday
Lapid increases IDF troops, & road closures will remain as is needed on Gaza border

08.03.22 – We- - - News – Wednesday
Security blocks on Gaza border to stay as Egypt mediates Gaza restraints