

News Headlines

08.06.19 West Bank students instructed by Hamas, building explosives, hidden in Hebron homes

08.04.19 Texas & Ohio young public shooters fill the news headlines

08.01.19 Dutch parliament approves limited ban on face-covering clothing

07.31.19 Trump renewed five sanction waivers on Iran which can be revoked at any time

08.06.19 West Bank students instructed by Hamas, building explosives, hidden in Hebron homes

Shin Bet uncovers Hamas terror plot in the West Bank

Hamas cells in the West Bank were receiving their instructions directly from the military wing of the terror group in the Gaza strip and were told to procure weapons, train for attacks and kidnappings and recruit more operatives

Yoav Zitun|Published: 08.06.19 , 16:55

An explosive device prepared for use was found by the Shin Bet, IDF and police forces in Hebron inside a makeshift lab where it was made.

According to an official announcement Tuesday the device was to be detonated in Jerusalem.

According to the Shin Bet, a number of Hamas terror cells were uncovered in the West Bank all receiving instruction from Hamas in Gaza.

The cells had planned terror attacks against Israeli as well as Palestinian Authority targets.

The operatives in the West Bank were instructed to purchase lethal weapons, train for attacks including kidnapping, stabbing and shooting and recruit fighters for future operations.

The explosive device uncovered, was made by a cell receiving direct orders from the military wing of Hamas in Gaza

According to the Shin Bet, on June 29, 2019, security forces arrested 22-year old student who was recruited to build explosive devices for use by Hamas operatives. He enlisted the help of other students who were tasked with procurement of the needed ingredients to make bombs.

The explosive devices were hidden inside homes in the Hebron area placing the families in those homes at great risk.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reacting to the news released the following statement: "I commend the ISA, IDF and Israel Police forces for the operational-intelligence effort that led to the thwarting of a terrorist attack that Hamas planned to carry out on our territory".

08.04.19 Texas & Ohio young public shooters fill the news headlines

Suspected white supremacist kills at least 20 at Texas shopping center

Dozens more were left wounded when a 21-year-old man armed with a rifle opened fire outside the Walmart in the largely Latino city of El Paso; police say the suspect left a manifesto rallying against 'Hispanic invasion' of Texas

Reuters|Published: 08.04.19 , 08:40

A young gunman opened fire in an El Paso, Texas, shopping area packed with as many as 3,000 people during the busy back-to-school season Saturday, leaving 20 dead and more than two dozen injured. The suspect is believed to have posted an anti-immigrant manifesto shortly before the massacre.

Gov. Greg Abbott called the incident in the Texas border city "one of the most deadly days in the history of Texas." Police said authorities were investigating if it was a hate crime.

The suspect was arrested without incident outside the Walmart near the Cielo Vista Mall, said El Paso Police Chief Greg Allen. Two law enforcement officials who spoke on condition of anonymity identified the suspect as 21-year-old Patrick Crusius. El Paso police didn't release his name at a news conference but confirmed the **gunman is from Allen, near Dallas.**

Many of the victims were shot at the Walmart, police said.

"The scene was a horrific one," said Allen, adding that many of the 26 people who were hurt had life-threatening injuries.

The chief said police found a post online possibly written by the suspect. "Right now we have a manifesto from this individual that indicates, to some degree, it has a nexus to potential hate crime," Allen said.

In the four-page document the suspect apparently bemoans the "Hispanic invasion of Texas" and expresses his support of the New Zealand shooter who killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch.

The shooting came less than a week after a gunman opened fire on a **California food festival.** Santino William Legan, 19, killed three people and injured **13 others last Sunday** at the popular **Gilroy Garlic Festival,** and died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

El Paso, which has about 680,000 residents, is in West Texas and sits across the border from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Residents quickly volunteered to give blood to the injured after the shooting, and police and military members were helping people look for missing loved ones.

"It's chaos right now," said Austin Johnson, an Army medic at nearby Fort Bliss, who volunteered to help at the shopping center and later at a school serving as a reunification center.

Adriana Quezada, 39, said she was in the women's clothing section of Walmart with her two children when she heard gunfire.

"But I thought they were hits, like roof construction," she said of the shots.

Her 19-year-old daughter and 16-year-old son threw themselves to the ground, then ran out of the store through an emergency exit. They were not hurt, Quezada said.

She said she saw four men, dressed in black, moving together firing guns indiscriminately. Police later said they believed the suspect, who was armed with a rifle, was the only shooter.

Ryan Mielke, a spokesman for University Medical Center of El Paso, said 13 of the injured were brought to the hospital with injuries, including one who died. Two of the injured were children who were being transferred to El Paso Children's Hospital, he said. He wouldn't provide additional details on the victims.

Eleven other victims were being treated at Del Sol Medical Center, hospital spokesman Victor Guerrero said. Those victims' ages ranged from 35 to 82, he said.

President Donald Trump tweeted: "God be with you all!"

At a candidate forum Saturday in Las Vegas, presidential candidate and former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke, who is from El Paso, appeared a bit shaken after news of the shooting in his hometown was reported. The Democrat said the shooting shatters "any illusion that we have that progress is inevitable" on tackling gun violence.

He said he heard early reports that the shooter might have had a military-style weapon, saying we need to "keep that (expletive) on the battlefield. Do not bring it into our communities."

El Paso Mayor Dee Margo said he knew the shooter was not from his town.

"It's not what we're about," he said at the news conference with the governor and police chief. El Paso is nearly a 10-hour drive from Allen.

In the hours after the shooting, authorities blocked streets near a home in Allen that is associated with the suspect. Officers appeared to speak briefly with a woman who answered the door of the gray stone house and later entered the residence.

El Paso County is more than 80% Latino, according to the latest census data, and the city, where the mayor said tens of thousands of Mexicans legally cross the border each day to work and shop, has become a focal point of the immigration debate. Trump visited in February to argue that walling off the southern border would make the U.S. safer, while city residents and O'Rourke led thousands on a protest march past the barrier of barbed wire-topped fencing and towering metal slats.

O'Rourke stressed that border walls haven't made his hometown safer. The city's murder rate was less than half the national average in 2005, the year before the start of its border fence. Before the wall project started, El Paso had been rated one of the three safest major U.S. cities going back to 1997.

Heidi Beirich, director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, also said the El Paso shooting suspect wasn't on her group's radar screen prior to the shooting.

"We had nothing in our files on him," Beirich wrote in an email.

The shooting is the 21st mass killing in the United States in 2019, and the fifth public mass shooting. Before Saturday, 96 people had died in mass killings in 2019 - 26 of them in public mass shootings.

The AP/USATODAY/Northeastern University mass murder database tracks all U.S. homicides since 2006 involving four or more people killed, not including the offender, over a short period of time regardless of weapon, location, victim-offender relationship or motive. The database shows that the median age of a public mass shooter is 28, significantly lower than the median age of a person who commits a mass shooting of their family.

Since 2006, 11 mass shootings - not including Saturday's - have been committed by men who are 21 or younger.

08.01.19 Dutch parliament approves limited ban on face-covering clothing Dutch parliament approves limited ban on burqa, niqab

Limited ban on 'face-covering clothing' in public places kicks off in Netherlands, pushed for by far-right politician Geert Wilders for over a decade

Associated Press|Published: 08.01.19, 20:37

The Netherlands has approved a limited ban on "face-covering clothing" in public places, including Islamic veils and robes such as the burqa and niqab but not the hijab, which covers only the hair. Firebrand far-right politician Geert Wilders had pushed for the ban for over a decade.

Parliament's upper chamber made the final approval in a vote Tuesday.

Wilders' Freedom Party claimed the development as a major victory, while Senator Marjolein Faber-Van de Klashorst called it "a historical day because this is the first step to de-Islamize the Netherlands."

"This is the first step and the next step is to close all the mosques in the Netherlands," she said, building on Wilders' anti-Islam rhetoric.

The Dutch law is described by the government as "religion-neutral," and does not go as far as more extensive bans in neighboring countries like France and Belgium. It applies on public transport and in education institutions, health institutions such as hospitals, and government buildings.

Successive Dutch governments have sought to ban niqabs, which cover most of the face but still shows the eyes, and burqas, which cover the face and body — even though studies suggest that only a few hundred women in the Netherlands wear the garments. The ban also covers ski masks and full-face helmets.

The government said people still have full freedom on how to dress, except when it is necessary to have full facial contact — for instance in education and health-related situations.

The ban does not apply to public streets, although police can ask an individual to remove face-covering clothing for identification.

"This is actually virtually a complete ban because the only spaces that are still available for women (who wear face-covering clothing) are the street and the private sector," said Annelies Moors, professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. "And, of course, the private sector can also have their house rules, they could also possibly legislate against their presence. So this leaves women very little space."

"It is completely disproportionate and the only effect will be that many of these women will stay at home even more," said Green Party senator Ruard Ganzevoort. "They will not have an opportunity to go to school. They will not have an opportunity to go to learn to swim, and all those things."

08.01.19

Ynet-News-Aug-1-2019

IDF officer moderately wounded, 2 soldiers lightly hurt in pre-dawn Gaza attack

Israeli military says a Hamas operative belonging to a force responsible for restraining border violence breached the security fence and opened fire at the troops called into the area; the militant's brother is believed to be an amputee Palestinian protester killed by IDF last year

Yoav Zitun, Elinor Levy, Matan Tzuri | Published: 08.01.19, 08:29

An Israeli officer was moderately wounded and two other soldiers had been lightly hurt after a Gaza militant breached the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip and opened fire at IDF troops in a pre-dawn attack on Thursday. The military shelled a Hamas outpost adjacent to the border in response.

Israeli military said the perpetrator - Hani Abu Salah - who was killed during a shoot-out with the soldiers, belonged to a Hamas unit responsible for restraining border violence along the security fence, including unauthorized launching of rockets and trespassing into Israeli territory.

IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Ronen Manelis said the Gaza militant was armed with an AK-47 rifle and several hand grenades. "At this point we understand the terrorist acted independently. The body of the terrorist is currently in our territory," said Manelis.

According to sources in Gaza, the militant's brother - Fadi Abu Salah - was a disabled Palestinian man killed by Israeli sniper fire during mass protests in the Strip in May 2018. The incident sparked international criticism of the tactics used by the IDF to restrain the violent protesters during the weekly marches.

In the meantime, the IDF officer has undergone an operation at Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva, where all three of the wounded had been hospitalized following the incident.

The attack occurred in the area where IDF is currently constructing an underground barrier along the border in order to prevent the terror group from building cross-border attack tunnels.

The militant was identified approaching Israeli territory around 2am by the soldiers remotely monitoring the area along the security fence. "It's unclear whether they realized the suspect was armed," said the military spokesperson.

The Golani force that arrived on the scene shortly after, found themselves under attack by the Palestinian who hurled a hand grenade and fired shots toward the troops. A platoon commander was moderately wounded in the shootout, while two other soldiers had been lightly hurt by shrapnel.

The Hamas operative then hid a few dozen meters away from the security fence, separating Kibbutz Kissufim and the city of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza. He was located by the security forces an hour later and fatally shot.

08.01.19

Israeli strike in Syria

Syrian media: Israeli missile hits in Quneitra

The state news agency says the attack in Syria's Golan Heights that hit a village caused only material damages and there were no reports of casualties

Reuters|Published: 08.01.19 , 15:02

An Israeli missile hit a village in the Quneitra countryside in Syria's Golan Heights near the frontier between the two countries on Thursday, Syrian state media said.

State news agency SANA described it as "an Israeli attack" that caused only material damages.

The Al Majd Hadith TV channel reported that Hezbollah militants were seen in the area sometime before the strike.

Although Israeli strikes in the war-torn country have reportedly become a common occurrence, daytime attacks are rare. It remains unclear whether the area was attacked from the air or via a surface-to-surface missile.

During Syria's eight-year war, Israel has carried out strikes in Syria which it says have targeted regional arch rival Iran and Tehran's ally Hezbollah.

The Arabic-language Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper reported on Tuesday that Israeli warplanes bombed Iranian-linked targets in Iraq and Syria in July.

The sources told the London-based newspaper that on July 19, Israel carried out an attack on the base of an Iran-linked paramilitary group in the northern Salahuddin province of Iraq.

Asharq Al-Awsat also attributed an attack on the Daraa province on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights last week to Israel, as part of the same efforts to disturb Iranian entrenchment in the area.

07.31.19 Trump renewing five sanction waivers on Iran which can be revoked at any time Parchin nuclear facility in Iran

U.S. renews Iran sanctions waivers

The Washington Post reports the Treasury Department asked for more time to consider the effects of possible sanctions on Russian, Chinese and European companies

Reuters|Published: 07.31.19 , 12:13

The United States is set to announce this week it will renew sanctions waivers for five Iran nuclear programs that allow Russia, China and European countries to continue civilian nuclear cooperation with Iran, the Washington Post reported on Tuesday.

President Donald Trump, in an Oval Office meeting last week, sided with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin who argued for renewing the waivers over objections by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and national security adviser John Bolton, the Post said.

Mnuchin “argued to Trump that if the sanctions were not again waived as required by law by Aug. 1, the United States would have to sanction Russian, Chinese and European firms that are involved in projects inside Iran that were established as part of the 2015 nuclear deal,” the Post said, citing six unnamed officials.

A State Department spokesman declined to comment to Reuters.

Pompeo in May extended five of seven sanctions waivers for 90 days. The waivers allow work at Iran’s Bushehr nuclear plant, the Fordow enrichment facility, the Arak nuclear complex and the Tehran Research Reactor.

Trump abandoned the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and six world powers last year, arguing that he wanted a bigger deal that not only limited Iran’s atomic work but also reined in its support for proxies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon, and curbed its ballistic missile program. Trump tightened sanctions on Iran in May to try to choke off its oil exports.

The Post said the Treasury Department asked for more time to consider the effects of possible sanctions on Russian, Chinese and European companies, and quoted a senior administration official as saying the goal of ending the waivers remained.

“These waivers can be revoked at any time, as developments with Iran warrant. But because of the Treasury Department’s legitimate concerns, we’ve decided to extend them for now,” the official said, according to the Post.

Fears of a direct U.S.- Iranian conflict have risen since May with several attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf, Iran’s downing of a U.S. surveillance drone, and a plan for U.S. air strikes on Iran last month that Trump called off at the last minute.