



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

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Shooting attack near Hebron, December 28, 2007: The Israel Security Agency revealed that the attack was carried out by Fatah operatives linked to the Palestinian security services, which are supposed to fight terrorism. The Palestinian treatment of the incident was insufficient, contradicting the image the PA is trying to foster.



The two off-duty Israeli soldiers, David Ruben and Ahikam Amihai murdered while on a field trip near Hebron (Photo courtesy of the IDF spokesman, December 29).

The attack

1. On December 28 a squad of three terrorist operatives carried out a shooting attack northwest of Hebron, murdering two off-duty, out-of-uniform IDF soldiers, David Ruben and Ahikam Amihai, both residents of Kiriya Arba. A girl who was with them managed to escape. The two, who were on a field trip, were carrying weapons.

2. Three armed Palestinians arrived in a vehicle and started shooting at the Israelis at close range. The two soldiers were mortally wounded but returned fire, killing the driver of the vehicle and wounding one of the other terrorists. Both Israelis later died. The young woman hid during the firefight and notified the Israeli security forces (IDF spokesman's Website and Haaretz daily newspaper, December 28).

3. The two remaining terrorist operatives threw the body of the driver out of the vehicle, seized the soldiers' weapons and fled. Fearing they would be apprehended by the Israeli security forces, they surrendered to Palestinian General Intelligence in Hebron the same evening and handed over their own weapons and those taken from the Israelis. The Israel Security Agency and the IDF are investigating the incident and are carrying out large-scale detentions.

4. Interrogation of the two terrorists revealed that **the attack had been planned** and that the squad, which belonged to **Fatah, was waiting for an opportune moment to carry it out.**¹ The opportunity presented itself when they discerned the Israelis walking in the wadi. The two terrorists who turned themselves in were: **Amer Badad Khalim Taha**, 26, a resident of Abu Sneina (in the Hebron district), **a Fatah operative who served in the Palestinian National Security Service;**² and **Ali Hamid Rajeb Dandanas**, 24, a resident of Hebron, a **Fatah operative** who served as a clerk in Hebron's Sharia (Muslim religious) court and **was in contact with the Palestinian Authority's General Intelligence Service.** The terrorist killed by the Israeli soldiers was **Bassel Nabil al-Natshe**, whose funeral in Hebron was attended by hundreds of Palestinians.³

¹ Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad **falsely** claimed responsibility for the attack.

² A "Palestinian security source" denied that Amer Taha belonged to the Palestinian National Security Service, claiming that he had been fired on June 14, 2007 (Ma'an News Agency, January 2).

³ For far it is unclear which organization he belonged to. According to the Palestinian media, he was a member of the PIJ's Jerusalem Battalions, according to another version, he belonged to Hamas' Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades.



Bassel Nabil al-Natshe, killed during the shooting attack (Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades Website, December 29).

5. This was not the first time **Fatah** operatives linked to the Palestinian security services were recently involved in terrorist activities in Judea and Samaria: the Israeli security forces detained two Fatah terrorists involved in the attack at Kedumim in which Ido Zoldan was murdered on November 19, 2007. One of them belonged to the Palestinian National Security Services in Ramallah and Salfit. The involvement of Fatah operatives who also belong to the Palestinian security services may indicate that there are elements, although they may be the exceptions, who do not accept the authority of Abu Mazen and carry out terrorist attacks against Israel.

6. Senior members of the PA were publicly reserved about the attack but did make the **false claim** that the motive behind it was criminal. PA Prime Minister **Salaam Fayyad** expressed his condolences at the death of the Israeli soldiers (December 30). Information Minister **Riyad al-Makiki** stated that the PA had detained the perpetrators of the attack and also claimed that the motive was criminal, saying that their detention “showed the efficiency of the [Palestinian] security services.” Palestinian “security sources” boasted about the success of the security services in the incident. They represented it as an implementation of the directives issued by Abu Mazen and Salaam Fayyad to impose public order throughout the West Bank (Ma’an News Agency, January 1, 2008).

7. The PA’s claims that the attack was prompted by criminal rather than nationalistic motives are **untrue**, and are contradicted both by information possessed by Israel and the admission of the two terrorist operatives who surrendered to Palestinian General Intelligence. The claims were made **to hide the PA’s responsibility for**

the attack and the fact that it was carried out by Fatah operatives who were in contact with the Palestinian security services. The steps taken by Palestinian General Intelligence show that their treatment of the affair and their cooperation with Israeli security forces was insufficient and ineffective, and that **the PA still has a long way to go before it can be said to fulfill its security commitments as defined by the first phase of the road map.**