

Israel Issues Terror Warnings for Travelers During Passover

Israel is sparing no effort to prevent tragedy over the coming Passover holiday, believing that Hezbollah is planning to target Israelis around the world.

As part of efforts to prevent terror organizations from attacking Israelis traveling abroad, the National Security Council's Counterterrorism Bureau, in coordination with the Foreign Ministry, mapped the hundreds of mass Passover seders planned around the world and briefed local authorities on security measures. The bureau stressed that there would be no Israeli security at these seders. All institutions that hold traditional mass seders, such as Chabad, have also been notified.

According to one senior Israeli security official, over the last year Israeli efforts managed to thwart more than 10 verified planned terror attacks against Israelis abroad.

Two weeks ago, Counterterrorism Bureau head Eytan Ben-David met with his Indian counterpart in light of heightened sensitivity about Israelis in India, stemming from the high number of Israeli tourists there as well as past terror attacks. Every year, 45,000 Israelis visit India, and Passover seders are held across the country in Chabad houses and guest houses associated with Israelis.

One of the worst terror attacks occurred in 2008 in Mumbai, in which Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivka were killed along with four other hostages at the Mumbai Chabad House. Last year, Tali Koren-Yehoshua, the wife of an Israeli diplomat, was wounded in a terror attack in New Delhi.

The bureau issued its semiannual travel warning ahead of the Passover holiday, indicating that as the spring vacations

approach, “destinations favored by Israelis and Jews could serve as targets for Iranian-sponsored terror organizations.”

Travel warnings are currently in place for Israelis in 27 countries, as well as eight additional regions. Most of the countries are African, Middle Eastern or Muslim Asian, but the warnings also include southern Thailand, Kashmir and Chechnya. The bureau issued the highest level warning for the Sinai Peninsula, calling on all Israelis to “exit the region immediately and return to Israel.”

The bureau stressed that warnings were also in place for Israelis headed for Turkey and Jordan, though the warning level for those countries was low. Meanwhile, though there are no official warnings, Israelis traveling to Morocco, Malta and Georgia are asked to be alert.

A separate warning specifies Djerba, Tunisia, as a possible target for attack in May during the annual Lag Ba’omer celebration there in honor of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai.

The complete list of travel warnings appears on the Prime Minister’s Office website in Hebrew only.

Israelis are prohibited by law from entering six countries: Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The travel warnings for other countries are to be viewed as recommendations.

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