

Terror Cell Charged With Planning to Abduct Israelis

Indictments were filed on Wednesday against members of a recently apprehended terror cell, residents of east Jerusalem, who allegedly conspired to kidnap and murder an Israeli in order to steal his weapon.

The Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) and the Jerusalem police arrested the cell in March. According to the Shin Bet, during one of their outings, three cell members had picked up a Jewish hitchhiker, but upon learning that he was not carrying a weapon, decided to let him go. The Shin Bet says that the cell had also planned to carry out a terrorist attack at Temple Mount, including firing weapons at Israeli security personnel stationed there.

The indictment, filed with the Jerusalem District Court, charges the cell members with a host of crimes, including conspiring to commit a kidnapping, conspiring to commit murder, conspiring to assist an enemy in wartime, assisting an enemy during wartime, contact with an enemy agent, carrying illegal weapons, attempted purchase of illegal weapons, attempted robbery, attempted murder, illegal military training and obstruction of justice.

According to the Shin Bet, the leader of the cell, Nur Hamdan, 25, confessed that he had planned to carry out an attack on Temple Mount "to protect Al-Aqsa mosque." He reportedly said that he had been inspired by YouTube videos detailing terror attacks in Jerusalem, especially the 2008 attack at Mercaz Harav yeshiva (in which eight students were killed).

Hamdan allegedly approached Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade in Gaza and in Nablus seeking assistance in preparing a shooting attack against Israeli targets on Temple Mount. He eventually

recruited four friends from east Jerusalem to assist in the attack, the Shin Bet said.

The members of the cell allegedly trained several times near Kalandiya in northern Jerusalem, and even planned to travel to Nablus to meet with a Tanzim activist and ask him for weapons and money. In addition, the cell had allegedly planned to steal weapons from Israeli police officers, and had even built several makeshift pipe bombs for that end.

The weapons already in the cell's possession were discovered at the east Jerusalem home of additional suspect Firas Djani. The police discovered two handguns, ammunition and a pipe bomb.

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