

‘They’re Threatening to Slit Our Throats’

Dozens of Jewish children were traumatized by a gang of teenagers who stormed a school bus in Australia and allegedly hurled racial epithets and threats.

New South Wales state police said five juveniles were arrested early Thursday over the incident on Wednesday afternoon in Sydney. The youths were questioned at a police station but later released without charge into the custody of their parents pending further investigations, police said.

The bus carrying about 30 children aged 5 to 12 years from three Jewish schools were subjected to “physical and racial threats” by a group of eight youths, ages 15 to 17, who boarded at a bus stop in the wealthy eastern suburb of Randwick, police said. No one was injured.

Jackie Blackburn said her three daughters, ages 8, 10 and 12, would need counseling after their terrifying bus ride.

She told Nine Network television on Thursday that her eldest daughter had phoned her from the bus pleading for help, saying: “There are eight very dangerous, drunk men on this bus.”

The daughter’s phone cut off, but Blackburn said she was soon phoned by her daughter’s friend from the same bus.

“They’re threatening to slit our throats; they’re chanting ‘Palestine’ and they’re going crazy about Palestine—‘Must kill the Jews’ and ‘Heil Hitler,’” Blackburn said.

“It was just very anti-Semitic and very scary for all the kids,” she said.

Isabelle Stanton, whose two daughters, ages 8 and 12, were on

the same bus, told *The Daily Telegraph* the youths had screamed: "We are going to murder you," and "Free Palestine."

"The kids are aware of what is going on in the Middle East, but the conflict in the Middle East should not be imported here—we are now feeling very vulnerable," Stanton said.

She said the teens kicked the bus door and windows as they left the bus.

Blackburn was critical of the bus driver, saying he should never have allowed the youths to get on the bus. She said he did nothing to stop their behavior.

State Communities Minister Victor Dominello condemned the attack, saying in a statement: "Public abuse and intimidation on the grounds of race or religion is deplorable. The people of NSW will never excuse it and those who are alleged to have subjected school children as young as 5 to this anti-Semitic attack should face the full force of the law."

The incident occurred only weeks after visiting Rabbi Avraham Shalom Halberstam and his assistant were rushed at by a group of Palestinian youths hurling anti-Semitic verbal abuse near a mall in a Jewish suburb of Perth.

The Australian government is a staunch ally of Israel, and it angered Arab and Islamic countries in June by changing its description of East Jerusalem from "occupied" to "disputed."

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