

## Militancy/Terrorism

07

MAY  
17:21 UTC

**Israel & Palestinian Territories Alert: Three militants planning attack in central Israel intercepted at military base in West Bank's Salem on May 7; highly notable given rarity**

### Please be advised:

- Israeli security officials have reportedly stated that based on their assessment, an attack targeting civilians in central Israel was foiled in West Bank's Salem on May 7.
- Israeli border guards had intercepted a bus carrying illegal Palestinian laborers from the West Bank into Israel near a military base in Salem, located about seven km east of Nablus, during the morning hours of May 7.
- Three Palestinians subsequently deboarded the bus and opened fire at the Israeli border guards. The Israeli border guards and an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldier returned fire, which killed two of the militants and wounded the third.
- The militants were found to be in possession of three knives, three submachine guns, and ammunition.



## Assessments & Forecast:

1. This development is highly notable given the rarity of successful or attempted attacks within Israel's 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) over recent years. The last such incident was reported in [October 2020](#), when the Israel Police identified and apprehended a Palestinian who was planning to carry out a shooting attack in Rosh HaAyin on September 29. The latest incident comes amid heightened [tensions](#) across Israel and the Palestinian Territories, particularly in Jerusalem, surrounding multiple issues. First, tensions between the Palestinian and Jewish communities have been rising since the beginning of Ramadan on April 12, which have manifested in the form of frequent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in Jerusalem over recent weeks. This has also prompted Gaza-based militant groups to launch [rockets](#) into southern Israel in recent weeks as an expression of solidarity with Palestinians in Jerusalem.
2. Second, tensions are currently very high in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah following an Israeli court's ruling that homes in this neighborhood belonged to Jewish families before 1948. This has prompted Palestinians to organize mass protests in Sheikh Jarrah in recent days to denounce the possible eviction of some Palestinian families from the area. Violent clashes between Palestinians and the IDF have been reported every day in the neighborhood since May 1, with the latter deciding on May 7 to ban entry of non-residents into the area. The commander of Hamas' military wing, the Qassam Brigades, also released a statement on May 5 in which he declared that "The Qassam Brigades will not stand idly by in the face of attacks on the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood...They [Israel] will pay a heavy price if the aggression against our people in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood does not stop immediately." These tensions likely exacerbated the perpetrators' perception of Israeli policies in Jerusalem and the West Bank as oppressive, thus motivating them to launch an attack in central Israel.
3. This attempted attack also coincides with al-Quds Day, which is an annual event held across Muslim-majority countries on the last Friday of Ramadan, to express support for Palestinians and oppose the existence of the State of Israel, including Israel's control over Jerusalem. Moreover, it comes two days ahead of Jerusalem Day, which commemorates the reunification of Jerusalem and the establishment of Israeli control over the Old City in the aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967. The date of this attack was thus likely strategically chosen as a means of symbolically rejecting the existence of the State of Israel and its control over Jerusalem. The recent shooting attack at West Bank's Tapuach Junction on [May 2](#), which wounded three Israeli civilians, may have also bolstered the militants' confidence and thus prompted them to launch their own operation against Israel. The militants' decision to hide amongst illegal Palestinian workers to infiltrate Israel highlights their effort to capitalize upon the prevalence of established networks that are known to smuggle hundreds of Palestinians without Israeli work permits from the West Bank into Israel for economic opportunities.
4. Regardless, the Israeli security forces' response to the incident demonstrates their heightened vigilance towards the threat to Israelis from Palestinian militants in the West Bank, particularly surrounding military installations. This is especially considering that this threat is higher during periods of elevated tensions between the Palestinian and Jewish communities as well as on and around symbolic dates, such as al-Quds Day and Jerusalem Day. **FORECAST:** Albeit unsuccessful, this incident may bolster the confidence of Palestinian militants and trigger additional attempts to target Israelis in the West Bank and possibly even in Israel. Israeli intelligence agencies will therefore further intensify their monitoring of potential militant suspects in the West Bank over the coming days, which in turn may also prompt an increase in pre-emptive raids by the IDF in the region. Security protocols at border crossings between Israel and the West Bank will also be made more stringent. However, this will not completely mitigate the risk posed to Israelis, especially that of low-sophistication attacks targeting those residing in the West Bank and Jerusalem. This is because low-sophistication attacks, such as stabbings, as they do not require extensive prior planning and are therefore difficult to pre-empt due to lack of intelligence.

## Recommendations:

## **Israel**

1. Travel to Israel may continue at this time while adhering to security precautions regarding militant attacks, while avoiding the immediate vicinity of the Syrian, Lebanese, and Egyptian borders, due to the persistent risk for cross-border violence.
2. In major Israeli cities, remain vigilant in crowded commercial areas or public transport hubs, as these locations have been targeted by militant groups in the past. Alert authorities to suspicious, unattended packages in these areas.
3. As a general precaution, avoid nonessential travel to the vicinity of Jerusalem's Old City, particularly in the vicinity of Damascus Gate, due to the increased potential for Palestinian residents in this area to conduct acts of militancy and engage in civil unrest against Israeli security forces and civilians.

## **Palestinian Territories**

1. Business-essential travel to Ramallah and Bethlehem can continue at this time. Adhere to basic security precautions regarding the threat of civil unrest and militancy. Consult with us for itinerary-based recommendations and ground support options.
2. Avoid nonessential travel to other Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank at this time given the persistent threat of civil unrest.
3. If travel is essential, prior to entering Palestinian-controlled areas from Jerusalem-area checkpoints, confirm that crossings remain open and no unrest is taking place. Crossings near the cities of Jenin, Qalqilya, and Tulkarem remain less prone to violence.
4. Minimize night travel in major cities, as the majority of IDF and PA security operations occur at this time, particularly in the vicinities of Palestinian refugee camps.