

Attacks in Israel as Palestinian Statehood Gains Momentum

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As a United Nations decision on Palestinian statehood looms and another intifada is rumored, southern Israel has erupted in violence.

On Thursday, Israeli officials reported attacks along its border with Egypt following the ouster of its autocratic leader, Hosni Mubarak. Gunmen near the southern Israeli resort town of Eilat launched a coordinated attack Thursday against three civilian and military targets, killing at least five people and wounding 20 more, Israeli military officials told the Los Angeles Times.

A public bus carrying Israeli soldiers was fired on as it drove south from Beersheva to Eilat on a highway near the Israel-Egypt border, according to officials. Nine passengers were reported injured. Shortly after the bus was attacked, a car in the area was struck with an anti-tank missile, killing five. In a third attack, roadside bombs targeted IDF troops. Several soldiers were wounded.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said Israel holds Egypt and the Palestinians responsible for the attacks. "It reflects Egypt's failing hold on Sinai and the rise of terror elements," Barak said. "This terror attack originated from Gaza. We will exhaust all measures against the terrorists."

Israel accuses Bedouin tribes on the Egypt-Israel border and "anti-Israel extremist groups" in the northern Sinai of smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip. Hamas, the elected government in Gaza, has evacuated facilities in anticipation of Israeli retaliatory strikes.

A d v e r t i s e m e n t The Egyptian military has conducted raids in the northern Sinai and arrested suspects it claims belong to al-Qaeda.

On Tuesday, AhramOnline reported that Ramzy Moafy, said to be Osama Bin Laden's physician, has reappeared in Egypt's North Sinai. "Attia told CNN that Moafy is believed to have contacted several terrorist organizations in Sinai, including members of El-Takfeer wal-Hijra and the Palestinian Islamic Army," AhramOnline is the web version of Al-Ahram, a newspaper owned by the Egyptian government.

DEBKAFfile, an Israeli military intelligence propaganda operation, has run numerous stories claiming Egypt's Sinai is now infested with al-Qaeda.

"For two years, debkafile's counter-terror sources have been reporting on the burgeoning concentration of al Qaeda cells and affiliates in Sinai and the

Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. The 2,200 Egyptian troops maintained there after Feb. 14 to maintain order and guard the Egyptian natural gas pipeline to Israel, Jordan and Syria were easily overpowered," DEBKA reported on August 15.

On Wednesday, the Egyptians reported they have "exposed a large factory that produced explosives, rockets, and munitions in the city of Al-Arish in the northern Sinai Peninsula," according to MEMRI, another propaganda outfit associated with Israeli intelligence and the neocons.

The attacks and accusations of al-Qaeda in northern Egypt arrive as a drive for Palestinian statehood intensifies. On Wednesday, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas met with the of the Kataeb (Phalange) and Lebanese Forces parties, both of whom confirmed support for an independent Palestinian state, a notable development.

Former CIA employee Ray McGovern talks about Israel and the Palestinians on the Alex Jones Show.

Abbas officially opened a Palestinian Embassy in Beirut by raising the Palestinian flag during a ceremony. There are an estimated 350,000 Palestinians in Lebanon's 12 refugee camps.

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