



Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre

BICOM Briefing

Terror attack in Tel Aviv

June 2016

Key Points:

The attack should be seen in the context of the Palestinian wave of violence since October 2015 but constitutes the first deadly attack since March. The fact the perpetrators had makeshift weapons, no history of security offences, and were not on the radar of the intelligence services is indicative of the so called 'lone wolf Intifada'.

Many details of the attack, such as how the perpetrators entered Israel, how they procured their weapons and whether they have any affiliations to Palestinian terrorist groups are still not fully known.

The attack poses difficult dilemmas to security establishment and new Defence Minister Lieberman over how to strengthen Israeli deterrence and prevent future attacks without punishing the Palestinian population. With increased sensitivity during the month of Ramadan, Israel will be on security alert in the coming days with heightened vigilance across country.

What happened?

On Wednesday at 9.30pm, cousins Muhammad and Khalid Muhamra, both in the early twenties from the West Bank village of Yatta, 8 km south of Hebron, opened fire on civilians at the Max Brenner café in the Sarona Market in Tel Aviv. Sarona is a popular civilian destination for upscale food and retail located near the business Azrieli Centre and Israel's Defence Ministry. Both of the assailants were consequently apprehended shortly after the attack. Tel Aviv District Police Commander Cmdr. Chico Edri said that there had been no specific warning about the terror attack.

Two women - Ilana Nave, 39, and Mila Mishayev, 32 as well as two men - Ido Ben Aryeh, 42, and Michael Feige, 58 - were killed in the attack and at least another 16 were injured. One of the assailants, who was injured during his arrest, was treated in the same hospital as his victims.

Following the attack, the IDF encircled the village of Yatta south of Hebron from where the two terrorists departed, and their homes have been slated for demolition. Their families have also been questioned. Meanwhile 83,000 entry permits, which had been specially provided by Israel as a gesture towards the Palestinians for the month of Ramadan, have been frozen. This morning two extra army battalions were deployed in West Bank.

The US, UK, EU and UN all criticised the attack, while the Palestinian Authority issued a general condemnation against all acts of violence against civilians.

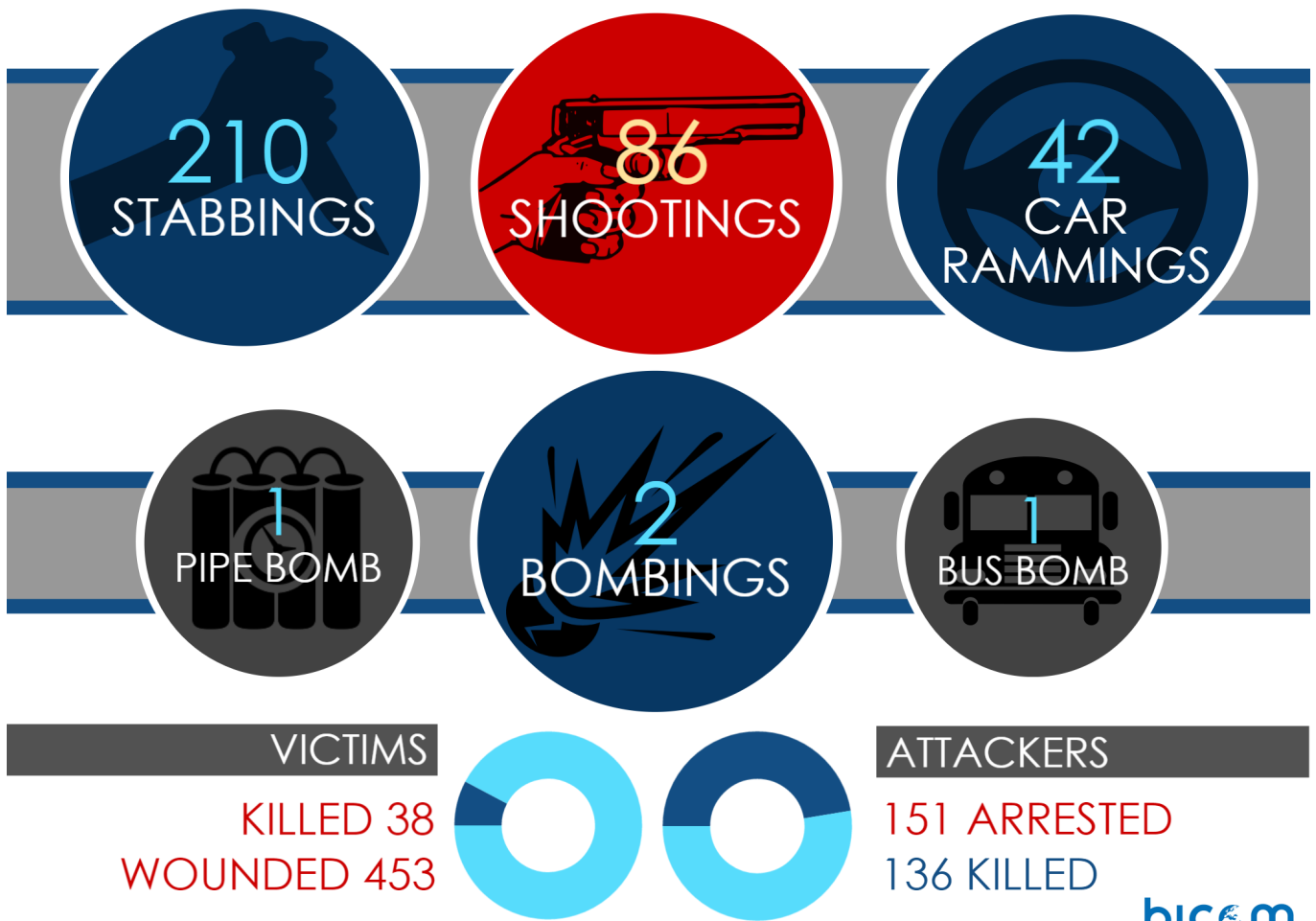
What is its significance?

Despite the recent wave of stabbing attacks witnessed in Israel and the West Bank over the recent months, yesterday's attack represents an escalation in terms of coordination and complexity.

The attack is also indicative of an emerging pattern in many of the stabbings, car rammings and shootings during the so-called 'lone wolf Intifada' in which the Tel Aviv attackers had makeshift weapons, no history of security offences, and were not on the radar of the intelligence services.

The attack fits into the recent trend of the increased use of firearms in attacks. While only 10% of Palestinian attacks between October -

WAVE OF TERROR IN ISRAEL



Data: BICOM research, cross-checked with Israeli Security Sources. From Oct 2015 up to June 2016. For more information please contact mediateam@bicom.org.uk

bicom

December 2015 involved firearms, this has now risen to 25-30% of attacks in 2016. Moreover, despite a recent lull in the number of violent attacks - there were 61 last October, yet three in May - the sophistication of many of these attacks is increasing.

What happens next?

Investigating the unanswered questions: The intelligence services will continue investigating how the attackers entered Israel and to what extent they received help. Israeli intelligence will also seek to discover how the attackers procured their weapons and whether they had any connection to Palestinian groups. While both Hamas and Fatah (President Abbas' party) praised the attack, and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh claimed the attackers belonged to his movement, their exact affiliation - if any - remains unclear.

The Lieberman Effect: The IDF has traditionally opposed punitive measures that it believes might

motivate more Palestinians to participate in the violence and has previously rejected proposals to deny entry work visas for Palestinians. The IDF also regards the Palestinian security forces as partners in containing organised armed groups and large scale demonstrations. At the same time, there will be pressure from politicians within the government to respond harshly to the terror attack. While the previous Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon often sided with the IDF's recommendations, many eyes will be on the new Israeli defence minister, Avigdor Lieberman, as to where he will fall in this debate. Lieberman has previously used fiery rhetoric regarding the necessity of restoring Israel's deterrence.

Balancing between deterrence and protecting the Palestinian population: The Israeli security cabinet convened at lunchtime to discuss the Tel-Aviv terror attack and Israel's response. Like previous discussions following Palestinian terror attacks, the dilemma facing the cabinet is striking the correct balance between maintaining

Israeli deterrence and maintaining the quality of life for the Palestinian civilian population. During the cabinet discussion Defence Minister Lieberman requested the Attorney General look into expediting the legal process for destroying terrorists' homes while Prime Minister Netanyahu said Israel was considering not returning the bodies of dead terrorists to their families.

Improving Security; heightened vigilance over

Ramadan: With increased sensitivity during the month of Ramadan, Israel will be on security alert in the coming days with heightened vigilance across country. The cabinet also approved closing gaps in Israel's security barrier in the Tarkumiye-Metar area in the Southern West Bank and that work will commence on the 28th June.

This briefing was produced by BICOM's Research Team.

For more information please contact:

Media Team

020 7636 5500

07879 644099

mediateam@bicom.org.uk