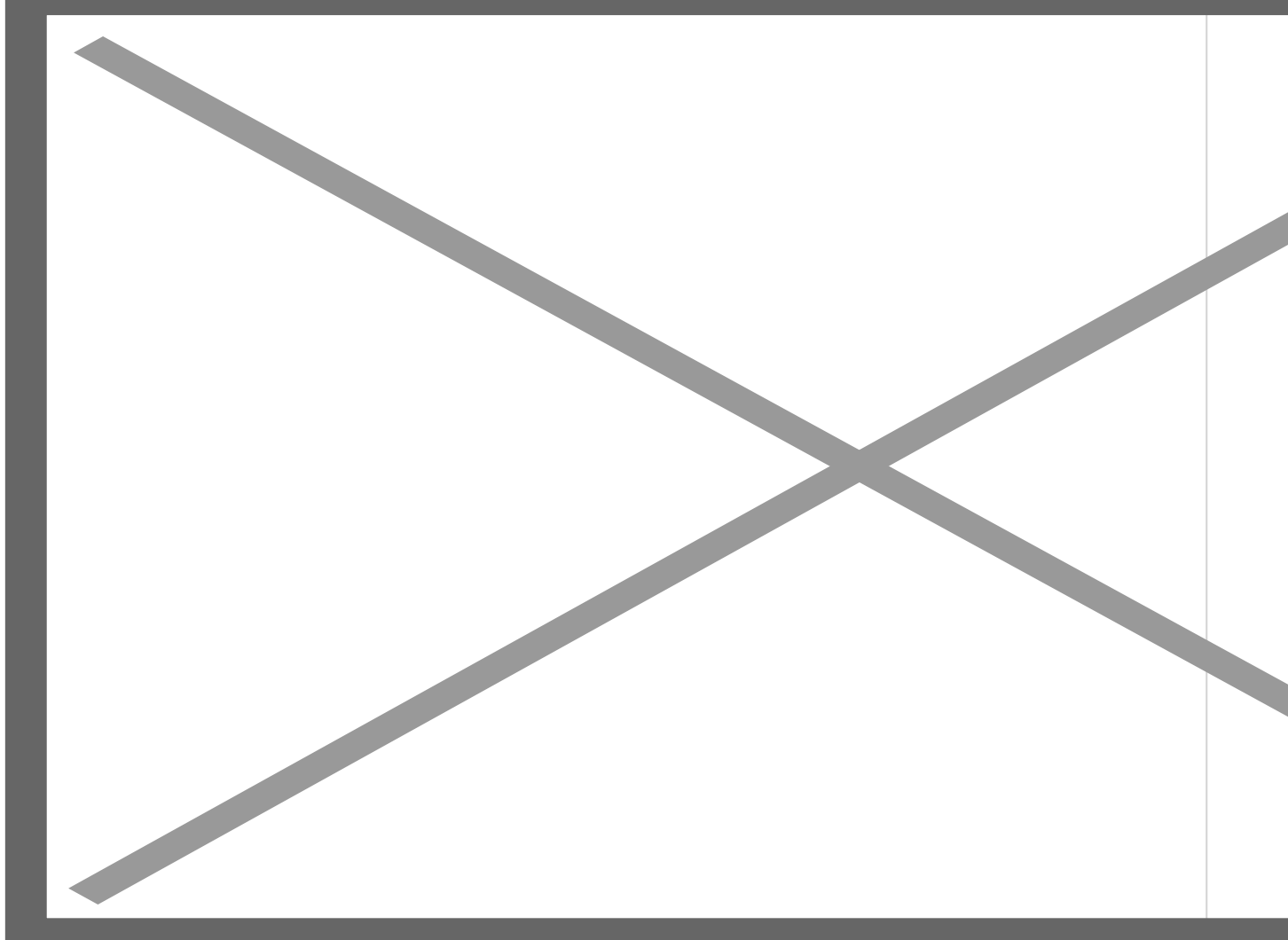


Israel preparing teams to carry out targeted killings of Hamas leaders

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Hamas deputy political chief Saleh al-Aroui (Photo by AP)

London, May 11 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have reportedly informed Western allies that the Tel Aviv regime is preparing teams to carry out targeted killing of leaders of the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement who live abroad, as ongoing tensions in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories are heading towards a large-scale eruption.

According to an article published in the London-based The Times daily newspaper, while some Israeli legislators have called for the assassination of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, the regime officials are wary of carrying out targeted killings in the besieged Gaza Strip or the occupied West Bank fearing that such moves could trigger devastating retaliatory attacks against sensitive sites inside the occupied land.

The report added that, instead, any potential targeted killings are more likely to take place in the countries where Hamas leaders live, such as Lebanon and Qatar.

The report said targets could include Saleh al-Arouri, a deputy Hamas leader who is in charge of West Bank operations, and Zaher Jabarin, a member of Hamas' political bureau. The newspaper also said that Hamas has already been informed of the Israeli regime's plans to resume targeted killings of Palestinian resistance figures.

Israel has previously been accused of carrying out hits on high-ranking Hamas officials abroad.

Mohammed al-Zoari, an aviation scientist and engineer with links to Hamas, was shot dead at point-blank range on December 15, 2016 in the Tunisian city of Sfax.

According to reports on Israel's Channel 10 and Army Radio at the time, unknown assailants shot Zoari, who helped Hamas develop unmanned drones, multiple times when he was sitting in his car near his home.

In 2018, Fadi Mohammed al-Batsh, a Gaza-born electrical engineer and Hamas member, was gunned down by two motorcyclists in the Malaysian capital city of Kuala Lumpur as he walked to dawn prayers. His killing was widely blamed on Israel.

Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, a co-founder of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades – the military wing of Hamas, was assassinated in his hotel room in Dubai in January 2010 after Mossad agents used forged foreign passports to carry out the killing.

In 1997, Mossad agents attempted to poison senior Hamas official Khaled Mashaal in Jordan. The attempt failed though.

Hamas has warned that it will burn Israeli-occupied cities to the ground with "massive missile strikes" if the regime in Tel Aviv acts on its threats to assassinate any of the leaders of the Palestinian resistance group.

According to Lebanon's al-Mayadeen television news network, Hamas told Egyptian mediators that it will not remain indifferent to the Israeli regime's threats to assassinate its leaders, noting that "the price of such foolishness is known to the enemy."

"We will burn the cities in [the country's] center and launch missiles at Tel Aviv and Gush Dan if Israel acts on its threats, those of which surpasses the enemy's imagination," Abu Ubaida, spokesman for the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, warned on Saturday.

Moreover, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement has vowed to launch extremely painful and devastating retaliatory strikes against sensitive targets inside the occupied territories if Israeli officials resume the policy of targeted killings against Palestinian figures.

"The assassination of any resistance leaders, above all Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, will open up the gates of the hell to occupiers," Khaled al-Batsh, a member of the Politburo of Islamic Jihad, said.

He described the Israeli regime's threat to assassinate Sinwar as a threat to all Palestinians, stressing that a heroic battle against Zionist occupiers will begin once any of the Palestinian resistance leaders is targeted.

“Any resident of [the occupied city of] al-Quds considers himself as obliged to support the Palestinian nation. We call on revolutionary youths to bravely fight off Zionists in defense of the Palestinian cause of Palestinians’ aspirations,” Batsh highlighted.

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