Israel Foiled 400 Major Terror Attacks in 2017, Shin Bet Chief Says

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Israel foiled 400 potential major terror attacks in 2017, Shin Bet chief Nadav Argaman disclosed on Sunday.

Speaking at a Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee meeting, Argaman noted that 13 were planned suicide attacks and eight were planned kidnappings. A further 1,100 potential lone wolf attacks were thwarted.

The Shin Bet chief noted that there were 54 attacks carried out in 2017, a decrease from the 108 carried out in 2016. Argaman qualified the decrease, however, stating that "the calm we are experiencing is misleading, and Hamas is trying with all its might to carry out attacks and undermine the stability of the Palestinian Authority."

Argaman added that the Palestinian front, in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, is quite unstable, "particularly after Trump's declaration on Jerusalem." He added that this reality is more challenging than ever in Gaza.

There have been a number of attacks in Israel in recent weeks. Two weeks ago, a security guard was stabbed and seriously wounded near the entrance of Jerusalem's Central Bus Station. The terrorist, a 24-year-old West Bank resident named Yassin Abu al-Qara, was arrested and brought in for interrogation. Prior to the attack, he posted on Facebook that "for the sake of God and for the sake of Al-Aqsa, we will drain our blood."

In October, 19-year-old Ron Kokia, an Israeli soldier in the Nahal Brigade, was stabbed to death at a bus stop in the southern Israeli city of Arad. Khaled Abu Judeh, a Bedouin Israeli who resides in the Negev, admitted to killing Kokia and said that his original plan was to capture a soldier in attempt to advance negotiations for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Two weeks ago, the Shin Bet announced that it had foiled a Hamas plot to capture soldiers or settlers in the West Bank over Hanukkah. According to the Shin Bet, three Hamas operatives planned to disguise themselves as settlers and capture an Israeli soldier or settler at a bus stop near the West Bank city of Nablus. The Hamas operatives planned to exchange their captive for Palestinian prisoners.

Tensions have been high on the Gaza border since Israel struck an attack tunnel near Kibbutz Kissufim, killing a number of Islamic Jihad operatives.

Islamic Jihad attempted to carry out a retaliatory attack in Israeli territory. Because of internal struggles and the ongoing reconciliation process between Hamas and Fatah, the organization encountered difficulty in carrying out an attack from inside Gaza and focused its energies on carrying one out within the West Bank instead.

When the plan failed to take hold, however, Islamic Jihad responded by firing mortar shells at an Israeli army post near the border. After Trump's declaration of U.S. recognition as Israel's capital, Hamas allowed Salafist organizations in Gaza to fire rockets at Israel while attempting to coordinate efforts at carrying out a retaliatory attack in Israel from the West Bank, an operation that has not yet succeeded.