1 killed as terror bombings target 2 bus stops at entrances to Jerusalem; 22 hurt

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/explosion-at-bus-stop-near-entrance-to-jerusalem-7-injured-2-critically/>

Two explosions at two bus stops near entrances to Jerusalem on Wednesday morning killed one person and left another 22 people injured, police and medics said.

Police described the explosions as a terror bombing attack.

The first explosion occurred close to the main entrance of Jerusalem in Givat Shaul, shortly after 7 a.m., peak commuter hour.

Eighteen people at the bus stop were injured in the blast, including two critically and two seriously, medical officials said. The victims were taken to two hospitals in Jerusalem.

One of the victims injured in the first blast later died at Shaare Zedek Medical Center, hospital officials said. He was named as 16-year-old Aryeh Schupak, a yeshiva student from Jerusalem’s Har Nof neighborhood, and a Canadian national.

A second blast occurred shortly after 7:30 a.m., at Ramot junction, another entrance to Jerusalem.

Five people lightly hurt by shrapnel or suffered from anxiety in the second explosion were taken to the Hadassah Mount Scopus Medical Center, hospital officials said.

A bus at the station was damaged by the explosion. It was unclear if the victims were at the station or on the bus itself.

Police suspected the explosions were caused by near-identical remotely detonated explosive devices hidden behind the bus stops in bushes. The devices were packed with nails to maximize casualties, according to police officials.

Visiting the scene, Israel Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said there may have been two attackers.

“This is a framework of attack that we haven’t seen for many years,” Shabtai said.

He called on the public to be alert for suspicious packages, and said officers were scanning the city for other possible devices.

Due to the nature of the attack, police suspect an organized cell was behind it, rather than just one person, Deputy Commissioner Sigal Bar Zvi, head of the police operations division, told reporters.

She said there were no specific warnings about Wednesday’s attack, but there had been intelligence pointing to planned attacks in general.

Police also raised their level of alert following the attack, according to Bar Zvi.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility, but the Hamas terror group hailed the attacks.

“The action conveyed the message to the occupation by saying that our people will stand firm on their land and cling to the path of resistance,” Mohammad Hamada, a Hamas spokesperson said in a statement.

“The coming days will be intense and more difficult for the enemy. The time has come for the creation of cells that are spread all over Palestine and are ready for a confrontation,” he added.

Security services were sweeping the area in an attempt to find suspects connected to the explosions.

Police said they had closed off the Route 1 highway following the first blast. It was later reopened.

Public Security Minister Omer Barlev spoke with the police chief and was expected to visit the scenes of the attacks, his office said.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz held an assessment with the Shin Bet security agency chief, deputy army chief, and other senior military and police officials, following the attack. Prime Minister Yair Lapid was to hold a separate assessment later Wednesday.

The explosions came amid heightened tensions, following a series of Palestinian attacks that have left 29 people in Israel and the West Bank dead since the start of the year.

In recent months there have been several stabbing and attempted stabbing attacks in Jerusalem, mostly in the Old City. Last month, a Palestinian gunman killed an Israeli soldier at a checkpoint near Jerusalem.

In the spring, the military launched a major anti-terror offensive in West Bank following the attacks.

The operation has netted more than 2,000 arrests in near-nightly raids, but has also left over 130 Palestinians dead, many of them — but not all — while carrying out attacks or during clashes with security forces.

Bombings on buses and in public places were a hallmark of the Second Intifada from 2000 to 2005, but mostly subsided over the last 17 years, which Israeli officials attributed to increased security measures, including the West Bank security barrier, and better intelligence.

In 2016, the Hamas terror group was accused of [bombing a bus in Jerusalem](https://www.timesofisrael.com/several-injured-in-bus-blaze-in-jerusalem/), leaving 21 people injured. And in 2011, a bomb hidden in a backpack exploded at a bus stop outside the Jerusalem International Convention Center, killing two and injuring dozens more.