

Two Israelis, one Egyptian shot dead in Alexandria

REUTERS, Cairo

Two Israeli tourists and their Egyptian guide were shot dead yesterday in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, Israeli foreign ministry said. A policeman alleged to have carried out the shooting in the Sawari district of Alexandria was in custody, two Egyptian security sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

One Egyptian was injured in the shooting, the first such attack on Israelis in Egypt in decades. The Egyptian interior ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

The shooting happened one day after an attack against Israel by Islamist group Hamas, for which Israel vowed "mighty vengeance" in response. According to one of the Egyptian sources, the policeman said he lost control and fired randomly on the tourist group after being provoked.



A plume of smoke rises above buildings in Gaza City during an Israeli air strike yesterday. Inset, a Palestinian man reacts next to the ruins of a house destroyed in Israeli strikes in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

London police step up patrols after Israel-Gaza violence

AFP, London

London police said yesterday that they had boosted patrols across parts of the city following the attacks on Israel by the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

"We are aware of a number of incidents... in relation to the ongoing conflict in Israel and the border with Gaza," the Metropolitan Police said on social media.

"The Met has increased policing patrols across parts of London in order to provide a visible presence and reassurance to our communities," it said.

Britain's interior minister Suella Braverman said there should be "zero tolerance for anti-Semitism or glorification of terrorism on the streets of Britain".

"I expect the police to use the full force of the law against displays of support for Hamas, other proscribed terrorist groups or attempts to intimidate British Jews," Braverman wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

There was visible security around one synagogue in northwest London, an AFP journalist saw.

Police in Germany and France also said they had reinforced security around synagogues and Jewish schools and monuments.

'It was a security failure' Israeli forces face questions after Hamas attack lays bare intelligence gaps

REUTERS, Jerusalem

As Israel reeled from a deadly attack by Hamas who broke through barriers around Gaza and roamed at will, killing scores of civilians in Israeli towns, defence chiefs faced growing questions over how the disaster could have happened.

A day after the 50th anniversary of the start of the 1973 Yom Kippur war, when Israeli forces were caught off guard by Syrian and Egyptian tank columns, the military appeared once again to have been surprised by a sudden attack.

"It looks quite similar to what happened at that time," said retired General Giora Eiland, a former head of Israel's National Security Council.

"As we can see it, Israel was completely surprised, by a very well-coordinated attack," he told a briefing with reporters.

An army spokesman said there would be discussions on the intelligence preparation "down the road" but for the moment the focus was on fighting. "We'll talk about that when we need to talk about it," he told a briefing with reporters.

Israel has always regarded Hamas as its sworn enemy, but since inflicting heavy damage on Gaza in a 10-day war in 2021, Israel had adopted a mix of carrot and stick to maintain stability in the blockaded enclave.

It offered economic incentives including thousands of work permits allowing Gazans to work in Israel or the occupied West Bank, while maintaining a tight blockade and the constant threat of air strikes.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government has always made great play of its security credentials and taken an uncompromising stance towards the Palestinian factions including Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since 2007.

INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

However, when the time came, Israel's security apparatus appeared to break down as a force of Hamas gunmen estimated in the hundreds by the military broke through security fences and scattered into towns.

"This was an intelligence failure; it could not

be otherwise," said Jonathan Panikoff, the US government's former deputy national intelligence officer on the Middle East, who is now at the Atlantic Council think tank.

"It was a security failure, undermining what was thought to be an aggressive and successful layered approach toward Gaza by Israel," he said.

For Israelis, images of dead bodies lying in the streets or groups of civilians being driven or marched into captivity in Gaza came as a profound shock.

More than 250 Israelis were killed and over 1,500 wounded, an unprecedented number of Israeli victims in a single day. The military suffered significant losses and Palestinian groups said they had captured dozens of soldiers.



The gunmen also seized security posts including a police station in the southern town of Sderot and overran the Erez crossing, a high security facility that channels people entering and leaving Gaza through a tight series of controls.

On Saturday, Hamas media circulated footage showing fighters ranging through abandoned offices and running past the high concrete walls of the site.

"They've been planning this for a long time," said former Israeli National Security Advisor Eyal Hulata. "Obviously this is a very coordinated attack, and unfortunately they were able to surprise us tactically and cause devastating damage."

Major airlines cancel dozens of flights to Tel Aviv

AFP, Paris

Major airlines have cancelled dozens of flights to Tel Aviv this weekend after the Palestinian militant group Hamas launched a surprise large-scale attack against Israel.

American Airlines, Air France, Lufthansa, Emirates and Ryanair are among those pulling flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport.

However, airport authorities did not stop commercial air links with Israel's second international airport at Eilat, a tourist destination on the Red Sea.

And Israeli flag carrier El Al said yesterday that it was maintaining its Tel Aviv flights for now, though some flights operated by foreign partners had been cancelled.

"We might cancel flights to places where we don't have a lot of Israelis to help other Israelis in other places," a spokeswoman told AFP.

In a statement, El Al added that it was operating "in accordance with the instructions of the Israeli security forces", with all flights now departing only from Terminal 3 at Ben Gurion airport.

Like most other airlines, it said clients could change their tickets without charge.

INCURSION INTO ISRAEL

Hamas forces detour from Saudi-Israel momentum

AFP, Washington

With its surprise attack against Israel, Hamas has violently shifted the world's eyes back to the Palestinians and dealt a severe blow to momentum to secure a landmark US-brokered deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian-backed Islamist group who run the impoverished, blockaded Gaza Strip on Saturday fired thousands of rockets and infiltrated forces into Israel, 50 years after Arab states' assault on Israel during the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was at war. Just weeks earlier he had brushed aside the Palestinian issue during a speech at the United Nations and said normalization in 2020 with three other Arab nations in the so-called Abraham Accords had "heralded a new age of peace."

Netanyahu also said Israel was on the cusp of a bigger prize -- recognition by Saudi Arabia, guardian of Islam's two holiest sites.

President Joe Biden, eager before next year's US election for a major diplomatic win, has pushed for a deal, and more talks were expected in coming weeks -- despite skepticism from some of Biden's fellow Democrats about the proposed security guarantees to the conservative kingdom, whose rights record has long been under scrutiny.

"It was always a tough hill to climb, and that hill just got a lot steeper," said Brian Katulis, vice president of policy at the Middle East Institute in Washington. The violence throws a spotlight on disputes between Israel and the Palestinians and "makes it harder to sweep those complicated issues under the rug the way the 2020 Abraham Accords did," he said.

Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has spoken recently of progress with Israel but also insisted on movement on the Palestinian cause, seen as a priority for the aging King Salman. Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry returned to familiar language Saturday, saying in a statement that the kingdom had been warning of an "explosive situation as a result of the continued occupation and deprivation of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights."

Aziz Alghashian, a Saudi expert on Saudi-Israeli relations, said the statement was intended to dispel any notion that the kingdom would prioritize normalization at the expense of supporting the Palestinians. "This kind of situation has made Saudi Arabia go back to its traditional role," he said. "Netanyahu put another obstacle to these normalization talks because he said this is now a war. I don't anticipate normalization is going to take place against the backdrop of war," Alghashian said.

A US official said it was "premature" to discuss the violence's effect on normalization, as Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed the conflict with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, by telephone. A Saudi readout of the call said Prince Faisal stressed "the kingdom's rejection of targeting civilians in any way and the need for all parties to respect international humanitarian law."

Netanyahu has cast diplomacy with the Palestinians as antiquated and described a future of friendship with Gulf Arabs, who share Israel's hostility toward Iran's clerical rulers.



UKRAINE'S KHERSON REGION

Dozen hurt in Russian attack

REUTERS

A dozen people were wounded, including a 27-year-old woman and her 9-month-old baby, in a Russian attack on the southern Ukrainian region of Kherson, its governor said yesterday.

"The Kherson region experienced another terrible night," Governor Oleksandr Prokudin wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

The woman and the infant were hospitalised with moderate wounds, he said, adding that a 33-year-old Red Cross medic was also wounded. Several houses and gas pipelines were damaged in the attack.

Over the past 24 hours, Russian forces carried out 59 attacks on Kherson, the region's administration said on Telegram, including 19 instances of shelling of Kherson city, the region's administrative centre.

Russia has frequently carried out air strikes and shelling on Ukraine since the start of its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Ukraine says its counteroffensive in the south and east is gradually making progress.

Both sides deny targeting civilians, but thousands of civilians in Ukraine have been killed in attacks that have hit residential areas as well as energy, defence, port, grain and other facilities.

Russia's defence ministry said the country's air defence systems had "detected and destroyed" two Ukrainian S-200 anti-aircraft missiles, thwarting attacks it said Kyiv attempted four hours apart on the Crimean Peninsula on Saturday.

At 10:25 pm in Moscow, Ukrainian public broadcaster Suspilne quoted a resident as saying two explosions rang out in the area of Yevtaporiya in the west of Crimea.



Protesters hold Spain's, EU's flags and 'No to amnesty' signs during a right-wing protest against plans to grant Catalan separatists an amnesty in order to form Spain's next government, in Barcelona, Spain yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

150 trucks stopped, few destroyed, in Manipur

TNN, Imphal

As many as 150 trucks were stopped, a few destroyed, and keys snatched from some of them during an indefinite economic blockade on NH-2 imposed since Thursday by Senapati District Students' Association, which is from Manipur's hill district abutting Nagaland.

This was in protest against the ongoing ban on mobile net services in Manipur, where the government extended the restriction on Friday until October 11.

NH-2 connects Dimapur in Nagaland with Imphal and is a crucial lifeline for Manipur, especially the Imphal valley, as it facilitates transportation of essential commodities such as food, medicines, fuel, cooking gas, and other necessities.

The students' union had issued an ultimatum to the government, demanding lifting of the ban by Friday.