

12 of 20 DOCUMENTS

Associated Press Worldstream

May 18, 2003 Sunday

## **Suicide bomber** dressed as religious **Jew** to blend in with Israeli bus passengers

**BYLINE:** JASON KEYSER; Associated Press Writer

**SECTION:** INTERNATIONAL NEWS

**LENGTH:** 734 words

**DATELINE:** **JERUSALEM**

The sun was just rising on a regular Israeli workday as the No. 6 bus rumbled quietly along Sunday. A soldier dozed in the back with headphones on. From her seat, another soldier, like many edgy bus riders in Israel, eyed her fellow passengers, but saw nothing to cause alarm.

As the bus neared a busy intersection, a nondescript man wearing the prayer shawl and skull cap of religious **Jews** detonated a bomb, blowing himself up and killing seven passengers. The force of the blast punched a gaping hole in the front of the bus and showered the pavement with glass.

The gush of metal and fire tore through one of the driver's legs, and as he lost control of the vehicle its back end fishtailed, smashing a sidewalk bus stop shelter. The long, two-sectioned bus filled with smoke, and screams of panic and pain.

The bodies of the dead remained sitting upright in their seats, including that of a woman with short dark hair whose head slumped back and whose legs were still crossed. One man's body, heaved by the blast, leaned from a broken window.

The attacker struck a few minutes before 6 a.m. (0300 GMT) at one of **Jerusalem's** largest intersections, wedged between the Arab neighborhood of Shuafat and the Jewish neighborhood of French Hill in a part of **Jerusalem** that Israel captured in the 1967 war and that is claimed by the Palestinians.

Over nearly 32 months of violence, attackers have often struck the busy intersection, whose sidewalks are frequently crowded with hitchhikers and soldiers waiting for buses. Three other **suicide bombers** have killed seven bystanders there.

In November 2001, a gunman sprayed bullets into a bus at the intersection, killing two. Several car bombs also have shaken the neighborhood without causing injuries.

Thirty minutes after Sunday's bus attack, a second **suicide bomber**, apparently unable to pass police roadblocks that were quickly set up, detonated his explosives not far up the street, in an Arab neighborhood on the city's outskirts. He killed himself, but no one else was injured.

Sgt. Dekel Shai, 19, who had shut his eyes in the back of the bus on his way back to base after a weekend break, was jolted awake by the blast. He waved down a police car and went back to help the wounded. He tried to pry open the bus's front door, but his hands kept slipping on the blood-soaked surface.

Suicide bomber dressed as religious Jew to blend in with Israeli bus passengers  
Associated Press Worldstream May 18, 2003 Sunday

Shai said he used the tourniquet that all soldiers carry in their first aid kits to stop the bleeding in the bus driver's torn leg. The driver, Yitzhak Hayat, in his 50s, screamed in pain.

"He was panicking, so I just kissed him on the forehead to quiet him," recalled Shai from a hospital bed where he was under observation. "There were people panicking who I really wanted to help but I didn't know how."

Hayat was in serious but stable condition following surgery at a **Jerusalem** hospital.

Sgt. Vered Loyevsky, 19, another soldier on her way back to the base, said every time she travels by bus she keeps her M-16 rifle close at hand, knowing the weapon might be her only chance of stopping a potential bomber.

"When you are a soldier you have a lot of responsibility," she said.

Loyevsky followed the same ritual on Sunday, but said she saw nothing suspicious. She was recovering at a hospital from shrapnel wounds to her leg.

Sunday's bus bombing was the first such attack in **Jerusalem** since last November. Bombers have waged 93 suicide attacks, killing 357 bystanders, since the current violence erupted in September 2000. Most attacks are carried out by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a group linked to the mainstream Fatah, have claimed responsibility.

Police said the bomber was dressed in a white prayer shawl and skull cap worn by observant **Jews**, perhaps to give the impression he was coming home from morning prayers. Palestinian **suicide bombers** have dressed as Orthodox **Jews** and Israeli soldiers in the past. Some have dyed their hair blond to mingle into crowds unnoticed.

After the blast, Uri Lupolianski, **Jerusalem's** first ultra-Orthodox Jewish mayor, grimly surveyed the scene. Sunday's bombing was the first attack to occur since he took the post several months ago.

"I prayed every day before I was mayor for myself and for my family, but since I became mayor I pray for all the citizens of **Jerusalem**," he said. "Every day that I see things are OK, I'm so happy. Now, this is so terrible."  
jak/lja<

**LOAD-DATE:** May 19, 2003

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

Copyright 2003 Associated Press  
All Rights Reserved