

Who Are The Suicide Bombers?

ARTICLES #1-5

The suicide bombers can get right to their targets
By BBC News Online's Kate Milner

Suicide bomb attacks against Israeli targets have become the most dramatic and bloody weapon in the armoury of the Palestinian militant groups.

It is a measure of the hatred of Israel felt by some Palestinians that there appears to be no shortage of recruits ready to die for their cause.

The suicide bombers are typically unmarried men in their late teens and 20s.

They act in the belief that they will go straight to paradise, where they will get places of honour next to God.

Media-conscious

Most of the bombers are affiliated to the Palestinian militant groups Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

Such attacks are, according to analysts, planned meticulously, along the lines of a military operation.

In some cases, support teams transport the bomber by van or car to the location minutes before the detonation.

The Palestinian militant groups, which are Sunni Muslim, resemble the Lebanese Shia'a militant group Hezbollah in that they are acutely media-conscious and the timing and positioning of attacks are carefully considered to achieve the maximum public impact.

The explosives usually have a hand-pulled detonator rather than a button, because it is less likely to go off accidentally.

Promised rewards

Some media reports have speculated that suicide bombers take drugs before they go on their missions, but this would run contrary to the strict religious teachings they adhere to.

They are likely to be motivated by religious fervour.

According to Islamic tradition, he who gives his life for an Islamic cause will have his sins forgiven and a place reserved in paradise.

For many years, suicide attacks on Israelis have been seen by some Palestinians as just such acts of martyrdom.

Recruits are reassured by their organisation that their families will be looked after materially until they die, and there are charitable organisations that exist for this purpose.

Recruits are picked out from mosques, schools and religious institutions. They are likely to have shown particular dedication to the principles of Islam, and are singled out for deeper study.

ARTICLE #1

Gradually, they get more involved in political issues, and are taught the rewards that will await them if they sacrifice their lives.

Eventually, many of them will volunteer for a suicide mission, hoping for greater glory.

They will spend less and less time with their families and devote themselves to religious study and spiritual preparation. They are sent out with just a day or two's notice on how and where to blow themselves up.

Faced with men who embrace their mission with such zeal, Israeli security forces will have to be extra vigilant to stop them.

Why We Have Become Suicide Bombers

- Understanding Palestinian Terror

By Dr. Eyad Sarraj

A few weeks ago I said that the struggle of Palestinians today is how not to become a bomb and that the amazing thing is not the occurrence of the suicide bombing, rather the rarity of them.

The BBC interviewer appeared to understand. I was shocked because it is our understanding that the world out there will never understand. And who on earth in their right mind would understand terror and the killing of innocent people? Why do Palestinians kill themselves and Israelis in such a horrific way at the bus stop or in a crowded market? Do you really care to know? Well, let me try and explain.

I believe it is an act of absolute despair and a very serious stage of the seemingly perpetual conflict. Since the uprooting of the Palestinians in 1948 triggered by Irgun Jewish terror under the leadership of Yitzak Shamir and Menachem Begin, we have tried everything. We have tried Nasser and Arab Nationalism, only to be invaded in 1956 in our second homes in the refugee camps. It was only because of the Russian threat to bomb London and Paris, and the resolve of American president Eisenhower that ended the Israeli occupation.

We have tried the United Nations and its Security Council, which by the way have made excellent resolutions on our behalf. For example Resolution 194 calling on Israel to allow us to return to our homeland, but to no avail. So we kept wandering around, between airports and refugee camps, waiting for a hero or an earthquake. All we wanted was to go home. But our story was getting worse and we grew bitter as we heard that a Jew from Poland would be declared a citizen of our country - a country now called Israel. We were told that officially we were stateless with undefined nationality. So we went to universities. We believed then that Jews were so clever because they were educated. We were told that Jews controlled the world with their education. They are doctors, lawyers and scientists, never beggars or boxers. In twenty years many of us became university graduates and we were in every university. We had some pride. Some of our educated people formed the resistance movement. They believed that the Arab countries would never fight Israel, and that we had to force them to fight. Fatah with Yasser Arafat was born. They forced the Arabs to fight by inviting Israel to attack Egypt in 1967. In the course of six days the Arabs were defeated again but worse. This time we lost Gaza and the West Bank, Egypt lost Sinai, and Syria lost the Golan. In a sudden stroke our fate was sealed and we had to live under Israeli military occupation for thirty years. Do you know

ARTICLE #2

what does it mean to live under Israeli military occupation? Do you really care to know? Let me tell you a few things.

You are given an identity number and a permit to reside. If you leave the country for more than three years in succession, you lose that right to residence.

When you leave the country on a trip, you are given a laissez passez, a travelling document, valid for one year and it tells you in its recording of your particulars that you are of undefined nationality.

Israeli occupation means that you are called twice a year by the intelligence for routine interrogation and persuasion to work as an informer on your brothers and sisters. No one is spared. If you are to be a member of a political organisation you will be sentenced for ten years. For a military action you will be sentenced to life.

To survive under the Israeli occupation you are given the chance to work in the jobs that Israelis do not like, sweeping the streets, building houses, collecting fruit or harvesting. You will have to leave your home in the refugee camp in Gaza at 3 am, go through the road blocks and check posts, spend your day under the sun and surveillance returning home in the evening to collapse in bed for a few hours before the following day.

We simply became the slaves of our enemy. We are building their homes on our villages, and we clean their streets. Do you know what does it do to you when you have to be the slave of your enemy in order to survive. No you will never know how painful it is unless your country is occupied by another force. Only then will you learn how to watch in silence pretending not to see the torture of your friends and the humiliation of your father.

Do you know what it means for a child to see his father spat at and beaten before his eyes by an Israeli soldier? Nobody knows what happened to our children. We don't know ourselves except we observe that they lose respect for their fathers. So they, our children, the children of the stone as they became known, tried the Intifada - the Uprising. Seven long years our children were throwing stones and being killed daily. Nearly all our young men were arrested, the majority were tortured. All had to confess. The result was every one suspected that all people were spies. So, we were exhausted, tormented and brutalised. What else could we do to return to our home? We had almost forgotten that and all what we wanted was to be left alone.

What else could we try? Oh yes, peace. When the news came that Arafat had signed a peace treaty in Washington we were jubilant. At last we thought we were to get rid of that miserable life of military occupation, at last. So we had hope.

We could not believe our eyes when there were no more curfews and we could actually spend our evening on the beach or wander in streets which were now ours after eight o'clock at night. We were ecstatic. We even had elections and we had a parliament, so we were told.

Then came Binyamin Netanyahu.

He refused to meet Arafat and was clearly forced to shake hands in obvious disgust. He refused to free our prisoners, to have a safe passage for us to move between the West Bank and Gaza. He even surrounded our towns and villages with his tanks and arrested our policemen. Then he went after our holy places and opened a tunnel under our holiest Mosque. Tens of our children and also Israeli soldiers were killed because of that tunnel, but he went on insulting us and driving out our sanity.

Arafat called for patience and we were patient, then Netanyahu started to build settlements in Jerusalem and drive the remaining Palestinians out. Settlers in Hebron spat on our Prophet ﷺ and called him a pig. All in the name of peace we were humiliated, even arrested and tortured by Palestinian forces to protect the peace. Our Authority was turning against us to please Netanyahu. Our officials were driving in big cars and building big villas. They have VIP cards and cross the check posts like human beings while we are left to rot.

I've told you a few things. Now do you understand why we have turned into suicide killers?

Dr. Eyad Sarraj is a Palestinian Psychiatrist, Commissioner of Citizens Rights, and an Awardee of Physicians for Human Rights. He was detained three times by Arafat's forces during 1996.

The Women Suicide Bombers

Andrea Dworkin

There are good reasons for women suicide bombers, and anyone who knows what's happening to women in the Middle East can't be surprised.

This is not the first time there have been women martyrs from Palestine. Between June 1967 and October 1985, there were 353 terrorist attacks inside Israel and each caused casualties. In the era of Oslo and the early days of the Palestinian Authority there were a near endless parade of suicide bombers who murdered Israeli civilians in acts of terror. There were, in the interstices of the terrorists, young women, often women who had been raped, sometimes by men in their own families. Rather than face an ignominious death, the young women wrapped themselves with explosives and committed a glorious suicide, one that would raise them up into the elite of martyrdom. Now one sees the same happening with exemplary young women, whose motives have to do with trying to scale the heights of a woman-hating society. How does one rise up in a land where women are lower than the animals? If one does what the men do, does one get a measure of the respect the community gives the men?

It is better, easier, and more logical to blame the Israelis for women's suffering than to blame the men who both sexually abuse and then kill them according to honor society rules. Says one woman: "It is as if we were in a big prison, and the only thing we really have to lose is that. Imagine what it is like to be me, a proud, well-educated woman who has traveled to many countries. Then see what it is like to be an insect, for that is what the [Israeli] soldiers call us-cockroaches, dogs, insects."

The female suicide bombers are idealists who crave committing a pure act, one that will wipe away the stigma of being female. The Palestinian community is not sacrificing low women, women of no accomplishment, women with no future. Instead, the women suicide bombers are the society's best in terms of human resources, a perverted example of the best and the brightest. There are reasons for this.

The first has to do with sexual abuse. Israeli and Palestinian feminists have worked together in rape crisis centers to repair the torn hymens of Palestinian rape victims. This is a life-saving procedure, since sexual abuse is perceived as a form of the woman having prostituted. There is no empathy, no post-traumatic stress disorder, no redemption, no revenge against the rapist, no legal prosecution of him. Instead for the woman or girl there is secrecy or death. In becoming suicide bombers, women trade in the lowly status of the raped woman for the higher status of a martyr. The fact that women suicide bombers have not been recognized as such before this current onslaught of anti-Israeli aggression has to do with the invisibility of women in general and the necessary silence of injured women.

The second reason for women suicide bombers is to try to rise in the nationalist struggle so that when that struggle is over the status of women will be recognized as deserving of

citizenship and equality. In Algeria women fought heroically. All the rules that bind women seemed to change. Women were in the company of men. Women were brave. Women were not hidden. After liberation the women were pushed back down. A similar dynamic took place with Israeli women, needed to fight and to settle the land early on, now distinctly second-class, especially under increasingly influential religious law.

The third reason is pride: the deep-seated belief that a young woman can be as brave, as sacrificing, as willing to submit to revolutionary imperatives as men. Girls and young women want to stand up to the Israelis, hard to do in a landscape of maniacal fighting men. The best and brightest are motivated to stand up for their families: their beaten fathers, their destroyed homes, their angry mothers, and the brothers who are civilly superior to them.

In this time of terror, there is no tie between Israeli and Palestinian women, no conviction on the part of Palestinian women that the Israeli women they are killing have anything in common with them. Even though policy is made in both communities by aggressive, angry men, there is no sisterhood to speak of, no sense that there but for the grace of God go I. Instead adult Palestinian men pick out those needing or desiring martyrdom, strap explosives around them and send them into Hell, not Heaven. The more women want to prove their worth, the more women suicide bombers there will be. The lower the Israelis push the "cockroaches," the angrier the accomplished Palestinian women will be, and sisterhood between them and the young bombers will also disappear. The older women will let the younger women do the dirty work. They will not stop them.

Both Israeli and Palestinian men push women into an anti-sisterhood camouflaged as nationalist liberation.

Andrea Dworkin is the author of "Scapegoat: The Jews, Israel, and Women's Liberation." Her most recent book is "Heartbreak: The Political Memoir of a Feminist Militant."

Palestinian Support For Suicide Bombers

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Is this the path to justice for Palestinians?

By Martin Asser

BBC News Online

The Palestinian Authority leadership has frequently condemned the tactic of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians as a means of combating Israel's occupation, saying such attacks harm the Palestinian cause, not help it. But that view is clearly at odds with how most Palestinians see the bombings, which have brought death and terror to Israel's streets dozens of times since the intifada erupted in September 2000.

The June 2002 poll by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre showed that a large majority - nearly seven out of 10 people - supported the suicide operations, about 60% of those expressing their "strong" support.

The Palestinian view appears to be that, if their people - whether involved in the uprising or not - are being killed by Israeli forces, there is no reason why Israeli civilians should be exempt from the suffering.

However, as Israel has conducted its massive military operations in the West Bank over the past few months, support for suicide operations has weakened, from a high of 74% in December 2001 to the current 68%.

The fall is more marked in the West Bank - which has born the brunt of the crackdown - where the figure is 66%.

Eliminating Israel

But unfortunately for the Palestinians, what many still see as their most potent weapon - the indiscriminate human bomb - is seen by almost everybody else as illegitimate terrorism.

This is especially true in a post-11 September world where the "war on terror" has become a global clarion call.

A group of Palestinian liberal intellectuals has come out to say that suicide attacks are an obstacle to the achievement of legitimate goals enshrined by United Nations resolutions.

They are aware that attacks directed at the Israeli army would be more likely to garner international support, as many people around the world view Israel's occupation as illegal and unjust.

But the broader Palestinian population has become, if anything, more radicalised, setting its sights on something more than ending the occupation.

More than 51% see the liberation of all historic Palestine - and the removal of Israel from the map - as the true goal of the intifada, according to JMCC's findings.

And the Palestinians see the attacks at the heart of Israel as the way to achieve that goal, it seems.

The Israeli prime minister, with his threat to reoccupy Palestinian-controlled land until the suicide attacks end, hopes to shake the Palestinians back into the realisation that Israel's overwhelming military superiority will win the day.

That policy may also mean Israel has to give up less territory to the Palestinians in a final settlement.

Notes from a suicide manual

The introduction of Japanese kamikaze pilots was one of the most dramatic developments of the second world war. But what motivated these young men to fly their fatal missions? There are some clues in the manual they carried in their cockpits for inspiration, and which is now published in English for the first time. Here are some extracts.

Albert Axell
Thursday August 22, 2002
The Guardian

The mission of to-go units

Transcend life and death. When you eliminate all thoughts about life and death, you will be able to totally disregard your earthly life. This will also enable you to concentrate your attention on eradicating the enemy with unwavering determination, meanwhile reinforcing your excellence in flight skills.

Exert the best in yourself

Strike an enemy vessel that is either moored or at sea. Sink the enemy and thus pave the road for our people's victory.

Take a walk around the airfield

When you take this walk, be aware of your surroundings. This airstrip is the key to the success or failure of your mission. Devote all your attention to it. Look at the terrain. What are the characteristics of the ground? What are the length and width of the airstrip? In case you will take off at dusk, or early morning, or after sundown, what are the obstacles to be remembered: an electric pole, a tree, a house, a hill?

How to pilot a fully dressed-up [heavily equipped] aircraft that you dearly love

Before taking off. (After taxiing the plane from the camouflaged emplacement to the airstrip.) You can envision your target firmly in your mind as you bring your plane to a standstill.

Breathe deeply three times. Say in your mind: "Yah" (field), "Kyu" (ball), "Joh" (all right) as you breathe deeply. Proceed straight ahead on the airstrip. Otherwise you may damage the landing gears.

Circle above the airstrip right after take-off. Do so at the minimum height of 200m. Circle at an angle within five degrees and keep your nose pointed downwards.

Principles you should know

Keep your health in the very best condition. If you are not in top physical condition, you will not be able to achieve an ideal hit by tai-atari (body-crashing).

Just as you cannot fight well on an empty stomach, you cannot deftly manipulate the control stick if you are suffering from diarrhoea, and cannot exert calm judgment if you are tormented by fever.

Be always pure-hearted and cheerful

A loyal fighting man is a pure-hearted and filial son.

Attain a high level of spiritual training

In order that you can exert the highest possible capability, you must prepare well your inner self.

Some people say that spirit must come first before skill, but they are wrong. Spirit and skill are one. The two elements must be mastered together. Spirit supports skill and skill supports spirit.

Aborting your mission and returning to base

In the event of poor weather conditions when you cannot locate the target, or under other adverse circumstances, you may decide to return to base. Don't be discouraged. Do not waste your life lightly. You should not be possessed by petty emotions. Think how you can best defend the motherland. Remember what the wing commander has told you. You should return to the base jovially and without remorse.

When turning back and landing at the base

Discard the bomb at the area designated by the commanding officer. Fly in circles over the airfield. Observe conditions of the airstrip carefully. If you feel nervous, piss. Next, ascertain the direction of the wind and wind speed. Do you see any holes in the runway? Take three deep breaths.

The attack

Single-plane attack. Upon sighting a target, remove the (bomb's) safety pin. Go full speed ahead towards the target. Dive! Surprise the enemy. Don't let the enemy take time to counter your attack. Charge! Remember: the enemy may change course but be prepared for the enemy's evasive action. Be alert and avoid enemy fighters and flak fire.

Dive attack

This varies depending on the type of the aircraft. If you are approaching the enemy from a height of 6,000m, adjust your speed twice; or from a lower height of 4,000m, adjust speed once.

When you begin your dive, you must harmonise the height at which you commence the final attack with your speed. Beware of over-speeding and a too-steep angle of dive that will make the controls harder to respond to your touch. But an angle of dive that is too small will result in reduced speed and not enough impact on crashing.

Where to crash (the enemy's fatal spots)

Where should you aim? When diving and crashing on to a ship, aim for a point between the bridge tower and the smoke stack(s). Entering the stack is also effective.

Avoid hitting the bridge tower or a gun turret. In the case of an aircraft carrier, aim at the elevators. Or if that is difficult, hit the flight deck at the ship's stern.

For a low-altitude horizontal attack, aim at the middle of the vessel, slightly higher than the waterline. If that is difficult, in the case of an aircraft carrier, aim at the entrance to the aircraft hangar, or the bottom of the stack. For other vessels, aim close to the aft engine room.

Just before the crash

Your speed is at maximum. The plane tends to lift. But you can prevent this by pushing the elevator control forward sufficiently to allow for the increase in speed. Do your best. Push forward with all your might.

You have lived for 20 years or more. You must exert your full might for the last time in your life. Exert supernatural strength.

At the very moment of impact: do your best. Every deity and the spirits of your dead comrades are watching you intently. Just before the collision it is essential that you do not shut your eyes for

a moment so as not to miss the target. Many have crashed into the targets with wide-open eyes. They will tell you what fun they had.

You are now 30m from the target

You will sense that your speed has suddenly and abruptly increased. You feel that the speed has increased by a few thousand-fold. It is like a long shot in a movie suddenly turning into a close-up, and the scene expands in your face.

The moment of the crash

You are two or three metres from the target. You can see clearly the muzzles of the enemy's guns. You feel that you are suddenly floating in the air. At that moment, you see your mother's face. She is not smiling or crying. It is her usual face.

All the happy memories

You won't precisely remember them but they are like a dream or a fantasy. You are relaxed and a smile creases your face. The sweet atmosphere of your boyhood days returns.

You view all that you experienced in your 20-odd years of life in rapid succession. But these things are not very clear.

In any event, only delightful memories come back to you. You cannot see your own face at that moment. But because of a succession of pleasant memories flashing through your mind, you feel that you smiled at the last moment. You may nod then, or wonder what happened. You may even hear a final sound like the breaking of crystal. Then you are no more.

Points to remember when making your last dive

Crashing bodily into a target is not easy. It causes the enemy great damage. Therefore the enemy will exert every means to avoid a hit.

Suddenly, you may become confused. You are liable to make an error. But hold on to the unshakeable conviction to the last moment that you will sink the enemy ship.

Remember when diving into the enemy to shout at the top of your lungs: "Hissatsu!" ("Sink without fail!") At that moment, all the cherry blossoms at Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo will smile brightly at you.

· Extracted from Kamikaze by Albert Axell. To be published this month by Pearson Education Ltd, price £19.99. www.history-minds.com.