

Fast Facts: The “Lions’ Den” terror group

Published: October 28, 2022



Logo of the Lion's Den terror group (Image: [Wikimedia](#))

Key points

- The Lions’ Den is a small terrorist group in the West Bank that has committed several terror attacks
- It has inspired the creation of several other groups organisations in the same area
- The group has committed several terror attacks, including the murder of an IDF soldier
- The Lions’ Den is based in Jenin, a city in the West Bank that has become notorious for being controlled by several major terrorist groups

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Summary

The Lions' Den is a terrorist organisation that emerged in 2022 and is run by several dozen Palestinians in the northern West Bank. The terror group is ideologically opposed to both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, even though the latter have publicly praised them. The Lions' Den has carried out multiple terror attacks, including killing IDF soldier Ido Baruch, putting a large IED at the Kedumim gas station, shooting at the Har Bracha and Shavei Shomron settlements, and firing upon vehicles in the Nablus area. While there is no official affiliation, there is evidence that Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad have both provided financial support to the Lions' Den.

Read more: [Growing security challenges in the northern West Bank](#)

What is 'The Lions' Dens'?



The IDF have carried out anti-terror operations in the northern West Bank (Image: Wikimedia)

The “Lions’ Den” is a terrorist group of a few dozen armed Palestinians operating from Nablus in the northern West Bank.

It was founded by Mohammad al-Azizi after the IDF raided a July 25 meeting this year held in Nablus to coordinate the activities of terrorists from Fatah (Tanzim), Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

The name is related to a 2007 terrorist group called Nablus’ Night Knights, which was dissolved in 2008.

Also, in Palestinian slang, Lions is a nickname for Palestinians living in the West Bank (not Gazans), so the West Bank is ‘the Lions’ den’.

The most well-known member of the group was Ibrahim Nablusi (in Arabic, Nablusi means “from Nablus”) a criminal who was responsible for several shooting terror attacks on Israelis who was killed by the IDF in August.

‘Fast Facts’ are snapshots of rapidly evolving situations. This specific page will not be updated, but we are monitoring developments and will issue a new fact sheet if doing so is useful.

Before they created their group, many of its members were petty criminals engaged in burglary and extortion in the Nablus area.

Read more: [AIJAC condemns deadly Jerusalem terror attack](#)

How 'Lions' Den' differs from other terrorist groups

This group and others in Jenin and Nablus have emerged due to lack of governance and enforcement of law and order by the weak and corrupt Palestinian Authority.

Jenin, once labelled “the capital of the second Intifada”, has become a hornets’ nest for crime and terror. Without effective PA activity, terror cells quickly emerge there.

Nabulsi and other Lions’ Den members have become popular on Palestinian social media, hailed as heroes and martyrs after they were able to avoid, at least for a while, being caught or killed by Israel. Even PA officials have praised them, given their popularity, while PA security forces officers have made false claims that they fought against the IDF alongside Lions’ Den.

The group represents a new generation of disgruntled and frustrated Palestinians, who despise both the PA and Israel.

During its existence, the group has challenged the PLO narrative about unity between diaspora and West Bank and Gaza Palestinians, and instead aspires to assert its dominance among West Bank Palestinians as the leader of its people there.

The group’s emergence represents a warning regarding what might happen if and when Palestinian internal conflict escalates as the tenure of ageing PA leader Mahmoud Abbas approaches its end – the prospect of chaos, with terrorist gangs controlling the streets and the agenda.

Read more: [IDF facing prolonged escalation in West Bank](#)

Is the Lions' Den coordinated with Hamas or other terror organisations?

The group claims that despite originating from different terrorist organisations, its members are above the organisational affiliation of their previous groups and operate in unison. That's why, for example, they all wear the same-coloured uniforms, and don't appear with a flag of any of their original terrorist groups.

However, there is evidence that Lions' Den has been supported by funding from both Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Jenin bridges – different terror cell?

The Lions' Den has imitators that have emerged in recent weeks. They are not the same group though.

Examples include “The Lights of the Hawks” in Tulkarm, and the “Lions of Justice Brigade” in Hebron, whose objective is to “protect the civilians” whenever IDF forces enter the area.

Read more:

[Fact Sheet: “House and Garden” – An IDF operation targeting terror infrastructure in Jenin](#)

What attacks has the group carried out?

Among the terror attacks LD has conducted are:

- Murdering IDF soldier Ido Baruch (Oct. 12)
- Shooting at the Har Bracha and Shavei Shomron settlements.
- Firing on vehicles in the Nablus area.
- Shooting at army positions around Nablus.
- Placing a large IED at the Kedumim gas station, which miraculously did not explode.

One terrorist linked to the group managed to reach Jaffa, part of the Tel Aviv area, armed with an improvised weapon and explosive devices. Fortunately, he was captured by Israeli security forces before he could execute a planned attack.

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Read more: [Denying Israel's right to stop terrorists undermines peace](#)

How has Israel responded?

The Israeli army has killed or arrested numerous members of the Lions' Den over recent months, but a few others remain on the loose. As recently as October 26, IDF troops arrested three members of the loosely organised terror group. This follows the killing of the apparent [leader](#) of the group by Israeli troops on Oct. 25, as well as four other gunmen in a raid in the Kasbah of Nablus which also destroyed a bomb factory the group was running.

The IDF is hunting down the remaining group members. One senior member, Tamer al Kilani, was killed on Oct 22 by using an explosive mounted on his motorcycle, an attack many commentators attribute to Israeli security forces.

It should be noted that in recent days the PA security apparatuses have started to assist – although in a limited matter – in controlling Lions' Den because it considers the group a threat to itself. There are recent reports that four leaders of the group decided to [surrender to PA security forces](#) in the hope of reaching an agreement with it regarding their activities. Following this surrender, they were widely mocked on Palestinian social media. Some analysts have suggested that these events, together with the IDF and PA actions against it, may effectively signal the end of this terror group.

Read more: [Israel will continue to act in self-defence against Palestinian terror](#)