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Hamas financier detained

Jenin resident detained on suspicion of funneling funds to families of suicide bombers; Defense establishment: Arrest blow to terror

Efrat Weiss



Money for relatives of terrorists



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Cleared for publication: Ahmed Saltana, a Hamas member from Jenin who headed the organization's charity funds committee, was detained on suspicion of funneling donation money from across the world to families of Palestinian suicide bombers and prisoners.

The committee dealt with about USD 1 million per year, collected through alleged charity organizations in Europe, North America and Arab countries. The money was transferred to families of suicide bombers, prisoners and Hamas members in order to reward them for their activities.

Relatives of the terrorist who carried out the suicide bombing in Jerusalem's Sbarro restaurant, in which 15 Israelis were murdered and 107 were wounded, were also among the receivers of financial support through the committee.

Other fund receivers were the families of Hamas' members in Jenin who were killed since the IDF's Defensive Shield operation in 2002.

In the past few months, the Shin Bet and the Police International Investigations Branch have conducted a joint investigation as part of the war against terror financing.

Saltana, 43, served a prison sentence between 1993 and 1996 for his activities in Hamas. He was arrested during a large-scale IDF and Shin Bet operation on September 25, 2005.

Saltana has been working for the charity funds committee in Jenin for 16 years, and had also run the committee's offices during the past nine years.

Defense establishment officials said that fact that the suspect will be put on trial and the consequential damage caused to the committee's work constitute a blow to Hamas' infrastructure in Jenin, which is an inseparable part of the organization in the form of economic backing aimed at encouraging acts of terror.

The officials said the damage caused by the arrest may reduce the motivation among Palestinian youths in Jenin to execute suicide bombings in Israel and may thwart the promotion of terror against Israeli residents.

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