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## MIDEAST



Brian Hendler

Leah, one of two surviving daughters of the Schyveschoorder family, is rolled on a stretcher to attend the Jerusalem funeral of her parents and three of her siblings who were killed in a 2001 Palestinian suicide attack on the Sbarro pizzeria.

## FIRST PERSON

# Five years after Sbarro bombing, bereaved mom mulls others' losses

By [Frimet Roth](#)

August 9, 2006

JERUSALEM, Aug. 8 (JTA) — With war raging against Hezbollah, it's easy to overlook Israel's other threat. The events of this day, five years ago, provide a stark reminder of the enemy across our southern border: Hamas.

On Aug. 9, 2001, Izzadin al-Masri, the 22-year-old son of a well-to-do restaurateur, and Ahlam Tamimi, a 20-year-old university student and part-time journalist, set out. Hamas had trained and equipped them. Tamimi had scouted for and located the target — the popular Sbarro's restaurant in downtown Jerusalem.

Tamimi, in revealing Western clothing, was disguised as a young Israeli woman. Masri had a guitar case slung over his shoulder, packed with 5 kilograms of explosives — along with nails, screws and bolts to exacerbate the injuries.

Chatting in English and carrying a camera, they passed an Israeli checkpoint between eastern and western Jerusalem. When they reached the unguarded entrance to the crowded pizzeria, Tamimi and Masri parted. He entered the eatery alone and detonated his bomb.

My 15-year-old daughter, Malki, had entered moments earlier with her friend, Michal Raziel. I know from speaking with a survivor that the girls were standing on line waiting to order. Each was urging the other to go first.

That was all I knew about what happened inside the restaurant that afternoon — until I interviewed Esther Shoshan.

"I was upstairs with one of my daughters," Shoshan recalled. "We'd wanted to sit downstairs where it's roomy, near the windows. But it was too crowded. Two of my daughters had gone to park the car. Two others, Miriam and Yocheved, went down to the lower level to get our food.

"Then there was an enormous blast. The place went dark. People started screaming, 'Pigua! Pigua!' " — terror attack.

"We ran downstairs. There was a terrible stench. I saw body parts everywhere. Here a limb, there a head. The bodies were bloated. There was water everywhere; I have no idea where it came from. I searched for my children.

"My two daughters who had gone to the car park arrived seconds later. The older one came inside and found Miriam and Yocheved. They were on fire. She managed to put out the flames but then was rushed away by rescue workers."

Shoshan was taken to a local hospital. She left shortly afterward to keep searching for the two children she had left at the scene.

She located Miriam, 15, at Hadassah-University Hospital. She had suffered third-degree burns on 40 percent of her body. Sixty nails were lodged inside her, many only millimeters from vital organs. Her spleen was ruptured and there was a gaping hole in her right thigh.

Yocheved, 10, could not be found in any of the city's hospitals. Later that day, a cousin and uncle identified her body at the Abu Kabir morgue. She

was buried at midnight.

"I was torn between grief and Miriam's rehabilitation," Shoshan recalled. "She came home only a year later, after five operations."

All told, 15 people died in the Sbarro attack that day, including eight children, and 130 were injured. Since then, their families have been grappling with grief.

Shifra Hayman and her husband are among them. In 2001, they were living in Los Angeles when their only child, Shoshana Greenbaum, went to Israel to study for a few weeks. Greenbaum, three months pregnant, died in the attack.

The Haymans are religiously observant and wanted Greenbaum buried according to Jewish tradition as quickly as possible and in Israel. Since they don't travel on Shabbat, they were unable to arrive in time for their daughter's funeral.

Hayman, a medical social worker, seeks the positive.

"Shoshana's wristwatch, which was sent to us after the attack was, miraculously, still running when we got it," she recounted, "which must reflect some gentleness in the way" God "took her life."

Hayman recalled her last conversation with her daughter, a night before her murder.

"I remember how grateful I was for the conversation I'd had the previous night with Shoshana. She'd been so happy," she said.

Chana Nachenberg has been in a coma since the attack. Her parents visit her in the hospital every day.

Her husband, David, works as a sports journalist and as a child-care assistant close to his home so he can be available for the couple's daughter, who is now 8.

David recently obtained a rare rabbinical dispensation to remarry, but hasn't been able to bring himself to begin dating.

"Who would want to go out with me?" he asks. "I'm not like a widower or a divorcee. Women will be afraid that my wife might wake up one day and that I'd divorce them to return to her."

Mordechai and Tzira Schijveschuuder had brought five of their eight children to Jerusalem for a break from the tense security situation at home in the West Bank settlement of Talmon. Only two daughters, Leah and Chaya, survived the Sbarro bombing.

Elisheva Moshkovitz, Mordechai's sister, and her husband, Moshe, Tzira's uncle, are raising the girls.

"We moved into my brother's home in Talmon immediately afterward and stayed there for six weeks," Moshkovitz said. "It was a very difficult time for us, even financially. I had been in an accident and wasn't working. We had trouble paying the grocery bills. There was almost no help from anyone."

Encountering other Sbarro victims strengthens my resolve to keep the memory of this crime alive.

When, as happens a lot these days, the government mentions the possibility of a prisoner release, a shiver goes down my spine. Hamas is demanding the release of women prisoners, including Tamimi — who is serving 16 life sentences in an Israeli prison — in exchange for a captured Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

The Israeli government has steadfastly refused to release terrorists with blood on their hands. In any case, remorse or repentance could not be further from Tamimi's mind.

She made this clear five months ago when she told journalists: "I'm not sorry for what I did. I will get out of prison and I refuse to recognize Israel's existence."

"We will become free from Israeli occupation and then I will also be free from prison," she said.

Along with the other Sbarro families, I remember my lost loved one. We are determined to help keep their murderer, Ahlam Tamimi, behind bars until the end of her days.

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