

From Times Online

February 18, 2010

Arrest the head of Mossad, says Dubai police chief

Jenny Booth, Hugh Tomlinson, Sheera Frenkel and David Sharrock

Interpol must issue an arrest warrant to help locate the head of Mossad, the chief of Dubai's police force said today.

The International Policing Organisation has issued "red notices" for the hit squad who used false identities when they targeted the Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Mabhouh.

But Dahi Khalfan Tamin, the emirate's police chief, called for such a warrant to be used against the head of Mossad as well because he believes it is likely that the Israeli spy agency was behind the killing.

In pre-recorded comments to Dubai TV he called on the organisation to issue "a red notice against the head of Mossad ... as a killer in case Mossad is proved to be behind the crime, which is likely now".

Meanwhile the Foreign Secretary today described the cloning of six British passports in a suspected Mossad assassination as an "outrage" and denied that Britain was "going through the motions" in its dealings with Israel over the issue.

Ron Prosor, the Israeli ambassador, was asked to attend a 15-minute meeting today at the Foreign Office with Sir Peter Ricketts, the Permanent Secretary who heads Britain's diplomatic service.

As he left Whitehall, Mr Prosor stressed that he had been "invited" rather than summoned to the meeting, signalling that it was not a diplomatic dressing down.

"I was unable to add any additional information to Sir Peter Ricketts' request," he told journalists afterwards. "As you know it is not the usual way to talk about what happens inside these meetings."

Mr Miliband, who was not present, said afterwards that British officials had stressed how seriously the UK government was taking the possible abuse of UK travel documents by a friendly government.

"What the Permanent Secretary made clear is that we hope and expect Israel will co-operate fully with the investigation (that has been launched by Gordon Brown and is being undertaken by the Serious and Organised Crime Agency), and to send back to his government the seriousness with which we are addressing this situation," said Mr Miliband.

"There has obviously been a very serious incident involving British passports and British passport holders who woke up yesterday morning extremely worried."

Mr Miliband denied that the mild step of inviting Mr Prosor in for talks was merely "going through the motions", and pointed out that Soca's inquiry was still ongoing. Later, on the Jeremy Vine radio show, he described the misuse of passports as an "outrage".

"The most important thing is to get to the bottom of the misuse of fraudulent British passports," he added.

He revealed that the cloned passports had been of the old style, without the latest microchip technology that makes them harder to clone.

Mr Tamim said today that he is 99 per cent sure that Israel was involved in the killing.

"Our investigations reveal that Mossad is involved in the murder of al-Mabhouh. It is 99 per cent, if not 100 per cent, that Mossad is standing behind the murder," he said.

Dubai police now believe that the assassination team comprised 18 members, and that they used a location in Austria as a "command centre."

Six of the suspected killers used the fake travel documents cloned from the passports of British citizens now living in Israel. A further three used falsified Irish papers, and a tenth, believed to be the plot's mastermind, used false French documents. France has this afternoon demanded an explanation from Israel of the use of one of its passports.

Ireland meanwhile called in Zion Evrony, the Israeli ambassador to Dublin, for talks today with David Cooney, the secretary general of the Department of Foreign Affairs, inside Iveagh House, the Department of Foreign Affairs on Dublin's St Stephen's Green.

Speaking after his hour-long meeting, Mr Evrony echoed Mr Prosor, saying: "I told him I don't know anything about the event - beyond that it is not customary to share the content of diplomatic meetings," before departing in his official car.

The three forged Irish passports used by the Dubai murder suspect were at first said by the Irish government to have been completely fake, but today it conceded that these too had been cloned from the travel documents of three genuine Irish citizens.

Two have been contacted while the gardai are still trying to find the third. All three are believed by Irish authorities to be innocent victims of passport theft, with the photographs and names on the stolen documents changed. The two already contacted are both resident in Ireland, and it is understood they were due to travel abroad this weekend.

Michael Martin, the Irish foreign minister, said that if the two had gone ahead with their travel plans they would probably have been taken into custody "because Interpol would be on red alert".

Britain has been under pressure to take a tough line with Israel, which has refused to confirm or deny whether the Mossad, its intelligence service, was involved in the plot.

David Cameron, the Tory leader, said: "At the very least we need some assurances about the future to make sure that whatever has happened in the past this can't happen again, and I would expect the Government to ask some pretty tough questions."

Yesterday, in the first official comments from Israel on the case, Avigdor Lieberman, the Foreign Minister, told Israeli army radio that Mossad involvement should not be assumed. It was Israel's policy never to comment on such matters, he said.

Mr Lieberman also played down fears of a diplomatic rift with Britain, adding: "I think Britain recognises that Israel is a responsible country and that our security activity is conducted according to very clear, cautious and responsible rules of the game. Therefore we have no cause for concern."

In a further twist that may suggest that al-Mabhouh was betrayed by his own countrymen, Jordan today revealed the names of two employees of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank whom it said it had extradited back to Dubai for questioning over al-Mabhouh's death.

They are Ahmad Hasnin, an intelligence operative, and Anwar Shekhaiber, a PA official in Ramallah, Jordanian officials said. Hamas claimed that both were members of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement.

A third man, named by Palestinian media as Nahro Massoud, a Hamas security operative, has been arrested in Damascus.

All three were residents of the Gaza Strip until the Hamas takeover in June 2007. A Hamas official in Gaza said it was "likely" they knew al-Mabhouh, who quit Gaza in 1989 after abducting and murdering two Israeli soldiers, and continued to help Hamas from abroad by arranging arms shipments.

Interpol today launched an international manhunt for the Dubai assassins, placing the 11 suspects whose pictures feature in the cloned British, Irish, French and German passports on its most wanted list.

"Since the names on the passports discovered as part of the Dubai Police's investigation are most likely the names of real and innocent people whose identities have been stolen, Interpol does not believe that we know the true identities of these wanted persons," said Ron Noble, the secretary general of Interpol.

Mr Noble told the World Economic Forum in Davos last month that passport fraud by criminals and terrorists currently posed the biggest threat to international security. Sharing passport information between different immigration authorities was a far more effective way to tackle the threat than body scanners, he said.

[Contact our advertising team](#) for advertising and sponsorship in Times Online, The Times and The Sunday Times, or place your [advertisement](#).

Times Online Services: [Dating](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Property Search](#) | [Used Cars](#) | [Holidays](#) | [Births, Marriages, Deaths](#) | [Subscriptions](#) | [E-paper](#)
News International associated websites: [Milkround](#)

Copyright 2010 Times Newspapers Ltd.

This service is provided on Times Newspapers' [standard Terms and Conditions](#). Please read our [Privacy Policy](#). To inquire about a licence to reproduce material from Times Online, The Times or The Sunday Times, click [here](#). This website is published by a member of the News International Group. News International Limited, 1 Virginia St, London E98 1XY, is the holding company for the News International group and is registered in England No 81701. VAT number GB 243 8054 69.

