

Dubai assassination squad carried diplomatic passports

Police in Dubai said that some of the assassins involved in last month's killing of a Hamas commander had entered the emirate carrying diplomatic passports.

By Adrian Blomfield in Jerusalem and Richard Spencer in Dubai

Published: 8:22PM GMT 21 Feb 2010

The claim will intensify the pressure on Israel, whose foreign minister is due to meet David Miliband and other European envoys in Brussels today. Avigdor Lieberman will face questions about allegations that Mossad agents posing as Europeans and travelling on false passports were behind the killing.

Providing fresh details yesterday about the identity of a second group involved in the assassination of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, Dubai's police chief disclosed that up to three of the killers carried documents identifying themselves as foreign diplomats.



Suspects wanted in connection with the killing of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, clockwise from top left: Michael Lawrence Barney, James Leonard Clarke, Stephen Daniel Hodes, Paul John Keeley, Melvyn Adam Mildiner Photo: AP

Related Articles

[EU 'concerned' over passports used in assassination](/news/worldnews/europe/eu/7291070/EU-extremely-concerned-over-passports-used-in-Hamas-assassination.html) (/news/worldnews/europe/eu/7291070/EU-extremely-concerned-over-passports-used-in-Hamas-assassination.html)

[Mossad: the elite women who work for 'the family'](/news/features/7280625/Mossad-the-elite-women-who-work-for-the-family.html) (/news/features/7280625/Mossad-the-elite-women-who-work-for-the-family.html)

[Mossad: the Keystone spoofs](/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/7280578/Mossad-the-Keystone-spoofs.html) (/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/7280578/Mossad-the-Keystone-spoofs.html)

[Dubai and Israel's own suicide mission](http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/juliankossoff/100026695/dubai-and-israels-own-suicide-mission/) (<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/juliankossoff/100026695/dubai-and-israels-own-suicide-mission/>)

[Dubai police chief: arrest head of Mossad](/news/worldnews/middleeast/dubai/7265392/Miliband-use-of-fake-British-passports-in-Dubai-hit-is-an-outrage.html) (/news/worldnews/middleeast/dubai/7265392/Miliband-use-of-fake-British-passports-in-Dubai-hit-is-an-outrage.html)

[How I escaped Mossad's clutches](/news/features/7272511/How-I-escaped-Mossads-clutches.html) (/news/features/7272511/How-I-escaped-Mossads-clutches.html)

"There is information that the Dubai police will not make public for the moment, especially regarding diplomatic passports," Lt Gen Dahi Khalfan told a local newspaper.

Although he did not elaborate, the disclosure is certain to increase diplomatic tensions between Israel and European countries, including Britain. Any fraudulent use of diplomatic passports would be considered a grave security breach by the country, or countries, that issued them.

David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, will once again raise Britain's concerns when he meets Mr Lieberman on the sidelines of a European Union foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels. Israel has so far shown little willingness to co-operate with Britain as it investigates how the doctored passports of six of its nationals, all residents in the Jewish state, came to be used by some of the assassins. Last week, Dubai disclosed that 11 members of the 18-strong assassination squad carried European passports – six British, three Irish, one German and one French.

Two Palestinians alleged to have provided logistical support to the operation are in custody in Dubai, but police in the Gulf state have

largely remained silent about the identities of the remaining five individuals.

Officials in Dubai yesterday confirmed speculation that two of the five held Irish passports, suggesting that at least one of the other three carried diplomatic documentation.

European states seeking answers from Israel seem unlikely to get them. Last week, Ron Prossor, the Israeli ambassador to London, said he was “unable to assist” and similar messages have been relayed by envoys to Ireland and Germany.

Israel is convinced it has averted a diplomatic crisis. At the weekend, the country’s deputy foreign minister, Danny Ayalon, said he foresaw no diplomatic fallout because there was no irrefutable evidence linking Israel to the killing.

It emerged yesterday that one of the assassins allegedly applied in person for a German passport by passing himself off as the descendant of Holocaust survivors. According to Germany’s Der Spiegel magazine, the man was given a passport in the name of Michael Bodenheimer by authorities in Cologne after providing documents showing that he was of German lineage and that his grandparents had been persecuted by the Nazis.

Police also disclosed that several of the assassins visited Dubai on reconnaissance missions in the year leading up to the killing of Mr Mabhouh, suggesting that the plot was planned further in advance than was initially believed.