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Israel Foreign Ministry: No Hostages Released

Indian TV says that with the release of captives from the Oberoi Hotel, the hostage situation in Mumbai is over. Israeli sources say otherwise.

By Hana Levi Julian & Nissan Ratzlav-Katz

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With the release of more than 30 hostages held by jihadist terrorists at the Oberoi Trident Hotel in Mumbai, Indian officials told the media Thursday night that there were no more hostages being held by the attackers.



photo: Indian TV

Israeli Foreign Ministry officials, however, stated unequivocally that no hostages had been released from the Chabad House, also taken over by the terrorists. Nor had there been any Israeli hostages rescued from the Oberoi Trident Hotel, located nearby.

Left: Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg, being held hostage at Mumbai Chabad House which he co-directs
Photo: www.chabad.org

Indian television reported Thursday night that there were no Israeli hostages left in the Nariman House building, where Mumbai's Chabad House is located, but it was believed there were still at least two, possibly more gunmen in the building. Indian commandos entered the building, said the reporter, clearing the floors of terrorists as they went along. Seven hostages were said to have walked out of the building, and several were taken to the hospital.

Later statements by Israeli Foreign Ministry officials said that no one had been released from the Chabad House. The people who fled the area had been hiding nearby, the officials said. Foreign Ministry spokesmen said they are working on obtaining solid information on the identities of the people who managed to flee the Nariman House area. Indian and British sources said they appeared to be foreigners, but there was no final information as of 11:45 p.m. (Israel time).

No Israeli or Jewish names have been found on any of the lists of injured or dead in any of the hospitals or morgues in the city; all were reviewed by Foreign Ministry and Consulate officials. Moreover, the Foreign Ministry says there are other Israelis still trapped elsewhere in the city, notably in the Oberoi Trident Hotel, although it was not clear how many.

Security forces were still sweeping the targeted hotels for secondary explosives or for terrorists hiding throughout the building as of 1:00 a.m. Friday. Reports said more than 125 people had been killed in the multipronged attack.

Terrorists Offered to Negotiate

Combined forces of India's National Security Guards (NSG), Army, Navy, Mumbai Police and Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) were dispatched to battle with pockets of terrorists in various locations throughout the city in continued mop up operations. A 45-minute exchange of intense gunfire between India government forces and terrorists at the Oberoi Trident Hotel located near Mumbai's Chabad House early Thursday evening had led to the rescue of dozens of tourists who were trapped in the upper floors of the luxury hotel.

The terrorists who were holed up in the city's Chabad House had offered to negotiate with India's government for the lives of the Jewish hostages they are holding, but the government said, "No deal." Israel's Foreign Ministry estimated that some 20 to 25 Israelis were being held hostage in other locations around the city as well, including an undetermined number at the Oberoi-Trident Hotel. Foreign Ministry officials said it was impossible to determine an exact number, because not every Israeli registers with the

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Consulate when they come to the city.

A spokesman for the terrorists who had identified himself to a local television station as "Imran" complained about government treatment of Muslims in Kashmir.

"Ask the government to talk to us and we will release the hostages," he said, speaking in Urdu with what was described as a Kashmiri accent. "Are you aware how many people have been killed in Kashmir? Are you aware how your army has killed Muslims? Are you aware how many of them have been killed in Kashmir this week?"

While government commandos in black caps moved into position for a final assault on the Nariman House building where the Israelis were being held hostage, the entire area was flooded with light in order to enable the troops to see what was going on the building. "They have a lot of ammunition on them and that is why they are considered so very, very dangerous and the commandos are proceeding with such caution," explained one journalist on the scene.

"It could be a long haul," warned security officials as they grappled with the dilemma of how much information to release to the media while making plans to attack the Islamist terrorists who held hundreds of British, American and Israeli nationals hostage across the city. "This particular place has many access points and so it is a complex operation to secure it," explained an *NDTV* reporter.

An estimated total of 25 terrorists had struck 10 different locations across Mumbai Wednesday night, taking hostages that included top CEOs, tourists and businesspeople. Journalists in India referred to the attack as "Mumbai's 9/11." Three terrorists, including one from Faridkot, Pakistan were captured, alive, at the nearby Taj Mahal Hotel.

Chabad House Attack

Chabad-Lubavitch emissary Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivka were both reported unconscious, as were several of the Israelis, according to a babysitter who managed to escape with the couple's one and a half-year-old son Moshe.

Rabbi Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg

Photo: www.chabad.org

The babysitter, a local woman, called the family shortly after the siege began, and accompanied the little boy to the home of the Israeli Consulate's security officer, where both are awaiting his grandparents, Rabbi Shimon Rosenberg and his wife Yehudit who are expected to arrive from Israel. Rabbi Rosenberg is the principal of Migdal Ohr Girls' High School in Migdal Emek, which was founded by his brother-in-law, Rabbi Yitzchak David Grossman, winner of the Israel Prize and numerous other public awards.

The Hebrew names of the Chabad emissary and his wife who are being held hostage are: Gavriel Noach ben Freida Bluma and Rivkah Bas Yehudis. Chabad Headquarters has asked for prayers to be said for their safety invoking their Hebrew names.

Two kosher food supervisors who apparently had just arrived in the country, Rabbi Bentzion Chroman, who lives in Israel and Rabbi Leibish Teitelbaum, son of the Volover Rebbe of Boro Park, New York, were also being held hostage.

Deccan Mujahideen Takes Responsibility

A previously unknown Muslim terrorist group linked to the international Al Qaeda terrorist organization, calling itself the Deccan Mujahedin, claimed responsibility for the massive multi-site terror attack carried out late Wednesday night in the city formerly known as Bombay. Mumbai is home to some 15 million people and is India's largest city.

The terrorists struck two luxury hotels frequented by Americans and British nationals, the Taj Mahal Hotel and the Oberoi Trident Hotel as well as the city's largest train station, the Metro Theater and the Cama Hospital with automatic weapons and grenades. Intelligence sources said the level of sophisticated training and weapons employed by the terrorists made it clear that they were not local criminals. The terrorists were armed with AK-47 assault rifles and grenades.

Three top police officials were among the casualties, including Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) Chief Hemant Karkare, Additional Commissioner Ashok Kamte and encounter specialist Vijay Salaskar, reported *IBN News*, which said Karkare had received death threats in phone calls at his home within the past several days. More than 300 people were reported wounded in the attacks, with at least 200 others reported taken hostage in various locations around the city. By Thursday night, nearly all had been freed, as Indian commandos continued mop up operations.

The terrorists demanded that India release "all mujahedins," telling a local television station that "only after that will we release the people." American and British nationals were being separated out from among other foreigners and held as hostages, according to one British citizen who told *Sky News* television that he had watched as a gunman asked a group of some 40 hostages for their country of origin. Those who were from Italy, he said, were released, but British and American citizens were held.

Five terrorists were reported dead and 14 police officers were killed as well in an exchange of gunfire at the Taj Mahal Hotel, where thick black smoke billowed from blazing windows on the upper floors. Despite reports that all terrorists were killed, a lone gunman managed to surprise commandos, spraying bullets after a period of quiet as barricaded guests began to leave their rooms. The injured terrorist was silenced by Indian forces.

Movie theaters, entertainment centers and multiplexes were ordered to remain shut due to fears that terrorists were still at large and roaming the city. Schools were closed as well, and it was not clear whether the stock market would be open on Friday.

NDTV reported that Indian security officials believe the terrorists infiltrated into the city by sea. There is little regulation in the Bombay Harbor, noted the journalist in his report. Nariman House is located in the southern part of the city, along the water.

The sophisticated terrorist attacks, the worst ever in Mumbai and India, came as Mumbai approaches its elections. Incoming U.S. President-elect Barack Obama and currently sitting President George W. Bush condemned the attacks, as did French President Nicolas Sarkozy, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and France as the current president of the European Union.

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Foreign nationals from Australia, Britain, Italy and Japan are counted among the victims.

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1. **Praying for their safety.... (n.c)**
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2. **attacks**
tzina, Jerusalem (27/11/08)
3. **When will it be time Chabad,**
, (27/11/08)
4. **Please daven for them!**
rivkah, Melbourne (27/11/08)
5. **hostages**
b, m (27/11/08)
6. **CHabad.org down?**
eliseva, Cleveland (27/11/08)
7. **No More Weakness**
Yanatan, Yerushalayim (27/11/08)
8. **We Must get all to Return**
Paul Sider, Haifa (27/11/08)
9. **Terrorist Regimes are Psychopathic Serial Killers**
, (27/11/08)
10. **say tehillim!**
your brother, australia (27/11/08)
11. **not abducted**
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14. **The Rabbi and Rebbetzin**
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16. **Mombasa attack by al Qaeda on Chabad**
Ziggy, Safat (27/11/08)
17. **My Head Hangs in Shame**
Carol D'Souza, Mumbai (27/11/08)
18. **tehillim**
chana, (27/11/08)
19. **TEHILLIM & TZEDAKAH for the merit of the following people & all Jews there:**
Eli, (27/11/08)
20. **Hashem Please Guard These People**
nachi, johannesburg (27/11/08)

21. Names for Tehillim

Chabad, Beijing (27/11/08)

22. to #3 when you have a government for the people of Isreal!!!! (n.c)

james rosenbaum, Earth (27/11/08)

23. All in the name of Islam

Stephanie, Israel (27/11/08)

24. Noahides praying for the hostages

Rachav, Melbourne, Aust (27/11/08)

25. Names, Tehillim, Tzedakah

Brana Lobel, Israel (27/11/08)

26. Gavriel Noach ben Freida Bluma and Rivka bas Yehudis

, (27/11/08)

27. replt to # 8 & #3

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28. You Should Not Be Reporting All This

, (27/11/08)

29. #3 //say Tehillim for Gavriel Noach ben Freida Bluma...

Binyomin, golus (27/11/08)

30. names: tehillim needed

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31. hostages

Tommy, belfast uk (27/11/08)

32. Death Penalty for terrorists

Shimshon, (27/11/08)

33. Reporting in Cape Argus, Cape Town

A JEW, South Africa (27/11/08)

34. terrorists

Yitzchak Ben Yisrael, Atoka, Oklahoma (27/11/08)

35. Our prayers are with the Apple of God's eye - our brother & sister Israelis

Daphne, Bengaluru (27/11/08)

36. ANTI Free World U.S. ARMS Lebanon's HEZBOLLAH ARMY (3)

Linda Rivera , NYC (27/11/08)

37. Tehilim names

Jew, NY (27/11/08)

38. terrorists

carl clark, thetford u.k (27/11/08)

39. American Medias

Yanatan, Yerushalayim (27/11/08)

40. Signal for carnage: Islamic crazies sighted the crescent moon on Nov.26.08!

(n.c)

MED, USA (27/11/08)

41. Indians rightly identified them as MUSLIM TERRORISTS!!!

MED, USA (27/11/08)

42. PRESIDENT BUSH SAID THAT.....

CHAIM, NY (27/11/08)

43. Wake up Peres and Carter

A. Cummins, Baltimore (27/11/08)

44. What?!

David Daoud, TelAviv (27/11/08)

45. Mumbaai

A JEW, South Africa (27/11/08)

46. Pray for these holy Jews

, (27/11/08)

47. NOT time to daven

Michael Abramowitz, Houston (27/11/08)

48. So they may have AL-QAEDA, but we have THE AKEIDA.

Norway , (27/11/08)

49. Sins of India

S, Anon (27/11/08)

50. to # 3 who asked when will chabad come home?

chaim, brooklyn ny (27/11/08)

51. to # 47,who saying it is not time to daven

chaim, brooklyn ny (27/11/08)

52. were they really rescued from Chabad House or not?

ilan, karnei shomron (27/11/08)

53. To #49 S.Anon - Who are you to judge anyone???

, (27/11/08)

54. #16

Natan, Yisrael, soon (27/11/08)

55. Is Israel any different

Mottel, (27/11/08)

56. "Kol Yisrael areivim zeh ba'zeh," that is: Every Jew...

Norway , (27/11/08)

57. THE INDIAN BLACK CATS HAVE BEEN WIPING OUT THE TERRORISTS ONE BY ONE

HAL TRIPP, LA PAZ, BOLIVIA (27/11/08)

58. Remember These Souls Oh HASHEM

Shimon, Adelaide (27/11/08)

59. HOMELAND SECURITY-NOT UP TO SNUFF

LEN, USA (27/11/08)

60. pointing a finger?

Joe Sanders, los angeles, ca (27/11/08)

61. Minor criticizm of TB #47 Michael Abramowitz

sk, USA (28/11/08)

62. # 47 "Not to pray"??

YB, Jerusalem (28/11/08)

63. BABY

, NY (28/11/08)

64. MOMBASA AL QUEDA ATTACK

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65. Head Hangs In Shame...

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66. No Deal for the Jews

Avi, pomona (28/11/08)

67. response to #47

dys, Beverly Hills (28/11/08)

68. praying for safety

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69. Rabbi Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg

Lupe Rivera Perez, Fremont, CA (28/11/08)

70. No more land for PIECES! NUKE for PEACE!!!

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71. For those Fools who think the Holocaust Ended in 1945

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