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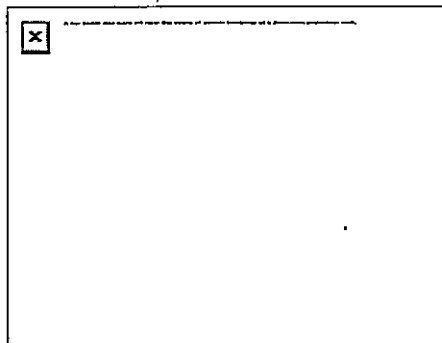
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Jerusalem terrorist attacks claim at least 12 dead

December 2, 2001 Posted: 2:53 PM EST (1953 GMT)



A car bomb also went off near the scene of suicide bombings at a Jerusalem pedestrian mall.

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JERUSALEM (CNN) -- A coordinated series of three terrorist attacks in a crowded Jerusalem pedestrian mall left at least 12 people dead Saturday night -- including two suicide bombers -- and wounded more than 180 others, police said.

All those killed were young men, ages 14 to 20, authorities said. The mall had been crowded with mostly young people who came out after sundown marked the end of the Sabbath.

At least 19 people were critically injured, 28 moderately injured and the rest were slightly injured, they said.

"This is the worst attack on Jerusalem that has ever happened," said Israeli government spokesman Avi Pazner.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat condemns the attacks "in the strongest possible terms."

U.S. President Bush said he was "horrified and saddened" to learn of the attacks.

"I strongly condemn them as acts of murder that no person of conscience can tolerate and no cause can ever justify," Bush said. "Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must immediately find and arrest those responsible for these hideous murders. They must also act swiftly and decisively against the organizations that support them."

"Now more than ever, Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must demonstrate through their actions and not merely their words their commitment to fight terror," the president said.

Police said at least two suicide bombers detonated the explosives near Zion Square just before midnight. A third explosion about 10 minutes later came from a car bomb, which was timed to explode as rescue workers arrived to tend to casualties, authorities said.

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A witness said the car bomb exploded in a vehicle parked outside an ice cream parlor. Stores and restaurants were badly damaged in the blast.

"There cannot be anything but anger and condemnation for those who've done it," Palestinian Cabinet Minister Nabil Sha'ath said Sunday. "I can only say that the Palestinian leadership will do everything it can to arrest and follow up on these actions and do its very best to stop them."

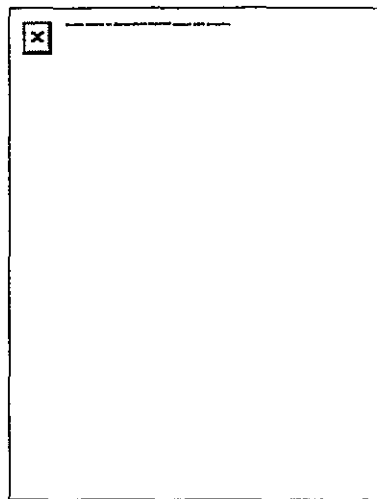
In the port city of Haifa around midday Sunday, a powerful bomb ripped through a bus, police said, killing at least 16 people, including a suicide bomber, and injuring about 35 others.

The suicide bomber detonated the explosion on the bus shortly after noon at a busy intersection in downtown Haifa, police said. The bombing happened 12 hours after the Jerusalem attacks.

Palestinian witnesses in Abu Dis, a village on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem, said Sunday morning a number of Palestinians were taken into custody there in the wake of the bombings. Israel didn't comment about how the roundup was related to the attacks.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the Jerusalem attacks; however, a call in Arabic was placed to the Jerusalem bureau of the BBC. The caller identified himself as being from the Islamic Jihad and said the group was behind the Jerusalem bombings. But a Web site claiming to represent the radical Islamic group Hamas said it was responsible for the Jerusalem and Haifa attacks.

Islamic militant groups have threatened to commit attacks in Jerusalem to avenge the killing of a Hamas military leader last week by an Israeli missile attack.



Bomb blasts in Jerusalem injured about 180 people.

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