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Old Tricks, new targets:

Israel's continued use of explosives in covert ops

Israel's covert use of explosive devices, recently hidden in pagers and radios, highlights a long-standing pattern of sabotage, far from anything new, with devastating consequences for both civilians and resistance operatives.



(Photo Credit: The Cradle)

There is no doubt that we have suffered a major blow both in terms of security and humanity, an unprecedented one in the history of the resistance in Lebanon at least,

unprecedented in the history of Lebanon, and it may be unprecedented in the history of the conflict with the Israeli enemy across the entire region, perhaps even unprecedented in the world.

– The late Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, 19 September

Contrary to the assassinated resistance leader's words in his final speech, Israel's terrorist attack involving [exploding pagers](#) and radio communication devices targeting Lebanese resistance operatives is **not** an "unprecedented" or exceptional event when viewed in the context of the occupation state's extensive intelligence operations over the decades.

Israel has used similar methods in [previous assassinations](#) of Palestinian resistance leaders. One prominent example occurred on 5 January 1996, when Yahya Ayyash, a key leader of the armed wing of Hamas, the Qassam Brigades, and the mastermind behind numerous operations against Israel, was assassinated. The Israeli Shin Bet used a small, 50-gram explosive hidden in a portable device to carry out the attack.

In 2018, Israeli agent [Kamal Hammad](#) revealed shocking details about Ayyash's assassination. Hammad, who was closely associated with his nephew Osama – Ayyash's confidant – was tasked with delivering a booby-trapped phone to Ayyash.

This mission, according to Hammad, required six months of careful planning. On the day of the operation, Ayyash, a.k.a "the Engineer," was celebrating the birth of his new child and made a call to his parents via a landline at Hammad's uncle's house.

When Israel jammed the call, Ayyash switched to the booby-trapped mobile phone. As soon as his voice was identified, the detonation button was pressed, killing him instantly.

Fast forward two decades and Israel has resumed similar tactics, detonating hundreds of pagers and radios, having infiltrated the supply chain. This time, innocent civilians were among the targets, not just resistance members. Over 3,000 people were injured, and at least 37 were killed, including children and women, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health. Many victims suffered severe injuries to their eyes and limbs.

In the aftermath of the massacre, Taiwanese company Gold Apollo revealed that a [Hungarian firm](#), BAC Consulting, manufactured the devices. Gold Apollo confirmed a partnership with the Hungarian company, which bore their brand.

However, Hungary denied manufacturing the devices, and the BAC website was mysteriously shut down immediately following the incident. The owner of BAC, [Cristiana Bársony-Arcidiacono](#), claimed to be an expert in disaster management, but the company's website offered no details about its manufacturing activities, raising suspicions about its true role.

She denied producing the pagers in a phone interview with NBC News, asserting she was merely an intermediary. Gold Apollo's chairman, Hsu Ching-Kuang, also [stated](#) that three years prior, a woman named "Teresa" approached him, claiming to represent BAC Consulting.

After months of negotiations, they agreed to sell Gold Apollo pagers to BAC. However, Hus revealed that BAC later requested to design their own products under the Gold Apollo brand, which raised concerns. The last shipment of components to BAC occurred earlier in the year. It was later confirmed that the AR-924 pagers used in the explosions were acquired by Hezbollah in February, indicating a long-planned Israeli breach of the supply chain. This plot was further unraveled when [three intelligence officers](#) confirmed that BAC Consulting was part of an Israeli front, with other shell companies involved to obscure the true origin of the devices.

While BAC dealt with regular customers, their true objective was Hezbollah, and the pagers sold to them contained batteries filled with PETN explosives. Production of these devices ramped up after Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah publicly criticized mobile phones in [February 2022](#) over their lack of security.

Regarding the explosion of radio devices, Japan's ICOM confirmed that the model in question, the IC-V82, had been [discontinued](#) a decade prior. They could not confirm whether the devices involved were counterfeit or genuine. The Lebanese Ministry of Communications noted that these devices were not provided by a licensed agent, nor were they inspected by security services.

International experts have condemned these attacks as war crimes. In a press release, UN human rights experts [stated](#) that the simultaneous detonation of thousands of devices without considering the identities of those affected violated humanitarian law by targeting civilians indiscriminately.

These attacks violate the human right to life, absent any indication that the victims posed an imminent lethal threat to anyone else at the time. Such attacks require prompt, independent investigation to establish the truth and enable accountability for the crime of murder.

Amnesty International also called for an investigation, emphasizing that such attacks disregard the right to life and the laws of armed conflict.

Aya Majzoub, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, [said](#):

The mass explosions across Lebanon and Syria in recent days bear the hallmarks of a sinister dystopian nightmare. Using hidden explosive devices concealed within everyday telecommunications devices to wage deadly attacks on such a scale is unprecedented.

Although Israel has not officially claimed responsibility for the operation, Defense Minister Yoav Galant announced on 18 September that a “new phase” of the war with Lebanon had begun, praising the “excellent achievements” of the Shin Bet security service and Israeli intelligence, a statement seen as an implicit recognition of Israel’s role in the attacks. Lebanese authorities and US officials have also indicated that they believe Israel orchestrated the attacks.

Although Israel has not officially claimed responsibility, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Galant hinted at the occupation state’s involvement by praising the achievements of the Shin Bet and Israeli intelligence in what he called a “[new phase](#)” of the war with Lebanon. Lebanese authorities, along with US officials, have indicated that Israel was likely behind the operation.

Investigations into the supply chain have since expanded, with recent developments emerging from [Bulgaria](#). A Norwegian man, Rinson Jose, linked to a Bulgarian company involved in the supply of the pagers, has disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

Norwegian authorities have issued an international warrant for his arrest while investigations continue into the network of shell companies used to smuggle the explosive devices into Lebanon. These findings suggest that Israel created an elaborate intelligence front, using commercial intermediaries to infiltrate and sabotage the supply chain before the devices reached Hezbollah.

Already overshadowed by the assassination of Nasrallah, the carpet bombing of Beirut, and the impending invasion of the south, the exploding pagers and walkie-talkies represent a continuation of Israel’s covert operations and terrorist tactics but with major strategic implications for the resistance and the region’s security.

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