Shin Bet arrests Israeli for planning ISIS attacks

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<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Shin-Bet-arrests-Israeli-for-planning-ISIS-attacks-534686>

The Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) revealed on Sunday that it had arrested an Israeli citizen on suspicion of supporting Islamic State and planning to carry out an attack for the jihadist group.

An indictment was filed in the Central District Prosecutor’s Office on Sunday against Hassan Taher Shir Yusuf, a resident of the Arab-Israeli city of Taibeh.

According to the agency, Yusuf started becoming more religious in 2014-15 and examined the possibility of joining Islamic State in Syria.

The findings of the investigation also revealed that Yusuf had watched videos showing how to prepare explosives and had even tried to find someone to purchase an M16 for him.

Last summer, in parallel to protests which [broke out on the Temple Mount over the placement of metal detectors](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israel-removes-Temple-Mount-metal-detectors-that-enraged-the-Muslim-world-500663), Yusuf tried to persuade others to join him in carrying out attacks against Israelis, including a shooting attack in Jerusalem, a car-bomb attack in front of the police station in Taibeh and a stabbing attack.

According to the Shin Bet, everyone he approached to carry out the attacks refused, and since Yusuf was afraid to do it alone, none were ever carried out.

“The investigation shows that the fact that people in his immediate surroundings distanced/dissociated themselves from his actions played an important role in disrupting his plans to carry out terrorist activity,” the Shin Bet said.

“The Israel Security Agency views Israelis who support Islamic State organization as a serious security threat,” read a statement by the agency, adding that it “will continue to closely monitor suspects and take the necessary enforcement measures in order to prevent the dissemination of the organization’s doctrine in Israel, as well as the departure of Israelis to fight with the group.”

The Islamic State group was declared an illegal organization in 2014 by then defense minister Moshe Ya’alon, and Israel has so far largely avoided an attack by Islamic State, though several Arab Israelis have been arrested on suspicion of links with IS and plans to carry out attacks inspired by the Sunni extremist group.

Last week, the Shin Bet announced that it had arrested two [female Beduin citizens who planned to carry out a deadly terror attack](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Israeli-Beduin-women-arrested-on-suspicion-of-planning-attacks-for-ISIS-533118) inside Israel during the New Year and join the group’s affiliate in the Sinai Peninsula.

In October 2015, authorities broke up the first known case of an IS plot in Israel and indicted seven Israeli-Arabs on charges of belonging to an IS cell planning to attack military targets.

The first deadly attack in Israel believed to have been inspired by the jihadist group was in January 2016 when an Israeli Arab went on a shooting spree in Tel Aviv killing three people. Six months later two Palestinians shot dead four Israelis at Tel Aviv’s Sarona Market.

According to the Shin Bet, some 60 Israeli citizens have traveled to Syria or Iraq to fight with rebel groups including Islamic State. Several are reported to have been killed and fewer than 10 are estimated to have returned to Israel, either of their own accord or after being caught by Turkish authorities while trying to cross the border and deported back to Israel.

In August, the Interior Ministry began the process of revoking the citizenship of 19 Israelis who went to fight for IS after a law proposed by Interior Minister Arye Deri went into effect allowing him to strip Israelis of their citizenship if they are members of foreign terror organizations.

The Shin Bet is reported to have provided the Interior Ministry with a list of 20 Israelis who had joined the jihadist group, including one who died fighting for the group as the list was being compiled.