Police say they foiled two Jerusalem stabbing attacks in past 2 weeks

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The Israel Police announced on Thursday that it had foiled two separate attempted terror attacks in Jerusalem’s Old City before and during the Passover holiday.

According to police, two suspects were arrested since the start of April who are accused of planning to carry out stabbing attacks in the capital.

In one incident, police said a woman from the Bedouin town of Rahat was arrested on April 2 on suspicion of planning to stab a group of police officers. Police said the woman, 31, was arrested near Damascus Gate in Jerusalem’s Old City after officers saw her walking around with her hand inside her bag, approached her and found she was carrying scissors.

She later confessed that she was planning to use them to stab an officer in the capital, police said.

The woman was arraigned in court on Thursday, and her remand in custody was extended until Monday, when prosecutors intend to file an indictment at the Jerusalem Magistrate’s Court.

“Alongside the many terror attacks foiled by intelligence information, the best response to lone-wolf attacks is first and foremost the vigilance, alertness and professionalism of the police officers who deal with and thwart any threat to harm them or citizens,” said Jerusalem Police chief Doron Turgeman.

In a separate incident, police said a 37-year-old resident of the A-Tur neighborhood of East Jerusalem was arrested in recent days in the Old City while wearing a mask.

Police discovered that the man was violating the terms of a legal order to stay out of the Old City, after he was recently caught hanging the flags of a terror organization atop the Temple Mount.

According to police, the suspect confessed during questioning that he had intended to carry out a stabbing attack in Jerusalem using a knife he planned to take from a restaurant in the capital where he works as a cook. The suspect’s remand has been extended through Monday.

Tensions in and around Jerusalem’s Old City have been high in recent weeks, in particular during the overlap of the Passover and Ramadan holidays and amid repeated clashes between security forces and worshipers atop the Temple Mount.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office [announced that](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-bars-jewish-visitors-from-temple-mount-for-last-10-days-of-ramadan/) Jews and other non-Muslims would be barred from visiting the Temple Mount during the last 10 days of Ramadan in order to prevent further clashes at the Jerusalem holy site that could spark a wider conflagration.

The Temple Mount, known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif or Noble Sanctuary, is the holiest place for Jews as the site of the two ancient Jewish temples, and Al-Aqsa is the third-holiest shrine in Islam.

While the decision this year was in line with longstanding Israeli policy aimed at limiting friction during the holiday period, there had been speculation that the new hardline government would change course, with far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir pushing to allow Jews to continue ascending the Temple Mount through the end of Ramadan.

Tuesday’s decision was announced hours after Hamas issued a statement calling on Palestinians to flock to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in droves during the final 10 days of Ramadan and not to leave the site.

Last week hundreds of Palestinians barricaded themselves inside with explosive devices, rocks and fireworks in order to target Israeli officers and civilians. Police said they were left with no choice but to enter the mosque overnight Tuesday-Wednesday, which then sparked intense clashes with the Palestinians inside. Scenes of police violence toward people holed up inside the mosque were distributed widely on social media and led to further Muslim anger and international condemnation.