

Hezbollah Members Arrested in Thailand Admit to Planning Attack on Israeli Tourists

Both men, Lebanese nationals, are thought to belong to a larger terror cell; Bangkok police make arrests after receiving information from Israeli intelligence.



Illustration: Thai soldiers stand guard at the Royal Thai Police headquarters in Bangkok. January 18, 2014. Credit: Reuters

Two members of Hezbollah arrested several days ago in Thailand have admitted that they were planning to launch a terror attack against Israeli tourists in Bangkok, the Bangkok Post reported on Friday morning.

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The men arrived in Bangkok on April 13, and police suspect they were planning to direct an attack on Israeli travelers during Passover.

The two suspects are Daoud Farhat, a Lebanese national who also holds French citizenship, and Youssef Ayad, a Lebanese man who is a citizen of the Philippines.

Both men were born in Lebanon, according to the information in their passports, but the documents' authenticity has still not been affirmed by authorities.

Farhat was on his first visit to Thailand, his passport shows. Ayad, on the other

hand, has visited the nation no less than 17 times in the past.

Thai police officials said they made the arrests after receiving information regarding the suspects' activities from the Israeli intelligence agency. The two suspects were arrested in different locations, they said.

The two are suspected of belonging to a larger terror cell, thought to be comprised of at least nine Hezbollah members.

A senior officer in the Thailand police told the Bangkok Post that Ayad admitted he was planning attacks against Israelis while under investigation. Various materials that could be used to fabricate bombs were found in his Bangkok residence, the officer said, adding that further searches would be carried out in other residences thought to be used by members of the cell.

Police said that the two suspects will be expelled from Thailand upon the conclusion of the investigation. It is unclear if charges are planned to be brought against the men.

Thai authorities are searching for an additional suspect named Bilal Bahsoun, whose whereabouts are unknown. Police suspect he is may no longer be in the country.



Youssef Ayad, top photos, Daoud Farhat, bottom left, and Bilal Bahsoun, bottom right. Credit: Photos from Stop910.com

Source:

<https://www.haaretz.com/hezbollah-men-planned-israeli-tourist-attack-1.5245479>

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