

**4 ABU NIDAL GROUP MEMBERS INDICTED FOR PLOTTING AGAINST JEWISH TARGETS****By Deborah Kalb**  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, April 1 (JTA) -- The indictment of four members of a radical Palestinian group who allegedly plotted to kill Jews and blow up the Israeli Embassy here may signal a new determination on the part of the U.S. government to crack down on terrorists operating on American soil.

The move, announced by the Justice Department on Thursday, came just over a month after the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York shocked Americans into recognizing the dangers of domestic terrorism.

The four men, all members of the Abu Nidal terrorist group, were indicted Wednesday in U.S. District Court in St. Louis, where three of the defendants live.

The men charged were identified as Zein Isa, Saif Nijmeh and Luic Nijmeh of St. Louis, and Tawfiq Musa of Milwaukee. Isa was already serving a jail sentence, and the other three men were arrested by FBI agents Thursday.

Charges against the defendants, for activities dating as far back as 1986, include the 1989 murder of Palestina Isa, the teen-age daughter of Zein Isa; smuggling money to other members of the Abu Nidal group; targeting Jews for murder; and obtaining weapons illegally.

Luic Nijmeh discussed the idea of blowing up the Israeli Embassy with a co-conspirator, the Justice Department charged.

The embassy had little to say about the case Thursday afternoon. Israeli officials said they were "looking into the matter and were in contact with American authorities."

The arrests and indictments are an indication of the U.S. government's heightened concern about terrorism since the World Trade Center bombing in late February, according to Steven Emerson, a writer and terrorism expert.

But he said the timing of the indictments, so soon after the New York bombing, may be "more of a coincidence" than a deliberate decision to demonstrate U.S. activism against terrorism at the present time.

**Warnings 'Fell On Deaf Ears'**

The defendants were charged under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statute, which is generally used to charge members of organized crime syndicates.

This represents the first use of the RICO statute to prosecute terrorists and shows "an aggressive new strategy" against terrorists by the U.S. government, Emerson said.

He said that information relating to this case, which has been under investigation for several years, shows that the Abu Nidal movement has an extensive infrastructure in Latin America and Europe.

Emerson said the defendants had conducted surveillance at the Israeli Embassy in Washington and had been maintaining a list of possible Jewish targets since 1986.

In addition, Emerson said that defendant Isa allegedly was instructed to kill his daughter by

overseas representatives of the Abu Nidal organization because the girl was becoming too Westernized and represented a security problem.

The Abu Nidal group is infamous for a long string of bloody showcase attacks, including the simultaneous assaults at the Rome and Vienna airports in December 1985 and the 1986 massacre at the Neve Shalom synagogue in Istanbul.

In recent months, Israel has been warning that members of Palestinian terrorist groups, including the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, have been establishing bases in the United States.

"The Israeli warnings fell on deaf ears," Emerson said.

He feels that the terrorist groups are "fusing" the United States and Israel in their minds and that it is now easier for them to plant bombs in the United States because of the relative lack of difficulty entering this country.

Legislation was introduced in Congress recently that would bar members of Hamas from entering the United States.

Advocates of greater terrorism awareness say that the combination of the trade center bombing and this new indictment could make Americans more conscious of a domestic terrorism problem.

"These incidents show that the terrorism problem is not one of terrorists dispatched from overseas, but one of people living among us," Emerson said.

**NUNS TO LEAVE AUSCHWITZ, ENDING YEARS OF DISPUTE****By Ruth E. Gruber**

OSWIECIM, Poland, April 1 (JTA) -- The long-running dispute over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz appears to be close to resolution, with 14 nuns expected within days to move out of the building where the Nazis stored poison gas at the former death camp.

Last-minute problems stemming from the nuns' reluctance to move into the new \$2 million building under construction for them nearby have been cleared away by explicit Vatican instructions to the nuns that reached Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy of Oswiecim on Thursday, said Jewish officials involved in the negotiations.

This week's move by the Vatican helps implement a 1986 agreement reached between church and European Jewish officials. And it caps nearly a decade of bitter controversy over the convent, located at the edge of the concentration camp, where 1.6 million Jews were killed.

A follow-up agreement reached in 1987 stated that no permanent Catholic place of worship would be installed within the boundaries of the camp and that the Carmelite nuns would vacate their convent within two years.

But the deadline came and passed and the dispute dragged on. The Vatican order this week appears to fulfill the wishes of both Catholic and Jewish leaders to put the issue squarely behind them before April 19, when the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising will be marked with numerous ceremonies in Poland and around the world.

Kalman Sultanik, World Jewish Congress vice president, said in New York that Bishop Rakoczy

phoned him Thursday to inform the WJC about the Vatican decision to formally close the convent and order the nuns to move.

Rakoczy said he was scheduled to meet with the nuns personally Friday and that they were expected to move out within the next few days, Sultanik recounted.

Both Catholic and Jewish sources had indicated in recent weeks that a written formal directive from the Vatican would be necessary because the nuns would not leave on their own.

"They feel they were not part of the decision process involved in the affair and so are being stubborn," said a Jewish source.

#### New Convent Not Yet Finished

Stanislaw Krajewski, representative of the American Jewish Committee in Warsaw, said it seemed clear the Vatican realized the urgency of the situation and wanted to resolve it.

Polish government officials had said they, too, wanted to resolve the issue.

The WJC had considered boycotting the commemoration ceremonies at the site of the Warsaw Ghetto if the dispute over the convent were not resolved.

But WJC Executive Director Elan Steinberg said the organization had now decided to participate in those ceremonies.

The resolution of the dispute is the culmination of years of patient and secret diplomacy with officials of the Roman Catholic Church and the Polish government, led by Theo Klein, former president of the European Jewish Congress; Serge Cwajgenbaum, EJC secretary-general; EJC President Jean Kahn; and Sultanik.

The Rev. Mark Glownia, director of the church-run Center for Information, Meetings, Dialogue, Education and Prayer, of which the new convent is to be a part, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the church hierarchy all "agreed that this problem must be ended."

Glownia said the nuns would be given a choice of moving to the new convent nearby, or to other locations elsewhere.

The new convent a few hundred yards away is ready and waiting.

The large red brick building, constructed behind a high wall and around a central courtyard, is far from complete. But a two-story wing including living quarters for the 14 nuns, common rooms and other facilities is finished.

Each nun will have an individual room -- rectangular with a large window, wooden floors and a sink. The bedrooms are arranged along two corridors, with a common bathroom for each corridor.

#### Cross Remains A Problem

The convent's chapel has not been completed, but Glownia said Mass would be celebrated in one of the common rooms.

Another wing containing nearly a dozen more bedrooms is still under construction.

Glownia said work on the incomplete parts of the building would continue after the 14 nuns had moved in.

While the main concern at the moment was the transfer of the nuns to the new convent, Glownia said he also foresaw problems regarding the removal and transfer of the huge cross set up next to the current convent by the wall of the death camp.

Changing the position of a cross of that size and importance will be a major event in the

spiritual and civic life of the entire town, he said.

"We have already planned a place for the cross at the new convent," he said. "But we must prepare the transfer with local Catholics. We must explain -- and explain well -- why the best place for this cross is next to the new convent.

"I feel that the best way to handle the transfer of the cross would be to make a great religious festival out of it, with a solemn procession from one place to the other, involving senior church dignitaries."

The cross is currently situated outside the camp wall, near a place where many Poles were killed by the Nazis.

"There is a plan to replace the cross with a small monument to the people killed there and to open the area so that visitors can pray there and leave flowers," he said.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Michel Di Paz in Paris.)*

#### **JEWISH GROUPS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH GERMAN COMPENSATION OFFER** By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, April 1 (JTA) -- Jewish groups are dissatisfied with a proposed new German law that would compensate Jews whose property was stolen by the Nazis in East Germany, but would require them to pay property taxes on the restitution.

The draft law, proposed by the German Cabinet this week, would compensate Jewish and non-Jewish victims of the Nazi and Communist regimes by paying them 1.3 times what their property was worth at the time it was seized.

The bill, drawn up by the Finance Ministry to settle the issue of expropriated real estate and, clear the way for investment in eastern Germany, left Jewish groups unhappy.

"The proposed levy on properties restituted to victims of Nazi persecution is immoral and contravenes the commitments which the German Federal Republic undertook" when the formerly divided Germany was reunified, said Israel Miller, president of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

The World Jewish Congress termed the proposed law "unacceptable," on the basis of consultations the WJC had with Ignatz Bubis, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

"We hope that, even at this late date, the German government will modify its proposal so as to take into account principles of equity and justice," said WJC Secretary-General Israel Singer.

Bubis and WJC President Edgar Bronfman plan to meet with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on May 12 and present a joint position representing Jewish communities in 80 countries, according to the WJC.

In Bonn, Dieter Vogel, a spokesman for the German government, said, "Jewish groups have said they don't want just 1.3 times the original value but today's real value.

"That would be impossible to pay," he said.

"Naturally this law is controversial, but for financial reasons we cannot satisfy all wishes," said Vogel.

If the draft is accepted by the Bundestag and passed into law, claimants will have two months to decide if they want to try to get their property back or receive compensation. Payments would be made in 1996.

## RABIN HOPES CLOSURE OF TERRITORIES WILL REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT AS WELL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 1 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has expressed hope that closing off the administered territories to deter the current wave of violence will also help curb unemployment in Israel.

Rabin also said Thursday he hoped the closure would not financially hobble the Palestinians in the territories.

He called upon Arab and European countries to grant economic aid to the territories to enable more job opportunities there.

In the meantime, Israeli farmers, left stranded with no working hands in their fields and orchards, were notified Thursday that some 1,500 soldiers would be sent to them on an emergency and temporary basis to help out in the fields.

A group of 300 soldiers, both men and women, were scheduled to begin working Friday at a flower-packing plant and other groups went to various locations around the country.

The general closure has caused difficulties among Israeli employers, particularly in the construction and agriculture sectors.

Thursday marked the second consecutive day of the general closure, with 120,000 Palestinian workers who usually commute daily to jobs in Israel proper forced to stay home.

Rabin's hopes were ironically echoed by Shaher Sa'ad, the secretary-general of the Palestinian Trade Union.

Sa'ad voiced hope that the closure would push Palestinians to develop a more independent economy in the territories.

He, too, called for funds to be invested in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sa'ad said extensive investment in the territories is needed to create an economic infrastructure to supply local work opportunities.

He estimated that closing the territories would cost Palestinians some \$44 million a week in lost revenue.

### More Fire From The Right

Despite calls for an economic separation between the territories and Israel proper, economic experts have stressed time and again in recent months that years of development would be needed before the Palestinians could make do without relying on the Israeli economy.

Professor Ezra Sadan, a former director-general of the Israeli Treasury, said recently that it could take as long as 15 years before the Gaza Strip could detach itself economically from Israel, even if hundreds of millions of dollars were invested in the region.

Meanwhile, the right-wing Israeli opposition has blasted the government, charging it invited the violence by portraying itself as weak and too conciliatory.

But Likud's newly elected chairman, Benjamin Netanyahu, also attacked Rabin for closing the territories.

He compared the closure to putting "a thin plastic lid on top of a boiling pot." He called it dangerous because it drew "future border lines."

Regardless of the potential long-range consequences of the closure, one fact was undisputable: Thursday was the first day of the week that passed with no stabbings.

Army officers reported a tense quiet in the territories, but no violent clashes.

## E.C. LEADERS URGE PALESTINIANS TO RETURN TO TALKS WITH ISRAEL

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, April 1 (JTA) -- A delegation of European Community leaders, arriving here on the last leg of a Middle Eastern tour, expressed confidence that the Arab governments would return to the peace talks and urged the Palestinians do the same.

The E.C. leaders also condemned, in strong language, the recent spate of terrorist attacks against Israelis, saying they point up the urgent need for the peace talks to resume.

The delegation arrived in Israel on Thursday, following visits to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

The group was led by Danish Foreign Minister Niels Petersen, whose country currently holds the rotating E.C. presidency.

It also included Robert Urbain, Belgian minister of foreign trade; Mark Elliott, British undersecretary of state; and Hans van den Broek of the Netherlands, the E.C. commissioner for foreign affairs.

Petersen, interviewed on arrival at the airport, said the visit came at "a moment when developments give rise to serious concerns.

"The vicious cycle of violence and terror in the occupied territories seems (to be) deepening. It certainly makes itself felt also in Israel," he said.

"The European Community firmly condemns the recent killings, including the murders of two Israeli policemen," he said.

Petersen said confidence-building measures are needed by all parties to the conflict.

The so-called E.C. troika was welcomed by Israel's deputy foreign minister, Yossi Beilin. "We believe it is important that you are coming in such tense days, in order to have an objective view (of) the conflict," he said.

### Urged To Help Stop The Violence

The delegation met Thursday with Palestinian leaders Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi, and later with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

After meeting with the Palestinians, Petersen said Israel's deportation of some 400 Hamas activists has put the Palestinians in a "difficult position."

He said the E.C. considers the action to have been illegal.

At the same time, he said he told the Palestinians that "they cannot escape part of the responsibility for the deteriorating" situation in the territories.

He said they "must cooperate in stopping the violence" and should return to the talks.

Husseini said he stressed to the E.C. leaders the Palestinian commitment to the peace process. But he hoped they could persuade the Israelis to stop using force against the Palestinians to demonstrate their support of the peace process.

The delegates' meeting with a top Palestine Liberation Organization official in Jordan on Wednesday triggered statements of protest from Israel's Foreign Ministry, which charged that such meetings fuel illusions that the ground rules for the peace talks can be changed.

Those ground rules bar the PLO from directly participating in the Middle East talks.

Israel's Foreign Ministry lodged similar objections following recent decisions by Britain and Belgium, taken independently, to resume contact with the top PLO leadership.

**ISRAEL LAUNCHES 2-PRONGED RAID ON TERROR BASES IN NORTH LEBANON**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 1 (JTA) -- Responding to perceived threats from extremist groups throughout Lebanon, Israel Defense Force attack vehicles engaged in a double-pronged raid early Thursday morning on terrorist bases in northern Lebanon.

Israeli air force helicopter gunships and naval missile boats fanned out to coastal installations in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp south of Tripoli, the Syrian-controlled port city close to Lebanon's northern border.

The targets were bases of the Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, Ahmed Jabril's terrorist organization.

The bases were reportedly used as training and jump-off sites for raids against Israel.

The IDF denied Egyptian reports quoting Palestinian sources who said Syrian installations had been hit in the raids.

**PERES SIGNS ACCORD WITH CANADA FOR JOINT RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT**  
By Bram D. Eisenthal

OTTAWA, April 1 (JTA) -- The governments of Canada and Israel have established a joint industrial research and development program, featuring an initial three-year investment of \$6 million to be divided equally between both countries.

The program, meant to increase joint ventures between private businesses of both countries, was announced by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Tuesday at the Canada-Israel Committee's biannual conference and parliamentary dinner.

Earlier in the day, Peres had initialed a memorandum of understanding establishing the program with External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall and Michael Wilson, Canada's minister for industry, science and technology.

News of the new project was warmly received by Canadian Jewish leaders gathered here, who have been critical in the past of Canada's lack of economic and technological cooperation with Israel.

Peres, the guest speaker at the CIC dinner, was in Canada on a three-day official visit. During the trip, he also met with Canadian political leaders and found himself at times forced to defend Israel's expulsion last December of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon.

The foreign minister also met separately with outgoing Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the leader of the opposition Liberal party, Jean Chretien.

At the CIC dinner, attended by more than 1,400 Canadian Jewish leaders and politicians, Mulroney publicly expressed his commitment to Israel and Canadian Jews.

He said that his special feelings for the Jewish state date back to the 1967 Six-Day War.

"I remember seeing Israel fighting for its survival, which inspired tremendous respect," he said. "I've remained a steadfast friend of Israel ever since."

Mulroney also commented on how the Canadian Jewish community "is engaged in the life of this country in a way that's extraordinary."

The community, he said, "has a dynamic presence (and has) proven to be the greatest

ambassador for two countries separated by enormous distances."

Peres, in his comments, said the Canadian government has promised to support Israel in its drive to end the Arab-led boycott against Israel.

He also revealed that Mulroney pledged to press the United Nations and other world bodies to permit Israel to become a member of various scientific, cultural, health and economic organizations.

But the foreign minister's visit was not all rosy.

During his meeting with McDougall, Peres was told that Canada wants Israel to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as a means of enabling the region to become a nuclear-free zone.

And throughout the visit, the issue of the Palestinian deportees kept cropping up. At one point, Peres told the media that it is not his government's policy to expel Palestinians.

"Expulsion or deportation was never our policy and is neither our policy today," he said. "What happened was an exception to the rule, and I hope there will not be any need in the future to repeat it."

**Protests Staged By Arab Students**

Prior to the CIC dinner, Arab students and other youths gathered outside of the conference center to protest Israel's continuing hold on the administered territories. An Israeli flag was burned, placards were raised and slogans shouted.

Jewish students and adults congregated across the street and responded with pro-Israel chants, signs and songs.

"Why don't you care about democracy in Arab lands?" Rabbi Reuben Poupko of Montreal shouted into a megaphone.

The demonstration, similar to one held prior to the last such dinner two years ago, was relatively peaceful.

But one young man, later identified as an Israeli, scuffled briefly with the pro-Palestinian protesters.

At another speaking engagement later in Toronto, Peres cited the absence of democracy within Palestinian politics as the greatest obstacle in the peace process.

"When you have an armed minority against an unelected majority, you have trouble," Peres said.

He called for the Palestinian delegation at the Washington peace talks set to resume in April to make "necessary concessions" to achieve a compromise with Israel.

As for Syria, Peres reiterated Israel's readiness for "a withdrawal" from the Golan Heights. "The Syrians have said they are ready for peace without embassies, which is like lunch without bread," he said.

Peres also faced protest at the Toronto event, an address to the Canadian Club, one of the country's most prestigious corporate fraternities.

The protest even included some Jews who did not share the majority of the community's enthusiasm to welcome Peres.

A handful of demonstrators from the Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza joined a vocal protest staged by the Canadian Arab Federation outside the hotel where the Canadian Club luncheon was held.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Gil Kezwer in Toronto.)