

# Hamas militants die in Israeli air strike

## Web site indicates three were preparing an attack

By Ibrahim Barzak  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### Airstrike kills three

An Israeli helicopter fired missiles at a car carrying suspected Hamas militants on a road through the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, killing three people.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — An Israeli helicopter strike killed three Hamas militants in a car Wednesday, the second such targeted attack in five days and a possible sign that Israel is stepping up its campaign against militants ahead of a planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Two missiles slammed into the car, triggering a fire that bystanders tried to put out with blankets and their jackets. One man, using a blanket, lifted a charred body out of the car and carried it onto a stretcher.

The Israeli military said one of those killed, 24-year-old Farid Jamal, was behind several roadside bombings and rocket attacks on Israelis. The other two were identified as Ibrahim Barzak, 34, and Amar Hassan, 21.

On its Web site, Hamas indicated that the three were about to carry out an attack. "The three martyrs were on a holy mission when the Zionist U.S.-made helicopters fired two missiles toward their vehicle," the statement said.

Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin said the Islamic militant group would keep up attacks against Israel. "The Palestinian people will continue their resistance despite this aggression," Yassin said.

Wednesday's strike, near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim, came just five days after Israeli helicopters fired missiles at a car in the same area, killing three militants of the Islamic Jihad group.

There has been some expectation that Israel would step up its strikes against militants in Gaza ahead of a proposed withdrawal. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has said he would dismantle most Israeli settlements in the strip and impose a boundary on the Palestinians if peace talks remain frozen in coming months.

Avi Pazner, an Israeli government spokesman, said Israel would continue its campaign against militant groups even after a pullout.

The prospect of an Israeli withdrawal has also fueled internal Palestinian strife in Gaza, with armed gangs and militant members of the security forces jockeying for power.

On Tuesday, gunmen killed Khalil al-Zaben, an adviser to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Police have made no arrests, but a security official said privately he believed the attackers had ties to Arafat's Islamic movement. So far, Islamic militant groups, Arafat's main political rivals, have stayed out of the internal fighting.

Sharon has pledged to coordinate the Gaza pullout and other unilateral steps with the United States. A top Sharon

aide, Dov Weisglass, met earlier this week with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

A senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Wednesday that U.S. officials did not reject unilateral steps, but expressed concerns about security and humanitarian issues. U.S. officials have said Israeli actions should fit into the "road map" peace plan, which moves through three stages to a Palestinian state next year.

Talks on the plan have been frozen for months, and neither side has carried out even its first provisions — halt violence, dismantle militant groups and end construction in Jewish settlements.

Also Wednesday, Israeli troops in the West Bank killed a Palestinian who belonged to the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, an armed gang with ties to Fatah. The army said the man, who had an assault rifle, approached troops during an arrest operation in the Tulkarem refugee camp, and they opened fire.

A Palestinian demonstrator wounded by soldiers in a clash last week over Israel's West Bank separation barrier died in a hospital. He was the third man to die from a clash between soldiers and stone throwers near the village of Bidou, where Israel is planning to build a section of the barrier.

Israel says it needs the contentious barrier of razor wire, cement walls and trenches to keep Palestinian suicide bombers out of Israeli towns and cities. However, the barrier dips into the West Bank in some areas, and Palestinians say it is a land grab meant to prevent them from establishing a state.

### French parliament adopts ban on headscarves

PARIS (AP) — A law banning Islamic headscarves in France's public schools was overwhelmingly adopted Wednesday in the Senate despite protests by many French Muslims that the measure is discriminatory.

The 276-20 vote mirrored similar support by the National Assembly, the lower chamber of parliament, which passed it 494-36 on Feb. 10.

President Jacques Chirac must now formally sign it into law within 15 days. He had said such a law was needed to protect the French principle of secularism.

The law forbids religious apparel and signs that "conspicuously show" a student's religious affiliation. While Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses would also be banned, authorities have made clear that it is aimed at removing Islamic headscarves from classrooms.

The measure is to take effect in September.

There are an estimated 5 million Muslims in mostly Roman Catholic France — the largest Muslim population in Western Europe.

The Senate, which like the lower house is controlled by conservatives such as Chirac, still had to dismiss 23 proposed amendments raised in two days of debate. The amendments were offered mainly by the left.


The law is to be re-examined after a year in force to see whether "conspicuous" should be replaced by "visible."

### NEWS IN BRIEF



# Let's Go Out To Eat

## Thursdays in The Battalion



**MEXICAN CAFE**  
3312 S. College Ave., Bryan

Serving the freshest and best mexican fast food since 1969.

## 49¢ Crispy Tacos

No Limit. Show Student ID  
Expires 04-02-04.  
Between Farm Patch and Villa Maria



**BLUE BAKER**  
Baking It Great!

3312 S. College Ave., Bryan

Bakery • Pizzeria • Deli • Café

## FREE 9" SPECIALTY PIZZA

with purchase of any specialty pizza & 2 sodas  
Pizza Served Daily After 5pm.  
Offer Expires: 3/15/04. Valid for dine-in or delivery.  
Delivery minimums and fees apply. One coupon per transaction.  
201 Dominik Drive (979) 696-5055



**Buck's Pizza**  
PIZZA · STROMBOLI · HOAGIES

## 2 Medium One Topping Pizzas \$9.99

Limited time offer. Some restrictions apply.  
Free delivery

# 693-2BUCK



**Jose's Restaurant**

Buy one entree and get a second entree of equal or lesser value  
**FREE!**

(Good only Sun-Thurs. from 5pm - closing)  
Not valid with any other offer.  
Present coupon to server when ordering. Expires 04/20/04.  
(Closed Mondays)  
3824 S. Texas Ave., Bryan  
268-0036  
All credit cards & checks accepted.



**Must Be Heaven**  
Sandwich Shoppe  
Old Fashioned Sandwiches  
Fresh Baked Bread  
Soups - Quiche - Salads  
Baked Potatoes  
Homemade Desserts

**BRYAN**      **COLLEGE STATION**  
At the intersection of Villa Maria @ Briarcrest      Rock Prairie Rd next to College Station Med Center

**731-8891**      **764-9222**

Buy one Heavenly Special, Get one 1/2 off with Coupon!

Offer Available after 4:00 p.m. Only - Must have coupon



**POPEYES**  
CHICKEN & BISCUITS

<p>2 Can Dine! 5 Pc Mixed, 2 Reg. Sides &amp; 2 Biscuits</p> <p><b>\$5.99</b></p> <p><small>Expires 04/17/04</small></p>	<p>3 Pc Mixed, 1 Reg. Side &amp; 1 Biscuit</p> <p><b>\$3.99</b></p> <p><small>Expires 04/17/04</small></p>	<p>Texas A&amp;M Students with a valid ID get <b>10% off</b> on regular menu items.</p>
--	--	---

Present coupon when ordering. One coupon per customer per visit. Void where prohibited. Not valid with any other offer. Good at participating Popeyes only. ©2003 AFC Enterprises, Inc.

## ZARAPE

Buy one entree and get a second entree of equal or lesser value  
**FREE!**

(Good only Sun-Thurs. from 5pm - closing)  
Not valid with any other offer.  
Present coupon to server when ordering. Expires 04/20/04.  
(Closed Mondays)  
308 N. Main, Bryan  
779-8702  
All credit cards & checks accepted.

## caffe' capri

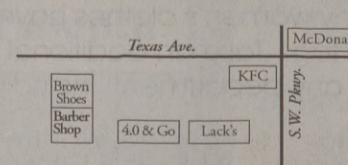
the place for Italian  
for more info, ask a friend

### FREE APPETIZER

With meal purchase and this coupon. Not good with any other offer.

Ag owned & operated  
222 n. main in historic downtown bryan  
979.822.2675

## THE BARBER SHOP



**693-4400**  
Mon.-Fri. 8:00 - 6:00  
2553-C Texas Ave. S. College Station  
Next to Brown's Shoe Store

# \$2 off

with this coupon  
Offer expires March 31, 2004

## Honey B Ham & Deli

The Best Sandwiches in Town

## FREE CHIP & DRINK!

w/purchase of any sandwich

2415 A S. Texas Ave.  
Parkway Square Shopping Center  
College Station, TX  
696-DELI (3354)  
Expires 04/30/04



Now serving an Atkins Menu



**OTTO'S BAKERY & CAFE**  
3115 S. College Ave. Bryan, TX 77801 (979) 775-1111

Monday-Friday 7:30 am-4 pm  
Saturday 8 am-2 pm  
Drive-Thru Available  
Regular Hours for Carry Out  
Call ahead for Casseroles & Dishes  
Phone-in orders welcome  
Cakes and Diet Desserts Available  
Catering Available  
Wholesale Orders Welcome

**WEDDING CAKES, ALL OCCASION CAKES,  
SPECIALTY CAKES, KOLACHES, PASTRIES,  
SOUPS, SALADS, SANDWICHES,  
LUNCH SPECIALS AVAILABLE**

**FREE COOKIE & DRINK WITH MEAL SPECIAL**