

Breaking news from the Jerusalem Open House: Terror and hate crimes suspect held by police for crimes against LGBTQ community and other minorities

By Yonatan Gher

Earlier this week (Nov 1, 2009) the Israel police cleared for publication the arrest of Yaakov Teitel, 35, a US-born immigrant settler, suspected of carrying out a series of heinous hate crimes against the LGBTQ community, left-wing activists, Palestinians and Messianic Jews.

The police apprehended Teitel a month ago while he was hanging posters extolling the attack on the Tel Aviv LGBT youth center last August. In that attack, a masked gunman armed with a machine-gun killed two young people and wounded 13 others, before fleeing into the night. The Israeli LGBTQ community is still reeling from the trauma of this event.

During his investigation, Teitel allegedly declared his involvement in this attack. Despite his apparent confession, investigators have not found sufficient evidence so far to tie him to the attack.

The police successfully linked Teitel to a bomb with the words "Sodomites Out" written on it, found eight days before the Jerusalem Pride March in 2006. They also found flyers nearby entitled "Death to Sodomites," with instructions on how to make Molotov cocktails and other improvised weapons to be used against LGBTQ people. The flyer also promised NIS 20,000 to anyone causing the death of "one of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah." It was signed by "The Red Hand of Redemption," the same title used in the flyers praising the Tel Aviv attack.

Teitel is also being charged with killing two Palestinians, as far back as 1997, and more recently for planting bombs against Prof. Zeev Shternhell, Jerusalem Open House activists, a Christian monastery and Messianic Jews. In the latter two incidents, two people were injured, including a 15-year old boy, who was seriously wounded.

In response to the Teitel's arrest, Yonatan Gher, executive director of the Jerusalem Open House for Pride and Tolerance commented that "there is a clear thread linking the terrible actions of Yaakov Teitel: hatred of the 'other', whoever the other may be. It is imperative that we do not respond to this arrest with similar hatred."

Gher continued, "We request that people do not point an accusing finger at any sector, but point it at hatred itself. We expect to hear renunciations of Teitel's shocking actions from a wide spectrum of the Israeli population, from the political right and left, from religious and



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secular populations, from LGBTQ and straight people. Let us unite against these hateful actions and respond to them through the love and acceptance of the other.”



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