



NORTH KOREA TO STAND TRIAL FOR SUPPORTING TERROR

For the first time, the government of North Korea will face charges of supporting terrorism against Israel in a U.S. Federal Court.



In May 1972, terrorists from the Japanese Red Army (JRA), working in league with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), placed automatic weapons, ammunition, and grenades in their check-in luggage on a flight from Italy to Israel. When their bags emerged in Tel-Aviv at the arrivals hall, they took out the weapons and opened fire in every direction mowing down passengers, flight crew members and airport workers. They also attempted to blow up airplanes on the ground using hand grenades. Two of the three attackers were killed, and a third, Kozo Akumoto, was captured, tried, and sentenced to prison in Israel.

Most of the victims were Catholic pilgrims from Puerto Rico who had come to visit the Holy Land for the first time.

North Korea was behind the attack. As the trial will show incontrovertibly, in the months leading up to the massacre the leaders of the JRA and PFLP met each other and with North Korean officials, who provided funding, intelligence, training, and other material support for the terrorists. The attack was part of the JRA's declared strategy of taking their anti-Western violence and plans of communist revolution to other parts of the world, beginning with Israel—a strategy approved by the North Korean government.

This will be the first time North Korea is being held to account in a U.S. court for its support of terrorism over many decades. It is widely known that one of the world's most oppressive regimes is also a consistent support of terrorism, including providing weaponry, training bases, and funding for Palestinian terrorist organizations. They were also responsible for building an enormous underground bunker system for Hezbollah that dramatically increased the terrorist group's fighting capacity in the 2006 Lebanon War. For this reason, the U.S. State Department put North Korea on its official list of states that sponsor terror in 1988—a fact that makes it possible for American victims to sue the North Korean government and collect against their assets in a U.S. court. Although North Korea was removed from the list late in 2008 for political reasons, the current lawsuit was filed on behalf of the Puerto Rican families before the deadline for filing lawsuits, as were two other lawsuits Shurat HaDin currently has pending against North Korea.

The trial will begin on December 3 in the U.S. Federal Court in San Juan, Puerto Rico.