

Eli Cohen

Eliahu (Eli) ben Shaoul Cohen (Hebrew: 16 אֱלִיָּהוּ בֶן שְׂאוּל כֹּהֵן, December 1924 – 18 May 1965) (Arabic: ايلي كوهين) was an Israeli spy. He is best known for his espionage work in 1961 - 1965 in Syria, where he developed close relationships with the political and military hierarchy and became the Chief Adviser to the Minister of Defense. Syrian counter-intelligence authorities eventually uncovered a spy conspiracy, tried and convicted Cohen under pre-war 'martial law' to death penalty in 1965. The intelligence he gathered is claimed to have been an important factor in Israel's success in the Six Day War. In 2005, he was voted the 26th-greatest Israeli of all time, in a poll by the Israeli news website Ynet to determine whom the general public considered the 200 Greatest Israelis.

Early life and career: Eli Cohen was born in Alexandria to a devout Jewish and Zionist family in 1924. His father had moved there from Aleppo in 1914. Though his parents and three brothers left for Israel in 1949, Cohen remained to finish a degree in electronics and to coordinate Jewish and Zionist activities. In 1951, following a military coup, an anti-Zionist campaign was initiated, and Cohen was arrested and interrogated over his Zionist activities. Cohen took part in various Israeli covert operations in the country during the 1950s, though the Egyptian government could never verify and provide proof of his involvement in Operation Goshen, an Israeli operation to smuggle Egyptian Jews out of the country and resettle them in Israel due to increasing hostility there. In 1955, a sabotage unit, made of Jewish Egyptian citizens and recruited by Israel's secret police, operated against their native Egypt and attempted to destroy Egyptian relationships with western powers. The unit bombed American and British installations expecting that this would be considered the work of Egyptians. Egyptian authorities uncovered the spy ring and after a trial, two of the group's members received the death penalty. Cohen had aided the unit and was implicated, however no link between Cohen and the accused could be found. Following the Suez Crisis, the Egyptian government stepped up persecution of Jews and expelled many of them. In December 1956, Cohen was forced to leave the country.

In 1957, Cohen was recruited by the Israel Defense Forces, and was placed in military intelligence, where he became a counterintelligence analyst. His work bored him, and he attempted to join the Mossad. Cohen was offended when Mossad rejected him, and resigned from military counterintelligence. The Mossad recruited Cohen after Director-General Meir Amit, looking for a special agent to infiltrate the Syrian government, came across his name while looking through the agency's files of rejected candidates, after none of the current candidates seemed suitable for the job. For two weeks he was put under surveillance, and was judged suitable for recruitment and training. Cohen was then informed that the Mossad had decided to recruit him, and underwent an intensive, six-month course at the Mossad training school. His graduate report stated that he had all the qualities needed to become a katsa, or field agent. He was then given a false identity as a Syrian businessman who was returning to the country after living in Argentina. To establish his cover, Cohen moved to Argentina in 1961.

Cohen moved to Damascus in February 1962 under the alias Kamel Amin Thaabet. The tactics of Cohen to build relations with Syrian high-ranked politicians, military officials, influential public figures and local foreign diplomacy community, had been carefully masterminded by Mossad. He continued his social life as in Argentina, spending time in cafes listening to political gossip. He also held parties at his home,

which turned into orgies for high-placed Syrian ministers, businessmen, and others, who used Cohen's apartment "for assignations with various women, including Defense Ministry secretaries, airline hostesses, and Syrian singing stars." At these parties such highly placed officials would "talk freely of their work and army plans. Eli, who would feign intoxication, remained sober and listened carefully. In addition to providing loans to government officials and acting as an avid host, he was asked for advice by government officials, who were often intoxicated by the alcohol he freely provided. Cohen himself was not above the spicier part of a spy's life either. He had seventeen lovers in Syria, all dazzling beauties with a fair degree of family power." Some sources claim that he had established a good friendship with Amin al-Hafiz. In 2001 Hafez in interview with Al-jazeera distanced himself from Cohen he said that such a friendship would be impossible given the fact that he had been in Moscow until 1962. After Hafiz became Prime Minister, Cohen may even have been considered for the position of Syrian Deputy Minister of Defense.

Cohen provided an incredible amount of intelligence data to the Israeli Army over a period of four years (1961-1965). Cohen sent intelligence to Israel by radio, secret letters, and occasionally in person, he secretly traveled to Israel three times. His most famous achievement was when he toured the Golan Heights, and collected intelligence on the Syrian fortifications there. Feigning sympathy for the soldiers exposed to the sun, Cohen had trees planted at every position. The trees were used as targeting markers by the Israeli military during the Six-Day War and enabled Israel to easily capture the Golan Heights in two days. Cohen made repeated visits to the southern frontier zone, providing photographs and sketches of Syrian positions. Cohen learned of an important secret plan by Syria to create three successive lines of bunkers and mortars; the Israel Defense Forces would otherwise have expected to encounter only a single line.

After large amounts of radio interference were detected and traced to their source, on 24 January Syrian security officers broke into Cohen's apartment where he was caught in the middle of transmission to Israel.

After a trial before a military tribunal, he was found guilty of espionage and sentenced to death under 'martial law'. Cohen was said to have been repeatedly interrogated and tortured. Israel staged an international campaign for clemency, hoping to persuade the Syrians not to execute him. Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir led a campaign, demanding the international community to force Damascus to consider the consequences of hanging Cohen. Diplomats, Prime Ministers, and Pope Paul VI tried to intercede. Meir even appealed to the Soviet Union. Despite international appeals, and the governments of France, Belgium and Canada, to persuade the Syrian government to commute the death sentence, the death sentence decision was upheld. On 15 May 1965, Cohen wrote in his final letter: "...I am begging you my dear Nadia not to spend your time in weeping about some thing already passed. Concentrate on yourself, looking forward for a better future!"

On 18 May 1965, Cohen was publicly hanged in the Marjeh Square in Damascus. On the day of his execution, Cohen's 'last wish' to see a Rabbi was respected by the prison authorities. While on his way in a truck to the Marjeh Square, he was accompanied by Nissim Andabo, the 80-year old Chief Rabbi of Syria.

Mordechai Vanunu and "Cindy"

Mordechai Vanunu (Hebrew: מרדכי ואנונו; born 14 October 1954), also known as John Crossman, is a former Israeli nuclear technician who, citing his opposition to weapons of mass destruction, revealed details of Israel's nuclear weapons program to the British press in 1986. He was subsequently lured to Italy by a Mossad agent, where he was drugged and abducted by Israeli intelligence agents. He was transported to Israel and ultimately convicted in a trial that was held behind closed doors.

Vanunu was born in Marrakesh, Morocco, to an Orthodox Jewish family. The family lived in the city's Mellah, or Jewish quarter. His father, Shlomo, ran a grocery store, and his mother, Mazal, was a housewife. Vanunu studied in an Alliance française school, and a Jewish religious elementary school, or cheder. In 1963, following a rise in anti-semitic sentiment in Morocco, Vanunu's father sold his business, and the family emigrated to Israel. Vanunu was eight years old at the time and had four brothers and sisters. For high school, Vanunu attended Yeshivat Ohel Shlomo high school, a Bnei Akiva-run school, where he was an honor student

In October 1971, he was conscripted into the Israel Defense Forces. He tried to join the Israeli Air Force as a pilot, but after failing the entrance exam, was sent to the Combat Engineering Corps and became a sapper. After basic training, he completed a commanders' course and then a non-commissioned officers course, attaining the rank of Sergeant-Major. He entered university and studied physics. After failing two exams at the end of his first year and realizing that the full-time work he needed to pay for his education interfered with his studies, Vanunu dropped out and returned to his parents' home in Beersheba, and worked in a series of odd jobs.

In 1976, Vanunu applied for a job at the Negev Nuclear Research Center, an Israeli facility used to develop and manufacture nuclear weapons located in the Negev Desert south of Dimona. Most worldwide intelligence agencies estimate that Israel developed nuclear weapons as early as the 1960s, but the country has intentionally maintained a "nuclear ambiguity", neither acknowledging nor denying that it possesses nuclear weapons. Vanunu was responding to an advertisement for trainee technicians to work at the facility. After a lengthy interview with the facility's security officer, he was accepted for training, and was put through an intensive training course in physics, chemistry, mathematics, first aid, fire drill, and English. He did sufficiently well to be accepted, and was employed as a nuclear plant technician and shift manager in February 1977.

He opposed the 1982 Lebanon War, and campaigned for equal rights for Arab Israelis.[24] In his security file at the Negev Nuclear Research Center, it was noted that he had displayed "left-wing and pro-Arab beliefs". He became acquainted with many Arab students, including pro-PLO activists. In June 1984, he was interrogated at the facility's security office. The next month, he left for Paris for two weeks with a student group to meet French-Jewish students, and when he returned, he was interrogated again. In May 1984, he was again questioned by the head of security at Dimona and a lawyer who was possibly from Shin Bet, and was let off with a stern warning about divulging any unauthorized information., Vanunu secretly smuggled in a camera and covertly took 57 photographs. Vanunu quit his job on October 27, 1985, due to repeated efforts by his superiors to transfer him to tasks that were less sensitive than his previous positions at the facility. He was given severance pay of \$7,500 and a reference letter praising his work and describing his departure as a layoff.

During this time, he met Oscar Guerrero, a freelance journalist from Colombia. Guerrero persuaded Vanunu to sell his story, claiming that his story and photographs were worth up to \$1 million. After failing to interest Newsweek, Guerrero approached the British Sunday Times, and within a few days, Vanunu was interviewed by Sunday Times journalist Peter Hounam. In early September 1986, Vanunu flew to London with Hounam, and in violation of his non-disclosure agreement, revealed to the Sunday Times his knowledge of the Israeli nuclear programme, including the photographs he had secretly taken at the Dimona site. The Sunday Times was wary of being duped. As a result, the newspaper insisted

on verifying Vanunu's story with leading nuclear weapon experts, including former U.S. nuclear weapons designer Theodore Taylor and former British AWE engineer Frank Barnaby, who agreed that Vanunu's story was factual and correct.

Vanunu gave detailed descriptions of lithium-6 separation required for the production of tritium, an essential ingredient of fusion-boosted fission bombs. While both experts concluded that Israel might be making such single-stage boosted bombs, Vanunu, whose work experience was limited to material (not component) production, gave no specific evidence that Israel was making two-stage thermonuclear bombs, such as neutron bombs. Vanunu described the plutonium processing used, giving a production rate of about 30 kg per year, and stated that Israel used about 4 kg per weapon. From this information it was possible to estimate that Israel had sufficient plutonium for about 150 nuclear weapons.

The Israeli government decided to capture Vanunu, but determined to avoid harming its good relationship with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and not wanting to risk confrontation with British intelligence, determined Vanunu should be persuaded to leave British territory under his own volition. Israel's efforts to capture Vanunu were headed by Giora Tzahor.

Through constant surveillance and analysis by Mossad psychologists, the Mossad found that Vanunu had become lonely and eager for female companionship. Masquerading as an American tourist called "Cindy", Israeli Mossad agent Cheryl Bentov befriended Vanunu, and on 30 September persuaded him to fly to Rome with her on a holiday.[34] This relation has been perceived as a classic honey trap operation whereby an intelligence agent employs seduction to gain the target's trust—a practice which has been officially sanctioned in Israel. On the day Bentov met Vanunu, the Israeli Navy electronic surveillance ship INS Noga was ordered to the Italian coast.

The Noga, disguised as a merchant ship, was fitted with electronic surveillance equipment and satellite communications gear in its superstructure, and was primarily used to intercept communications traffic in Arab ports. As the ship was heading from Antalya in Turkey back to Haifa, the captain was instructed in an encrypted message to change course for Italy and anchor off the coast. The Noga arrived off the Italian port city of La Spezia and anchored in international waters, just outside Italian territorial waters.

Once in Rome, Vanunu and Bentov took a taxi to an apartment in the old quarter of the city, where three waiting Mossad operatives overpowered Vanunu and injected him with a paralyzing drug. Later that night, a white van hired by the Israeli embassy arrived, and Vanunu was carried to it on a stretcher. The ambulance drove out of Rome, down the coast to a pre-arranged point. Vanunu was transferred to a waiting speedboat, which then rendezvoused with the waiting Noga anchored off the coast. He was brought aboard the Noga in total secrecy. The crew were told to assemble in the ship's common room and lock the door as Vanunu and the Mossad agents were taken aboard. The ship then departed for Israel. During the journey, Vanunu was kept in a cabin, with Mossad agents taking turns guarding him. None of the Noga's crew was allowed to look at the prisoner.

Assassination of Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh

The **assassination of Mahmoud Al-Mabhouh** (Arabic: محمود المبحوح, Maḥmūd al-Mabḥūḥ; 14 February 1961 – 19 January 2010) took place on 19 January 2010, in a Dubai hotel room. Al-Mabhouh—a co-founder of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the IslamistPalestinian group Hamas—was wanted by the Israeli government for the kidnapping and murder of two Israeli soldiers in 1989 as well as purchasing arms from Iran for use in Gaza; these have been cited as a possible motive for the assassination.^[1] He also had other enemies, including Fatah (whose members "loathed" him). He had spent 2003 in prison in Egypt and was being sought by Jordanian intelligence.

His assassination attracted international attention in part due to allegations that it was ordered by the Israeli government and carried out by Mossad agents holding fake or fraudulently obtained passports from several European countries and Australia.

The photographs of 26 suspects, and the names they used, have been placed on Interpol's most-wanted list. According to Dubai's authorities, there are up to 29 suspects, 12 of whom carried British passports, six Irish, four French, one German, and four Australian, and another two Palestinians who were arrested. Interpol and the Dubai police believed that the suspects stole the identities of real people, mostly Israeli dual citizens. Two Palestinians, believed by Hamas to be former Fatah security officers and current employees of a senior Fatah official, were taken into custody in Dubai, on suspicions that one of them provided logistical assistance to the hit team. Despite Hamas's claim, Dubai would not comment on the incident or identify the two Palestinian suspects.

According to initial reports, Al-Mabhouh was drugged, then electrocuted and suffocated. Lt. Gen. Dhahi Khalfan Tamim of the Dubai Police Force said the suspects tracked Al-Mabhouh to Dubai from Damascus, Syria. They arrived from different European destinations and stayed at different hotels, presumably to avoid being detected and, with the exception of three of its members suspected of "helping to facilitate" who had left on a ferry for Iran several months before the assassination, departed after the assassination to different countries. Dubai's police chief said that he was "99% certain" that the assassination was the work of Israel's Mossad. On 1 March 2010, he stated that he was "sure" that *all* of the suspects are hiding in Israel. He said that Dubai would ask for an arrest warrant to be issued for Meir Dagan, the head of Mossad, if it is confirmed that the Mossad is involved and responsible for the assassination. The Hamas leadership also holds Israel responsible, and has vowed revenge. However, later in March, Dubai police chief said, "I am now completely sure that it was Mossad", and went on to say "I have presented the (Dubai) prosecutor with a request for the arrest of (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu and the head of Mossad" for the assassination.

On 23 March 2010, Britain's foreign secretary expelled an Israeli diplomat after the UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency turned up evidence that Israel had forged copies of British passports. On 24 May, the Australian government expelled an Israeli diplomat after concluding that there was "no doubt Israel was behind the forgery of four Australian passports" related to the assassination. Similar action was taken by Ireland. Israel has refused to comment on the accusations that its security forces were behind the assassination.

