

Suicide bombers kill 23 in Tel Aviv

Judith Sudilovsky/CNS

TEL AVIV, Israel — Hazel Cutin, a 25-year-old Filipino, had just finished dinner when the first suicide bomber struck her Tel Aviv neighborhood.

Cutin, a caregiver for an elderly Israeli woman for two years, got up to see which would be the safest way to get to work when the second blast occurred just outside the building, which shook so hard that some residents fled, fearing it would collapse. Glass shards were everywhere, and the building front was destroyed.

"I am still shaking," she said Jan. 6. "I saw half of a human leg in front of me. People were lying all over the ground. I don't know if they were dead or injured."

At least 23 people were killed in the Jan. 5 blasts, and some 100 others were wounded. Many of the injured were foreign workers, illegally in Israel, who were afraid of being arrested if they sought medical help; the area is largely inhabited by foreign workers, including many Catholic Filipinos and Africans.

Israeli police, medical and immigration officials assured the workers that anyone needing medical treatment would not be arrested.

One of Cutin's neighbors who works illegally in Israel received se-

vere cuts from bits of glass that had shattered in her face. Cutin said she tried to clean the blood from her friend's face and took her to the paramedics.

Cutin said that although her friend was afraid of being arrested she was more afraid of being blind.

An offshoot of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, a militia linked to Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, said two of its members carried out the bombings, which Arafat condemned. A spokesman for the group told The Associated Press the splinter group was formed after an Israeli military offensive against Palestinians in March.

"One month ago I felt compassion for the Palestinians for having their homes destroyed, but right now the only thing I feel is a burning hatred in my heart," said Cutin.

"How can they do such a thing? If they are fighting for a cause, then why do they set off the bombs in a place where they know almost 90 percent of the people are foreign workers?" she asked.

Cutin added that she had no plans to return to the Philippines. "If the Israelis can live with it, so can we," she said.

Rachel Navidad, a 25-year-old Catholic Filipino who also has worked in Israel as a caregiver for



Reuters/CNS

An Israeli policeman inspects a bomb site in Tel Aviv Jan. 5. At least 23 people were killed in two blasts.

two years, said she felt she had no choice but to stay, because no work is available in the Philippines.

"I will go back to be with my family eventually, but I need to work some more here in order to save money to open my own business," she said.

Navidad, who shares an apart-

ment with five other women, said the blast shattered the apartment windows and left the place in total disarray. She said Jan. 6 that she and her roommates spent the night of the bombings cleaning, but the following morning she found pieces of flesh clinging to her broken windows and awning.

"And the smell here is terrible," she said, adding that she and her roommates would be looking for a new apartment.

"Everyone is afraid," she said.

Pointing to the statue of the Virgin Mary in her living room, Navidad said she prays all the time, but that since the explosion not only has she prayed for her own safety but for peace.

"We want there to be peace here because we want to work," she said, noting that she did not want to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian political situation.

"I am still very nervous; I don't know what to think or say," she said.

But 31-year-old Ogie Gelacio, a Filipino Catholic who works for the American Embassy in Tel Aviv and whose home was damaged in the bombings, was packing his bags.

"I have had it," he said. "This is the second time (there has been a bombing here) and I just cannot live like this. I am leaving."

California suspends statute on sex-abuse cases

Jerry Filteau/CNS

WASHINGTON — As the church continued to confront the clergy sexual abuse problem in the new year, California quickly became a focus of national attention.

The reason was a new law that took effect Jan. 1, giving alleged clergy abuse victims a one-year window to sue church institutions, regardless of how long ago the alleged abuse occurred.

But there were also new developments in several other states, including Nevada, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and New Hampshire.

The first lawsuits under the new California law were filed Jan. 2 against the San Francisco Archdiocese, the Oakland and San Jose dioceses and the Order of Friars Servants of Mary, better known as the Servites.

The next day Costa Mesa lawyer John Manly, who represented a client in a \$5.2 million settlement last year with the Los Angeles Archdiocese and Orange Diocese, filed a petition with the California Supreme

Court to have a single judge hear all or nearly all lawsuits filed statewide under the new law.

Stockton attorney David Drivon, whose firm is representing about 250 alleged victims, has predicted that 500 lawsuits will be filed in California during the one-year suspension of the statute of limitations.

In Wisconsin, Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of Milwaukee announced a new archdiocesan review board to handle abuse allegations Jan. 2.

He expressed strong support for mediation as the preferred approach to settling claims, saying that his review of past archdiocesan expenses showed that "more money went for legal fees than to the needs of caring

for victims. My goal would be to minimize as much as possible the need for such legal fees and to concentrate instead on the need for therapy, healing and restorative justice."

The Chicago Archdiocese Jan. 4 announced the permanent removal of two priests following a second-stage review of the allegations against them. Both had been suspended since last year when the allegations were made.

Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Jerome Listeck informed parishioners at St. Joseph Parish in Round Lake that Father Raymond Skriba, their pas-

tor since 1984, was removed because the archdiocesan review board found "reasonable cause" to suspect him of having sexually abused teenage girls in the 1960s.

At Queen of the Rosary Church in Elk Grove Village, parishioners were told that their associate pastor, Father John A. Robinson, was removed because the board found reasonable cause to suspect he had engaged in sexual misconduct nearly 30 years ago with a teenage boy.

Cherry Blossom Festival

In Washington, DC
4 days/3 nights
April 3rd - 6th, 2003
Acc. at McLean Hilton Hotel
Escorted by: Sal Orsi

High Class Tours & Travel

For More Information/Reservations
Call either Sal at 585-247-9032
and leave message or
Coach USA at 585-334-2222 ext. 4404
or email Sal at highct5429@aol.com

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)
Vol. 114 No. 13, January 9, 2003
Published weekly except the first Thursday in January and the last Thursday in December. Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1136 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY 14624, 585/529-9530. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, PO Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624.

4 Glass Block Windows Installed \$398

Includes 4 windows 32"x14"
2 vented and 2 solid. Fully insured.

Energy Efficient • Private • Secure

VanGuard
Glass Block Co.

Over 10,000 basement windows installed
749-3265 • 538-6926