Atef Bseiso: PLO Security Official Assassinated in Paris, 1992



Atef Bseiso (1948–1992) was a Palestinian security commander from Gaza City and a close aide to Abu Iyad, who headed counter-espionage in the

PLO’s Unified Security Apparatus, uncovering Israeli spy networks and building ties with European security services. He was shot three times in the head with a silenced pistol outside his hotel in Paris after midnight on 8 June 1992; Fatah accuses Israel’s Mossad of killing him. [1] [2] [3]

This article is part of the series “Assassinated leaders of the Palestinian revolution,” alongside the articles on Abu Iyad, Abu al-Hol and Khaled Nazzal.

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Who was Atef Bseiso?

Atef Bseiso was a man of the shadows in Palestinian security: few knew him, he avoided the media, and no photo of him was published before his death [2]. He spent a quarter of a century in security work, from building the nucleus of the Monitoring Apparatus in Lebanon to countering Israeli espionage and handling security at the Madrid peace conference [1] [4].

Atef Bseiso at a glance

Item	Details
Name	Atef Fayeq Bseiso [1] [4]
Born	23 August 1948, Gaza City [1] [2] [4]
Education	Palestine Secondary School, Gaza (1966); law at Beirut Arab University [1] [4]
Organisation	Fatah, from 1967 [1] [2]
Role	Head of counter-espionage in the PLO’s Unified Security Apparatus from 1974 [1] [2] [4]
Family	Married, with three children: Fayeq, Farouk and Dana [1]
Assassinated	8 June 1992, outside his hotel in Paris [1] [2] [3]
Buried	Martyrs of Palestine Cemetery near Tunis, 10 June 1992 [1] [2] [4]

Timeline

Year	Event
1948	Born in Gaza City on 23 August [1] [4]
1966	Finishes Palestine Secondary School in Gaza [1]
1967	Joins Fatah; studies law in Beirut [1] [2]
1968	Builds the nucleus of the “Monitoring Apparatus” in Lebanon [1]
1972	Member of the Monitoring Apparatus’s central leadership [1] [2] [4]
1973	Detained in Italy on an unproven charge, then released [1] [2] [4]
1974	Head of counter-espionage in the Unified Security Apparatus [1] [2] [4]
After 1982	Builds ties with European security services [1] [2]
1991	Handles security for the Madrid peace conference [1] [2] [4]
8 June 1992	Assassinated in Paris [1] [2] [3]

Year	Event
10 June 1992	Buried near Tunis [1] [2]

A son of Gaza

Atef Fayeq Bseiso was born on 23 August 1948 in Gaza City, the year of the Nakba, to a family of scholars and notables [1] [4]. His father, Hajj Fayeq Bseiso, managed the Bank of the Nation in Hebron and Gaza and was arrested three times by the British Mandate authorities [1] [2]. He finished Palestine Secondary School in Gaza in 1966, then moved to Beirut to study law at Beirut Arab University [1] [4].

From the Monitoring Apparatus to Unified Security

In 1967 he joined Fatah and worked on its student committee in Lebanon [1] [2]. In mid-1968 he was tasked with building the nucleus of the “Monitoring Apparatus” in Lebanon and devoted himself full-time to the movement [1]. After the events of September 1970, Abu Iyad restructured the apparatus, and in 1972 Bseiso joined its central leadership [1] [2] [4].

In 1973 he was detained in Italy on a charge of attempting to bomb an Israeli plane while carrying a Moroccan passport under an alias, and was released for lack of proof [1] [2] [4]. Israel claims he took part in the 1972 Munich operation [3].

Spy-catcher

In 1974 the apparatus became the PLO’s “Unified Security Apparatus” under Abu Iyad, and Atef Bseiso took charge of counter-espionage, uncovering several Israeli spy networks and overseeing security training [1] [2] [4].

European security and the Madrid conference

After Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Bseiso built ties with European security services, coordinated with the security services of socialist states and organised their training courses for the apparatus; Berlin was his main regional base [1] [2]. Arabi Kaloub writes that he convinced European security services that Israel's information on the PLO and the region was false [1].

At the 1991 Madrid peace conference he handled the security file, spending about ten days in Madrid coordinating with Spanish security services [1] [2] [4].

The assassination of Atef Bseiso: Paris, 8 June 1992

Atef Bseiso came to Paris on an official visit to meet a French intelligence official [2] [1]. After midnight on 8 June 1992, as he returned with colleagues to the Méridien hotel in Montparnasse, two men approached as he got out of the car and fired three shots into his head at close range with silenced pistols, killing him instantly; the attackers fled by car [1] [2].

President Yasser Arafat and Fatah accused Israel's Mossad of the killing, which Israel denied [2] [3]. A press report says a French judge's report in March 1999 held the Mossad responsible [2].

The spy Adnan Yassin

Palestinian accounts say the spy Adnan Yassin, who worked in the PLO office in Tunis, helped the Mossad track Atef Bseiso's movements from Germany to Paris, and that the killing later helped expose him [1] [2].

Burial in Tunis

On 10 June 1992 Atef Bseiso was buried in the Martyrs of Palestine Cemetery near

Tunis, attended by the Palestinian leadership, Tunisian officials and hundreds of mourners [1] [2] [4]. He left a wife and three children: Fayeq, Farouk and Dana [1].

Legacy

Atef Bseiso was the last link in the chain of Israeli assassinations of PLO leaders in Europe that began with the Mossad assassinations in Europe in the 1970s and ran through Khaled Nazzal in Athens in 1986 [3]. He was killed just a year and a half after his mentor Abu Iyad and his comrade Abu al-Hol in Tunis.

Video

Conclusion

From Gaza to Beirut, from Tunis to Berlin and Paris, Atef Bseiso lived in the shadows hunting spies, until silenced bullets hunted him down on the pavement outside a Paris hotel.

Also in this series: Abu Iyad, Abu al-Hol, Khaled Nazzal.

Frequently asked questions about Atef Bseiso

Who was Atef Bseiso?

A Palestinian security commander from Gaza, head of counter-espionage in the PLO’s Unified Security Apparatus.

When was Atef Bseiso assassinated?

After midnight on 8 June 1992.

Where was Atef Bseiso assassinated?

Outside the Méridien hotel in Montparnasse, Paris.

How was Atef Bseiso killed?

Two men shot him three times in the head with silenced pistols as he got out of a car.

Who killed Atef Bseiso?

Fatah accuses Israel’s Mossad, which a French judge’s 1999 report also blamed according to press reports; Israel denied it.

Where is Atef Bseiso buried?

In the Martyrs of Palestine Cemetery near Tunis.

What was Atef Bseiso’s link to Abu Iyad?

He was one of his closest aides in the PLO’s Unified Security Apparatus.

Sources and references

Arabic-language sources are listed with translated titles.

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4. Karim Younis, “Atef Fayeq Bseiso,” Al-Natour Center for Studies and Research, 8 June 2026.