Opinion

30 years after Lockerbie, aerial terrorism still blights our world

Op-ed: The tragedy of 9/11 and subsequent plane bombings have not lessened the horror of the day when a passenger jet fell out of the sky onto a tiny Scottish town; we must unite to stop the people behind such heinous acts.

Yoram Schweitzer |Published: 12.21.18

We are now marking the 30th anniversary of the Lockerbie attack, aka the Pan-Am Flight 103 attack — the bombing of a passenger plane that claimed the lives of 270 innocent people — which is widely seen as one of the most brutal acts of terrorism in history.

On December 21, 1988, a bomb aboard the plane detonated mid-flight above the small town of Lockerbie in Scotland. The explosion killed 270 people, including 11 locals who were hit by debris from the destroyed jet. At the time, it was the most lethal attacks against a civilian plane to date, with the highest number of casualties recorded. The plane had taken off from Frankfurt, Germany and was headed to Detroit via London and New York.

The joint British-American investigative committee set up in the wake of the attack ultimately blamed Libya. But we should not forget that the first round of finger-pointing was directed at Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command. This was largely due to the October 26, 1988, arrest in Germany of a small cell belonging to Jibril's organization. Interrogation of these would-be terrorists revealed that they had planned to simultaneously attack five airplanes from Spain, the US and Israel. The operation was orchestrated and was to be led by Jibril in Damascus.

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