



Israel teen 'gunman' wanted an A+

An Israeli teenager has been arrested after he donned a mask and prowled the streets of his town with a big rucksack and toy gun for a school project.

The boy, 15, was seized by police in the southern town of Ashdod suspecting he was a Palestinian militant.

The student was quoted as saying he was researching police reactions in the town and "just wanted to get an A+".

The stunt was considered highly risky in Israel, where attackers are often shot by police or civilians.

Ashdod police commander Chief Superintendent Danny Elgarat told the BBC the Jewish teenager in question was "normal" and could even be considered a "gifted" pupil.

Shooting risk

He carried binoculars and wore his father's military fatigues as he made an appearance near one of the city's malls.

Anxious residents soon began calling the police, fearing the rucksack contained an explosive device.

After a search, armed officers located the youth, surrounded him and ordered him to freeze, at which point he revealed his identity.

"Had he attempted to flee he would unquestionably have been shot," the Israeli newspaper Yehdiot Ahranot pointed out.

The youth was later released on bail and was not charged.

"It's fine - he tested the police reaction," Mr Elgaret said.

Israel has faced numerous attacks on civilians by Palestinian militants in recent years, although there have been few in the past year.

Ashdod is located not far from the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by the militant group Hamas.

Story from BBC NEWS:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/7694719.stm

Published: 2008/10/28 12:59:40 GMT

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