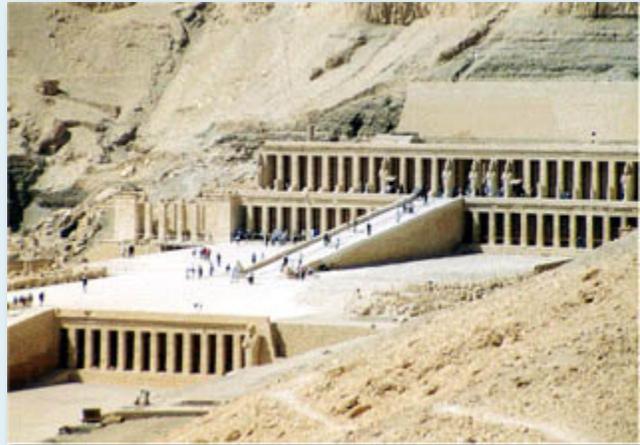


# DEIR EL-BAHRI

**Situation:** Gunman attack tourists at a famous Egyptian archeological site.

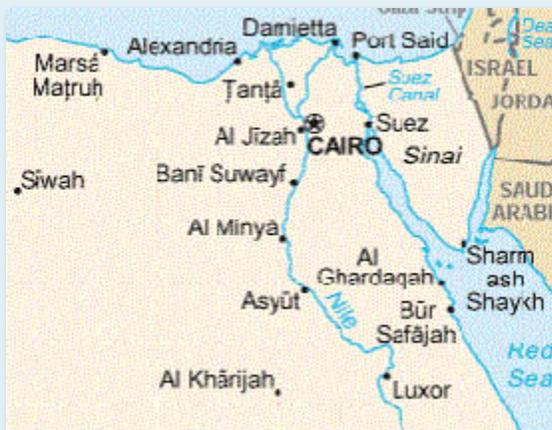
On 17 November 1997 at 8:45 in the morning, six gunmen attacked unsuspecting tourists visiting Deir el-Bahri, an archeological site located across the Nile River from Luxor, Egypt. This tragic attack claimed the lives of 62 innocent people and wounded 26 more.



The men that carried out the attack belonged to two Muslim extremist groups: Al-Gamd'a al-Islamiyya or the "The Islamic Group" and the Jihad Talaat al-Faith or the "Holy War of the Vanguard and the Conquest." The precise motive of the attack is still debated but the desire to embarrass the current Egyptian government and perhaps replace it with a more pure Islamic government is most likely a contributing factor.

The attack on tourists at Deir el-Bahri demonstrates the terrorist tactic of targeting tourist locations in order to gain as much international attention as possible. The attack also demonstrates that foreign visitors can be targeted in order to accomplish domestic political objectives.

When visiting tourist sites, you should be vigilant and be aware of persons acting suspiciously or items that seem out of place. Doing so could alert you to a possible threat and increase your chance of survival.



Luxor, Egypt is located about 300 miles south of Cairo and is a popular tourist spot. One of the most famous sites in the area is the Memorial Temple of Pharaoh Hatshepsut, located across the river at Deir el-Bahri. More than two million tourists a year visit Hatshepsut's Temple.

The temple had just opened for tourists when the attack took place. Almost without notice, six men disguised as security forces swarmed the site armed with automatic rifles and knives taking aim at anyone in their path. As tourists heard the shots

many fell to the ground or tried to hide in tombs and behind other objects. Most of those killed were shot, but some tourists were either beheaded or disemboweled.

When the carnage was over, 62 innocent people lay dead. Most of the victims were foreign tourists: 35 Swiss, 10 Japanese, 6 British, 4 Germans, 1 French, and one tourist who had dual British and Bulgarian citizenship. In addition, 1 Egyptian tour guide and 3 police officers were also killed.

It is important maintain an awareness of your environment and identify exits, egress routes and places to take cover in the event of an incident. Doing so can save you precious time during an attack and increase your chance of survival.

When the killing at Luxor had stopped, the six terrorist attempted to flee the area by stealing one of the tourist busses at the site. When Egyptian police and military forces arrived a gun battle broke out with the terrorists. Eventually all six terrorists were either killed by the Egyptian forces or committed suicide.

Because all the terrorists were killed, there are many still unanswered questions concerning the attack. It is suspected that Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden financed the attack, but definitive proof as not been found.



By the time of the attack on Luxor, Islamic terrorism had been increasing for over five years. Extremists originally took up arms in 1992 and had been increasingly targeting tourists. Earlier in 1997, a shooting and petrol bomb attack on a tour bus claimed the lives of nine German tourists and their Egyptian tour guide. In total, 34 tourists had been killed by terrorists in Egypt in the five years preceding the attack on Luxor.

Before going to unfamiliar locations, you should research the threat and prior terrorist incidents in the area. Good research may identify types of places or specific locations that have been targeted by terrorists in the past and which you might want to avoid.



The attack on the tourists in Luxor drastically affected the health of the Egyptian tourism industry. Almost immediately, several embassies issued travel advisories to their citizens to avoid travel to the southern part of Egypt until the security situation improved. As a result of these warnings, many tourists already in Egypt altered their itineraries and went to other locations in safer parts of Egypt. Other tourists not yet in the country either

cancelled their trips completely or went to other countries in the area.

You should heed the advice issued by the US embassy in countries you are visiting. Travel advisories and warnings are not meant to be an inconvenience, but are issued in an attempt to protect American lives. Advisories usually upset host nations and are not issued lightly. They are usually based on intelligence and analyses of prior incidents.