

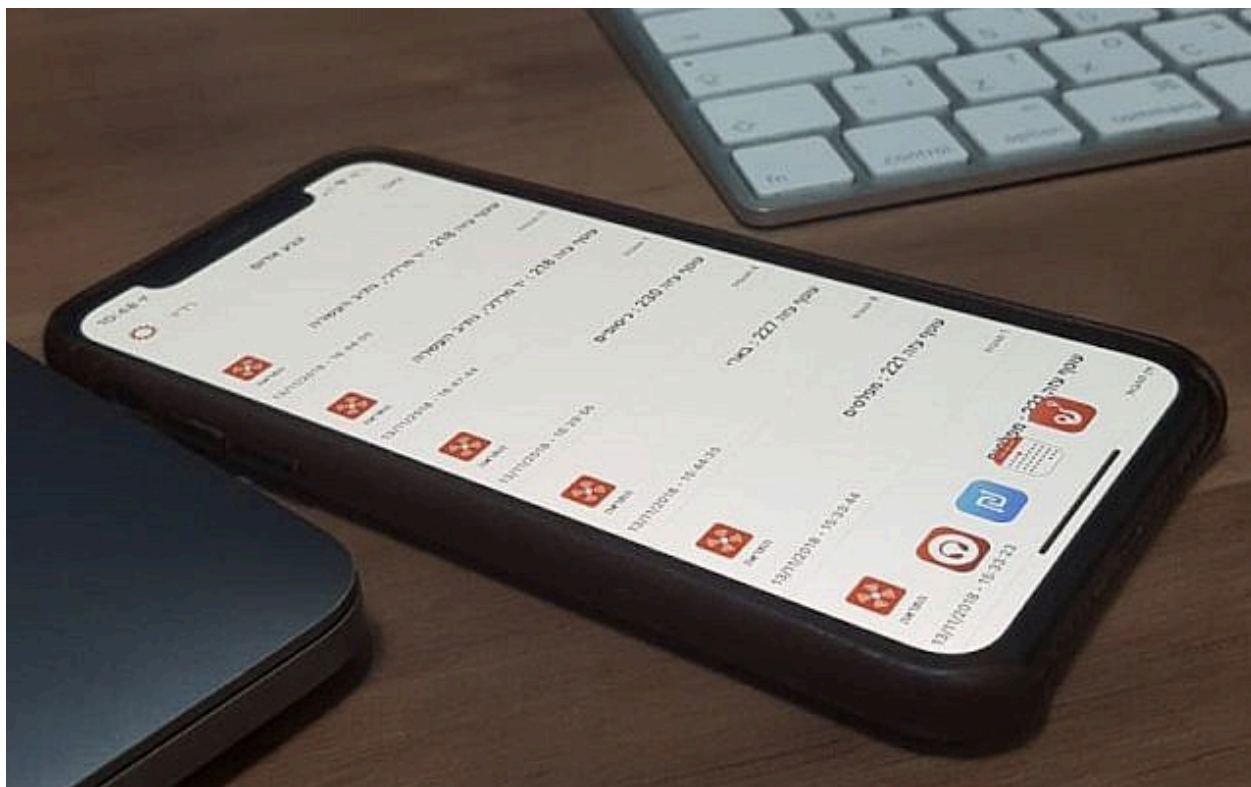
GROUP ATTACKED LA JEWISH HOSPITAL IN 'EYE FOR EYE' FOR GAZA

US indicts 2 Sudanese brothers linked to Oct. 7 cyberattacks on Israeli alert apps

Ahmed and Alaa Omer are detained in unspecified country, were interrogated by FBI for allegedly running cybercrime collective Anonymous Sudan; allegedly also targeted Iron Dome

By **TOI STAFF**

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Illustrative: Israeli apps alert users whenever a missile is headed into the country. (Sam Sokol/Times of Israel)

The United States has indicted two Sudanese brothers linked to cyberattacks on early warning systems in Israel during the Hamas onslaught on October 7, 2023, and other attacks in Israel, the US and Europe, The [New York Times](#) reported Friday.

The two had also claimed to have targeted Israel's Iron Dome missile defense in an incident, several months before the Gaza war started, that saw several Hamas rockets evade the interceptors in one incident.

Sudanese nationals Ahmed and Alaa Omer are accused of running the cybercriminal collective Anonymous Sudan, which struck two online Israeli applications that give alerts of danger. The apps were third-party warning systems and not the official IDF Home Front Command warning system.

The attack is said to have come 30 minutes after Hamas-led terrorists breached the border with Israel to kill nearly 1,200 people and take 251 hostages, but the indictment against the brothers does not indicate if they were coordinated with Hamas.

The assault on the border coincided with Hamas launching several thousand rockets into Israel.

A representative of one of the applications, "Tzofar — Red Alert," which alerts Israelis that they need to head to bomb shelters amid incoming rockets, confirmed to the Times that the company's website had been targeted during the onslaught, but said the mobile app continued to work.

"We are currently targeting some critical endpoints in the alert systems of Israel," Anonymous Sudan posted to its Telegram channel on October 7. "Glory to the Palestinian Resistance, we are with you."



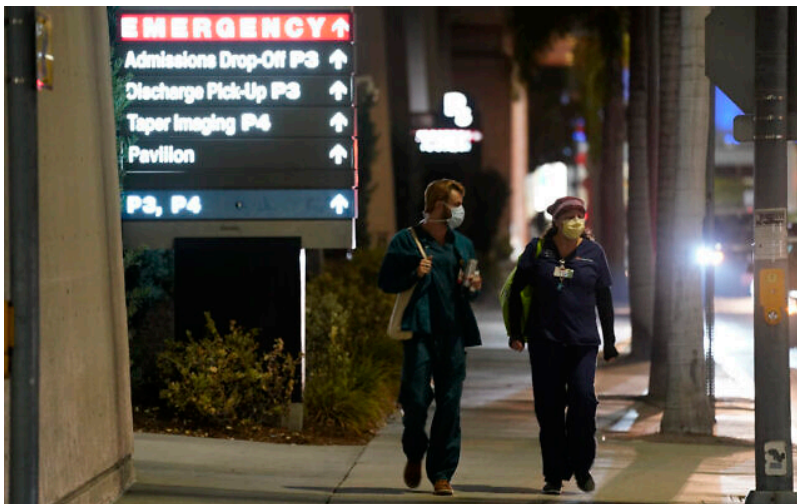
Rockets are launched by Palestinian terrorists from the Gaza Strip toward Israel, in Gaza, October 7, 2023. (AP Photo/ Hatem Moussa)

In February, Anonymous Sudan also targeted critical computer systems at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, a Jewish hospital in Los Angeles, the Times said.

“Bomb our hospitals in Gaza, we shut down yours too, eye for eye,” the brothers were said to have written on Telegram. Throughout the war in Gaza, Israel has struck several hospital compounds where it says Hamas has embedded itself.

The brothers were arrested and are in custody in an unspecified country, where they have been interrogated by the FBI, the Times said, adding that it was unclear if they would be extradited to the US.

Their attacks were potentially so life-threatening that Ahmed Omer could face life in prison for one of the charges against him — the first time a cybercrime would carry such a penalty, the Times said, citing E. Martin Estrada, the US attorney for California’s central district who handled the indictment.



Cedars-Sinai Medical Center workers walk outside the hospital, in Los Angeles, California, January 5, 2021. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello,File)

“When you’re attacking hospitals, you’re putting lives in jeopardy, and this one certainly put lives in jeopardy,” Estrada said.

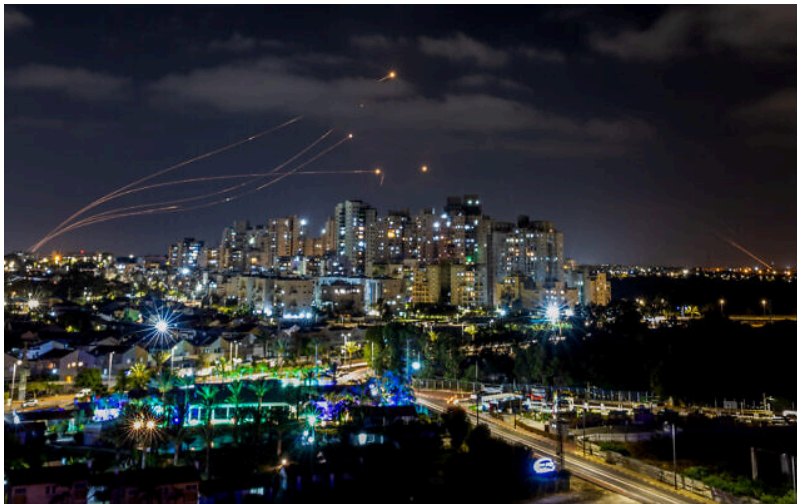
Anonymous Sudan has launched some 35,000 DDoS — distributed denial of service — attacks since it emerged on Telegram in January 2023, the Times said.

The newspaper cited Ian Gray, vice president of cybersecurity firm Flashpoint, as saying Anonymous Sudan has interacted with pro-Kremlin hacker groups linked to Russia’s security services.

The interaction “appears to be ideological and not based on national origin,” Gray said, noting that Anonymous Sudan’s Arabic-language Telegram messages indicate it subscribes to a pan-Islamist ideology.

Anonymous Sudan has targeted the websites of several media organizations, including CNN and The Washington Post, as well as Israel’s High Court and the Haifa port.

In May 2023 during a flare-up, Anonymous Sudan [targeted the Iron Dome missile defense system](#), allowing 16 rockets, a larger-than-usual number, to cross into Israel from Gaza, the Times said, citing Flashpoint.



The Iron Dome anti-missile system fires interception missiles after rockets are fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, as seen from Ashkelon, on May 13, 2023. (Yossi Aloni/Flash90)

Despite the claims of the group and Flashpoint, it is considered highly unlikely that they managed to affect or infiltrate the military Iron Dome system.

While most of the rockets landed in open areas, meaning they would not have triggered an interception attempt, a number of them impacted populated areas of Sderot, including one projectile that hit a work site, injuring a foreign national there.

The military later said Iron Dome had suffered a technical malfunction, which was quickly resolved. Despite Anonymous Sudan's claims, Iron Dome's ability to track and intercept projectiles is considered incredibly unlikely to be linked in any meaningful way to the state-run early warning system, nor any third-party application created by a private developer.

At the time, Anonymous Sudan warned on Telegram that it would coordinate with Hamas on future attacks.

"We are now playing with Israel again," the group wrote. "The strong strikes will be when there is a missile attack from Gaza."