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**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center  
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)**

## **Jordan accuses Hamas of planning terrorist attacks on its territory, directed by one of its Syria-based military leaders**



**Jordan's government  
spokesman Nasser Judeh: a  
Hamas cell exposed in Jordan  
was engaged in smuggling arms  
as well as gathering information  
for terrorist activities**



**Palestinian Authority Chairman Abu  
Mazen: the information received from  
the Jordanians is serious, disturbing and  
convincing**



**Hamas spokesman Sami Abu  
Zuhri: the Jordanian  
accusations are baseless**

■ The Jordanian authorities have recently announced they had exposed **terrorist activity of the Hamas movement** inside the kingdom's territory. These terrorist operatives, some of which arrested by the Jordanian authorities, were involved in smuggling arms and ammunition into Jordan as well as gathering information on potential targets, including sites and senior figures.

■ At a press conference held on April 25 in the wake of the exposure, Jordanian government's spokesman **Nasser Judeh** announced that a **Hamas terrorist cell had been uncovered several weeks earlier; the cell had been in advanced stages of planning terrorist attacks.** The interrogation of one of the operatives involved led to the discovery of additional explosives (TNT, C4), LAW missiles and detonators in northern Jordan.

■ The spokesman noted that the attack was intended against sites and high-ranking figures in Jordan (no details were provided as to these targets). He said that the detainees' questioning showed that they had received instructions to engage in terrorist activity **“from one of the [Hamas] movement's leaders, more specifically, one of the military leaders currently residing in Syria.”**<sup>1</sup> According to the government spokesman, **the questioning is still in progress,** and the terrorist operatives' activity is still being monitored (Jordan's Petra News Agency, April 25).

■ The government spokesman noted that Jordan was holding talks with Palestinian Authority Chairman Abu Mazen regarding the matter. He added that during Abu Mazen's meeting with the Jordanian Prime Minister, he received a **detailed briefing** from the director of General Intelligence, according to which the Jordanians now expect the visit of a delegation of high-ranking political and security officials on Abu Mazen's behalf. It is supposed to meet with Jordanian officials and receive the

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<sup>1</sup> Well-informed sources told a reporter of the Lebanese Al-Mustaqbal that the Jordanian security apparatuses managed to record a telephone conversation between Khaled Mash'al, chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, and one of the cell members. The sources pointed out that the cell's activity was exposed two weeks prior to the official announcement, and that four or five operatives were detained (Al-Mustaqbal, April 26).

complete information on the affair. At any rate, the spokesman emphasized, “it will not affect the Jordanian people’s profound relationship with the Palestinian people” (*ibid.*).

It should be noted that Jordan has been suspicious of the Hamas government since the latter’s establishment, and it does not look forward to holding official, high-level contacts with it. Noteworthy in this context is Jordan’s refusal to allow the entry of the Hamas delegation led by Khaled Mash’al, conditioning the delegation’s visit upon Khaled Mash’al renouncing his Jordanian citizenship (Al-Quds al-Arabi, February 21). Not long ago, Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zahar intended to visit Jordan, but the government spokesman announced that it was **decided to postpone the visit until further notice**. The reason, as he put it, was the exposure of Hamas’s attempt to smuggle arms and ammunition to Jordan, as well as the suicide bombing attack at Tel-Aviv’s old central bus station (April 16), which Jordan strongly condemned (Jordan’s Petra News Agency, April 18).

## Palestinian response

Palestinian Authority Chairman Abu Mazen noted that he was briefed on the affair by the director of General Intelligence, Major General Mohammad Dahabi, during his visit to Amman. He stated he could not reveal all the information he had received from the Jordanian intelligence owing to its **sensitivity and severity**, but he dubbed the information **“serious and disturbing,”** and **“convincing** those who hear it of its credibility.” Abu Mazen noted that the Palestinian Authority was clearly interested in Jordan’s security and stability. “We will not agree to or put up with any action against Jordan, be it small or large, for it is a continuation of our strategic depth.” Abu Mazen praised the Jordanian government’s discreet handling of the affair, and its collaboration with him (**Al-Rai**, April 23).

**The Hamas government** categorically denied the Jordanian accusations. According to **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri**, **“the accusations are false and baseless.”** Abu Zuhri accused Jordan of taking part in a global campaign whose goal is to isolate Hamas. He added that such views “will not isolate the movement but will

rather isolate those who pursue them.” **He called upon Jordan’s intelligentsia and leadership to intervene in order to prevent the Jordanian government from continuing this political line against Hamas** (Ramattan News Agency, April 25). As for the cancellation of Al-Zahar’s visit, Abu Zuhri stated that the allegations brought up by the Jordanians against Hamas were only an excuse and that the real reason was the pressure exerted on Jordan by the US and Israel (Sama News Agency, April 19).

## Syria’s response

❏ An “official source” in the Syrian Foreign Ministry denied Jordan’s claims that the terrorist activity in Jordan had been directed by a Hamas military leader operating from Syria. According to the source, Syria possesses no information about the presence of a Hamas military leader in Syria, for Syria does not allow any military activity of the Hamas movement on its territory. The source stressed that all the leaders of Hamas residing in Syria were political leaders engaged only in **political-propaganda** activity (AP, Syrian News Agency, April 25).

❏ Syria’s long-standing claim that the terrorist organizations operating on its territory are engaged only in political-propaganda activity is **false**. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Hamas leadership in Damascus is also engaged in **directing terrorist-operative activity in the Palestinian Authority administered territories**. Senior Hamas figures reside in Syria and conduct **their activity from there**. These are mainly **members of the Hamas Political Bureau**, headed by Khaled Mash’al, alongside **members of the operative headquarters, headed by Imad al-Alami**. The activity of the Hamas leadership in Syria, including in the terrorist-operative sphere, is conducted **under the sponsorship of the Syrian regime**, which supports terrorist activities from its territory.