



### Government Officials in Jordan Arrest Several High-Profile Figures Including the Former Crown Prince

The Jordanian government announced this week that it had foiled a coup plot involving several members of the royal family. Former Crown Prince Hamzah bin Hussein was arrested alongside 16 others for “attempts to jeopardize the safety and security” of Jordan. Some of the additional prominent figures that were implicated include Bassem Awadallah, a former chief economic advisor to King Abdullah II, and Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a member of the royal family. Hamzah bin Hussein is a popular figure in Jordan, particularly among tribal communities. However, King Abdullah was criticized during several tribal meetings that the prince attended, and experts have noted that this brought Hamzah under intense scrutiny. Prince Hamzah denied all of the allegations surrounding him in a video leaked to foreign media outlets and said he was under house arrest with his family, and has since signed a letter declaring full loyalty to the king. In the aftermath of this latest series of developments in Jordan, many of the country’s allies including the United States released statements backing King Abdullah and his security services.

Initially, Jordan denied that the country’s former crown prince had been detained. However, after a cell phone video he recorded while under arrest surfaced in foreign media, Jordanian officials confirmed that Hamzah bin Hussein was being detained. In the video, Prince Hamzah said he had been told he and his family couldn’t leave their house, and their phone and internet lines had been cut to prevent him from contacting anybody. In the face of allegations regarding potential foreign involvement in the plot, Prince Hamzah argued that he was not part of any external ploy to destabilize Jordan nor had he been communicating with outside actors who sought to undermine or overthrow the king. Additionally, he stated that the chief of Jordan’s military staff had visited him and confirmed that there had been criticism of the king at meetings that Prince Hamzah was at. However, he expressed that Prince Hamzah wasn’t the one criticizing the king, and that the current situation was meant to serve as a warning. Two days after Prince Hamzah’s house arrest began, he had a meeting with King Abdullah and several mediators to resolve their differences. In the end, Hamzah signed a letter in which he declared full loyalty to the king, and pledged his commitment to Jordan’s constitution.

Jordan’s Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti told a state-run news agency that Prince Hamzah was being asked to stop “movements and activities” that threatened Jordan’s security and stability. It is not immediately clear what movements or activities he was referring to, although Prince Hamzah admitted to have been corresponding with a long-time personal friend and Israeli businessman who offered to fly his family to Germany. Jordanian authorities noted that the man in question, Roy Shaposhnik, is a former Mossad agent, while Shaposhnik and Prince Hamzah have tried to deny any links to the Israeli intelligence agency.

Since the arrests took place, several of Jordan’s international allies have signaled their support for the king. Saudi Arabia and the United States both issued strong statements backing King Abdullah, who has been a staunch ally on several issues in the region. Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait are among the other nations who have come out in support of the king.