

Jordan's Former Crown Prince Detained Amid Crackdown on Alleged Coup Plotters

Prince Hamzah bin Hussein restricted to his palace in Amman, though the army insists he is not among those arrested

By [Middle East Eye](#)

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Jordan has detained a former crown prince at home and arrested two senior ex-officials and several others, sources have told Middle East Eye, amid a possible coup plot.

A large number of security forces have been deployed on Amman's main streets and around its most sensitive sites.

Prince Hamzah bin Hussein, the 41-year-old half-brother of King Abdullah II and crown prince until 2004, has been detained at home, sources in Amman said, though the government has denied he has been arrested.

“We asked him to stop activities and movements that are used against Jordan's stability,” the Jordanian army [said in a statement](#).

The army added that Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a member of the royal family, and Bassem Awadallah, who was director of King Abdullah's office in 2006, have been arrested following “comprehensive investigations undertaken by security agencies”.

In a [video sent to the BBC](#) by his lawyer on Saturday evening, Prince Hamzah denied any wrongdoing and said he was not part of any conspiracy. He also accused the country's leaders of corruption, incompetence and harassment.

In the video, he said:

“I had a visit from the chief of general staff of the Jordanian armed forces this morning in which he informed me that I was not allowed to go out, to communicate with people or to meet with them because in the meetings that I had been present in – or on social media relating to visits that I had made – there had been criticism of the government or the king.”

He said that he was not accused of making the criticisms himself.

However, he went on to say:

"I am not the person responsible for the breakdown in governance, the corruption and for the incompetence that has been prevalent in our governing structure for the last 15 to 20 years and has been getting worse... And I am not responsible for the lack of faith people have in their institutions.

"It has reached a point where no one is able to speak or express an opinion on anything without being bullied, arrested, harassed and threatened."

'Investigations are continuing'

A senior Middle East intelligence official briefed on the events told the Washington Post that investigations were ongoing into an attempt to unseat the king. The Post reported that tribal leaders and members of the Jordanian security establishment are said to have been involved in the plot.

"At least 20 more people involved with Prince Hamzah have been arrested at the same time," a Jordanian source told MEE.

"It could be a failed coup attempt, but nobody knows the exact details."

Major General Yousef Huneiti, chairman of Jordanian armed forces, said:

"The investigations are continuing. We will announce the results when we finish. All procedures were taken according to law. All people are under the law. Jordan's safety and stability is the priority."

Yaser al-Majali, director of Hamzah's office, and Adnan Abu Hammad, who manages the prince's palace, are among the detainees.

Sharif Hassan bin Zaid was formerly King Abdullah's special envoy to Saudi Arabia. Some local websites in Jordan say he holds Saudi citizenship.

Following his work in the king's office and a stint as finance minister, Awadallah established new businesses in UAE and Saudi Arabia. Some sources say he works as a consultant for Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Hamzah is the son of the late King Hussein and his fourth wife, the US-born Queen Noor. He was replaced as crown prince in 2004 in favour of King Abdullah's son Hussein.

In a statement, the [Saudi royal court said](#):

"We stand with Jordan and support the decisions of King Abdullah to preserve the security of his country."

Meanwhile, the US State Department described King Abdullah as a "key partner" and said he "has our full support".

Egypt voiced its support for the king and his efforts “to maintain the security and stability of the kingdom against any attempts to undermine it”, Egypt’s presidential spokesman wrote on Facebook.

The Gulf Cooperation Council said in a statement that the GCC stood with Jordan and all its measures to maintain security and stability.

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