

Did Israel have Prior Knowledge of the Amman 11/9 Terror Attacks?

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
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In-depth Report: [AMMAN 11/9](#)

Did Israel have prior knowledge of the terror attacks on three hotels in Amman, Jordan, which led to the death of 57 people?

According to an official Jordanian statement, the casualties included 33 Jordanians, six Iraqis, two Bahrainis, three Chinese, an Indonesian, a Syrian, a Saudi and an American.

Israeli Citizens evacuated prior to the Blast

At least two authoritative news sources cast doubt on the official version of events.

According to Haaretz, Israel managed, with the cooperation of the Jordanian security forces, to discreetly evacuate several Israeli citizens prior to the blast, who were staying at the Radisson SAS hotel:

“A number of Israelis staying yesterday at the Radisson SAS were evacuated before the bombing by Jordanian security forces, apparently due to a specific security alert. They were escorted back to Israel by security personnel.

The Foreign Ministry stated yesterday that no Israeli tourists are known to have been injured in the blasts. Representatives of Israel’s embassy in Amman were in contact with local authorities to examine any report of injured Israelis, but none were received.”(Scores dead in three Amman hotel bombings; Israelis evacuated before attack, by Yoav Stern and Zohar Blumenkrantz, Haaretz, 9 November 2005, italics added)

Moreover, a report published in The Los Angeles Times, quoting an authoritative source, also suggests that Israeli intelligence had prior knowledge of the attacks and failed to intervene:

“Amos N. Guiora, a former senior Israeli counter-terrorism official, said in a phone interview with The Times that sources in Israel had also told him about the pre-attack evacuations.

“It means there was excellent intelligence that this thing was going to happen,” said Guiora, a former leader of the Israel Defense Forces who now heads the Institute for Global Security Law and Policy at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. (LA Times, 11 November 2005)

According to Amos N. Guiora:

“The question that needs to be answered is why weren’t the Jordanians working at the hotel similarly removed?” (quoted in LA Times, op. cit)

Retraction

No doubt under pressure from both the Israeli and Jordanian authorities, Yoav Stern and Zohar Blumenkrantz who authored the first report in Haaretz on November 9, retracted their statement to the effect that the Israeli citizens had been evacuated prior to the blast:

“There is no truth to reports that Israelis staying at the Radisson SAS hotel in Amman on Wednesday were evacuated by Jordanian security forces before the bombing that took place there. The Israelis were escorted back to Israel by Jordanian security personnel only after the attacks had taken place, contrary to earlier reports.” (No truth to report of Israeli evacuations before Amman bombs, By Yoav Stern, Haaretz, 10 November 2005)

Ironically, the following day, in the November 11 issue of Haaretz, *the retraction had been retracted*. The author’s of the November 9 article Yoav Stern and Zohar Blumenkrantz had reaffirmed their earlier report:

An Israeli Arab businessman was one of the casualties in the multi-pronged terror attacks, the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem said Thursday. Two high-ranking Palestinian security officials were also said to be among the dead. ...It was still unclear whether there were any other Israeli casualties in the attack. (...)

Hours before the bombings, many Israelis were evacuated from the Radisson SAS, one of the hotels hit in the attacks, apparently due to a specific security alert.” (Haaretz, 11 November 2005, italics added).

Head of Palestinian Intelligence dies in Attacks

Three high-ranking Palestinian intelligence officials including Maj.-Gen. Bashir Nafeh, head of the Palestinian Authority’s military intelligence and Col. Abed Allun, a high-ranking Preventive Security forces official, who were staying at the Hyatt Hotel were also killed in the blast. .

In this regard, Russian analyst Shamil Sultanov of the Russian Duma’s International Affairs Committee has pointed to an “Israeli connection”. According to Sultanov, in a radio interview, the death of Maj General Bashir Nafeh “has furthered the chances of Muhammad Dahlan” (who currently occupies the position of Minister of Civilian Affairs), to replace Mahmud Abbas as leader of the Palestinian National Authority. Sultanov suggests that this change in leadership within the Palestinian Authority would serve Israeli interests:

“If you consider these blasts, there are two key points, from my point of view. First, Jordan is a key player here for the Americans. The stance of the new king, Abdallah II, who, by the way is half-English, is fairly complex because contradictions have arisen between the old Jordanian team and the king in the last six months, even the last year. And in principle what has just happened is a very good opportunity for Abdallah II to make certain changes, to put it mildly, to his team and to strengthen his personal authority, and so on.

And the second theory I adhere to is the Israeli connection. Abu-Mazin [Mahmud Abbas], the leader of the Palestinian National Authority, is seriously ill. And many believe that his Fatah party may not win with such a leader, that it will definitely not win the parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in the next few months. So for a very large number of players – for the Americans, for Israel, for Sharon, for the Egyptians – [Palestinian Minister of Civilian Affairs Muhammad] Dahlan would be the optimal player and politician to replace Abu-Mazin. In that sense, these explosions, and in particular the murder, as a result of one of the blasts, of Bashir Nafi, the Palestinian National Authority's military intelligence chief in the West Bank, is, from my point of view, a clearing of the way for Dahlan.”(Radio Mayak, Moscow, in Russian, 1214 gmt 11 Nov 05, BBC Monitoring)

This Russian viewpoint is consistent with other assessments on the role of Dahlan, who actively collaborated from 1994 to 2001 with the Israeli IDF and Shin Bet in the crackdown and arrest of Hamas leaders. According to GlobalSecurity.org:

“Both Israel and the US [have] groomed Dahlan as a successor to Arafat” .

Chinese Defense Delegation

According to CNN, there were three Chinese “students” among the dead. The official reports, however, confirm that the three Chinese were in fact members of a Chinese Defense delegation to Jordan from China's National Defense University. Beijing has rushed a high level investigative team integrated by China's ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense to Amman with a view to investigating the deaths of the three Chinese military personnel.

Moreover, Dr Ghalib Abd-al-Mahdi, a senior Iraqi economic official and brother of Iraqi Vice-President Adil Abd-al-Mahdi, was also killed in the blasts

Joint Intelligence Agreement between Israel and Jordan

According to an Israeli radio report, the attacks have open the way towards the signing of a joint intelligence agreement between Israel and Jordan.

“Jordan is in the process of signing a joint security agreement and the establishment of an operations room for combating terrorism in cooperation with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian National Authority.” (Journalist quoted in Jordanian foreign minister's news conference, 13 November 2005)

Media Disinformation

The attacks were immediately described by the Western media, without corroborating evidence and prior to the conduct of an investigation, “ as bearing the hallmarks of Al Qaeda.”

A statement allegedly written by “Al Qaeda in Iraq” was posted on a mysterious Islamist website. The web posting, which claimed responsibility for the attacks,. stated that the attacks were in response to “the conspiracy against the Sunnis whose blood and honor were shed by Crusaders and the Shiites”.

Aired on network TV around the World, the attacks were followed by organized mass rallies and demonstrations across Amman directed against terrorist mastermind Al Zargawi.

What the Western media, however, has failed to report, is the atmosphere of disbelief and skepticism which characterizes Jordanian public opinion. Openly discussed and debated on the streets of Amman, as confirmed by a recent article in the New York Times (November 12, 2005), many Jordanians believe that Israel is behind the bombings.

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Read also the related followup article by Michel Chossudovsky : [The Al Zargawi Amman 11/9 Bombing: More Holes in the Official Story](#)

ANNEX: PRIOR EVACUATION OF ISRAELI CITIZENS, HAARETZ, NOV 11, 2005

This article appeared on November 11, one day after Haaretz retracted the story in its November 10 issue. For the record we are reproducing below both articles. We have highlighted the relevant paragraphs in bold-italics

King Abdullah cancels trip to Israel after Amman triple suicide bombing



By [Yoav Stern](#) and [Zohar Blumenkrantz](#), Haaretz Correspondents, and News Agencies



Friday, November 11, 2005

[link to original article <http://www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/spages/643639.html>]

Israel on Thursday evening says Jordan's King Abdullah II has canceled a planned trip to Israel after at least 57 people were killed in simultaneous suicide bombings at three hotels the Jordanian capital of Amman on Wednesday night.

An Israeli Arab businessman was one of the casualties in the multi-pronged terror attacks, the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem said Thursday. Two high-ranking Palestinian security officials were also said to be among the dead.

Husam Fathi Mahajna, 40, from the northern town of Umm al-Fahm, was a guest at a wedding held at the Radisson Hotel and his body was taken to the Jordan University Hospital in Amman, where it was identified by a local friend.



The family of Mahajna headed to Amman on Thursday morning. Mahajna was to be buried in his hometown on Thursday at 7 P.M.

It was still unclear whether there were any other Israeli casualties in the attack. Hours before the bombings, many Israelis were [evacuated](#) from the Radisson SAS, one of the hotels hit in the attacks, apparently due to a specific security alert.

More than 115 people were wounded in the bombings at the Radisson, Days Inn and Grand Hyatt, where the bomber is believed to have blown up in a banquet hall where a wedding reception was underway. The Radisson is known to be popular with Israeli tourists.

“There were three terrorist attacks on the Grand Hyatt, Radisson SAS and Days Inn hotels and it is believed that the blasts were suicide bombings,” police spokesman Major Bashir al-Da’aja told The Associated Press. He declined to elaborate.

Most of the victims of the attacks were Jordanian, said Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister Marwan Muashar said.

Al-Qaida in Iraq posted a statement in an Arabic Internet site in which it claimed responsibility for the bombings.

The claim of responsibility, signed in the name of the spokesman for the group Al-Qaida in Iraq, said that “after studying and watching the targets, places were chosen to carry out an attack on some hotels that the tyrant of Jordan has made the backyard garden for the enemy of the religion - Jews and crusaders.”

Hundreds of angry Jordanians rallied Thursday outside one of the three U.S.-based hotels attacked by suicide bombers, shouting, “Burn in hell, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi!” after the terrorist’s group claimed responsibility for the blasts that killed at least 56 people, including an American.

Protesters - including women and children - gathered outside a bombed hotels, shouting, “Death to al-Zarqawi, the villain and the traitor!” Drivers honked the horns of vehicles decorated with Jordanian flags and posters of the king. A helicopter hovered overhead.

Jordan rounds up first suspects

Jordan’s King Abdullah II chaired a meeting with his security chiefs, just hours after returning home from a trip abroad and inspecting the still-smoldering sites.

Jordanian security forces snared a group of Iraqi suspects in the triple hotel bombings that killed at least 56 people, and officials said Thursday one of the bombers spoke Iraqi-accented Arabic before he exploded his suicide belt in the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

A senior security official linked the bombings to Jordan’s war-ravaged eastern neighbor, saying the Hyatt bomber spoke with an Iraqi accent and several other Iraqis have been detained.

Security staff patrolling the Hyatt stopped the middle-aged terrorist as he was wandering the lobby. He spoke briefly to the guards before detonating the explosives strapped underneath his Western-style suit, the official said on condition of anonymity because he was unauthorized to speak to the media.

“Among those arrested there were different nationalities, including Iraqis and other Arabs, and not only Jordanians,” the official added.

Another official, insisting on anonymity because he is not allowed to speak to the press, said that DNA tests were being carried out to determine the identity of the perpetrators, including two suicide bombers who blew themselves up in two of the separate hotel attacks. A third suicide attacker used a car to attack the third hotel.

Palestinian officials among dead

Two high-ranking Palestinian security officials, a senior Palestinian banker and the commercial attache at the Palestinian embassy in Cairo died in the bombings in Jordan, the Palestinian envoy to Amman said on Thursday.

Maj.-Gen. Bashir Nafeh, the head of military intelligence in the West Bank, and Col. Abed Allun, a high-ranking Preventive Security forces official, were killed in the attack at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Ambassador Attala Kheri told The AP in a telephone interview.

Jihad Fatouh, the commercial attache at the Palestinian Embassy in Cairo, and Mosab Khorma, deputy Chairman of Cairo-Amman Bank in the Palestinian territories, were also killed in the three nearly simultaneous suicide bombings on American-owned hotels in the Jordanian capital on Wednesday night, Kheri said.

The Palestinian Authority ordered Palestinian flags lowered to half-staff for one day, and declared a three-day mourning period.

“It’s a very sad day for Palestinians, and we extend our condolences to King Abdullah and the Jordanian people,” Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia told reporters. “We condemn this attack vehemently. It’s a criminal attack that targeted innocent civilians.”

International condemnation

Jordan’s King Abdullah II condemned the attacks as “criminal acts committed by a deviant and misleading bunch” and said they would not sway Jordan from continuing its battle against terrorism. He cut short his official visit to Kazakhstan to return home.

“The hand of justice will get to the criminals who targeted innocent secure civilians with their cowardly acts,” he said in a statement carried by the official Petra news agency.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called King Abdullah and expressed his condolences. He told the Jordanian King the entire world must unite in the war against terror.

U.S. President George W. Bush condemned the bombings and offered U.S. assistance in the investigation.

“The president condemns in the strongest possible terms the vicious terrorist attacks against innocent civilians in Amman, Jordan,” said a statement by White House spokesman Scott McClellan.

“Jordan is a close friend of the United States, and we will offer every possible form of cooperation in investigating these attacks and assisting in efforts to bring these terrorists to justice,” he added.

Israelis allowed to return

A Jordanian police official said the attacks hit minutes before 9 P.M. in two districts in the Jordanian capital, including the commercial areas of Jebel Amman and al-Rabiyeh, which houses the Israeli Embassy.

The Allenby border crossing between Israel and Jordan was opened to allow Israelis to leave the Hashemite Kingdom immediately.

The first bomber struck the Grand Hyatt, completely shattering the stone entrance.

Police said a second explosion hit the nearby Radisson SAS hotel where about 250 people were attending a wedding reception.

The Radisson in particular is popular with Israeli tourists and was a target of several foiled Al-Qaida plots in the past.

“The attacks carry the hallmark of Al-Qaida,” one police official said on condition of anonymity in line with police regulations. “However it is not certain. We are investigating.”

Ayman al-Safadi, editor of Jordan’s Al-Ghad newspaper, told Al-Arabiya satellite network that it was a “terrorist operation.”

“Finally, the terrorists succeeded in breaking the security in Jordan,” he said, referring to past success in foiling many terror plots.

The Grand Hyatt and Radisson SAS hotels, in the Jebel Amman district, are located about one kilometer apart and are frequented by American and European businessmen and diplomats. The Days Inn is located three kilometers away.

An American businessman who was at the Grand Hyatt when the explosion occurred, said that it was caused by a “bomb that went off in the lobby.” He declined to identify himself.

“It was a miracle that we made it out with a scratch,” said a British guest at the Grand Hyatt.

“We thought it was fireworks for the wedding but I saw people falling to the ground,” said Ahmed, a wedding guest at the Radisson who did not give his surname. “I saw blood. There were people killed. It was ugly.”

Security was beefed up across the capital, especially around hotels and diplomatic missions, police said. Several armed policemen and cars were patrolling the streets of Amman, where Jordanian Prime Minister Adnan Badran declared Thursday a national holiday – apparently in order to allow tightened security measures to take hold.

Jordan, a key ally of both the United States and Israel, had largely escaped the terror attacks that have hit other parts of the Middle East, and its sleepy capital, Amman, is viewed as a haven of stability in the region.

But Jordan has not been entirely immune: On August 19, militants fired three Katyusha rockets at a Navy ship docked at the Red Sea resort of Aqaba, narrowly missing it and killing a Jordanian soldier.

Jordanian officials blamed that attack on Al-Qaida in Iraq, and there have been growing

worries that the violence in Iraq could spill over into Jordan, where many Iraqi exiles have taken refuge from the violence.

Jordan has arrested scores of Islamic militants for plotting to carry out attacks in the moderate Arab kingdom. It has also sentenced numerous militants to death in absentia, including the Jordanian-born leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

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No truth to report of Israeli evacuations before Amman bombs



By [Yoav Stern](#), Haaretz Correspondent



November 10 2005

[link to original article <http://www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/spages/643661.html>]

There is no truth to reports that Israelis staying at the Radisson SAS hotel in Amman on Wednesday were evacuated by Jordanian security forces before the bombing that took place there.

The Israelis were escorted back to Israel by Jordanian security personnel only after the attacks had taken place, contrary to earlier reports.

Al Qaida said Thursday that it had carried out the triple suicide bombings at the Radisson, Grand Hyatt and Days Inn hotels in downtown Amman, in which at least 57 people, including an Israeli, were killed.



Representatives of Israel's embassy in Amman were in contact with local authorities to examine any report of injured Israelis, but none were received. There are often a number of Israeli businessman and tourists in Amman, including in the hotels hit Wednesday.

Israel's counter-terror headquarters on Wednesday recommended Israeli citizens not travel in Jordan. Travel warnings regarding Jordan were tightened a few months ago, but many Israelis still visit the country. Many also visit other regions such as the Jordanian Arava and the ancient city of Petra.

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