

'Full support' - Israeli, US, Saudi leaders back Jordanian king



Jordan's King Abdullah II (AP/Jean-Francois Badias)

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International leaders, including Israel's Defense Minister Benny Gantz, released statements of support for Jordan's King Abdullah II after the kingdom's security services foiled what they called an attempted coup.

During a press conference on Sunday, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said that the "malicious plot" had been thwarted at the "zero hour."

He said that 14 to 16 individuals, some with close ties to King Abdullah's half-brother, former Crown Prince Hamzah bin Hussein, had been conspiring to topple the kingdom's longtime leader.

Prince Hamzah is currently under house arrest, and the Jordanian government is keeping mum about the extent of his alleged involvement.

“The plot is totally contained. Our security and stability are not shaken,” Safadi said.

World leaders expressed their support for King Abdullah. Jordan is a strategic partner for many countries, widely seen as an island of stability in the Middle East. The Hashemite family has been ruling the kingdom for a century.

“We are closely following the reports out of Jordan, and we have been in touch with Jordanian officials, said U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price. “King Abdullah is a key partner of the United States, and he has our full support.”

“The kingdom affirms its full support, with all its capabilities, to all decisions and measures taken by King Abdullah and His Highness Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, the Crown Prince, to maintain security and stability,” read a statement from the Saudi royal court.

Benny Gantz, Israel’s Defense Minister, told reporters in a phone conference Sunday evening that the Jewish State would offer full support to its neighbor.

“Jordan is a peaceful neighbor, with extraordinary strategic importance. We will do what is necessary to maintain that relationship, which has lasted some 30 years,” he said.

However, Gantz was careful to stress that Israel would tread carefully and allow the kingdom to handle the situation as they see fit.

“Regarding the internal developments there — that’s an internal issue,” he added.

In a video released to the BBC by his lawyer, Prince Hamzah proclaimed his innocence, saying he was being punished for speaking out against corruption in the kingdom.

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He bemoaned a ruling class “that puts its personal interests, puts its financial interests, puts its corruption is more important than the lives and dignity and futures of the 10 million people that live here.”

Hamza’s mother, Queen Noor, appeared to advocate on behalf of her son via her Twitter account.

“Praying that truth and justice will prevail for all the innocent victims of this wicked slander,” she wrote. “God bless and keep them safe.”

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