



[Jordan Sentences Two Ex-Officials on Charges of Attempting to Destabilize the Monarchy](#)

Earlier this week, Jordan sentenced two ex-officials on charges of attempting to destabilize the monarchy. The King's cousin, Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, and the former court chief, Bassem Awadallah, were convicted for sedition and were given the maximum sentencing. Awadallah and bin Zaid were accused of aiding Prince Hamzah in planning a failed coup. Prince Hamzah, a prominent political figure in Jordan who was removed from the line of succession in 2004 by King Abdullah II and replaced with the King's eldest son, was not charged with a crime after reaffirming his fealty. There are credible allegations of external involvement in the plot, with Awadallah – who has citizenship in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States – believed to have been approached for his foreign ties. The Saudi Arabian regime and the United States under the Trump administration had been pressuring Jordan to accept the widely criticized “Deal of the Century” Mideast peace plan, and it is thought that the conspirators sought foreign assistance to exploit King Abdullah II's perceived vulnerability as a result of this. The Jordanian government was ultimately informed of the scheme, and proceeded to take action against the two former officials.

The implications of foreign involvement regarding the coup are of great concern to the Jordanian regime. Both the United States under former President Trump and Saudi Arabia are suspected of having had the incentive to aid Prince Hamzah's efforts before the recent U.S. presidential election. Upon the uncovering of the plot, Saudi Arabia immediately pressured officials in Jordan in an attempt to have Awadallah released. While authorities sought to draw a direct connection and the United States instantly showed support for King Abdullah II after the detainments, the two ex-officials were accused of soliciting foreign backing.

The Trump administration had been desperately trying to garner support for its heavily criticized “Deal of the Century,” which had also been firmly rejected by Jordan. The plan was a biased and one-sided proposal regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which would have cemented Israel's control over illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory, while offering no fair concessions to the Palestinians. Jordan is regarded as one of the protective forces of Christian and Muslim holy sites within East Jerusalem, and like most of the regional and international community, advocates for a meaningful and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There is also a foreign policy element to the sentencing of the ex-officials in Jordan. Awadallah is a U.S. citizen, and his family has put forth allegations of torture and abuse. They have demanded that the United States protect the rights of one of its citizens, with lawyers accusing Jordanian officials of psychological torture, solitary confinement, and physical abuse. This has surfaced shortly in advance of a planned visit by King Abdullah II to the White House next week on July 19th. Awadallah's legal team in the United States has expressed that they aim to be involved in the conviction appeal process as it moves through the higher courts in Jordan.