Two arrested in alleged Iranian plot to attack Israelis, Jews in Athens

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Greek police arrested two Pakistani nationals Tuesday who were allegedly planning mass-casualty terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in the country.

Israel’s Mossad spy agency, which aided the Greek investigation, said in a statement that the two were part of an Iranian terror network.

The Iran-born pair, aged 27 and 29, were being held at police headquarters in central Athens, Greek authorities said. A third man, who is not in Greece, was wanted for questioning and charged in absentia.

A government official told The Associated Press that one of the targets was a Jewish restaurant in central Athens. Reports indicated that the target was a Chabad House, which includes a Kosher restaurant and also hosts other religious services.

The official asked not to be identified, pending official announcements.

Police said the suspects had chosen a target of “high symbolism” and were making final preparations for the attack.

“Their aim was not only to cause the loss of life of innocent citizens, but also to undermine the sense of security in the country, while hurting public institutions and threatening [Greece’s] international relations,” the police statement said.

The two suspects both entered Greece illegally from neighboring Turkey and had been in the country for at least four months. As part of their investigation, police searched multiple sites in Athens, as well as in southern Greece and on the island of Zakynthos.

In a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office, Mossad said it had helped Athens in the “grave affair,” including uncovering links to Iran.

“After the investigation of the suspects began in Greece, Mossad assisted in unraveling intelligence of the infrastructure, the methods of operation, and the connection to Iran,” the spy agency said.

It claimed the two Pakistanis were part of a “wide Iranian network that operates from Iran and out of many countries.”

Greek police said an attack was imminent. “An analysis of the seized information and digital data revealed and confirmed that the members of the network had already chosen as the target of the attack, a building of special importance; had carried out the reconnaissance of the area and the planning of the attack; and had received final instructions to carry out the attack,” a statement carried by Greek [news site Ekathimerini read.](https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1207593/police-announce-arrest-of-two-members-of-foreign-led-terrorist-network/)

According to the report, authorities began investigating the terror network following the 2021 arrest of two other Pakistani men suspected of planning attacks on Israelis. The network was also linked to an Iranian plot foiled in Turkey last year, it said.

Greece’s anti-terrorism police division and National Intelligence Service were involved in the arrests, according to a police statement.

Greek Public Order Minister Takis Theodorikakos said in a tweet that “the operation demonstrates that the country’s security authorities maintain a high state of readiness for all Greeks and all visitors to our country.”

Foreign Minister Eli Cohen thanked Greece for thwarting the plot.

“The ayatollah regime in Tehran is exporting terror to the Middle East, Mediterranean and wider world and only a tough stance and cooperation will halt the terror activities of the Iranian regime,” he said in a tweet.

The Mossad is also working to thwart Iran-linked terror activities aimed at Israeli and Jewish targets in several other countries in Europe, Africa and Asia, Channel 12 reported.

Some of the countries at a high risk level include the United Arab Emirates, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Bahrain.